



## 2ND MINNESOTA BATTERY OF LIGHT ARTILLERY

### Jacob Decondres

Jacob signed his own name on his enlistment papers, but that may have been all the more writing he did as he left very little about his life beyond questions.

Muster roles showed Jacob mustering into the Battery on January 28, 1862. He was one of the early members of the Battery and should have been training with them at Fort Snelling. He may not have done much training, though he did go South with the Battery in May of 1862. Jacob was discharged for disability at St. Louis, Missouri, on June 7th. His discharge noted that he had not performed any duty for four months, meaning he had been ill since some time in February.

The descriptive information on his discharge said Jacob was 23 years old, with hazel eyes, dark hair and a dark complexion. He stood an even six foot tall and was a farmer. He had been born in Tompkins County, New York.

Jacob went back to Minnesota and must have recovered rather well as on the 17th of August of that same year, he enlisted again, this time with the Seventh Minnesota Infantry, Company B. Once again, he agreed to serve for three years, but his descriptive sheet said his eyes were blue rather than as they were when he enlisted in the Battery. He was still the same height, his age, occupation, birthplace, and his hair and skin tone remained the same. Jacob collected some cash at the time of his enlistment as he was advanced an entire month's pay, \$13, and a bounty of \$23.

No special remarks appear on his muster sheets until January and February of 1863. There, it was noted that Jacob was "absent at Winona on leave of 20 days." He was due back at the end of February. That did not happen as his muster sheet said by order of Colonel Miller, Jacob was detailed for Battery duty at Fort Snelling. The Third Minnesota Battery was forming and perhaps because of Jacob's earlier experience in the Second Battery, he was detailed to serve in the Third Battery.

However, those orders do not match what appears in the Third Battery's records. The Third Battery muster roll said Jacob joined the unit on October 2, 1862, at Camp Release in Minnesota, a transfer from the Seventh Infantry. Exactly when Jacob left the Infantry and where he joined the artillery is unknown.

Something else was going on and records do not explain what. The Battery's November/December muster sheets noted Jacob had to forfeit four days pay by sentence of general court martial at Fort Snelling on December 22, 1863.

The January and February, 1864 muster roll for the Battery said Jacob was sick in the hospital and the March/April sheet said he was retransferred to the Seventh as his original transfer had been canceled.

Jacob's muster sheets begin again in the Seventh Infantry with the March/April, 1864, sheet, noting he was "on detached service" to the Third Battery. In April, it said Jacob's transfer was invalid and his name was to be taken up on the roll of the Seventh once more.

It was probably a moot point as the muster sheets list Jacob as "sick in Hospital at Davenport, Iowa" in May and June of 1864. July found Jacob listed as back at Fort Snelling and serving on detached service there. The same notation was made on every muster sheet for Jacob until the May/June, 1865, muster. There it said Jacob was discharged on May 10, 1865 from Davenport, Iowa. Had Jacob really made it back to Fort Snelling or had he remained in the hospital at Davenport?



On the records of the Seventh Infantry, Jacob's account was settled at his discharge according to what they believed to be correct. He owed \$28.55 for clothing and money advanced to him prior to August 31, 1864. Their records also showed he was due another \$25 in bounty money. There is a discrepancy of \$2 in how much he got and how much the Seventh *thought* he got for a bounty when he enlisted and Jacob probably was shorted that \$2.

The tangled trail of service records Jacob left is more than what is known about the remainder of his life. No trace of Jacob has been found in any record until a request to the Veterans Department was made for a military tombstone to mark his grave. The request was undated, but asked for the stone to be sent to the Union Cemetery in Port Washington, Wisconsin. Cemetery records do not include a burial date and the county records do not have a death certificate for Jacob. Local newspaper indexes do not list Jacob's name, so not even an obituary gives any glimpse at his life.

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*Researched and compiled by the reenactors of the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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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