



2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 254

March 2018

On This Date-155 Years Ago

St. Patrick's Day during the Civil War

The celebration of St. Patrick's Day dates back more than 1,000 years. Irish soldiers and emigrants brought the tradition with them to the British colonies in North America.

On St. Patrick's Day, which falls during the Christian season of Lent, Irish families traditionally attended church in the morning and celebrated in the afternoon. Lenten prohibitions against the consumption of meat were waived and people danced, drank and feasted on the traditional meal of Irish bacon and cabbage.

During the Civil War, the soldiers joined in honoring Ireland's patron saint, regardless of their heritage or religion. The northern sector still being in winter quarters, with little or no fighting going on, the day could become one of amusement and celebratory events, including horse racing (and no doubt “a plenty of Whiskey in camp”).

But the events didn't always end in merriment, as evidenced by Oney F. Sweet's diary entry for March 17, 1865, while stationed near Petersburg, Virginia:

St. Patrick's Day. Celebrated a grand time. Horse racing. Two men killed and one Colonel by horses running over them.



St. Patrick's Day horse race in Virginia during the Civil War. Illustration from *The Soldier in Our Civil War*. (Leslie, 1893)

Upcoming Events

March 10, Mankato, MN Boy in Blue Symposium

This is an on-your-own event. Battery members have attended in the past, both learning and enjoying the presentation. For more info and to register (you need to register in advance) see their website: (<http://www.boyinblue.org/>)

March 24, Red Wing, MN Annual Meeting

We will be holding our elections at this meeting, so **it is imperative that we have a quorum of voting members**. To be a voting member, your dues must be paid for 2018.

This year, both the corporate officers and military officers are elected. Corporate officers include President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Historian. Military officers include Lieutenant, Sergeant, Quartermaster Sergeant, and two corporals.

As of this writing, the secretary position has no candidates as the incumbent has chosen not to run again. The incumbent president is still deciding if he will run again. Most of the military officers have agreed to run for their positions they currently hold.

ANYONE who is interested in running for any of these office may contact Daryl, Ken, John or Vickie with questions or submit your candidacy to Daryl at anytime. **The organization needs your participation!!**

Dues are Due!

There are only a few members with outstanding dues, so please find a membership renewal form on page 6 of this newsletter. Please fill out the form completely, so we have an accurate and up to date contact list.

Next Meeting

March 24, 2018 11:00am

Marie's Underground Dining, Red Wing
Call Ken Cunningham with questions or agenda items. 651 388-2945.



Battery Profile

William A. Sheldon

"I enlisted on the 16 day of August 1864 for one year 2 days," wrote William. "I was mustered for discharge on the 16 day of August 1865 I did not get my discharge and pay till the 18 after dark. It looks to me that I should be in the 1 year class." He was trying to settle a difference with the Pension Department in 1912 when he wrote the letter. He described his injury and concluded it with this promise: "Now give me what you think is right and I promise not to call you bad names."

It may have been a battle with the Pension Department that William had started over 20 years earlier. His first application for a pension was in 1884. Two comrades from the Battery wrote letters describing the injury William sustained while he was in the army. Both described William as healthy and "a strong able bodyed man" before June of 1865. That was when the Battery was moved by train from Knoxville to Loudon, Tennessee. Several cars jumped the tracks. William was on of the cars and was "injured in the side so as to cause a Ruptur and has bin compelled to ware a truss ever sence," according to Calvin Cowan. He said he was an eye witness to the "reck" and would testify if it were necessary.

Isaac Martin provided more detail about the train derailment. "Two cars came uncuppled about the center of the train & rolled down a embankment near twenty or thirty feet & caused quite a Smash up and quite a good many got hurt Wm Sheldon received his injury at that time. The number present I could hardly tell - judge there was a thousand soldiers on the train. Wm Sheldon was taken to Philadelphia, Tenn and there Doctored by Citerson Dr. I was with him and attended to him and saw the rupture."

William was receiving a pension in 1898 when he provided the information about his wife to the Department, so perhaps he was seeking an increase when he was writing them in 1912 asking to be considered to have served one year.

William had enlisted in the Battery during the draft rendezvous held in the late summer months of 1864. When he reached the station of the Battery, they were doing garrison duty near Chattanooga, Tennessee. They did not see any major battles during the last year of the war unless it was on a personal level with boredom or disease.

When he enlisted, William was 35 years old, a farmer living in Amador, Chisago County, Minnesota. He enlisted at Taylor's Falls for one year and received a bounty of \$100. His birthplace was in Chautauqua County, New York. He had hazel eyes, brown hair, a light complexion and stood 5' 11" tall.

After mustering out of the army in 1865, William went back to his farm where he and his wife lived out their lives. They did not have any children and his wife was dead by 1898.

When William died on January 8, 1914, the North Branch newspaper ran a notice in the Amador column. It said, "The remains of W. Sheldon was brought here Saturday and funeral services conducted." It described the funeral, then concluded, "He was a man of noble character and highly respected by all."

William was buried in the Sunrise Cemetery in Amador with a veteran's marker on his grave. The notice to the Pension Department said he was dropped from the roll by reason of death and had been paid \$22.50 on the January 4, 1914.



The Delphic Oracle

Submitted by Becky Loader

Held in 1864, the Mississippi Valley Sanitary Fair was housed in a temporary, 500-foot long building in St. Louis, Missouri. It featured an art gallery, bed linen and quilt department, cannon display, soda fountain, skating pond, a showroom for sewing machines, a separate showroom for farm implements, beer garden, "New Bedford Department" with walrus tusks and hinged seashells, and an actress portraying the Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe, who sold dolls. Food, handcrafts, and raffles were in abundant supply. The hall was lit by 3,000 gas jets and decorated with wreaths, rosebushes, cages of canaries, and plaster statuary provided by local businesses. All of this was to raise money for the U.S. and Western Sanitary Commissions to send supplies to the front for the troops.



Stall #12 was listed as the "Delphic Oracle." The columns were decorated with signs of the zodiac, skulls, paper hearts, and mythic creatures. The dome was strung with ropes decorated with Christmas ornaments and was topped with a stuffed owl. The center of the booth was occupied by a wheel that could be spun to reveal fortunes for those willing to donate a dime. The ladies running the booth wore mystical sashes and diadems that aided them in assisting those wishing to find their fortune by spinning the wheel. The "Prophetess" who ran the wheel purported to be the "seventh daughter of a seventh daughter."

Needless to say, no gambling was permitted at the Fair, but fortune telling seemed to be fine!

This Fair was extremely successful and made over \$550,000 in three days, though the highest price charged was the \$2 admission to the building.

The ladies of the Second Minnesota Battery of Light Artillery can now present an interpretation of the Delphic Oracle thanks to the carpentry skills of Lt. Cain.

Our booth features a wheel with authentic 19th century fortunes ("Leave nothing for tomorrow which can be done today." "If one will do, do not take two."), a banner with zodiac glyphs, stuffed owl, and appropriate mystical, yet patriotic, decorations in appropriate colors and sparkly fabrics and ribbons. The ladies have special sashes and diadems that enable us to help interpret the Oracle.

Note: we received a lot of feedback from the people who visited the booth. The number one response we got was that it was fun to see something new and unique. Very few of them knew about the Sanitary Fairs, their purpose, and how elaborate they were. We spurred a lot of interest in a new area of history! Huzzah!!



2018 PROPOSED SCHEDULE 2nd Minnesota Battery Light Artillery

This is the TENTATIVE calendar as discussed at the February meeting. Please review it and be prepared to vote on which you will likely attend at the March Annual Meeting.

March 10, Mankato, MN	Boy in Blue Symposium (Saturday) http://www.boyinblue.org/
*May TBD, Waconia, MN	St. Joseph' School
May 14, Edina, MN	Calvin Christian School (Monday)
**May TBD, Red Wing, MN	Twin Bluff Middle School
*May TBD, Long Prairie, MN	Long Prairie-Gray Eagle H.S.
May 28, Red Wing, MN	Memorial Day (Monday)
Jun 9-10, Elgin, IL	Civil War Experience & Reenactment http://9thvirginiacavalry.com/elginscivilwarexperience.html
Jun 16, Galesville, WI	Arnold House & Eastside Farm (Saturday)
Jun 26, Menomonie, WI	Wilson Park Concert (Tuesday)
Jun 30–Jul 1, Wauconda, IL	Civil War Days Reenactment http://www.lcfd.org/education/events/civilwar/
July 14-15, Rochester, MN	Olmstead County Living History Fair & Reenactment https://www.olmstedhistory.com/going-on/142
July 17, Goodhue, MN	Goodhue County 4-H (Tuesday)
Aug 11-12, Pipestone, MN	Civil War Days Reenactment http://pipestoneminnesota.com/cwd/Home.html
Aug 25-26, Morristown, MN	Ahlman's Shooters Roundup
Sep 29-30, Greenbush, WI	Civil War Days – Wade House Civil War Reenactment https://wadehouse.wisconsinhistory.org/featured-programs/civilwar-weekend-overview/
Oct 20-21, Minooka, IL	Dollinger Family Farm Civil War Reenactment http://edmilam.coffeecup.com/
Nov 11, Winona, MN	Veteran's Day Tribute (Sunday)

*Schools in Waconia, MN and Long Prairie, MN will be solicited for potential dates we can consider.
**Twin Bluff Middle School suggested any of the following dates would work: May 8-11, May 14-18, May 21-24, May 29 or 30.

NOTE: We need a minimum of ten people to do a school event. Please make your best effort to attend as many schools as you can—this is our gunpowder, grocery and gas money! **IF YOU HAVE DATES IN MAY THAT WOULD ALLOW YOU TO ATTEND/NOT ATTEND, please contact Daryl. We have some flexibility in a couple of the dates and may be able to shift dates where more members can attend if we know what those dates are!**

There is an opportunity for an ON YOUR OWN event by attending with Battery I or Battery G this summer. They are planning to go to the reenactment at Gettysburg, PA, July 5-8. They have more guns than men to man them, so members of the Second Battery are welcome to attend. For more information, contact John Cain or Daryl Duden.

A Letter from the Governor

Submitted by Daryl Duden

The Second Battery received a visit from Minnesota's governor, Alexander Ramsey in the summer of 1862. The Governor described what he saw and what he thought about the visit were reflected in a letter to the Lt. Governor.

Lieut. Gov. IGNATIUS DONNELLY,
St. Paul,

CORINTH, MISS., July 10, 1862

DEAR SIR: I have within the last few days issued six commissions to fill vacancies in the Fourth Regiment, and also two for a like purpose in the Fifth Regiment.

During the past week I have visited the Fifth Regiment, which is camped on Clear creek, some eight miles south of this place. At that time some sixty of the regiment were on the sick list, and some eighteen more absent in hospitals. The field officers and surgeons were in good health and spirits.

The Rev. Mr. Chaffee having resigned his position as chaplain, upon consultation with the field officers, I commissioned Rev. John Ireland as chaplain of the Fifth, and he was mustered in by General Smith.

The order mustering out Lieutenant Ryan, for absence, was revoked, and he is now actively performing the duties of his place. Captains Clark and Curtis are ill; the latter left for home yesterday.

On Monday, the 7th inst., with a number of officers, I rode over to the camp of the Fourth Regiment, and found the place well chosen, on an elevated ridge, with an abundance of good water, which, here in this hot and dry country, is an article of prime necessity, and generally so scarce as to compel the removal of camps otherwise desirably located. There are in all Northern Mississippi very few running streams, and even those are small and muddy.

Major Baxter was in charge of the camp, where were left with him some three hundred men unfit for duty. Colonel Sanborn, acting brigadier general, and Lieutenant Colonel Thomas, with the effective men of the regiment, had been suddenly marched off some days before, to Rienzi, twelve miles in advance.

You must not infer from the large number unfit for duty that there is a very large amount of sickness. Of the large number reckoned unfit for duty when I was there, but very few were seriously ill; most of those on the sick list were convalescent, and will soon be able to return to duty.

Major Baxter has been sent north to recruit his health, on twenty-days' leave of absence for that purpose.

Within two miles of the camp of the Fourth Regiment, I found the invalids of the Second Battery, some forty in number; eleven were at the hospital, and the rest, some seventy, were with Captain Hotchkiss and his battery near Jacinto, the county town of Tishomingo county, where I met the captain and Lieutenant Dawley on Wednesday.

The men here are hearty and eager for an opportunity to win laurels. Brig. Gen. Jeff C. Davis, Acting Brigadier General Sanborn and Lieutenant Colonel Thomas accompanied me to the camp.

On Thursday, the Fourth Regiment, along with the division of General Hamilton, moved back to the camp at Clear camp, leaving about 3 o'clock A. M. They reached the camp at 12 o'clock M., where I left them that evening and drove over to our gallant artillery corps, the First Minnesota Battery. In the absence of Captain Munch, who is still at home recovering from the wound he received at the battle of Pittsburgh Landing, the company is in charge of Lieutenant Pfaender, a most worthy man, as he is an efficient and capable officer.

This battery is in the division of Brigadier Todd, acting major general. The general in olden times was in command at Fort Ripley in Minnesota. The general very kindly; after dinner, gave me the opportunity of visiting with him the several regiments of his division, where, among the acquaintances I met, were Col. Benj. Allen, formerly of Hudson, Wis., now a colonel of a Wisconsin regiment, and who was severely wounded at Shiloh, but is recovering.

I have been waiting two days for the train for Tuscumbia, between which place and luka the Second Regiment is guarding that portion of the Memphis & Charleston railroad. As the railroad connection beyond the Tennessee river to Nashville is interrupted, and as my time will not admit of my going to Nashville by way of Louisville, I am reluctantly compelled to postpone a visit to the Third Regiment until another occasion.

Very respectfully yours,

ALEX. RAMSEY.

P. S. – We in Minnesota may discharge all apprehensions about losing any population by the opening of the South. Every one of our soldiers with whom I have conversed say they would not give a quarter section in Minnesota for all the county of Tishomingo.

It is just rumored the rebels have captured the train on which I was to go out to Tuscumbia, and if it is so I shall have to forego my visit to the Second Regiment.

A.R.

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

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Treasurer

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Twin Cities Metro Area Contact

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

Your Country Needs You!
And so does the Battery!

2018 dues are DUE !! To remain on the active 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: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

e-mail address: _____

Please send this form and your check to:

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

Please do fill out the form completely and return it with your dues as email addresses and cell numbers change. We need an accurate contact list in case of last minute event changes or emergencies.

Thank you!