



## 2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

# “ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 326

February 2025

### ***On This Date-160 Years Ago***

**Remarks for the Month of February, 1865**

(Numbers indicate the day of the month)

- 6      Sergt. John McCausland died of Small Pox in Hosp't. Chattanooga, Tenn. Jan. 25, 1865.
- 9      Ole Erickson recruit arrived from Ft. Snelling, Minn. in charge Capt. N. C. Daniels 9th Minn. Vol. Infy. Sergt. E. A. Whitefield and private James A. Hagadorn absent with leave since Feb. 6, 1865.
- 10     James Blair absent with leave since Jan 27, 1865
- 11     Martin Hosli returned from Hospital.
- 20     John H. Arnell, artificer discharged from U. S. service for disability by reason of Surg. Certificate, By Order of Maj. Gen Thomas, on date 16 Feb
- 21     Corp. J. B. White promoted to Serg't to date from Feb. 20, 1865.
- 25     Sergt. E. A. Whitefield absent without leave since Feb. 20/64. J. A. Hagadorn absent sick since Feb. 26/64 per Surg. Certificate dated Feb. 14, 1865
- 27     Artificer Lewis M. Beers died of Congestion of the Brain in Hospt. Chatt. Tenn. Feb. 16, 1865.

### ***Events for 2025***

While we have already been contacted by several places wanting us to come in 2025, there is room for more events on the calendar. Continue watching for information on events that we may want to consider for the 2025 reenacting season. A list of these potential events will be compiled and discussed starting in February with a final vote on the 2025 calendar in March.

### ***Dues Are Due!***

Did you pay your dues at the January meeting? If you did, this message is NOT for you!

The annual membership dues for 2025 are due in January, so the form is attached to the last page of this newsletter. The treasurer would appreciate your prompt attention to the dues as he needs to be sure he knows who is a member in good standing. This is especially important as we come to the elections and decisions on events and expenditures.

Send dues to Dary Duden. His address is on the form.

Please do fill in the form on the last page to update your email, phone, or anything else that may have changed. We want to have accurate info to find our members if we need to.



### **Next Meeting**

#### **or Date and Location to be announced**

Our usual meeting place at the Elks Lodge is not available for our February meeting, so other arrangements are being made. Watch your email for further information.

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



# Battery Profiles

## Stephen Toreson

Stephen was born on a farm in Tinglestad, Norway, on August 16, 1830, and came to Muskego, Wisconsin with his family in 1854 when he was 24. He worked on a farm there for a couple of years before he traveled with a group of men to Minnesota. As soon as Stephen arrived, he filed a claim for land, 180 acres in Eureka Township, Dakota County.

The land was raw, so Stephen lived with another family according to the 1857 census, while he worked to improve his claim. He had good reason to work hard at building a house, clearing land and establishing his farm—he wanted to marry and needed a home for his new bride. Stephen had met Ingeborg Anderson when they were living in Wisconsin, but she did not come to Minnesota until later in 1857. They married in February of 1858 and settled down to farm and raise a family. Both had family living nearby in Eureka. Stephen's father and brother had the next farms over from Stephen's land and Ingeborg's family was about a mile away. Their first son was born in November of 1858, followed by a daughter born in January of 1860. Another son and daughter were born in 1861 and 1863.



The battles with Confederates may have been far away from their farm, but the Civil War was intruding on the family farm life Stephen and Ingeborg were working at building. Two of Stephen's brothers were drafted, a third one enlisted, and the farm economy of the area was suffering. Stephen decided to enlist to serve one year in the army. He received a bounty of \$100 for his agreement to serve, \$33.33 at his enlistment and the balance in two later payments.

This is where the misspelling of Stephen's last name went down in official records. Military records spell Stephen's surname "Toreson." Family records show an "h" to make his name Thoreson. Stephen's brother, Ole said Stephen dropped the "h" while in the army. Ole mentioned the spelling in the pension deposition he gave for Ingeborg, he did not provide a reason for the change. However, known records where Stephen was required to sign his name show only his mark, "X." Family stories indicate Stephen had very little education and was likely illiterate his entire life. With Stephen's inability to read, probably aided by his Norwegian accent, he likely never knew his name was misspelled by the army.

Stephen reported to Fort Snelling on August 26, 1864, leaving behind his pregnant wife and four small children. He was assigned to the Second Minnesota Battery of Light Artillery and went South with a group of recruits. He reached the Battery in September while they were in garrison duty near Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Garrison duty remained the assignment for the Battery for the rest of the war, so Stephen was set to work repairing the fortifications instead of fighting Confederates.

The Battery's captain, William Hotchkiss, was detached from the unit and ended up overseeing artillery at the Battle of Nashville. One gun section from the Second Minnesota Battery started for Nashville, but were turned back and did not participate in the fight.

Family stories tell of Stephen being captured, but military records do not provide any evidence that Stephen was ever held by the Confederacy. His name does not appear in the morning reports as ever being absent from the Battery. He never reported sick and he was never noted by name for any reason in any known official Battery report. His muster sheets indicate he was present throughout the year of service he provided to the Union Army.

At the end of the war, the Battery returned to Fort Snelling where the men received their final pay and settled their accounts with the Army before being discharged on August 16, 1865.

Stephen returned to his farm and family, a family that continued to grow to include eleven children. By 1880, stories of rich lands in the Red River Valley were circulating and several friends from the area had moved there for that better land. Their reports enticed Stephen to head north with his brother and stake a claim near Grafton, Dakota Territory. They built a cabin and began breaking the virgin prairie. Ingeborg and the younger children stayed on their original farm in Dakota County, Minnesota.

The hard labor of breaking new land was too much for 52 year old Stephen. He suffered from a kidney disorder he blamed on his service in the Civil War. After two years in the Red River Valley, he returned to Minnesota and died on, September 22, 1882. He is buried in Highview Cemetery in Dakota County, Minnesota.

When Ingeborg applied for a widow's pension, she said they had no mortgage on their 180 acres when Stephen died. He left her four horses, seven milk cows, two calves, three hogs, some wheat and oats enough to feed the horses and for seed, but no money. Ingeborg's son farmed the land and gave her a portion of the crops as payment. Only their last child, Alfred, born in 1875, was under 16 years of age when Stephen died, so Ingeborg included him in the pension application.

Stephen had his will made out before his death where he made known his wishes for his estate. His estate was left to Ingeborg with the provision that she remain single. He left each of his sons \$300 and each of his daughters \$100, to be paid at the time they came of age. Pension records indicate Ingeborg did give the children their inheritance as Stephen's will indicated, but only so long as she had enough money. Further testimony in the depositions tell the story of just barely having enough money to get by on.

The last dated pension record on file for Ingeborg was 1901. The spelling change from Toreson to Thoreson was a problem for the pension department. Family records and memories indicate Ingeborg did eventually receive a \$12 month pension as Stephen's widow.





# Suits of Shoddy

HOW A WORD USED TO DESCRIBE SUBPAR CLOTH SAW ITS MEANING  
EXPANDED DURING THE CIVIL WAR BY TRACY L. BARNETT

**FOUNDED IN 1818**, Brooks Brothers of New York is the oldest clothing retailer in America. Even today, the name alone conjures images of fine silk neckties and Italian wool sportscoats—quality, luxurious, expensive products. Touting a patriotic commitment to American presidents and the armed forces, a pamphlet published to mark the company's 100th anniversary declared: "During and after the Civil War, it had many distinguished officers ... as patrons, among whom were Generals Grant, Sheridan, Hooker, and Sherman. It is also said that the coat worn by Lincoln on the night of his assassination was made by Brooks Brothers."<sup>1</sup> It was a splendid coat; crafted for Lincoln's Second Inaugural, the black wool greatcoat featured silk lining with an intricately embroidered eagle and the inscription, "One Country, One Destiny."<sup>2</sup>

Not all Brooks Brothers menswear was of such quality. Union soldiers in 1861 received lesser goods—or *shoddy* uniforms—from Brooks Brothers and other manufacturers.<sup>3</sup> "Shoddy," properly speaking," explained one 19th-century writer, "is the short wool carded or worn from the inside of cloth, without fibre or tenacity, and with no capability of wear, and yet easily made into the semblance of more durable goods. The same is now used, however, as applied to cloth, in a more general sense—to signify any description of rotten or improper material."<sup>4</sup>

Outfitting a volunteer army was a monumental task. Mistakes were made—some honest, some dishonest. And during the war's first months, many soldiers went into the field with subpar equipment and in uniforms made from *shoddy* wool. With their trousers disintegrating, some "wearers were exposing too much of their anatomy."<sup>5</sup>

The Civil War, however, expanded the definition of *shoddy*. By late 1861, all badly made goods were *shoddy*—"shoddy coats, shoddy shoes, shoddy blankets, shoddy tents, shoddy horses, shoddy arms, shoddy ammunition, shoddy boats, shoddy beef and bread."<sup>6</sup> While associated with northeastern war contractors and profiteers, the problem transcended region. Fraud, for example, thrived in General John Frémont's Western Department.<sup>7</sup> The Confederacy, too, had low-quality garb. "I have so much marching to do that my shoes is awring out very fast and my pants is warin out as fast as my shoes is," complained Alabamian George W. Athey.<sup>8</sup>

## Shod•dy

\ 'shä-dē \ noun & adjective

1) an inferior fabric manufactured from reclaimed wool; 2) inferior or imitation goods, often poorly and cheaply made; 3) a vulgar, falsely pretentious individual

Journalists, cartoonists, and the public condemned profiteers. "Who paid for them shoddy pants and them soft-shelled shoes?" protested James Fisk Jr., a New York financier. "Why, they were paid for by the brave men with their blood, and, by G-d, I think they had ought to had a *quid pro quorum* ... for their outlay. The man that will take the

upper hand of a soldier in the field, is worse than a thief—there's no sand in his craw—he's a d----d God-forsaken, pink-eyed, white-livered scoundrel, and his cloths don't fit him."<sup>9</sup> Providing subpar products to their boys, Americans reasoned, was not just bad business, it was unpatriotic too.<sup>10</sup> Public outrage prompted a series of state and federal investigations in 1861 and 1862, which did effectively expose and reduce fraud in the United States.<sup>11</sup>

By mid-war, *shoddy's* definition had metaphorized again; *The Days of Shoddy*, published in 1863 by Henry Morford, describes the word's new meaning: "a synonym for *miserable pretense in patriotism*—a shadow without a substance."<sup>12</sup> Rather than referring exclusively to products, *shoddy* was now applied to people as an insult. Those profiting, or perceived to be wrongly profiting, off the war

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THIS CARTOON, PUBLISHED IN HARPER'S WEEKLY IN AUGUST 1861, DEPICTS A UNION SOLDIER WHO RECEIVED A SHODDY, OR POOR QUALITY, UNIFORM UPON ENLISTMENT—THE "VICTIM" OF CONTRACTORS WHO HAVE INFLUENCE AT WASHINGTON, AS ITS CAPTION NOTES.

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became the *shoddyocracy*. New York City became the epicenter of the imagined crisis. In August 1862, the "Shoddyites," wearing "new silks" and "superabundant diamonds," visited the summer resorts at Saratoga and Long Branch. The same nouveau riche were "driving new equipages about Central Park and inspecting Brignoli through the wrong end of their new opera glasses at the Academy of Music."<sup>13</sup>

Not all had fraudulently obtained their wealth and, in fact, cases of fraud declined after the war's first year.<sup>14</sup> The critique, however, remained. In popular opinion, wartime consumption of the wrong sort became explicitly linked to morality and patriotism. Editorials and cartoons published during the war consistently emphasized the appearance and spending habits of the *shoddyocracy*. Diamonds, in particular, were deemed inappropriate items for some individuals to purchase or possess. Taking aim at conspicuous consumption, a male passenger en route to New York couldn't help but notice "Mrs. Shoddy" and her daugh-

ters' diamonds, which were "worth another million." "I may be a little cynical and hard to please," he remarked, "but it strikes me a time of carnage and death and lamentation like this is poor time for dancing and dissipation."<sup>15</sup> Established northern elites continued to dress in splendor and their status, like their attire, was not questioned in this context. The main critique was not how the money was obtained, but rather who obtained it and how they spent it.

Cartoons portrayed the *shoddyocracy* as uncouth, uncultured New Yorkers. In particular, war profiteers spoke with a thick Irish brogue and their wives shoved oversized, workingwomen's hands into fine kid gloves. Bearded merchants, born in foreign lands, cunningly and knowingly sold badly made goods for profit, and grew immensely wealthy as native-born soldiers died on the battlefield. Malicious stereotypes targeting New York's Jewish merchants and Irish immigrants were common. "Once again," concludes historian J. Matthew Gallman, "the Civil War had provided a convenient outlet for broad-based class and ethnic hostilities."<sup>16</sup>

"It was during the Civil War that the word 'shoddy' was coined," claimed Marian Campbell Gouverneur in her memoir of northeastern society life.<sup>17</sup> She is wrong only in part; the word predated the conflict, but it first entered the common American lexicon in 1861. In 1862, it first appeared as an adjective in the *Oxford English Dictionary*: a person "that pretends to a superiority to which he has no just claim; said esp. of those who claim, on the ground of wealth, a social station or a degree of influence to which they are not entitled by character or breeding."<sup>18</sup>

Over the course of just four years, the meaning of *shoddy* transformed from an obscure textile term into a common adjective and further into a slur—a prime example of war's effect on language for both soldiers and civilians. **M**



# **“Don’t Forget your Soldier Lovers!” A Story of Civil War Valentines**

By Angela Esco Elder |

Some may be surprised to learn that St. Valentine’s Day, and all its commercialism, was alive and well during the bloodiest war of our nation’s past. Much like today, nineteenth-century advertisers and newspapers relentlessly warned their patrons that the holiday loomed. On February 11, 1864, the *Holmes County Farmer* newspaper in Ohio read, “We are reminded that Valentine Day is approaching. Tuesday next, the 14th inst., is set aside as the carnival of lovers. It is said the birds choose their mates on that day, and, it being leap year, it is expected all the marriageable girls will select their mates.”

During the war, companies ran a number of Valentine ads that targeted women with loved ones off at battle. “Don’t forget your soldier lovers. Keep their courage up with a rousing Valentine. All prices. Six cents to five dollars each,” advertised Strong’s Valentine Depot in 1862. In 1863, New York City’s American Valentine Company promoted “soldiers’ valentine packets,” “army valentine packets,” and “torch of love packets.” In Washington D.C., Shillington’s likewise advertised packets specifically for soldiers, which “contains two superb sentimental valentines and elegant embossed envelopes; also comic valentines and beautiful valentine cards in fancy envelopes.

In some cases, this collision of holiday and war was quite jarring. For example, in February 1862,

**VALENTINES.**

**STRONG'S SOLDIERS' VALENTINE PACKAGE, NO. 1.**  
CONTAINS

1 very fancy Valentine, new style.....	15
1 elegant embossed Envelope.....	2
1 handsome Valentine, new style.....	10
1 nicely embossed Envelope.....	2
3 Military Comic Valentines, new style.....	9
1 Poetry Valentine Writer.....	6
2 fancy Valentine Cards.....	6

**PRICE FIFTY CENTS.**

**SOLDIERS' VALENTINE PACKAGE, NO. 2.**  
CONTAINS

1 elegant Valentine, new style.....	30
1 fancy Envelope.....	2
1 very rich Valentine, new style.....	20
1 fancy embossed Envelope.....	20
1 beautiful Valentine, new style.....	10
1 embossed Envelope.....	2
3 nicely colored Military Comic Valentines, new designs.....	15
1 Valentine Writer.....	6
2 splendid Valentine Cards.....	10

**PRICE ONE DOLLAR.**

The above packages are enclosed in a handsome illuminated envelope, printed in colors, and will be sent by mail, free of charge, on receipt of the price. Soldiers and the trade furnished at a liberal discount. Send your order early.

**T. W. STRONG,**  
Importer and Publisher,  
95 Nassau Street, New York

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**VALENTINES, VALENTINES.**  
**THE NEW YORK UNION VALENTINE COMPANY**  
Offer to the trade

Largest Discounts, Better Styles and a Greater Variety of  
**COMIC**  
**AND**  
**SENTIMENTAL**  
**VALENTINES**  
**AND ENVELOPES**

Than any other Manufacturers.

They have a variety of Styles very desirable, from the fact that they differ from any ever before manufactured. You will do well to examine this stock before purchasing.

**BERLIN & JONES,**  
Valentine and Envelope Manufacturers  
And dealers in all kinds of  
**NOTE, LETTER AND CAP PAPERS,**  
134 William Street,  
New York.

Valentine’s Day advertisement in The New York Herald, January 27, 1863.

Indiana’s Evansville Daily Journal described Main Street bookstores filled with card displays “large and varied enough to suit the tastes of all.” Immediately beneath this bulletin was a notice to the recently wounded and those in mourning: “Disabled soldiers applying for pensions, and the widow or heirs of soldiers who have been killed, or died in service, should call” began the section, followed by another notice related to “troops moving.” This newspaper column, flowing from one topic to the next, provides powerful insight into the daily experiences of the homefront. Yes, the war was about troop movements. Yes, the war included wounds, death, and pensions. But even as wives worried ceaselessly about the loss of husbands, scanning the papers for news, they also read advertisements and planned for their Valentine’s celebrations. Life did not stop in the midst of war. Neither did holidays. And advertisers knew it.

**ST. VALENTINE'S DAY.**—We are reminded by the appearance of the windows of the bookstores on Main street, that the anniversary of St. Valentine is near at hand. The stock of Valentines is large and varied enough to suit the tastes of all, and we anticipate a lively time at the Post office, next Friday.

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**Disabled soldiers applying for Pensions,** and the widow or heirs of soldiers who have been killed, or died in service, should call at the Pension Agency of Stinson & Tennis. They are fully prepared with all the required Forms of Instructions, and the Acts of Congress in relation to soldiers claims; and prepare papers with that care and precision which insures success in the Department at Washington.

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**Troops Moving.**

The steamers, B. J. Adams, E. H. Fairchild, Thos. E. Tutt and Baltic, with the 31st and 44th Indiana, and 17th and 25th Kentucky regiments, passed down the river, last evening. The steamers went up Green river, Saturday, and embarked most of the troops at Spottsville.

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Robert H. King's valentine for Louiza. Courtesy of the Library of Virginia.

Soldiers at war also remembered Valentine's Day. Though they appeared less likely to purchase formal Valentine's stationery, original poetry and letters of love came home in abundance. One particularly special valentine came from Confederate soldier Robert H. King, who created a paper heart with a pen knife for his wife, Louiza. When opened, the seemingly random holes in the paper reveal two people separated from one another, crying.

On November 8, 1861, Robert had written to his wife, "it panes my hart to think of leaven you all" and signed his letter as many soldiers did, with "yours til death." Ultimately, this would be true, and all Louiza would be left with was this paper heart. Robert died of typhoid fever near Petersburg, Virginia, in April 1863. She kept this valentine until her own death decades later, perhaps believing there is more heart in handmade.

To return to our original question, are our contemporaries correct in their claim that materialism is ripping out the heart of Valentine's Day? Perhaps not. At least in the nineteenth century, materialism was part of the holiday all along.

When Sarah Woif married Sylvanus Emswiller of Shenandoah County on Valentine's Day

1861, she likely was not thinking about advertisers, but rather, the love associated with the holiday. She certainly was not thinking about the fact that she, too, would become a widow in 1863 when Sylvanus died of pneumonia, fighting with the Second Virginia Infantry. Love, loss, celebration, heartache – they all swirled together in the Civil War.

The creativity of advertisers is not to be undersold as enterprising executives have discovered how to widen the consumer market to include those who are currently unattached.

"After the chocolates have been eaten and the flowers wilt, roaches remain thriving and triumphant. Give the gift that's eternal and name a roach for Valentine's Day."

That's right, for fifteen dollars, you can name a roach after your ex and send them a digital certificate from the Bronx Zoo!



***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>**

## ***Your Country Needs You!***

### **And so does the Battery!**

***2025 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: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send this form and your check to:

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

PLEASE fill out this form to be sure we have the most accurate contact info for members, especially if you have changed addresses, emails, phones, etc.