



2ND MINNESOTA BATTERY OF LIGHT ARTILLERY

James L. Blair

James enlisted at Dover, Minnesota on February 16, 1864. He signed up to serve three years and was promised \$300 in bounty money. Most men got at least a portion of their bounty immediately, but records do not indicate James got any of his money up front. The enlisting officer recorded that James was born in Dundee, Scotland, was 39 years old, and was working as a farmer at the time. He was 5' 8" tall, with blue eyes, light hair and a sandy complexion. James was assigned to the Second Battery and served as a private. The doctor who gave James his enlistment physical was William W. Mayo.

The information given to the recruiting officer agrees with the 1860 census in that James was born in Scotland and was farming in Dover, Winona County, but it said he was only 30. Four years later, James said he was 39. James had no taxable real estate value in 1860 and \$100 in personal property.

By March 31, 1864, James was in the field near Rossville, Georgia, but he was not serving with the Second Minnesota. The members of that unit were reenlisting and going home on veteran's furloughs, so James was detailed to the Second Illinois Battery I. James participated in the battles for Atlanta that summer while serving with the Illinois Battery and was wounded on August 9 in the battle for Atlanta. His muster sheet showed James absent at the end of August and that he owed \$2.30 for half of a shelter tent.

The Second Minnesota Battery was back in the field that fall and James was carried on their muster roll, but it is unclear where he was as he is never noted as "present" on the Minnesota muster sheets. Those muster sheets make note of James being owed \$80 for two installments of his bounty payment, but no indication that money was actually paid to James. That same notation was repeated on the muster sheet for November and December.

The muster sheets for January and February of 1865 still noted James owed bounty installments, but this time he owed \$3.80 for transportation.

His final muster sheet for March and April of 1865 provide a clue to where James was—the hospital at Jeffersonville, Indiana. He may have been in the hospital since being wounded in front of Atlanta the previous August when he was first noted as "absent." This final muster sheet indicated James was now owed for four installments of his bounty and that \$13.80 was stopped from his pay for "transportation."

His muster out roll was dated June 14, 1865, at Springfield, Illinois, indicating James had never made it to the Second Minnesota despite being carried on their rolls.

This is the last information about James that is certain. Several men by the name of James Blair appear in various documents and records in Minnesota and it is unclear which is the correct James Blair. Searches beyond Minnesota yield no information that is conclusively the right man.

Researched and compiled by the reenactors of the 2nd Minnesota Battery of Light Artillery. Visit our website at <http://www.2mnbattery.org> for more information about our soldiers and our organization.

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