



2ND MINNESOTA BATTERY OF LIGHT ARTILLERY

William Wallace Gallespie

William never lived in Minnesota. In 1864, he was working as a laborer on the east side of the St. Croix River in Polk County, Wisconsin. When he and his friend, Ezra Jewel, decided to enlist on August 30, 1864, they went to the nearest town with a recruiting office. That office was across the river in Taylor's Falls, Minnesota. It put the two men in the Second Minnesota Battery of Light Artillery where they would serve the last year of the war together and continue their friendship for the rest of their lives.

William was born on June 23, 1822, in Louisville, but he grew up in Illinois. He came to Marine Mills, Wisconsin in 1844, making him one of the earliest settlers of the county. He made his home in Clam Falls. That home included Cecilia M. Ring, a widow, whom William had married in 1851. The family grew further with the addition of sons and one daughter.

When he enlisted in 1864, he was 42 years and two months old, with blue eyes, sandy hair and a fair complexion. He stood 5' 11" tall. He was promised a bounty of \$100 in exchange for serving one year in the Army.

Being his enlistment was only for a year and it was late in the war, William started and ended his military career as a private. On December 5, 1864, he was detailed with a group of men from the Battery to cut logs for the garrison. Ezra was one of the later men detailed to this duty, so the friends still served together even though they were cutting logs. William and Ezra returned to the Battery for duty on April 5, 1865, and came north when the unit was mustered out on August 16, 1865.

William continued to live and work in Polk County. In 1878, he moved the family to a homestead in Loraine, still in Polk County, Wi, where he ran a hotel in addition to his farming operations. Ezra was still William's neighbor. By 1891, William was applying for a pension. He wrote, "My breast bone was broken 7 years ago by falling from a wagon, it causes a great deal of pain in my heart shoulder and back."

The Pension Department agreed and added "disease of heart" to the disability.

William was living in Stone Lake with his daughter, Mrs. Henry Tuttle, in 1913. His pension was paid at a rate of \$22.50 per month and the last check was issued in May. William died on May 23, 1913, and was laid to rest in the town of St. Croix, Wisconsin.

Both of the old soldiers were dead when the wife of William's friend and Battery comrade, Ezra Jewel, needed help. Ezra's wife lost her pension certificate in a house fire and needed proof of her husband's service before she could receive any further help from the Pension Department. William's son, William A. Gallespie, signed an affidavit for her stating he had known the Jewel family for many years and knew the claim to be correct. It was the proof she needed and her widow's assistance was restored.

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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