



2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 290

July 2021

On This Date-160 Years Ago

July 1861

The morning newspapers in Washington carried front page news on the morning of July 17, 1861. The Federal Army was—at long last—advancing! The ponderous movements of the Union Army were watched closely by the Confederates as they made ready to meet the “invaders” as they set foot on “southern soil.” Both sides stumbled about, making ready for a “great battle” that each fully expected to win almost without casualties. The reality of war had not yet come.

The battle finally began on Sunday, July 21, near Manassas Junction and along the little stream known as Bull Run. The Union forces were led by General Irvin McDowell; the Confederates by General Joseph E. Johnston.

Mistakes were made on both sides as each struggled to meet threats. At the end of the day, the Confederates saw their foes running in a blind panic from the battlefield. The Confederates had won the day!

The Union Army caught its breath and looked for someone to blame. McDowell was replaced by General George B. McClellan who began an overhaul of the army.

The Confederates were hugely confident and believed their prowess on the field of battle had brought them a well deserved victory. Many people believed this one victory would end the war. Others saw the casualties of the battle and wondered how such a tragedy could happen. The names of the dead and wounded appeared in papers throughout the country and everywhere people were discussing the horrors of war.

The Union lost 460 killed, 1124 wounded, and 1312 missing. The Confederate losses were 387 killed, 1582 wounded, and 13 missing. The total for the battle was 4878. Within two years, such totals would be considered a “brisk skirmish” compared to the terrible cost of Antietam or Gettysburg.

Upcoming Events

July 17-18 Olmstead County Living History Fair & Reenactment, Rochester, MN

This is always a good event! The battles are the same each day and will feature Wilson’s Creek, MO.

MEALS—breakfast will be made for those staying in camp. Lunch will be the usual sandwiches, etc. for everyone in the unit. You **MUST** let Daryl know if you plan to eat in camp so we know how much food to prepare!!

Supper will be ON YOUR OWN with the suggestion of buying your meal from the Boy Scouts who will have their “café” set up on the grounds. The event website is Olmstead County Living History Fair & Reenactment



Next Meeting

July 24, 2021 11:00am

The meeting will be held INSIDE at Marie’s Underground Grill in Red Wing.
Contact Ken Cunningham with questions or agenda items.



Battery Profile

Harris Harrison

Exactly when Harris Harrison arrived in Minnesota is unknown, but he was born in Agerhauss, Telemarken, Norway, April 13, 1835. He was part of a wave of immigrants coming to the new lands that were just opening up in the young state of Minnesota. The 1860 census showed Harris living with his parents in Leon Township, Goodhue County, where Harris was farming.

When the Civil War broke out, Harris decided to enlist. He was mustered into the Second Battery of Light Artillery on March 13, 1862. He was 26 years old, 5' 6-1/4" tall, had gray eyes, light hair, and a light complexion.

Harris had other skills and some sources say he was a blacksmith. Harris himself noted he was a blacksmith at his enlistment, so he may have practiced that trade in connection with farming as the 1860 census indicates. Skills as a blacksmith would have been valuable to the Second Battery and some records note that he used those skills as one of the Battery artificers. Other sources indicate Harris was the Battery's bugler. Neither position gave him rank and Harris remained a private throughout his army service.

Harris served the Battery faithfully and chose to reenlist when his first three years were over. This earned him a furlough back to Minnesota in the spring of 1864 and it was an eventful leave. Harris and Jane Chilson were married in the Church of Holden in Goodhue County that May.

But the war was not over and at the end of the 30 days, Harris reported back to Fort Snelling and returned to the South. On August 29, he was sent to the hospital in Chattanooga for an illness. He spent less than a week in the hospital and returned to the Battery on September 2. It was the last time he was away from the Battery until the unit was mustered out at the end of the war.

Harris returned to his bride and they settled down to raise a family. Their first child was born in 1866, and by 1881, they had added seven more children to their flock.

The Homestead Act would have given Harris the right to deduct his time in the Army away from his time to prove up on a homestead and this may have been the incentive for him to move to Day County, South Dakota, where he took a homestead on 160 acres in Wheatland Township. He moved his family to the new land in 1882. Two more children were born, making for a total of ten.

By 1898, when Harris applied for a pension, Jane had died, and Harris was still living in South Dakota. In 1912, a guardian had been appointed for him as he was no longer able to take care of his own affairs. The guardian's name was A. Chilson, leading to speculation that the guardian was a relative of Jane's. The pension Harris was receiving at the time was \$40.00 a month.

At some point, Harris was moved to the Soldiers' Home in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where he died on May 2, 1919. His body was sent to South Dakota for burial and his final rest, though his story is not yet finished. Research turned up a grave plot owned by Harris in the Wheatland Township Cemetery, South Dakota. Records indicate he bought a plot of eight graves and it was first believed Harris was resting there without a marker on his grave. The cemetery had been part of the Methodist Church in the area, but that church closed and the township took over ownership of the cemetery. When Harris bought the plot is unknown, but no one is buried there. The lawn mowing crew were the ones to tip researchers that Harris was not really buried in Wheatland, but that he was in a cemetery some five miles south. A fun name like Harris Harrison was one they remembered from when they cut the grass in that cemetery.

Harris and at least one son are buried in a family plot next to the Goodhue Lutheran Church in Eden Township, five miles almost directly south of the Wheatland Cemetery. There, Harris has a magnificent family stone that records his service with the Second Battery as a bugler.



A Four Legged Soldier

From the Andersonville Prison Facebook Page



Before the outbreak of the Civil War, a stray brown and white bull terrier wandered into the firehouse of the Niagara Volunteer Fire Company on Penn Avenue in Pittsburg, PA. The firefighters were impressed when the terrier fought and defeated a much larger dog. They made him their mascot and gave him the name, "Jack". From that time on, Jack ran on every call with the fire company.

In 1861, many of the men from the Niagara Fire Company enlisted in Company F of the 102nd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry. Loyal Jack went with them. Jack was a smart dog and quickly learned the bugle calls and commands for his regiment. He was known for his bravery during battles and would charge with his men straight to the front lines. After each battle, Jack would search for wounded, dead, and dying soldiers. Often, while on the march, he would lead his company to a water source or catch small animals for them to eat.

Jack and the 102nd PA INF participated in the Battle of the Wilderness, the Spotsylvania Campaign, and the siege of Petersburg. He was wounded at Malvern Hill and again at Fredericksburg. Jack was twice held as a POW. In 1862, he was captured at Savage Station but was only held for six hours before he managed to escape. At Salem Church in 1863, Jack and a group of men from his company were captured and sent to Belle Isle prison in Richmond. Jack's presence in the prison helped raise the morale of the Union soldiers. After being held for six months, Jack was exchanged for a Confederate prisoner. He returned to fight alongside his companions.

Sadly, on December 23, 1864, while the regiment was on furlough, Jack disappeared. Although the men offered a large reward for his return, Jack was never seen again. After the war, they commissioned a portrait of their faithful friend. It hangs on display at the Soldiers and Sailors National Military Museum and Memorial in Pittsburg.

A Few Random Fun Facts

From the website [Civil War Facts & Trivia – Legends of America](#)

An Iowa regiment ruled that any man who uttered an oath should read a chapter in the Bible. Several of them got nearly through the Old Testament.

There were more Southern-born Union generals (38) than Northern-born Confederate generals (33).

The famous Confederate blockade-runner, the C.S.S. *Alabama* never entered a Confederate port during the length of her service.

Not fond of ceremonies or military music, Ulysses S. Grant said he could only recognize two tunes. "One was *Yankee Doodle*; the other one wasn't."

President Abraham Lincoln was the first president to be assassinated.

Missouri sent 39 regiments to fight in the siege of Vicksburg, Mississippi — 17 to the Confederacy and 22 to the Union.

At the start of the war, the value of all manufactured goods produced in all the Confederate states added up to less than one-fourth of those produced in New York State alone.

For those who were drafted, the law allowed them to pay a substitute to go in their place. One type of "bounty jumper" was when men would hire out to more than one draftee and then make a hasty exit once they were paid. The record for bounty jumping was held by John O'Connor, who admitted to hiring himself out 32 times before being caught. He received a four-year prison term.

Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest had 30 horses shot from under him and personally killed 31 men in hand-to-hand combat. "I was a horse ahead at the end," he said.

Recap

June 19 A.A. Arnold House, Galesville, WI

It was a perfectly beautiful day to be on the lawn of this historic house and a great time to be together!! We set up three learning stations in addition to the gun and chatted with some very interested visitors. While the number of visitors was small, those who came had great questions and we held some good conversations with them.

We enjoyed a very special treat as well—the First Brigade Band was playing a concert as a part of the Founders Day celebration. They needed a “warm up” place and after hearing that the Second Battery was at the Arnold House, they chose the lawn as their warm up location. The band played for about half an hour with their period instruments. These true artifacts sounded incredible in the open air, much as they would have sounded 160 years ago in a camp! The Arnolds were even spotted dancing to the waltz the band played!

It was a wonderful day to be finally back together for an event at an historic site!



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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