



## 2ND MINNESOTA BATTERY OF LIGHT ARTILLERY

### Loring F. Fletcher

Coming from a home town with the name of Grand Detour was very fitting for Loring as his service in the 34th Illinois Infantry was anything but routine. He enlisted on September 7, 1861, at Camp Butler, Illinois, and was assigned to Company F. He enlisted for three years. Since he was only 18 years old, he needed a letter of consent, which his father wrote for him. Loring was still living at home, working on his father's farm in the town of Taylor, Ogle County, Illinois, when he enlisted. Loring was 5' 9" tall, had gray eyes, brown hair and a light complexion.

The 34th Illinois was assigned to the western theater of the war and Loring went with them. In September of 1864, the muster roll showed Loring to be "Absent with Authority" and "supposed" that he had been captured. The supposition was correct. Loring had been captured and he spent five months and five days away from his regiment. A reason given on one of the muster rolls suggested Loring was a "straggler" and that may be how he came to be captured.

Once released by his Confederate captors, Loring was assigned to Company H of the Regimental Paroled Forces of the U. S. Army. He stayed with them until April of 1862, when he returned to his regiment. His first duty was serving with the wagon train of the regiment, a duty he performed until August 31st.

With the coming and going of being captured, released, sent to the parole regiment, and then back, Loring's records got confused. He began to be recorded as a deserter. January and February's muster rolls show him absent, "whereabouts unknown." The muster roll dated April 10, 1863, said that Loring had reported from desertion to Camp Lew Wallace, but other records refute the desertion. Loring was cleared of the desertion charges and continued to serve.

Loring's next detour from infantry duty came on November 21, 1863, when he was assigned to the Second Minnesota Battery of Light Artillery. He served as a "detailed" man to help bolster up the thinning ranks of the Battery for about six weeks before he had to return to his own regiment. The 34th Infantry was in the process of veteranizing and Loring had to decide if he wanted stay in the army another three years or finish his term and go home. Loring decided to reenlist and he was immediately paid \$60 of a promised \$400 bounty. Reenlisting also earned him a 30 day furlough, so one more time, Loring left his regiment.

He made the most of his time on furlough, though, as he got married February 25, 1864.

Loring arrived back in the south with the rest of his regiment in March. He served with the infantry until July when he became very sick. Loring described it as a deep, severe pain in his side that grew steadily worse. He knew the date was July 22 because it began on the morning after they had fought a battle on the way to Atlanta. Loring was sent the Division Hospital where he remained until the end of October. The diagnosis was unclear, but doctors blamed his problems on "exertion and exposure" and believed the problem would continue to worsen. Loring was not discharged, however, he continued to serve with the 34th Infantry until it was discharged at the end of the war in Chicago, Illinois.

The disease was taking a toll on Loring and in December of 1865, he filed for a disability pension. He cited the problems, explained that he had been a farm laborer on his father's farm before the war, and that he was unable to do farm work because of his illness.



The pension papers do not tell if Loring received a pension, but his illness was probably as bad as he claimed it was. On May 3, 1865, Loring died. He was laid to rest in the Grand Detour Cemetery in Ogle County, Illinois with a military marker.

His son, Lester, was born five months later on October 5. Lester did receive a pension from his father's service and collected \$8.00 per month until he was 16 years old. Loring's wife remarried in November of 1868, and her pension stopped.

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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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