



2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 205

January & February 2013

On This Date-150 Years Ago

The Battery was deeply involved in the Battle at Stones River, aka Murfreesboro, Tennessee, fought on December 31 and January 2. The lull in the fighting on the 1st was not a celebration of New Years Day, but a momentary reorganization of the armies on both sides so they could renew their attack the next day.

News reports of the battle reached Minnesota in scattered bits and pieces. Some reports said the Battery had been captured, others said only two guns had been taken. The number of dead and wounded in the Battery varied just as much. Even the official report written by Captain Hotchkiss came under some questioning by one of his own men.

Three news reports of the Battery's action appear in this newsletter. (see page 3) The St. Paul paper lifted sections of the official report from Hotchkiss for their story and the St. Cloud paper repeated what had been printed in a New York newspaper.

Several weeks later, the St. Cloud paper printed a letter written by Lt. Alexander Kinkead that paints yet another picture.

You'll have to read and decide for yourself who saw through that fog of war.

This is a Two-Fer Issue

This is a combined January and February newsletter! It has 7 pages, be sure you read them all. The editor is not available to do the next one at the proper time, so decided to combine the two into one issue. Watch your emails for any necessary updates on events and next meetings.

Should this not meet with member approval, please feel free to fire the editor and someone else can take over the newsletter. This is a standing offer at anytime!

Next Meeting

Saturday, January 26, after the movie preview, ca. noon

Anoka County History Center, 2135 3rd Avenue N, Anoka*

This is a change from what was planned, please note the new location and see Upcoming Events column for more info.



Upcoming Events

January 26, 10:30 a.m. HUSH Movie Preview Anoka County History Center, 2135 3rd Ave, Anoka

We have been invited to see the 70 minute documentary on the Civil War, a focus on the First Minnesota Infantry, as a preview. Producer Michael Gray will be there to talk a bit about the movie, then show us the movie. He did a lot of local research which is why he is bringing the movie to Anoka.

This fell on the date of our January meeting, so we **moved the meeting to Anoka instead of Red Wing.** Following the movie, we will have our meeting and order pizza for lunch.

PLEASE RSVP to Vickie as her meeting room has a limited number of chairs! She'll find more if she knows you are coming. (And you know how she can get if she doesn't hear from people. BTW, her stick is NOT in storage for the winter!)

February 23, Winter Camp, 10:30 to 1:30, Mississippi Library, 410 Mississippi Street, Fridley

We will interpret things soldiers in the field did to keep themselves busy and warm during the long months waiting for the roads and weather to allow active military campaigns. Soldiers, get creative! What do you like to do that could have been done in camp? Whittle, play checkers, write letters, care for weapons, get your mail, take a reading lesson from another soldier, make repairs on uniforms, "fit up" your tent—these should give you some ideas!

The ladies of the Battery will be holding a Soldiers' Aid Society collection meeting. Several of our ladies have been working hard on this impression and have BOXES of props to make a real stand out display of the things the SAS collected and sent on to the Sanitary Commission. All Battery ladies are invited to be part of the SAS and those who have been doing the extra research are happy to provide notes and quick tips to get you up to speed with this new impression. Contact Miss Becky, Miss Katie or Miss Vickie for more info.

2013 Dues are due! See the last page for renewal form.

Battery Profile

Frank Lewis

I certify that my correct name is Frank Larson, and that at the time of my enlistment I assumed the name of Frank Lewis for the reason that many other men were enlisting under assumed names and "Larson" being a very common name I felt that "Lewis" would be easier and more separate and distinct from that of "Larson", and I have always retained the name of "Lewis" and am now known as Frank Lewis.

The young man who enlisted in the Second Battery under the assumed name of Frank Lewis was just 18 years old when he signed up for the Army on February 21, 1862. He and his father had come to Minnesota from Illinois in 1855. They both worked odd jobs as the family was by then scattered. Frank lost his mother shortly after coming to the United States. A brother died when they were living in Illinois. Frank and his sister were sent out to do what work they could and eventually, Frank and his father came to Red Wing, Goodhue County, Minnesota. Frank described their home as a "shack" about a mile and a half east of Red Wing.

Frank was born in Sweden on July 30, 1843, at Elsberg. After coming to America in 1851, his first name was Americanized from Frans to Frank. He later wrote, "I was picked on and made fun of, and spoken of as green Swede, and I took the name Lewis which was a kind of Americanized name for Larson." Frank didn't run into problems with using two names until after he returned from the Army when his father objected. His father used the name Larson and it confused people when Frank used Lewis. For a time, Frank went back to using Larson, but after his father died in 1873, Frank again went back to using Lewis.

Frank enlisted with another Swede from Red Wing, Anders Bergman. The two went off to Fort Snelling together to enlist. Frank carried with him a note of permission from his father to enlist as that was necessary if a young man were under the age of 21 years. Frank was 5' 8" tall, hazel eyes, light hair and a light complexion. He said by the time he left the service, he had grown an inch and so stood 5' 9" tall in 1865.

Army life seemed to agree with Frank as he was never in the hospital or listed on the sick roles during his service. When asked what his service had been in the Army, Frank was quick to provide details.

I was in the army that held Chattanooga against the attack of the rebel armies led by Gen'l Hood, while we were holding Chattanooga Sherman and Grant came from Mississippi and Hooker and Howard came from Virginia to our relief and we started from Chattanooga to Knoxville to route the rebels who were to attack Burnside who was holding Knoxville at that time, but did not reach Knoxville as the rebels were routed and our services were then not needed. I was also in a small skirmish in Kentucky under the command of Gen McCook. I was in battles at Stoneriver, where my mess-mate John O'Brien was shot and killed and Chickamauga, Mission Ride when Sherman, Grant and Hooker and Howard came to our relief.

Frank's job in the Battery was that of driving the lead team on the caisson throughout his time in the Army except for a detail to the Quartermaster Department in March of 1865.

After his first three years were complete, Frank reenlisted and served until the end of the war, being mustered out with the Battery at Fort Snelling on August 16, 1865.

After the war, Frank returned to Red Wing and worked around some, mostly as a farm hand. After the death of his father, Frank wandered, never staying too long in any one place. Still he said Minnesota was always his home. He wrote, "I always had my home in Goodhue County Minn and always kept my personal belongings with a family by the name of Carl Frederickson and among my personal possessions I had our old family bible."

In 1914, Frank settled down, going to live with his sister in Stromberg, Nebraska. She cared for him and encouraged him to apply for his veteran's pension, which Frank had never thought of doing. As long as he could make his own living, he didn't think he had any need to receive a pension. When he applied, he provided great detail about his time in the Battery, listing events, places, and comrades with great accuracy.

Frank died at the age of 79 years on Christmas Eve in 1922. His obituary was lengthy and included the following paragraph: *He took great pride in serving his country, and was 100 per cent American. He was very quiet and reserved in manner, but was much loved by those who knew him well and they feel the loss of a brother, uncle and friend.*

Frank was laid to rest in the Hoffer Cemetery some six miles east of Stromberg.



The Battle at Murfreesboro, Tennessee

As reported in the St. Paul, St. Cloud and Winona newspapers

The Second Minnesota Battery.

We have the report of Acting Brigadier Carlin, Colonel of the 38th Illinois, covering the operations of his brigade during the battles near Murfreesboro, during the last days of December, and the first days of January. Frequent allusion is made in this report to the conduct and valuable services rendered by the 2nd Minnesota Battery, under Capt. Hotchkiss. That these services may be known to our people, who take a commendable pride in the good conduct of our volunteers, we extract a few passages, scattered through the report.

Near the night of the 30th of December, the brigade of Col. Carlin's was opposed by a superior force, and for a time suffered severely from the fire of infantry and artillery. Two batteries had opened on his line, and finding a position where he could halt, he determined to do so, and wait the arrival of reinforcements. At this juncture, the report says:

Col. Alexander, 21st Illinois Volunteers, without instructions from me, ordered his regiment to charge upon the Battery in his front. His command was moving with a shout at the double-quickstep, within eighty (80) yards of the battery, already abandoned by its cannoneers when a very heavy fire was opened upon it by infantry which lay concealed behind fences and outhouses on the right and left of the battery. This fire killed and wounded a large number of the 21st Illinois Volunteers and threw the left companies into some disorder when the regiment was halted and formed on the right of the 15th Wisconsin Volunteers.

The fight was now fairly opened and continued vigorously until night by the front line of my infantry, and the 2nd Minnesota Battery which had been placed between the regiments. The batteries in our front were soon silenced, but another was then opened on my right flank distant about eight hundred (800) yards, which completely enfiladed my lines, and considerably injured us, but this too was driven out of sight by Captain Hotchkiss, 2nd Minnesota Battery, after a vigorous and well directed fire.

On the 31st, the fight was renewed, at daybreak, and continued throughout the day hot and destructive. Without the fact being communicated to Col. Carlin, the brigades on either side of him had

been withdrawn, and he found himself attacked in front and on both flanks. He saved his brigade from capture with great loss and difficulty; and he mentions the fact, as very credible, that "the guns of the 2nd Minnesota battery were brought off in safety." Elsewhere, in speaking of the same day's fight, he says:

Capt. W. A. Hotchkiss, Com. 2nd Minnesota Battery, with all his officers and men, deserve credit for their gallantry in the fight and energy in preventing the loss of the battery.

In closing his report Col. Carlin awards credit to several members of his staff, "for their zeal, fidelity, and courage in all the severe engagements embraced in this report;" and among those thus complimented, we are glad to notice the name of Lieut. Albert Woodbury, 2nd Minnesota Battery. Lieut. Woodbury is the son of the Hon. Dwight Woodbury, of the State Senate; and from other sources than this report, we have had gratifying accounts of his courage and efficiency.

From a private letter, written at the headquarters of General Davis's Division, Franklin, Tennessee, on the 6th of February, we extract the following:

"We left our camp near Murfreesboro, on the morning of the 31st of January, and have been cruising around the country in hopes of cutting off the rebel cavalry. We heard yesterday morning of the attack on Fort Donelson, and General Davis started our cavalry off at once to intercept the retreat of the repulsed enemy. He went in person, in order, as he said, 'to make our damned cavalry fight.' There has been a good deal of complaint in our army of the inefficiency of this arm of our service, and the Generals are all making a heavy effort to put it in better order.

"In the absence of General Davis, Colonel Carlin had charge of the division; and we are now waiting for news from Davis, to know in which direction to move. The country cannot be traversed by artillery, save by the pikes. The mud is quite deep, and the rainy season seems to have set in; the weather is cold; we have some snow; the creeks are all rising rapidly.

"This town is eighteen miles from Nashville, and is a very fine location; but like every place else in the South, all secesh. I do not perceive any other sentiment at all. When favors are want-

ed, then a strong love for "the Union as it was," seem to be uppermost; but real fighting love for "the Union" is not here, nor anywhere else south of the Ohio. The people here talk to our Northwestern troops as though they really expected soon to see a league of the States, leaving out New England.

"What is to be done here, of course I do not know. It looks to me as though we would not be able to advance very far or fast. Yet, Rosecrans's plans are inscrutable; and we derive but very slim satisfaction in guessing them out.

"I regret to state that six of our 2nd Minnesota Battery men were taken prisoners by the rebels to-day. They were sent out with a forage train,--under escort, of course,--but, contrary to the regular standing order, the Lieutenant in command allowed them to take horses; and, straying away from the train, they were gobbled up. They were, corporals Denlinger and Binkhead, and privates James M. Lane George Averill, Flint, and Simonds. It's a bad case.

"Our battery, by sickness, deaths, and discharges, is reduced to a very low number of men; and Capt. Hotchkiss has just this morning received a detail of infantry to put him in working order."

D. Atwater, Esq.
—The New York Herald rumor that the guns of the Second Minnesota Battery had been captured is incorrect. The boys were in the battle of Murfreesboro, stayed by their guns six days without regular rest, and lost two killed six or eight wounded and two of their guns.

St. Cloud newspaper

The Second Minnesota Battery (Winona newspaper)

By a private letter from a member of the above Battery, dated the 5th inst., we are pleased to learn that a statement published by us a few days since, from the N. Y. Herald, was incorrect, and that the Battery escaped with the loss of two killed and six or eight wounded, and two of their guns. It appears there were in the engagement at Murfreesboro and stood by their guns for six days without regular rest, and on the 4th, being nearly worn out, were ordered to the rear for rest. Of the killed was a Mr. Hopkins of Saratoga in this county. We did not learn the names of the wounded or the other member killed.

More reports from the field near Murfreesboro— but of a different kind

The following letter appeared in the St. Cloud Democrat on March 26, 18863, written by one of the Battery's lieutenants, Alexander Kinkead.

LETTER FROM LIEUT. KINKEAD.

**Capt. Hotchkiss Severely Handled.
Egotism and Falsity of His Report.**

In the field near Murfreesboro,
Tenn., Feb. 26th, 1863.

EDITOR DEMOCRAT.—It was a trite maxim of the ancient Romans, that truth was hid in the bottom of a well; here in the army it has long since fled in affright, to Saint Cloud, I hope. I am led to this conclusion on reading the different reports of the battle of Stone River. I venture the assertion that as far as the minor reports are concerned, the truth is seldom had, and the special object of Commanders—with rare exceptions—would seem to be for each particular individual possessing the right to make "A Report," to ventilate himself or his particular friends, whether entitled to the distinction or not — seemingly the greater the incompetency the greater the praise;—in this particular the Official Report of Captain Wm. Augustus Hotchkiss, Commanding 2d Battery Minn. Vols., is not an exception.

I might with propriety go beyond our own Division and criticize the Reports of men high in command and show most conclusively, glaring inconsistencies ; but, in the matter of Capt. Hotchkiss' Report, I deem it my duty to expose the greater part of that production, the more so, since this company has been so singularly unfortunate in the mis-statement of facts in the Official Reports of its Commanding Officer. "My Guns," and "my Battery," seem to constitute the burden of the Captain's last Report. At what particular time the Captain invested so largely in warlike implements is not known by us; upon this point had that been all, we I would be content to "forever hold our peace;" nor should we have ought to say as to whether all the balls were "aimed at me," nor, as to whether an officer seated on horseback, hit by a "spent ball"

coming with sufficient velocity to "ricochet," and strike said officer upon "the thigh" would inflict a "slight" or serious wound. I leave this question to be discussed by those familiar with the laws governing the flight of projectiles.

In speaking of the skirmish near "Knob Gap," the Captain remarks—"Almost in the outset of the engagement a shot from my right gun disabled one of the enemy's pieces." Now, as to Whether the "right" or the left gun disabled said piece the Captain could not from the position occupied by him know any such thing; indeed, there are doubts as to whether any piece was disabled by our guns in that action. One gun was captured which was afterward used by us against the enemy, and a disabled piece was found the next day some distance beyond "Knob Gap," on the line of march.

Again: "After seeing my Battery fairly under way for a place of more security, I devoted myself to keeping the battery together and conducting it safely through the timber, in which I was successful, being materially aided by the coolness of Lieut. Dawley." Here is a strange mis-statement of fact; because, it was myself who assisted in conducting the caissons and one disabled gun to the rear, and not Lieut. Dawley, who was at that time under fire and in charge of the Battery temporarily; the Captain being with the caissons and not where he should have been. The Captain fails on this, or any other occasion to recognize my presence and for reasons quite patent within the purview of the 2d Minnesota Battery. It is to be regretted that this "cool," and thoroughly efficient officer, Lieut. Dawley, should be so thoroughly "damned with faint praise," by being made to appear where he was not at the time spoken of by the Captain, and by being named in the Report as "cool," in a position of no earthly danger.

Again: "The 2d inst, by order of Gen Rosecrans, Lieut. Harder, who, though slightly wounded, had been placed in charge of one portion of my battery, with a captured gun, a battery wagon, forge and ammunition wagon, moved with the train that had been

started back to Nashville. At or near 'Lagrange' the train was attacked and a panic seized upon a part of the escort and many of the drivers, and one of my guns, the battery wagon and forge, were in possession of the enemy for a short time and until Lieut. Harder could extricate his howitzers from among the wagons, when he opened upon the enemy with shell and with the aid of a small body of cavalry succeeded in repulsing him, and recaptured my gun and carriages." The Captain might have added, this same party who went into Nashville, "by order of Gen. Rosecrans," carried off all the eatables belonging to the officers' mess, baggage and tents, ambulance and our blankets and it was not known for sometime, whether "the other portion of my battery" was captured, or where they were. To have said so much would have provoked inquiry and would not do. The Captain is wrong as to date; instead of the 2d of Jan. it was the 1st of Jan. that that portion of our battery, "changed its base" and at a time when the result of the battle was wavering; the question naturally suggests itself, Why did Gen. Rosecrans order to Nashville, caissons loaded with ammunition, a wagon containing ammunition, and guns not disabled save in not haying men enough to man them (and they would have been quickly supplied by making known the fact to Gen. R. or any one else in authority,) at a time, too, when, as a correspondent of a Cincinnati paper wrote "Artillery ammunition was alarmingly scarce?" Perhaps Gen. Rosecrans could tell another story. Perhaps Capt. Hotchkiss can explain. The truth is "one portion" of our battery left without Capt H's knowledge. They took all our spare ammunition and had our battery been engaged to any considerable extent after the blot of Dee. a re-supply could not have been had at that time in consequence of the "change of base," of "one portion of my battery."

Justice at the hands of Capt. Hotchkiss would have stated: "As soon as Sergeant Pratt could extricate the Howitzers he opened upon the enemy," &c.

(continued on page 5)

(continued from page 4)

If Capt. Hotchkiss has a "specialty" it is confined in the little word "self." He is singularly forgetful of his brave and efficient non-commissioned officers, every one of whom did their duty, and even robs one whom to have named in words of highest praise for having assisted to save our train, acting on his own responsibility, would be but doing an act of justice to Sergeant Lemuel S. Pratt, of Anoka, to whom all the praise accorded, to another is due. No gun of our battery was on the occasion above referred to, or on any other occasion "in possession of the enemy."

Again : "The officers and men of my command behaved with, exceeding coolness and courage with three exceptions." Does Capt H. mean in this ambiguous sentence, to say that, with *three exceptions* the men of this battery behaved well; or, with the exception of *three men*? If *men* we would question it. If *times* we would like to know the occasions. If men, when the battery conducted itself so well, it can be regarded in no other light than as exceedingly "small" for the Capt. to have made any invidious mention of it.—The men of this Battery with one acclaim, consider they have never have had justice done them. We would ask in the mildest manner possible, why Capt. Wm. Augustus Hotchkiss' report of the battle of Chaplin Hills, on which occasion the Battery did good service, was quietly consigned to the tomb of the Capulets, i.e., stored away among the papers of the Adjutant General of the State, or somewhere else, and not given to the public as is usually the case? Echo answers, Why ? We would ask if such reports as Capt. Hotchkiss' are calculated to produce harmony in any company. It is to be regretted that in Official Reports full justice is not done all, and that the privilege of "Reports" should be so prostituted, as in the case of the one here in question. Every man takes a pride in having his name go home either as an individual or as one of a company, "who did his duty" otherwise the effect is depressing and unsatisfactory. Surely, the changes, the privations, the sacrifices of which our

friends at home have no adequate idea,—are quite enough to entitle all, except in cases of bad conduct, to a modicum of praise. The tendency of all, or a great majority of reports is to bring men of inferior military talent into notice, and this on the face of, and to the injury of others of real merit and worth. I have seen all this in more than one instance where my actual knowledge was quite to the contrary, and the unfortunate result is seen and felt in the hundreds of incompetent officers who hold positions of great importance—very much so in time of battle. In proof of this, I have only to compare the bulk of our officers with a majority of those in the Confederate service. While the rank and file of our army is made up of soldiers, than whom there can be none better, our leaders in too many cases are wholly out of place. While on the other hand the rebel soldiers are not so good as ours, their leaders are too often greatly superior to those of the same rank in our service.—

If there is a defect in our armies greater than another, it is in placing men into high positions through partial reports or political influences. The men for great places, I speak more particularly in a military sense, are those who themselves are great, especially those who have shown themselves as such, on occasions that call forth abilities, and not those who reach a point from whence; "Fame's proud temple shines afar," through the kindness or influence of friends, regardless of merit.

The question is asked, "Why did Capt. Hotchkiss send a report to our Brigade Commander *differing materially from the one sent to Minnesota*? A pertinent query, this.

As corroborative testimony of what I have written, I herewith append a copy of a disapproval to a tender of resignation:

Headquarters, Second brigade
Feb 21sr, 1863

I cannot approve this resignation. Maj Gen. McCook has ordered the trial of this officer on charges obtained from a communication irregularly sent to Division and Corps headquarters. Capt. Hotchkiss has received orders to prepare charges

against Lieut. Kinkead, and *had* received them before his approval of this resignation. As the request of Capt. Hotchkiss sent to Division and, Corps Headquarters *differ materially from a report he made to me at Franklin on the same subject matter*, I think the interests of the service require a thorough investigation of the accusations against Lieut. Kinkead, in order that the *really guilty* may suffer, and the innocent be so pronounced by an impartial tribunal.

(Signed) W P. CARLIN.
Col. Commanding 2nd Brigade.
I make this communication under a sense of right and duty, and at the request of many members of the 2nd Minnesota Battery.

ALEX. KINKEAD.
2nd Lieut. 2nd Battery, Minn. Vols.

Recap

December 15, Civil War Christmas, Circle Pines

It was RAINING nearly the entire time we set up for this DECEMBER event and was still raining when we packed it down! Worries were that it would turn to ice, but warm temps saved the day for us. We had 16 members attend, giving visitors lots to see and hear about.



The library staff kept a count of 81 visitors, which pleased them very much. They also said they were amazed at how long people stayed. The staff person in charge said she didn't think anyone left until after 11:00 and then only a few at a time. Keep in mind that we opened our event early as we were all set up and ready, so we saw no reason to make people stand out in the rain for 20 more minutes. If people stayed until after 11:00 they were there for at least an hour.

That speaks to how well we all do with engaging the public, answering questions and holding their interest!

Nice work, Second Minnesota!

It was also great fun to have Miss Mandy back with us for an event. Her finals were finished early, so she was able to be home from her studies in the "Sandwich Islands" just in time to join us for the event. Corporal and Mrs. Overby were also back with us after having taken the summer off to have a baby in August. Little Tristan Overby made his reenacting debut at just four months old. Mrs. Overby said she should have put out a jar with a sign that said 25¢ a photo next to the baby—she could have paid for a semester of college for him!



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.

For information on the Battery, please contact:

President

John Cain

1640 Woodland Drive
Red Wing, MN 55066

Phone: (651) 388-9250

Treasurer

Daryl Duden

1210 West 4th Street
Red Wing, MN 55066

Phone: (651) 388-6520

Twin Cities Metro Area Contact

Ron & Vickie Wendel

12419 Redwood Street NW
Coon Rapids, MN 55448

Phone: (763) 754-2476

E-mail: momwendel@hotmail.com

Battery Website:
<http://www.2mnbattery.org>



We had a new volunteer from the Anoka County Historical Society as Santa this year and he fit in very well with all the fun and laughter of the event.



Your Country Needs You!

And so does the Battery!

2013 dues are DUE!! To remain on the active/voting member list, your dues are:

Civilian Member	\$12.00
Military Member	\$12.00
Associate Member	\$ 6.00
Junior Member (14-17)	\$ 6.00
Junior Member (under 14)	Free

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City, State and Zip: _____

Phone: _____

e-mail address: _____

Please give or mail this form and your check to:

Daryl Duden
1210 West 4th Street
Red Wing, MN 55066