



2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 222

October/November 2014

On This Date-150 Years Ago

Submitted by Lt. Cain

The men of the Second Minnesota veteranized in March of 1864 and earned a furlough home. Those who were not eligible to reenlist did not get the furlough, so they went to the Second Illinois Battery I. The following is where they served in June and July of 1864.

October 1st 1864

Moved by train to Stevenson, AL then to Huntsville, AL arriving and unloading at 7:00 PM for the pursuit of General N.B. Forrest who, along with General Hood, were marauding in Alabama and Northern Georgia.

October 4th 1864

The Division started for Florence, AL in pursuit of General Forrest.

October 7th 1864

Armed men with muskets and moved to Redan Irwin fronting Rossville Gap. Here they repaired the fortifications.

October 10th 1864

The 2nd Division (Morgan) with Battery I return to Chattanooga on the 14th and stay through the 18th.

October 16th 1864

The men of the 2nd Minnesota Battery are discharged from Battery I, 2nd Illinois Artillery and returned to duty at Stringer's Farm.

Sherman, after ordering Thomas to chase Rebels and repair supply routes realizes that he must cut his supply lines in his advance on Savannah, GA.

November 9th 1864

Remaining 7 men return from duty with Battery I, 2nd Illinois Artillery to the 2nd Minnesota Battery.

November 28th ? 1864

General Thomas orders Hotchkiss to organize a brigade of light artillery and report to General Steedman at Nashville.

Upcoming Events

November 11, Veterans Day, Winona, MN

We will once again be a central part of the Veterans Day program at this impressive annual ceremony. All gun crew members should arrive by 10:15 am to unload the gun, assign positions and be ready for the program to begin at the eleventh hour on the eleventh day of the eleventh month. If you need more information, contact John Cain, Daryl or Brian Tomashek.

A Little History of the Day

Veterans Day was first known as Armistice Day and celebrated the end of the fighting that was then known as the Great War. Today we call it WWI, but at the time, the world's people could not imagine such a terrible conflict ever happening again—numbering it was simply unthinkable. It was so unthinkable that the phrase the “war to end all wars” became the most common phrase of the war. The phrase originated with a series of articles by H.G. Wells published in a booklet where he argued the cause of the war.

The change of name for the day came in 1954 when the bill was signed to make November 11th known as Veterans Day. It was a day set aside to honor the veterans of all wars, not just those of WWI since by that time, we had begun numbering our conflicts. The next change came in 1971 when it was thought making the federal holidays fall on Mondays would promote travel and recreation. It was not a popular plan and by 1975, Veterans Day was back to November 11th to stay.

Next Meeting

November 22, 2014, 11:00 am
 Maries Underground Dining, Red Wing
 Call John Cain with questions ((651) 388-9250



Battery Profile

Andrew Oleson

Andrew was born in Flo, Hallingdal, Norway, on November 27, 1837. He came to the U.S. in the spring of 1861. He first lived in Rice County, then went to Houston County. He was living in Spring Grove, Houston County, when he drafted and traveled to Rochester to enlist for one year on September 3, 1864. His name was listed in the draft for Arendahl, Fillmore County, in the First District of Minnesota.

His enlistment papers with the Battery state he had blue eyes, light hair and complexion, and stood 5 feet, 4 inches tall. His occupation was farming.

Andrew served with the Battery until it was mustered out, serving just under one year. He returned to Houston County. On April 8, 1866, he married Bergit Evenson at the Norwegian Synod Church in Spring Grove on April 8, 1866. They stayed in Spring Grove for five years, then moved to Becker County in the spring of 1871. They took a homestead on the southwest quarter of section 4 in the township of Cuba and through the years had 11 children. Andrew and Bridget farmed this land for 34 years before they moved into the town of Lake Park where he built a "fine residence".

Andrew died from "Chronic Intirtial Nefloritis" on December 4, 1918, and was laid to rest in the Lake Park Lutheran Cemetery in Cuba Township.

Still, Andrew left a puzzle in the simple fact of his name.

His enlistment papers give the first hint of confusion. His name on the first line is "Andrew Oleson" with something more in bad handwriting in parentheses behind his name. This same thing appears in the second place for the name to be filled in, but further down the page is Andrew's signature. It reads "Anders Olsberg". The outside folder of his enlistment papers has his name as "Andrew Oleson (Berg)". On his muster sheet and descriptive roll, Andrew's name is simply "Andrew Oleson".

More confusion comes with the next piece of information, the 1883 pension index. The index calls him Andrew "Vee" and "Nee" interchangeably with the added notation that he served under the name of "Oleson". The pension record reports that he was collecting \$8.00 for rheumatism. His pension records almost clear up the confusion. A statement signed by Andrew explain that his "true" name was really Andrew Oleson Vee and that he is the "identical person" who enlisted and served under the name Andrew Oleson. No explanation is offered as to why his name was shortened.

The 1890 census adds another name. On it, Andrew is listed with a last name of "Svee".

A county history was written in 1907 that gives Andrew yet another permutation of his name: Andrew Wee. It was by this name that Andrew appeared to have lived in Becker County since the history records him as such and the name on his tombstone is "Wee". Andrew's wife survived him and would have most likely been the one to put up his stone. It is assumed Bergit knew how he wanted it spelled.

His Norwegian accent might account for the difference between "Vee" and "Wee", but that is speculation only.



Photo of Andrew Wee is from the *Pioneer History of Becker County, Minnesota* by Alvin H. Wilcox, 1907.

Money, Money, Money!

Soldier Pay in the American Civil War & 19th Century Currency

Union privates were paid \$13 per month until after the final raise on June 20, 1864, when they got \$16. In the infantry and artillery, officers were paid as follows at the start of the war: colonels, \$212; lieutenant colonels, \$181; majors, \$169; captains, \$115.50; first lieutenants, \$105.50; and second lieutenants, \$105.50. Other line and staff officers drew an average of about \$15 per month more. Pay for one, two, and three star generals were \$315, \$457, and \$758, respectively.

The Confederate pay structure was modeled after that of the US Army. Privates continued to be paid at the prewar rate of \$11 per month until June 1864, when the pay of all enlisted men was raised \$7 per month. Confederate officer's pay was a few dollars lower than that of their Union counterparts. A Southern Brigadier General for example, drew \$301 instead of \$315 per month; Confederate colonels of the infantry received \$195, and those of artillery, engineers, and cavalry got \$210. While the inflation of Confederate money reduced the actual value of a Southerner's military pay, this was somewhat counterbalanced by the fact that promotion policies in the South were more liberal.

As for the pay of noncommissioned officers, when Southern privates were making \$11 per month, corporals were making \$13, "buck" sergeants \$17, first sergeants \$20, and engineer sergeants were drawing \$34. About the same ratio existed in the Northern army between the pay of privates and noncommissioned officers. Soldiers were supposed to be paid every two months in the field, but they were fortunate if they got their pay at four-month intervals (in the Union Army) and authentic instances are recorded where they went six and eight months. (We have documentation that the Second Battery went more than twelve months without pay. Payment in the Confederate Army was even slower and less regular.

Source: "The Civil War Dictionary" by Mark M. Boatner

Just as the Revolutionary War prompted the Continental Congress to issue paper currency, the financing of the Civil War provided the catalyst for the continuing evolution of U.S. currency. In 1861, the U.S. Treasury issued its first paper currency since the Continentals--Demand notes. They were printed in \$5, \$10, and \$20 denominations, redeemable in coin on demand. Demand notes were also called "greenbacks" because their reverse sides were printed in green ink. Although Demand notes were no longer printed after 1862, they're still valid today, redeemable in current cash at face value.

Demand notes were replaced by Legal Tender notes, which were issued in denominations ranging from \$1 to \$10,000. To save metals during the Civil War, Legal Tender notes were originally backed by faith in the government, rather than gold or silver. In 1879, the U.S. Treasury began redeeming Legal Tender notes for coin. They were issued until 1966 and are still redeemable today at face value.

Lack of confidence in paper money resulting from the Free Banking Era and the Civil War inspired the creation of Interest-bearing notes, issued from 1861 through 1865. The interest paid on these notes provided the incentive for citizens to hold the currency and also helped to finance the final years of the Civil War.

Between 1861 and 1865, the Confederacy issued currency backed by cotton to millions of southerners, gambling that a Confederate victory would ensure the currency's value. Meanwhile, enterprising Northerners printed Confederate money and circulated it in the South. This led to one of the greatest inflationary periods in America, particularly in the South. By the War's end, Confederate notes were almost worthless and many people bartered or used black market Union issues as a medium of exchange.

Widespread hoarding of coins and the need to divert metals toward the war effort created a shortage of coins during the Civil War. Paper tickets, stamps, and bills were frequently substituted, but the scarcity was so great that Congress authorized the issuance of "paper coins" as a temporary "fractional currency." From 1862 to 1876, the federal government issued more than \$368,000,000 in fractional currency in three- to fifty-cent denominations. Called "shinplasters" or "fractionals," these paper coins were much smaller in size than our existing currency. After the Civil War, fractional currency was no longer needed and Congress stopped issuing fractional currency in 1876.

Source: San Francisco Federal Reserve

Recap

September 6, Northtown Library, Blaine, MN



Beautiful weather greeted us as we set up several flys in a "station" kind of format for visitors on the libraries' front lawn. We saw many visitors in a pretty steady flow all day. The gun, even though we didn't fire it, was a big draw. The SAS tent had a fish pond for the kids, but they have to have a "fractional" to fish. The only way to get a fractional was to talk to a soldier and "learn one thing" from them, so everyone had great fun with the fish pond. We will have to make a few more fractionals before the next appearance of the fishpond as there are always some visitors who want to keep the fractionals and we're starting to run short!

It was a nice event and we were paid well for the four hours.



Sept 27-28, Pilot Knob, MO

Submitted by Sgt. Duden

Members of the 2nd Minnesota Battery travelled to Pilot Knob MO for the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Fort Davidson. We were asked to portray Missouri militiamen and support the Confederate side for this event, so colorful uniforms were on display by most of our members including plaid pants, battle shirts, various brim hats and one fine top hat.

Camping with the Confederates was a really enjoyable experience, not only because we were graciously received by the folks from Missouri, but because our camp was posted in a beautiful grove of shade trees with historic rifle pits, flush toilets and running water only steps away from our tents. When we checked into the site, we were informed +1,400 re-enactors were pre-registered, but with the numbers of infantry, cavalry and artillery on the field participating both Saturday and Sunday, I suspect that number was greatly exceeded.

Our 10 pdr Parrott was assigned to the middle section of the three four-gun sections of full scale Confederate artillery stationed only a few hundred yards from the original earthen embankments of the Fort Davidson complex holding the Union army. The battle, which originally only lasted one day, was split into two parts for the re-enactment. On Saturday afternoon, all the Federal forces involved were pushed back to the area inside or just outside the fort by an overwhelming number of Confederate forces. There was an intermission during the grand ball on Saturday evening so re-enactors could join the numerous spectators and watch the culmination of this historic fight, the violent after dark explosion that occurred when the Union army blew up Fort Davidson. On Sunday, the battle from Saturday afternoon was resumed with Confederates charging the earthworks taking mass casualties from Union artillery, which were originally 32 pdr and 24 pdr guns the Federals had defending the fort.



Our friends from Battery I, 1st U.S., with their original 12 pdr Napoleon were among the Federal guns defending the fort. They were assisted by battery member Pvt. Mike Cunningham, who fortunately had packed his Federal uniform and was able to serve #4 on their gun for the weekend. Other members of the 2nd Minnesota Battery who attended this event were Sgt. Duden, Cpl. Graves, Bvt. Pvt. Cain, Pvt. Crowder, Pvt. Ken Cunningham, Pvt. Helgeson, Pvt. Hoekstra, Pvt. Tomashek, Ms. Graves and Ms. Helgeson. During the weekend, our thoughts and prayers were with Cpl. Ritchie and Ms. Loader, who were in Hannibal MO when they received word of a family emergency and immediately returned to Minneapolis.

No recap would be complete without mention of the vast numbers of spectators who attended this event. Park officials indicated this year produced record breaking crowds. This small community of 746 people had its population swelled both days by a crowd the St. Louis Dispatch estimated at 30,000 spectators. From the time the camps opened at 9:00am until 10:30pm on Saturday and well after the battle concluded on Sunday, lines in front of the numerous food vendors and bathroom facilities produced a minimum half hour wait to reach the front of the line. Not only were the people of Missouri gracious, they also exhibited uncommon patience.



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:

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

**You are Welcome to Attend
An Election Year**

1864 Ladies Tea & Aid Society Meeting

SATURDAY

NOVEMBER 8, 2014

2:00-4:00 p.m.



**At the St. James Hotel
406 Main Street
Red Wing, Minnesota**

Your Hosts~



**The Third Minnesota Regiment, Co. C
And Loyal Union Ladies**

Present a Meal of the times and an Election Program.

**Period Civilian and Military Dress is Highly encouraged, but not
required for a pleasant, enjoyable time. {Age 14 and over event.}**

TICKET PRICE: \$25.

**Please contact us to reserve your seat by telegraph ~(phone or email)~
and for payment information no later than October 20th, 2014 .**

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