



2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 203

October-November 2012

On This Date-150 Years Ago

October-November, 1862, Morning Reports

Remarks for the Month of October, 1862

(Numbers indicate the day of the month)

1 Adolph Apitz, Chas. S. Waldron - deserters. Left O. M. Hunter at L. {?} Barracks No. 1 at Louisville, sick. -- quit camp at Louisville

25 R. B. Price deserted

26 E. T. Tillotson - while in arrest deserted

Remarks for the Month of November, 1862

(Numbers indicate the day of the month)

1 Private Albert Gowdy detailed as Hosp. Steward.

Mary -- a contraband -- hired as Hosp. Cook

3 recd official information of the discharge of Andrew Bergman, Christopher Blake & Geo. L. Bartholomew --

4 Left Artificer A. T. Peck in Hosp. at Bowling Green.

5 (In turning over the Command to Lt. Woodbury, by order of Col. Carlin, I report one hundred (100) horses in the Battery for which I have receipted and four (4) horses that have been picked up and had subject to the order of those to whom they belong Capt. Wm. Augustus Hotchkiss, Commanding.)

12 Rec'd official information of the discharge of Nicholas Arn for disability by order of Maj. W. H. Spencer . 3rd Ky. Vols

13 D. W. Coulthard taken to Hosp. at Nashville, Tenn.

18 Recd official Notice of Discharge of Jos. Bernard

19 Lt. Woodbury appointed brig Inspector on Col. Carlin's Staff -- -- G. W. Townsend on detached service

25 Recd official notice of discharge of private Carl M. Olson on the 20th Oct 1862 and also of the discharge of James Green on the 6th Nov 1862 -- both on Surg. Certif. of disability.

26 Lauritz Olsen returned to duty from Hosp. -- Corp. Nichols, privates M. Blesi and Jas. S. McKinney taken to Hospital at Nashville

28 Alonzo Spaulding returned to duty from Hosp. (at Jefferson Barracks)

29 Received official information of the discharge of Jacob Decondres (June 7, 1862) and Jas. W. Clark (Sept. 11, 1862 by reason of Surgeons certificate of Disability.

Upcoming Events

November 11, Veteran's Day, Winona, MN

Plan to arrive by 10:00 am so logistics can be worked out with plenty of time. The program is held in Veterans Park by Lake Winona, starting at 11:00 a.m. in memory of the end of WWI (11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month). Our Bugler Bill will play *To The Colors* to open the program and close it with *Taps* after the gun has fired for the last time. We will be firing three times during the program and perhaps a couple more demo times after the program. (Remember how great the echo is over this lake?!)

Ladies are invited to attend in their finery to add color and show their respect for the veterans of our nation.

Confirm your attendance with John Cain if you have not already done so.

December 15, Circle Pines City Hall, Circle Pines 200 Civic Heights Circle, Circle Pines, 763-717-3294 Civil War Christmas, 10:30 to 1:30

We will interpret the things soldiers in the field and those at home were doing to celebrate the season. Please be thinking about what you want to do—we want this to be different than the Winter Camp we did last February at this same site, so start thinking about an 1860s holiday.

Ideas for soldiers include writing/reading letters, making a gift from camp materials to send home, decorating a tree from things in camp, planning a camp Christmas dinner for the troops, singing Christmas hymns, etc.

The home front activity ideas can include some of the same things as the soldiers, as well as packing Christmas boxes, planning special foods or clothing, traveling to visit family/soldiers, etc. **Volunteers are needed** to make church dolls, paper beads and cornucopias with the visitors! Supplies will be provided as well as training if needed.

Other ideas are encouraged! Please let Vickie know what you plan to do so she can coordinate the activities—we don't all want to be doing the same thing! This is a **paid event**, so we need a good showing of members!

Next Meeting

**Saturday, December 15, after the
Christmas Event, ca. 2:00p.m.**

At the Pizza Hut just off Lake Drive in Circle Pines.



Battery Profile

John Freman Spencer

John was born on September 7, 1839, in Crawford County, Maine. When he came to Minnesota is unknown, but he was in Anoka when he enlisted on May 6, 1864. This was the same time as the Second Battery veterans were home on veterans furlough and some were from Anoka. John may well have decided to join the Battery after talking with them. His enlistment was taken by Captain Hotchkiss while Hotchkiss was in Anoka.

John allowed his name to be credited to Vermillion in Dakota County and he agreed to serve for three years or until the end of the war. It does not appear that he received any bounty money, something that was unusual in Minnesota in 1864 as most men did receive a bounty at that time. The descriptive roll said John was 5' 9" tall, had hazel eyes, brown hair and a light complexion. He was a laborer and single.

When the furlough was over, the Second Battery returned south and John went with them as a new recruit. He never saw much hard fighting as most of the last year the Battery spent in the war was on



garrison duty. While there was little to cause harm in the way of Rebel bullets, accidents were entirely another matter. In June of 1864, John was put in charge of a corral of horses. He said the horses "stampeded." John tried to head them off as he was on a horse. He went under a low tree without noticing it until the tree struck him from the horse. The fall injured his left knee and it didn't heal properly, but John was never sent to the hospital for the injury.

John was mustered out with the Battery in August and he went back to working as a civilian.

On September 26, 1868, a justice of the peace married John Spencer and Margaret Dygert at Albion in Wright County, Minnesota. The couple had ten children between 1869 and 1895, though John told the Pension Department they had been separated at some time in their married life. He also noted that his dates might not be accurate as they had lost their house in a wind storm and all the contents with it.

When they moved to Swanville in Morrison County, Minnesota, is not known, but John had a successful farming operation there that he eventually turned over to one of his sons. He and Margaret continued to live on the farm until John died on October 23, 1915. John was laid to rest with a veteran's marker in the Springbrook Cemetery in Swanville.



Home for Christmas!

Miss Mandy was exceptionally excited to see that the library had chosen December 15 for the Christmas event as her last final of the fall semester is on December 12, so she has a plane ticket home on December 13 and will be joining the Battery for the Christmas event in Circle Pines.

She is thrilled to have this chance to see everyone from her "Civil War Family."

When she comes home in December, she will be halfway through her last classroom year. Starting next May, she will have a year of internship before graduation in the spring of 2014.

She keeps reminding family that after she graduates, we will have to call her "Doctor Wendel!"



New Research Resource!

The Library of Congress is a great place to research and they have a new online resource that has incredible information. Their project is to make newspapers searchable by word online. The database is constantly being added to and includes newspapers from 1836 to 1922 from across the nation.

There are several Minnesota newspapers on the site including one from Red Wing and another from St. Cloud. The St. Cloud paper is especially interesting as the Kinkead brothers, William and Alexander, were from St. Cloud and searches of the papers online have turned up two letters written by the Kinkeads. They sent the letters to the newspaper (run by Jane Grey Swisshelm) and she published the letters in full! Several other articles mention other Battery members from the St. Cloud area as they enlisted or came home on furlough. This much found with just a simple search one evening! What else is there waiting to be found?!!

“Summer” in October

It had been a cold morning for the 2nd Minnesota Light Artillery, I wished I had brought my great coat to the field like so many others did, but I didn't. I didn't want to carry it when the morning sun broke thru and the “hot work” of a battle would cause us to sweat and I knew a fight was coming.

The crew was ready, eager and experienced. It was a good crew, vets at every position, even capable backup vets on the limber. It was easy being corporal with this crew and I loved it. But as corporal, I would need to sub people in and out of positions to give everyone a chance to fight up front. I had a full crew of 7. I thought about that as I stood directly behind the gun.

The voice of Pvt. Wendel, our #4, softly told me that I should move to the side or the recoil of the gun would cause me considerable angst. I smiled back to reality and moved, the battle opened and we fought well. The boys on the limber moved into positions flawlessly. We were sharp and after the battle we received some nice compliments as we moved our gun to Loomis's ridge.(the ridge at the top of the hill from the Russell and Bottom houses) The day was still cold, but as I looked up and down the line, the guns were set properly. We were gun #3 in the center of the line with a slight gap between our battery and the right flank. Just as it was, I thought. I stood in my position, thinking about the lack of targets, the clear field of vision and how I wanted it to warm up a bit. Just a few hours of summer would be great, but alas, it is October.

Suddenly I heard Lt John Cain yell, “Corporal!”

I walked behind the limber where he was standing. I saluted lazily and he said, “We are adding another member to our gun crew.”

“But sir we have a full complement now!”

“It's a woman and she is important to our proceedings here,” said the Lt. “This is not a request. She can run powder, but she must be allowed to fire the gun.”

I snapped a salute and walked back to the gun. Pvt. Wendel was sleeping against the wheel and he opened his eyes when I said, “I have a job for you. You are going to teach this woman how to fire a gun in the middle of this battle.”

“Okay,” he said, as Ron is not a big talker. I repeated the instructions to Privates Arnoldy, Golden, and Crowder, advising them to send her to my side on the wet sponge and I would send her to #2—Bart—after the dry sponge.

I returned to the Lt and advised, “We are ready.”

He smiled. “I hope the crew can stay focused,” he said.

“What?” and I looked to the left.

A general walked up and introduced this beautiful young lady to the Lt and I. “This is Summer.”

And I said, without thinking, “Of course it is.” Her smile was as warm as her name and I knew the guys would accept her as they love teaching anyone willing to listen about what they do. Summer Cunningham was given a coat and a hat and she proceeded to stuff her auburn pony tail under the blue kepi hat. It looked a little big. Properly attired, I brought her forward to meet the crew. I could see the surprise in each man's face—Wendel at #4, Bart at #2, Tomashek on #1, and Scottish John at #3, bid her a sheepish hello.

She smiled at Scottish John and said, “My maiden name was Scottish.” John grinned.

“Well, he's a fan” I thought as she stood next to my left

side. I could feel her nervousness as she almost seemed to tremble and then it struck me, the history, women should fight here as they did 150 years ago and as Summer would do today. She had won me over! All was right with the historical gods!

Suddenly the first BOOM from a distant gun went off and I bellowed “LOAD!”

The rhythm of artillery sequence began. The fight was on and our 5 and 7 had Summer advancing the rounds like machinery on a finely tuned clock, though I could hear them whisper instructions to her. After 5 rounds, I told Pvt. Wendel, “It's time.” He brought Summer to the vent and showed her how to attach the primer, insert it, and extend her arm. The crew went through their steps and soon she was staring at me, ready to pull the lanyard. Her arm was stretched so tight, I was concerned that she might pull it by accident. Her steel blue eyes looked at me for the signal. I could see the anxiety and fear in them. She really wanted to do this right and I wanted her to hear the boom on the first pull.

I screamed “READY!” This was it, no lady like pulls on the lanyard, no failed primers. “FIRE”

Babs barked her joy and shot out a fiery flame like a dragon in mystical lore. Summer jumped a little, but her face lit up as the crew cheered. I could see Battery I (the gun crew next to us) looking over, smiling and they cheered as well as I recall.

The rest of the battle, Summer ran powder, and in the end, the Rebs overran our right flank, just like it happened so many years ago. We hooked up the limber and gun smartly and hustled it to the rear. The fight was over.

Summer thanked us and then gave us a great compliment. “This could be addictive,” she said and we responded with a triple “Huzzah!”

She took off her hat and shook her hair loose. Our extra crew member was a lady again and Bill Crowder, much the gentlemen, showed her how to blow the Assembly of the Buglers call, better known in our Battery as “all the ladies love to kiss the bugler.”

Unfortunately for Bill, a surly lady bugler walked up the big hill and asked, “What do you want?”

Bill stammered, “Uh, nothing. I was just showing someone a few calls.”

With a harrumph, the lady bugler went back down the hill. The crew roared with laughter, but then just as suddenly as Summer appeared, Summer was gone. Our ladies from camp showed up and asked if we could walk to the Russell House. As we walked to our next historic discovery, I thought it seemed a little warmer, maybe there was still a touch of Summer in the Autumn air.

Respectfully submitted:

Cpl .Ron Graves



Recap

September 15, Oakland Cemetery, Minnesota City

Submitted by Pvt. Brian Tomashek

The Minnesota City Historical Society held a cemetery walk on September 15 at the Oakland Cemetery in Minnesota City. One of those featured was the Battery's own Samuel Loudon. Brian Tomashek volunteered to attend the event in period dress and portray Samuel. The event had a nice turnout for its first time with the nice sunshine filled day helping out. Brian gave a presentation on Samuel's life while in the military and following. The presentation drew some winces from the crowd as Brian gave details regarding Samuels' groin injury during the battle of Stones River, TN.

All in all, a well organized event and a nice way to pay tribute to Samuel Loudon of the 2nd MN Light Artillery.

September 15, Anderson Center, Red Wing



Beautiful weather brought out lots of people to this day filled with music, art, books, and BOOMS from our gun. The ladies set up their Soldiers' Aid Society tent with boxes of goods, a rack full of quilts and lots of talking to visitors. Pvt. Ritchie set up his small arms display that visitors loved. The Officer's Tent was another popular stop, but it was the big gun was the big draw. It was a fun day to reach a new group of people.



October 6-7, Perryville, Kentucky

A caravan of four vehicles with the gun, equipment, and 12 Battery members traveled to Kentucky for this 150th Anniversary Commemoration at Perryville. We camped in the "mixed" camp—meaning we had Confederate neighbors on both sides! There was a dawn battle on Saturday, so reveille was at 5:00 am and it was cold! By the afternoon battle, the sun was warm and the day was beautiful. Our evening was topped off with an invitation to tour the Bottom House, a privately owned home that stood on the original battlefield. Sunday was cool, but sunny and beautiful as we soaked up the atmosphere of the actual ground where the Second Battery fought 150 years ago. Another highlight was our visit to the site of the Russell House, the yard of which was the location of the Second's guns during the battle. This trip was a chance for Battery members to walk in the original Battery's very footsteps and an exceptionally special event.

Everyone should have received the link to the Battery's Facebook page with the photos from Perryville, but just in case, here it is again: (Do a copy and paste for this nightmare address!)

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Second-Minnesota-Battery-of-Light-Artillery-Reenactors/371220336239#!/media/set/?set=a.10151253464446240.511718.371220336239&type=1>

The Second Minnesota Light Artillery Battery is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of Civil War history by living it.

Membership is \$12 per year. Non-member newsletter subscription rate is \$6.00 per year.

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Below: Battery members at the Russell House site.

