

2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 298

May 2022

On This Date-160 Years Ago

May, 1862

The boys of the Battery were in the South! At least as far as St. Louis where they had arrived on April 25th. They received their guns, 115 horses, 18 mules, and other equipment. Then they spent a great deal of time drilling and drilling and drilling some more according to Private George Murphie. This was probably to get them used to their own guns, their own horses and mules, and polish their skills with the equipment they would use when they faced the enemy.

On May 21st, the boys left Benton Barracks and boarded the steamer, *Warsaw*. They continued on their southward journey to Tennessee, stopping at Pittsburg Landing. The boys saw the aftermath of the battle of Shiloh some six weeks earlier.

They continued on to Hamburg, Tennessee, where they arrived on May 25th. The Battery's travels on the river took them 480 miles deeper into the South.

They unloaded the boat and set out on the road toward Farmington. They marched five miles and set up camp. The next day, they marched the remaining 13 miles to Farmington where they would remain until the 31st when they marched another seven miles to a camp near General Pope's Headquarters.

The Battery Returns state that this camp was three miles from Corinth, Mississippi.

Upcoming Events

May 17 Old Court House Museum, 315 West Madison Street, Durand, WI.

We need to arrive by 8:00 to set up five learning stations and rotate students through them, about 18-20 in each group. Following the school groups, we will remain at our stations for members of the Historical Society and the public to visit. **Bring your bag lunch (period correctness NOT required) as there will be NO time to go get anything.**

May 30 Red Wing, MN, 2022 Memorial Day Ceremony

Arrive at Bay Point Park by 7:30 to set up. Neil Bruce will be reading the Proclamation for the Memorial Day service and honor volleys from our gun.



A Letter from Frank Flint

Camp Benton
May 17th, 1862

Dear Jennie,

We went to the arsenal and drew 1200 rounds of cartridges. We have to drill most all of the time. Some think that we will go to New Mexico.

We have got four six-pound cannon and two 12 pound howitzers. I am lead driver on one of the howitzers. The Brigg's boys are both drivers.

Frank

Next Meeting

MAY ??, 2022 TBD Watch your email

Contact Ken Cunningham with questions or agenda items. 651-388-2945.



Battery Profile

Hilarius Schmidt

Hilarius was born in Glarns, Switzerland, on February, 3 1833. In 1852, he married Anner. They were part of a group of Swiss immigrants who came to Minnesota in the late 1850's. Hilarius and Anner settled in Champlin, Hennepin County, Minnesota. The tiny part of the community where they made their home was called "New Schwanden" because many residents came from the same area of Switzerland. Like many people in the area, Hilarius was a farmer.

The Second Battery was just forming up and had not yet been accepted into service when Hilarius enlisted on February 5, 1862. The descriptive roll said he was 29 years old, had dark eyes, brown hair and a dark complexion. He was 5' 4-1/2" tall.

Once the Battery was fully organized, they started south and Hilarius was with them. It was not to be a long stay in the south for Hilarius. He was first reported sick on the rolls for July and August of 1862. Hilarius was sent to the hospital at luka, Mississippi, where he was treated for dysentery. After a time, he was moved to the hospital at Chaska, Tennessee, and stayed there until about November 1, 1862. Hilarius was then moved to the hospital at St. Louis where he would remain for the rest of his time in the army.

Hilarius did not improve and was discharged for disability on January 3, 1863. The discharge noted he had been unfit for duty for over 60 days and they did not expect his condition to change. He had been treated for "eight months' standing, rebellious to treatment, besides a goiter of considerable size. Has done no service for the last six months. No case for pension." It was signed by the commanding officer of the hospital at St. Louis.

Hilarius went back to Minnesota and his farm in Champlin. In 1884, Hilarius decided to apply for a disability pension. He filed his claim stating the chronic diarrhea he was still suffering was making it impossible for him to do a full days' work. Several neighbors and Battery comrades filed depositions for Hilarius. All said he was of good health before he joined the army and had suffered ever since leaving it.

All save one. A.W. Giddings was a doctor in Anoka just across the Mississippi River from Champlin and he filed a different point of view in his deposition. Dr. Giddings said he did not know Hilarius before the war, but had treated him after it. Giddings believed the reason for Hilarius' trouble was not due to the war, but due to his drinking. Giddings said, "I have several times found his wife on the street crying and saying she had lost him and I would go into the saloon and lead him out when he was able to walk and get some one to help take him out when he could not walk." Giddings believed the drinking was the source of Hilarius' problems. He also wrote of a time when Hilarius had fallen out of a wagon and Giddings treated him for broken ribs. Giddings "supposed he was drunk" at the time. The deposition from Giddings was the only one to state this.

When asked about drinking, Hilarius himself said he did drink "whiskey, brandy and gin when I feel bad. That is what the doctors told me to do. I don't drink tea or coffee. I drink milk." When asked when was the first time he was drunk, Hilarius denied being drunk, but admitted that when his stomach was empty, he would feel drunk. Then the examiner asked this question: "Do you ever fail of getting drunk when you have a chance?"

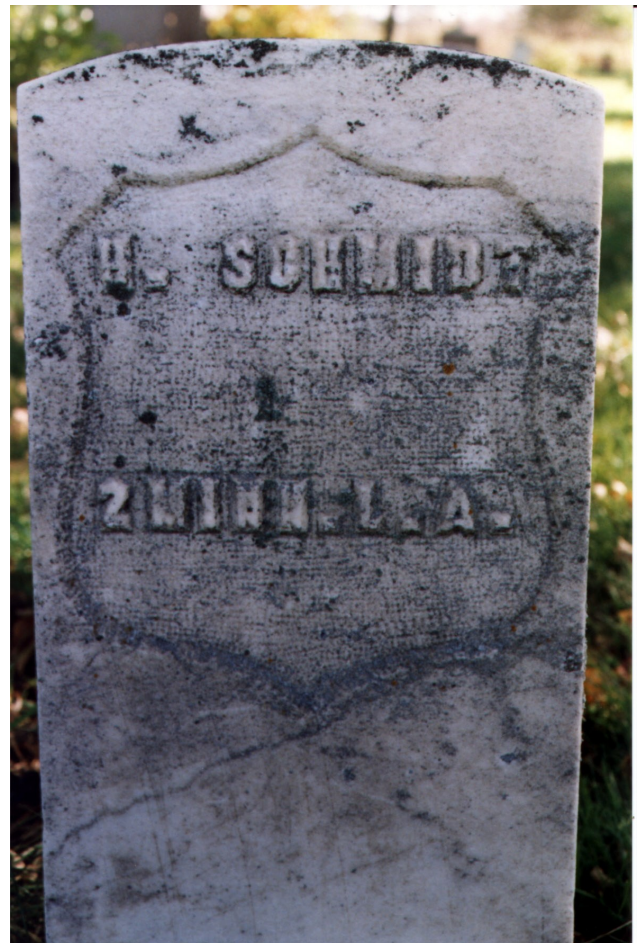
Hilarius' answer was probably not the best one to have give the pension examiner and it doesn't really answer the question. Perhaps he did not understand the question or perhaps he chose not to understand. Hilarius said, "No. Sometimes when I am empty I get drunk."

The pension was awarded to Hilarius starting in 1891.

At some point in his life, Hilarius probably anglicized his name, various sources used "Lawrence" as his first name.

Hilarius died on June 28, 1890. He was laid to rest in the Fridolin Cemetery in Champlin with a traditional white veteran's stone over his grave and a tall family marker nearby for both he and his wife.

The local newspaper was the *Anoka Union* and it carried the short notice of Hilarius Schmidt's death, but no formal obituary. It simply read, "Died Saturday, Lawrence Schmidt, an old resident. The funeral occurred Monday afternoon at the German Lutheran church."



Sewing for the War



One of the major ways that women contributed to the war effort on both sides during the war was working to producing clothing and ammunition. The Confederate Army of Tennessee was largely clothed by the efforts of women working for a number of government clothing depots in Georgia. Notably the Atlanta and Columbus Clothing Depots. As an example, the Atlanta Depot in 1863 employed around 3,000 seamstresses and produced 130,000 uniforms a year. The women were largely the wives of soldiers who were able to get an income by coming into the depots, where they received pre-cut uniform kits including buttons, they took them home, sewed them together and came back to turn them in and receive their pay.

In this way women were able to receive an income and also find a way to help their husbands and other loved ones in the field, providing a critical support role for the armies. (Photo Source: American Civil War Museum)



While this photo is unidentified, it highlights the sewing done by women during the war. Look close and you can see each woman has a scissor. They are all wearing work dresses, no hoops. Only one has a white collar and all but two have brooches at the neck. All of them are clearly wearing waist aprons and several have patch pockets on the front. Was this a sewing society? A ladies aid group? There are some similar facial features—several generations of a family? If only they could talk to us!

8 Things You May Not Know About Memorial Day

By Barbara Maranzan, the History Channel

Memorial Day and its traditions may have ancient roots. While the first commemorative Memorial Day events weren't held in the United States until the late 19th century, the practice of honoring those who have fallen in battle dates back thousands of years. The ancient Greeks and Romans held annual days of remembrance for loved ones (including soldiers) each year, festooning their graves with flowers and holding public festivals and feasts in their honor. In Athens, public funerals for fallen soldiers were held after each battle, with the remains of the dead on display for public mourning before a funeral procession took them to their internment in the Kerameikos, one of the city's most prestigious cemeteries. One of the first known public tributes to war dead was in 431 B.C., when the Athenian general and statesman Pericles delivered a funeral oration praising the sacrifice and valor of those killed in the Peloponnesian War—a speech that some have compared in tone to Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.

One of the earliest commemorations was organized by recently freed African Americans. As the Civil War neared its end, thousands of Union soldiers, held as prisoners of war, were herded into a series of hastily assembled camps in Charleston, South Carolina. Conditions at one camp, a former racetrack near the city's Citadel, were so bad that more than 250 prisoners died from disease or exposure, and were buried in a mass grave behind the track's grandstand.

Three weeks after the Confederate surrender, an unusual procession entered the former camp: On May 1, 1865, more than 1,000 people recently freed from enslavement, accompanied by regiments of the U.S. Colored Troops (including the Massachusetts 54th Infantry) and a handful of white Charlestonians, gathered in the camp to consecrate a new, proper burial site for the Union dead. The group sang hymns, gave readings and distributed flowers around the cemetery, which they dedicated to the "Martyrs of the Race Course."

In May 1868, General John A. Logan, the commander-in-chief of the Union veterans' group known as the Grand Army of the Republic, issued a decree that May 30 should become a nationwide day of commemoration for the more than 620,000 soldiers killed in the recently ended Civil War. On Decoration Day, as Logan dubbed it, Americans should lay flowers and decorate the graves of the war dead "whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village and hamlet churchyard in the land."

According to legend, Logan chose May 30 because it was a rare day that didn't fall on the anniversary



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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of a Civil War battle, though some historians believe the date was selected to ensure that flowers across the country would be in bloom.

After the war Logan, who had served as a U.S. congressman before resigning to rejoin the army, returned to his political career, eventually serving in both the House and Senate and was the unsuccessful Republican candidate for vice president in 1884. When he died two years later, Logan's body laid in state in the rotunda of the United States Capitol, making him one of just 33 people to have received the honor. Today, Washington, D.C.'s Logan Circle and several townships across the country are named in honor of this champion of veterans and those killed in battle.

Even before the war ended, women's groups across much of the South were gathering informally to decorate the graves of Confederate dead. In April 1886, the Ladies Memorial Association of Columbus, Georgia resolved to commemorate the fallen once a year—a decision that seems to have influenced John Logan to follow suit, according to his own wife. However, southern commemorations were rarely held on one standard day, with observations differing by state and spread out

across much of the spring and early summer. It's a tradition that continues today: Nine southern states officially recognize a Confederate Memorial Day, with events held on Confederate President Jefferson Davis' birthday, the day on which General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson was killed, or to commemorate other symbolic events. It didn't become a federal holiday until 1971.

Americans embraced the notion of "Decoration Day" immediately. That first year, more than 27 states held some sort of ceremony, with more than 5,000 people in attendance at a ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery. By 1890, every former state of the Union had adopted it as an official holiday. But for more than 50 years, the holiday was used to commemorate those killed just in the Civil War, not in any other American conflict. It wasn't until America's entry into World War I that the tradition was expanded to include those killed in all wars, and Memorial Day was not officially recognized nationwide until the 1971, with America deeply embroiled in the Vietnam War.

Although the term Memorial Day was used beginning in the 1880s, the holiday was officially known as Decoration Day for more than a century, when it was changed by federal law. Four years later, the Uniform Monday Holiday Act of 1968 finally went into effect, moving Memorial Day from its traditional observance on May 30 (regardless of the day of the week), to a set day—the last Monday in May. The move has not been without controversy. Veterans groups, concerned that more Americans associate the holiday with first long weekend of the summer and not its intended purpose to honor the nation's war dead, continue to lobby for a return to the May 30 observances. For more than 20 years, their cause was championed by Hawaiian Senator—and decorated World War II veteran—Daniel Inouye, who until his 2012 death reintroduced legislation in support of the change at the start of every Congressional term.

For almost as long as there's been a holiday, there's been a rivalry about who celebrated it first. Boalsburg, Pennsylvania, bases its claim on an 1864 gathering of women to mourn those recently killed at Gettysburg. In Carbondale, Illinois, they're certain that they were first, thanks to an 1866 parade led, in part, by John Logan who two years later would lead the charge for an official holiday. There are even two dueling Columbus challengers (one in Mississippi, the other in Georgia) who have battled it out for Memorial Day supremacy for decades. Only one town, however, has received the official seal of approval from the U.S. government. In 1966, 100 years after the town of Waterloo, New York, shuttered its

businesses and took to the streets for the first of many continuous, community-wide celebrations, President Lyndon Johnson signed legislation, recently passed by the U.S. Congress, declaring the tiny upstate village the "official" birthplace of Memorial Day.

In the spring of 1915, bright red flowers began poking through the battle-ravaged land across northern France and Flanders (northern Belgium). Canadian Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, who served as a brigade surgeon for an Allied artillery unit, spotted a cluster of the poppies shortly after serving as a brigade surgeon during the bloody Second Battle of Ypres. The sight of the bright red flowers against the dreary backdrop of war inspired McCrae to pen the poem, "In Flanders Field," in which he gives voice to the soldiers who had been killed in battle and lay buried beneath the poppy-covered grounds. Later that year, a Georgia teacher and volunteer war worker named Moina Michael read the poem in Ladies' Home Journal and wrote her own poem, "We Shall Keep the Faith" to begin a campaign to make the poppy a symbol of tribute to all who died in war. The poppy remains a symbol of remembrance to this day.

Despite the increasing celebration of the holiday as a summer rite of passage, there are some formal rituals still on the books: The American flag should be hung at half-staff until noon on Memorial Day, then raised to the top of the staff. And since 2000, when the U.S. Congress passed legislation, all Americans are encouraged to pause for a National Moment of Remembrance at 3 p.m. local time. The federal government has also used the holiday to honor non-veterans—the Lincoln Memorial was dedicated on Memorial Day.

