



## 2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

# “ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 210

July 2013

### On This Date-150 Years Ago

Frank Flint, a private with the Battery, wrote this letter in July of 1863, describing where the Battery was and what they were doing. Jennie was his neighbor girl (and later, wife.)

*Winchester, Tenn. July 29, 1863*

*Dear Jennie,*

*I suppose that you have heard all about our advance from Murfreesboro so I will say nothing about it only that we had a hard time as it rained all the time and there was no chance for rest as we expected every hour that the next we would be in a big battle. Our horses were not allowed to be unharnessed at all and they had very little to eat. As I was not prepared for wet weather, I suffered more than most of the boys. I was wet to the skin for ten days but enjoyed first rate health. We had two men hurt. One had his thigh broken by falling from a mule and another had his ankle broken by the gun carriage running over it. Our Inf. was skirmishing all the way but we did not have a chance to use our guns. There were several killed in our brigade.*

*This is a fine place and we are expecting to stay here for some time. Rosecrank's head-quarters are here. About a thousand horses and mules came in yesterday. They were taken by Stanley way down in Alabama. Lots of n---rs came in with them. There are lots of pretty girls here but there are all strong Secesh so of course they don't do us any good. There are two female colleges here, that is the reason there are so many girls.*

*What has become of Al Depue? I haven't heard from him for a year or more. The last that I heard he was hiding to get rid of being drafted. He pretended to want to enlist when I did but I guess he didn't want to very bad.*

*Frank  
2nd Minn. Baty.  
2nd Brigade  
1st Div.  
20th Army Corps*

### Upcoming Events

#### **July 4-7, Gettysburg, PA**

This is sure to be a once-in-a-lifetime event with nearly 10,000 reenactors registered! Those 12 members participating have been preparing for weeks and will be leaving on Monday, July 1, returning on July 9. Safe travels! And take LOTS of pictures! Here is the link to the website:

<http://www.gettysburgreenactment.com/>

#### **July 13, Anoka—All For The Union**

2135 3rd Avenue N, Anoka. Plan to arrive by 9 am for set up. We'll have the gun and some displays on the front lawn for the soldiers and the ladies will be inside with the SAS. **See pages 4-5 for history of the SAS and USSC.**

It would be especially nice if you can “bone-up” on Perryville as that is a main focus of the *All For The Union* exhibit inside the History Center featuring our 3/4 scale gun. There is no admission that day and we will make sure everyone gets time to go through the exhibit since the Second Battery has a major role in it! This event is in conjunction with the city arts and crafts festival of Riverfest. (<http://www.anokariverfest.com/events.htm>)

The Riverfest event runs 9-5, but our part is only 10 to 4. Either bring a lunch or plan to visit the food court that is a part of Riverfest. Parking for reenactors and History Center staff **only** in the History Center parking lot. We'll have the July meeting following the event inside the History Center. Questions? Email Vickie: [vwendel@comcast.net](mailto:vwendel@comcast.net)

#### **August 3-4, Boscobel, WI**

Save the dates for this annual favorite! More info will be coming later, but as this event is early in the month, just a reminder that it is coming!

### Next Meeting

**Saturday, July 13, after event, ca. 4:30**  
Anoka County History Center, Anoka  
2135 3rd Avenue N.



# Battery Profiles

## Alonzo Spaulding

The Second Battery was very nearly organized when Alonzo joined it on March 10, 1862. He came from St. Cloud in Stearns County where he had been farming. His family was well established in Minnesota, having come from Alonzo's birth place of Aroostook County, Maine, when Minnesota was a young territory. Alonzo was born on December 30, 1834, son of Daniel and Margaret Spaulding, but he had left their home to make his own by 1860. Alonzo married Hannah Langdon on March 21, 1860. They were not destined to have a long life together as Hannah died in 1861.

The descriptive roll for the Battery showed Alonzo to be 5' 8" tall, with sandy complexion, black eyes, and dark hair.

Army life did not appear to suit Alonzo as by September of his first year in the service, he was noted as "sick in Hospital at Jefferson Barracks." He was there until November 28, having spent some three months in the hospital. Alonzo returned to the Battery in time to participate in the battle at Stones River, Tennessee, where he came through the fight without injury. The Battery remained in the area, skirmishing and waiting for the spring campaign. On March 15, 1863, Alonzo was detailed as a teamster. He was harnessing a horse when it kicked him in the right in the knee and the blow dislocated it. Alonzo remained with the Battery, however, continuing his duties until May 22, 1863, when he was again sent to the hospital at Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

This time, there was no returning to the Battery. Alonzo was assigned to the Invalid Corps on October 5, 1863, but a few days later he was simply discharged. The reason given for his discharge was "chronic Diarrhea with emaciation. Disability 1/2. Unfit for Invalid Corps."

Alonzo went home to a farm in Maine Prairie, Stearns County, Minnesota. On July 4, 1864, he married Christina Langdon. The couple had four children and, though local history said Alonzo had training as a carpenter and blacksmith, they continued to farm. Alonzo was active in the community as was a Master Mason as well as holding a membership in the local GAR post.

Christina died in June of 1870 and Alonzo never remarried.

The injury to his knee troubled Alonzo and in 1876, he applied for a pension due to the disability from his knee. He was awarded \$4 a month by the Pension Department.

In 1885, Alonzo buried his oldest son, Edwin. Perhaps Alonzo needed a change of scenery from the sorrow in Minnesota as he moved to Fruitland in Washington State in 1888. He had not been there long when he was helping the "Steen Brothers" brand some cattle and a cow kicked him in the right leg. The bone of his thigh was badly broken and when healed, his right leg was two inches shorter than his left, causing a pronounced limp.

In 1900, was still living in Fruitland, Stevens County, Washington when his pension was increased to \$10 a month.

For the next years, records of where Alonzo was living are confused by his own descriptions. Alonzo said he was living in Minnesota in 1907 on one pension form, but on another, said he had been living in Washington since 1887. In another place, he said he was living in Stearns County, but placed it in Washington. Regardless of where he was in between, by 1912, he was in Mount Angel, Oregon. That was not to last either, as on February 13, 1918, Alonzo was admitted to the Washington State Veterans Home in Retsil, Washington. He lived there for two years before his death on April 7, 1920. He was laid to rest in the Veterans Home Cemetery. Six months later, another Second Battery veteran, Charles Ford, was laid to rest in the same cemetery a few rows away from Alonzo.







## Congratulations, Briar!

Our own Private Briar Golden sent his drawing of Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg to the postcard competition co-sponsored by the Civil War Trust and HISTORY. The contest encouraged students to reflect on the theme: *Preserving 150 Years of History: 1862-1863, Shifting Tides*. Students were asked to think about turning points of the American Civil War and the importance of preservation efforts in protecting its memory. Students submitted their postcards and competed for cash prizes provided by HISTORY and a membership to the Civil War Trust.

When the judging was over, Briar's drawing was awarded **FIRST PLACE** in the senior division! Way to go, Briar!

## Bacon and Greens

A Gastronomic Ditty written in 1861 by Samuel Cowell.

*I have lived long enough to be rarely mistaken,  
And had my full share of life's changeable scenes;  
But my woes have been solaced by good Greens and Bacon,  
And my joys have been doubled by Bacon and Greens.  
What a thrill of remembrance e'en now they awaken,  
Of childhood's gay morning, and youth's merry scenes;  
When one day we had Greens and a plateful of Bacon,  
And the next we had Bacon, and a plateful of Greens.*

*Ah! well I remember when sad and forsaken,  
Heartwung by the scorn of a Miss in her teens;  
How I fled from her sight to my loved greens and bacon,  
And forgot my despair over bacon and greens.  
When the banks refused specie, and credit was shaken,  
I shared in the wreck and was ruined in means;*

*My friends all declared I had not saved my bacon,  
But I lived,— for I still had my bacon and greens.*

*If some fairy a grant of three wishes could make one  
So worth less as I, and so laden with sins,  
I'd wish all the greens in the world,— then the bacon,—  
And then wish for a little more bacon and greens.  
Oh! there is a charm in this dish, rightly taken,  
That from custards and jellies an epicure weans;  
Stick your fork in the fat, wrap your greens round the bacon,  
And you'll vow there's no dish like good bacon and greens.*

Should you like to hear what the music to this unlikely ballad sounds like, go to

<http://www.pdmusic.org/civilwar2.html>

and click on the song title in the left hand column. There are many more songs on this website, so check it out and sing along!

# THE SANITARY COMMISSION & THE SOLDIERS' AID SOCIETY

When the war began in 1861, everyone wanted to help support the Union. That patriotic fever touched women as much as men, but as they could not enlist, they began organizing groups to “provide” for the soldiers. Women across the north got busy “getting up boxes” for the troops.

*In 2013, supporting the troops is just as important as it was in the 1860s and the Anoka County Historical Society is seeking everyone's help to recreate what those women of the Soldiers' Aid Societies did 150 years ago. Bring a donation from the following list to the History Center and drop it off to the ladies at the Soldiers' Aid Society booth at the event. All donations will be sent to U.S. troops currently serving overseas. The SAS booth will be inside the Anoka County History Center. Everyone is encouraged to tuck a note into their donations with a message or their own contact information just as women of the 1860s did.*

It was in New York that the idea of forming and getting official approval for an organization to oversee and efficiently distribute the contributions of the people in the North began. The plan was based on what had been organized in Britain following the Crimean War and it was to be called the United States Sanitary Commission (USSC). In the late spring of 1861, a conference to coordinate the individual efforts of relief societies throughout the United States was held. Doctors, clergymen, lawyers and other interested parties who recognized a need for better coordination of relief efforts, attended. As a result, the development of Articles of Organization were written to form what would become the US Sanitary Commission.

Members of the delegation lobbied the War Department for approval. The officers of the commission were all male--but it was women who did most of the work--and they agreed to confine their activities to the volunteer regiments (not the regular army). The Department sanctioned the creation of the U. S. Sanitary Commission on June 9, 1861. This was before the first major battle at Manassas, VA.

Before the war was over, there were more than 2,500 branch offices of the USSC in cities across the North. These branch offices were the collecting points for the local aid societies, the Soldiers' Aid Societies (SAS).

The USSC was organized into three departments, each designed to meet the soldiers' needs.

**Preventive Service Department** was probably the most significant and most controversial

department. This arm of the USSC sent inspectors to military hospitals and army camps to improve living conditions for the men. They started with the theory that it was easier to PREVENT a person from getting sick in the first place than it was to get them well again after they were sick. This is a rather new and revolutionary idea in medicine at the time, and not everyone believed in it. One of the basic practices suggested was clean drinking water.

It was not well understood how diseases, such as measles, were passed from one person to another. Fresh air in a ward of sick soldiers was an idea from the Sanitary Commission, not doctors.

Infection in a wound was so common that doctors looked for what they called “laudable pus” laudable meaning good. Some doctors never washed their hands between operating on patients, held surgical instruments in their teeth, and if they dropped one, just picked it up and continued surgery. It was not uncommon to reuse bandages if supplies were short—soldiers just hoped the bandages were washed between patients.

There was little to equate CLEAN with HEALTHY in the minds of army doctors. Getting sick wards and hospitals cleaned up was one of the main tasks taken on by the USSC.

The Preventative Services Branch also provided trained nurses and doctors to assist, especially in the larger hospitals.

Some generals and Army doctors found Sanitary Commission volunteers annoying and meddlesome, especially when they criticized the military's medical practices—mostly the lack of cleanliness.

The USSC got leading doctors of the time to write articles detailing the best medical practices for wounds or diseases and then distributed the pamphlets to army doctors. Some of these pamphlets were directed at soldiers, advising them on ways to prevent getting sick. To try to get the soldiers to read and hang onto these little books, they included things like the words to songs, hymns, prayers, an almanac, weather signs, etc. Some had articles about what the SAS—their mothers, wives and their girls back home--were doing for them, and how the USSC could further help the soldiers.

The USSC ran ships and railroad cars to transport wounded soldiers from battlefield hospitals near the fighting to the larger hospitals in the major cities of the North. Often, these carried loads both ways—medicines and supplies to the battlefield hospitals and patients in need of longer term care back to what were often called “convalescent hospitals” where patients stayed for longer periods of time.

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### **The second was the Department of Special Relief.**

This department managed “Soldier’s Rest” homes where a soldier traveling through that area could stop for a meal or a place to sleep. They also provided money for transportation and special care if a disabled soldier was in need of those services while trying to get home.

The Department of Special Relief helped families of disabled soldiers and sought help for widows and orphans. In some cases, they might help a family when the soldier was healthy, but unable to provide enough funds to care for his family. This happened not because the soldier was not sending his pay home, but because pay was not always a regular thing, even in the Union Army. The soldiers could use “credit” at the sutler, but often the family was left without. That was where the USSC tried to help.

Helping a soldier’s family was something that was seen as patriotic duty. Local aid societies worked to assist the soldiers and their families. One of the earliest efforts came from the ladies of Red Wing, MN (that city sent a company to the First Regiment) came in May of 1861. They were out looking for donations of money to help support soldier’s families. It was noted that other towns around them had already started similar fund raising efforts. In July of 1862, the city of St. Paul used a tax to give soldiers a bounty for enlisting and promised \$5 a month to their families while they served. In April of 1864, Anoka held a meeting to vote on a tax levy to benefit the families of soldiers. The general idea was that if a soldier didn’t have to worry about his family at home, he would be a better soldier.

The Special Relief Department also assisted soldiers in returning to civilian life after they had completed their time in service. Not disbanded until 1866, a year after the war was over, Special Relief workers were trying to help soldiers who were having problems returning to civilian life.

**The Department of General Relief** was by far where the most people were involved. This department sought donations from civilians and businesses of food, clothing, blankets, medicines, and other items for wounded and ill soldiers. While cash donations were very helpful to purchase relief items, often the actual

quilts, clothing, and food was more valuable as these items were sometimes in such short supply that there were simply none to buy.

In massive effort to supply the need of the Union soldiers, the local Soldiers’ Aid Societies were vital. They were the workers who sewed, baked, harvested, and more to send goods to the USSC and the SAS was where the vast majority of donations came from. The SAS was made up of local groups of women raising money, knitting socks, or whatever they could do and sending those boxes of goods to the local office of the USSC. The branch offices sorted the donations and sent huge boxes of like items either directly to the army where those supplies were needed or forwarded them to the regional USSC where they would be held until distributed where the greatest need was. It was estimated that there were some 32,000 SAS chapters across the North all feeding money and supplies into the USSC.

SAS chapters raised money by holding raffles, fairs, dances, sociable, pie and picnic basket auctions, soliciting donations, working to get a local tax passed to support the soldiers, and many more creative ways to support their troops. The money they raised was used to buy materials for making things for the soldiers or sent to the USSC. All of this was done on the local level.

It is estimated that the total amount of money and goods raised by the SAS and USSC during the war would—in today’s dollars—be about \$325 million!



# Recap

## June 8-9, Thunder in the Valley, Waukon, IA

We had a great time—despite being wet—at this first time event. The park was very pretty and it was filled with lots of activities. The event was well organized and a lot of fun. Sunday saw the event close right after the battle as severe weather was predicted to be moving in, so the organizers



got the word out and reenactors skedaddled. We took home many extra pounds of water because everything was wet, but we've been wet before!



## June 15-16, Wasioja, MN



**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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**<http://www.2mnbattery.org>**

Three battles over the two days kept everyone hopping, but we had a good deal of fun. With so many Minnesota units participating, we had friends everywhere we looked! The event had great supplies of wood and water, a nice site and almost too many things going on!

Our camp was right on the main path through the event, so we had many opportunities to interpret history with the visitors. Neil probably had the best interpretation going on—he demonstrated why forage caps got their name and how they were used!

