



## 2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

# “ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 288

May 2021

### On This Date-160 Years Ago

May of 1861 saw wild activity at Fort Snelling with the First Minnesota Regiment now complete. The regiment was full, with extra men besides. Training began in earnest on April 30, so the first week of May was the first taste of being a soldier for the men.

Taste was something they had a few complaints about! The following is from an article that appeared on May 2, 1861, in the *St. Paul Daily Press*.

*The complaints against the rations rose almost to a rebellion on Tuesday eve. One company declared the “grub so execrable that they would not touch it,” and pitched it, and the tinware it was served on out of doors, preferring to go to bed supperless to eating it. A firm yet earnest protest was sent to Headquarters in relation to it, and Col. Gorman on being assured of these facts, issued the following preemptory order to the contractors:*

*Regimental Headquarters, First Regt. Minnesota Volunteers  
Fort Snelling, May 1, 1861*

*Messrs Eustis & Lamb*

*The men under my command have made and still do make frequent and grievous complaints that the food furnished by you is of an inferior quality, and not properly served to them. This in no manner can be tolerated by me, and if further complaints of a like nature are made to me, your contract will be revoked, or a Court of Enquiry called to take action.*

*By order of the colonel commanding  
Wm. B. Leach, Adjt.*

The paper noted that by the next day, the rations had improved substantially and the boys “felt more lively and cheerful” than on the previous evening.

Demanding “good grub” is something that never changes!!

### Upcoming Events

#### **May 1 2021 Rochester, MN**

Arrive no later than 8:00—Scouts start at our stations at 9:00.

Gamehaven Scout Camp on May 1st, 2021. This event will be held at the Gamehaven Scout Reservation located on 5015 Simpson Rd. SE, Rochester, MN.

This event will be completely OUTSIDE and will follow all social distancing guidelines. We WILL wear masks and Scouts will not be within six feet of us, nor will they handle any of our equipment. The plan for this camporee is similar to what we did last time we were there a few years ago. The 2nd MN Battery will present 6 stations dealing with various aspects of Civil War life where groups of scouts cycle through every 30 minutes in the morning and afternoon. The Gamehaven Camping Committee will staff an additional 4 stations to cover requirements in the American Heritage merit badge. Each station will be presented 10 times to keep group size as small as possible.

**BRING A BAG LUNCH!** We will be too far from their food to make it work to eat and be back to our stations in the allotted time.

There is space for a few campers if any of our members would like to go down Friday night to be ready for Scouts at 9:00 am the next morning.

## ***We finally have an event!***

### Next Meeting

**May 22, 2021 11:00am**

The meeting will be held at Red Wing Elks Lodge in Red Wing, MN and will follow CDC guidance for masks and social distancing. Contact Ken Cunningham with questions or agenda items. 651-388-2945.



# **Battery Profile**

## **Errick Evenson**

Errick was a Norwegian immigrant who settled in Spring Grove, Minnesota, and took up farming. He had been born on August 7, 1838, in Norway.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Errick decided to enlist. He joined the 15th Wisconsin Infantry and served from December 13, 1861, to October 16, 1862, when he was discharged for disability. Errick went to the hospital on August 15th and remained there, unable to return to his unit for more than 60 days. The discharging officer believed Errick had come into the Army with a heart problem and he would “not likely be of further Service to the U.S.” The officer added this was not a case for a pension.

Errick probably did not agree with that officer. When Fort Snelling held a draft rendezvous late in the summer of 1864, Errick decided to enlist again. He joined the Second Battery on September 10, agreeing to serve for one year. He was paid a bounty of \$33.33 with \$66.67 due him. He was 26 years old, had gray eyes, light hair, and a light complexion. He was 5’ 8” tall. Whether Errick could read or not is open to question as he only made his mark on the enlistment forms, but it is possible he could simply not read or write in English. This lack of understanding probably contributed to the variations of the spelling of Errick. Some records have a single “r” in his first name, others drop the “k”.

Errick served with the Battery until the unit was mustered out on August 16, 1865. He moved about some after being discharged and was in Otter Tail County when he met Anne. She was there with her father while he was looking for good land to homestead. Anne had been married before and had a son, but she was divorced from her husband. The divorce decree awarded her custody of their son, Dave, and her ex-husband was ordered to pay the court costs. Anne kept Dave with her and was keeping house for her widowed father when she met Errick. They were married in Otter Tail and lived for a while in Norwegian Grove Township.

Anne believed Errick must have had sand in his shoes as he went off in search of better land and left her with her son and the daughter they had together. After three years of only getting a few letters from Errick, Anne went back to Wisconsin with her father, returning to his original home in Sand Creek Township in Dunn County. Her father died two years later and six more months later, Errick arrived. Anne had not seen him in five years. Anne said she “did not go to housekeeping with Errick, because he wouldn’t stay at one place; he wanted to be running all over.” Still, they did have two more children while Anne was living in Sand Creek Township. Two of the three children Anne and Errick had died as infants.

The family continued to live in Sand Creek at Anne’s father’s home until it burned down. She then went to live across the road at her sister’s home as her sister was not living there. Anne said she lived with Errick for a while at this time, but he kept leaving and coming back. Finally, she said, “He got crazy spells”. After living there about six months, Anne said Errick “got so ugly that I could not stand it longer and left him there, going to my son (by her first marriage) to make my home. He (Errick) would come down... occasionally, would stay three or four days, then go back again. He was taken from son Dave’s house to the Insane Asylum (in Red Cedar Township) and he staid in the asylum until he died there.” Hospital records indicate Errick was admitted on April 16, 1903. He remained there until his death from heart disease on June 13, 1909. A week later, he was buried in the Sand Creek Cemetery. His death record noted his occupation as “retired”, “2nd Minnesota Light Artillery” and he was provided with a military tombstone.

Ironically, the unit named on the grave marker is for his service with the 15th Wisconsin rather than the unit he “retired” from.



# "Get Vaccinated"

From the National Museum of Civil War Medicine

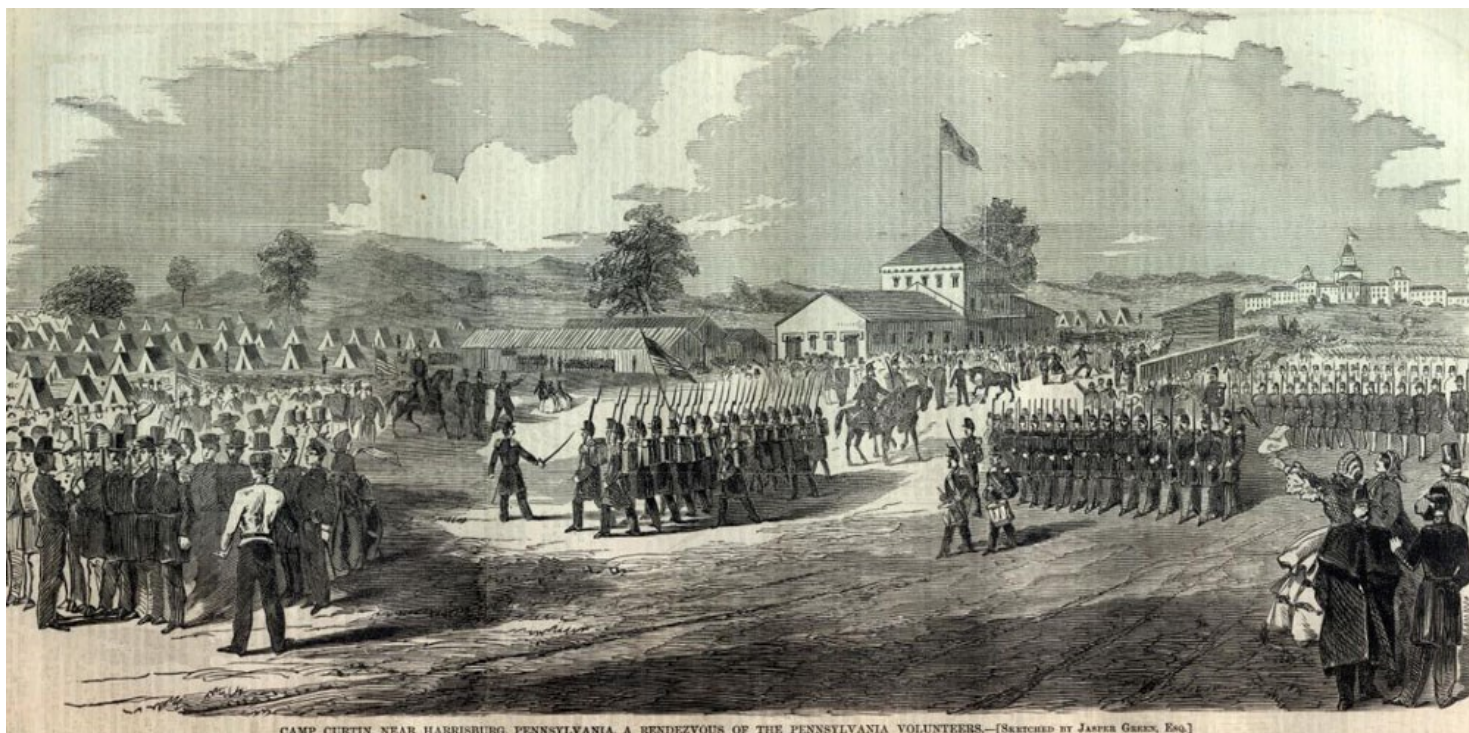
In the spring of 1861, thousands of volunteers descended on Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Railroads brought soldiers from across Pennsylvania and neighboring states to assemble at Camp Curtin, a military staging ground to assemble new units for the US Army and begin training them for war.

With soldiers arriving on every train, concerns quickly grew about the health of the recruits and of the surrounding community in Pennsylvania's state capital. Fears of an epidemic grew as more soldiers arrived - smallpox was the most dreaded. A local newspaper, the *Pennsylvania Daily Telegraph*, published a plea to the new recruits coming into the city and to those who may have been thinking of joining the Union Army:

*"Get Vaccinated -*

*We again urge on our volunteer soldiers the necessity of being vaccinated before entering into service. If this is attended to in every case a world of sickness and many valuable lives may be spared for our cause. When ordered off, there is no knowing with what the troops may come in contact, and all precautionary measure to avoid disease should be adopted. By all means, then, let the soldiers be vaccinated."*

Smallpox vaccination was extremely common during the Civil War and highly effective.



Camp Curtin at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania in May 1861 - *Harper's Weekly*

A Civil War era vaccination kit from the collections of the Smithsonian.



# Some General Civil War Nurse Facts

From the website: <http://www.civil-war-facts.com/>

Nurses during the American Civil War were not adequately trained to perform the overwhelming tasks of caring for the thousands of wounded and ill soldiers produced by the war. However, due to their efforts thousands of soldiers, who would have else died, were saved. Women nurses proved that, contrary to popular belief at the time of the Civil War, that they were capable of important and difficult jobs; this went a long way in their fight for equal rights with men. On this page are lists of interesting facts about nurses during the American Civil War. The information on this page includes who some of the famous nurses were, what duties nurse had to perform, and where these nurse came from.

During the American Civil War most nurses were male, outnumbering female nurses 4 to 1. This was largely due to American society's general belief at that time that women were not capable of performing important duties.

When the American Civil War began there were basically no women nurses in the United States. It was the general belief that they were not capable of a job with such responsibilities.

Women Civil War Nurses were generally from well-off middle class families. Most of these women, from both sides, volunteered due to a sense of patriotism and a desire to contribute to their sides cause.

It is estimated that about two thousand women from the North and South served as nurses during the American Civil War; most of them volunteering their services.

The push for equal rights for women in the United States was greatly helped by women Civil War nurses who proved they were just as capable as men in performing the difficult tasks of nursing.

It is difficult to determine the percentage of female nurses who were present on battlefields, but there were not many. Battlefield duty was considered too dangerous for women and usually reserved for their male counterparts, with women mostly serving in hospitals.



## 6. Mary Livermore ▲

"Thousands of women engaged in wartime voluntarism at all levels, from working at the local sewing circle, to tending to the wounded either at home or closer to the front, to devoting long hours in various organizations in either the Union or the Confederacy. But it is hard to imagine that any were more influential than Mary Livermore. Livermore rose to prominence in the Chicago-based northwestern branch of the United States Sanitary Commission, and she—with her colleague Jane Hoge—ran that city's highly successful Sanitary Fair in 1863. Livermore and Hoge went on to co-direct the northwestern branch of the Sanitary Commission." MG

***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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