



2ND MINNESOTA BATTERY OF LIGHT ARTILLERY

Martin O. Fossom

Martin Fossom was born in Gjerdrum, Norway, on March 23, 1844. Martin was about 12 years old when his family left Norway and moved to America. Before the family left Norway, a minister gave them a certificate written in the old style Norwegian script to provide proof of dates for births and marriage. The family lived near Wasioja until 1860 when they moved to a farm near Albert Lea in Freeborn County.

Martin was helping on the farm when he enlisted in the Second Battery in February of 1862. Martin had gray eyes, light hair and a light complexion. He was 5' 11" tall and single. He father said he was "a large man, would weigh about 200 pounds".

The time Martin spent serving the Battery was as a private. He was a dutiful son, sending home about \$100 of his pay to the family while he was in the service. In March of 1863, he was sent to Hospital #2 in Murfreesboro where he would spend a great deal of time moving from one hospital to another. On September 11th of that year, he was transferred to the Invalid Corps, but was discharged for disability two days later. After his discharge, Martin headed home, but was forced to stay in Winona several weeks because he was too ill to travel. His father said Martin was suffering with some kind of boil or deep sore on the side of his neck and it nearly killed Martin before it broke open and drained. It was not the only illness troubling Martin and was not the cause of his discharge.



Once home, Martin was still sick and was not able to farm. He bought a pair of colts and gave them to his father, but Martin was too frail to do more than light work such as driving teams. He served as a constable for a time, worked with a threshing crew, and was the town supervisor. After a few years, Martin moved to a place near Rushford, Minnesota. There, he kept a saloon. Martin remained in Rushford until going home to his family a few weeks before his death. The intent was to visit, but after supper on July 15, 1885, Martin went to bed not feeling well. He complained of pains in his stomach and was suffering greatly. The doctor was called before daylight the next morning and arrived at noon, but he could do nothing for Martin. Martin as 42 years old when he died that evening, July 16, 1885. He was buried in the Highland Prairie Cemetery in Fillmore County with a simple military marker.

Martin's father petitioned for the pension Martin would have been eligible for from his army service. The elder Mr. Fossom had lost his wife and had deeded the farm, which had a large mortgage on it, to his son Ole provided Ole take care of his father in later years. Ole died before his father and Ole's wife was trying to honor the contract between her husband and father-in-law, but crop failures and other troubles were making it hard. The Pension examiner interviewed everyone involved and decided that though there was not a strong case for the father getting the pension as it could not be proved that Martin had died from a service related illness, he was deserving of the "small amount" Martin's pension would provide.

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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