



2ND MINNESOTA BATTERY OF LIGHT ARTILLERY

Cornelius F. Harder

Cornelius enlisted in Captain Caligan's Company of 101st Regiment of Ohio Infantry on August 7, 1862. He joined the regiment at Camp Monroeville on August 30. He was from Lyme, Ohio, and agreed to serve for three years. At the time he was mustered in, he was given \$27 from Captain E. Drake. What he may not have told the recruiting offers was that he was only recently released from prison. In 1860, Cornelius was serving time in the penitentiary at Jeffersonville, Indiana, for larceny.

The descriptive book of the 101st Ohio Infantry placed him in Company A. He was 39 years old, was a harness maker and had been born in Hudson, New York. He was 5' 8" tall, had hazel eyes, brown hair and a sandy complexion.

Cornelius served as a private with the infantry until December 26, 1862, when he was left at the convalescent camp in Nashville. By February 28, 1863, he was back with the regiment.

On March 1, 1863, Cornelius and a number of other men from the 101st Ohio Infantry were detailed to serve with the Second Minnesota Battery. Orders were not officially written until the 29th, but they were backdated to reflect the date the men joined the Battery. It was while serving in the Battery that Cornelius began to have trouble. By June, he was under arrest for drunkenness, absence without leave and stealing. He was delivered to the provost marshal on June 22.

Three charges were preferred against Cornelius. The first was a "Violation of No. 44, Articles of War" with the specification that he "did fail to report at the time fixed, to the place of drill; he not being Excused therefrom by any competent Authority."

The second charge was "Absence from Camp without leave. In this; that he, the said Cornelius F. Harder, Private Co. A 101" Reg't Ohio Vol. Inf. did, without permission from competent Authority, absent himself from the camp of his Company, and did remain absent until arrested and bought back to said camp by a party sent after him by his Commanding officer."

Stealing was the third charge, "In this: that he, the said Cornelius F. Harder, Private Co. A 101" Reg't Ohio Vol. Inf. did steal from his comrade, David Coulthard, Private, 2" Battery Light Artillery Minnesota Vols. One Silver Watch: this at the Camp of the 2" Minnesota Battery, near Murfreesboro, Tenn. On or about the 22" day of June A.D. 1863."

The charges were drawn up by the Battery's Lieutenant, Albert Woodbury and witnessed by four Battery men: Lt. Richard L. Dawley, 2nd Lt. Alexander Kinhead, Corporal Daniel Frye and Private David W. Coulthard. The charges were forwarded up the chain of command, but the outcome is unknown. The next record of Cornelius was that he was left sick in the hospital at Chattanooga in September of 1863.

Orders transferred him back to his Infantry regiment in October and he was present with Company A, 101st Ohio Infantry by November.

Cornelius stayed out of trouble in the infantry until he was assigned daily duty as a saddler in May of 1864. The good conduct didn't last as on November 27, he was listed as a deserter at Columbia, Tennessee. The company muster role made a careful list of all the equipment Cornelius had taken when he left along with the value of each item.

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| 1 Springfield Rifle Musket, Complete (58 cal) | \$19.25 |
| 1 cartridge box, Complete (58 cal) | 3.25 |
| 1 Ball screw | .13 |
| 1 screw driver | .20 |
| 1 Spring vice | .30 |
| 1 Knapsack | 2.15 |
| 1 Haversack | .40 |
| 1 Canteen and strap | .45 |
| 1 Shelter Tent | 4.60 |
| Total: | \$30.96 |

On December 29, Cornelius was listed as a patient at Hospital No. 3 in Nashville, Tennessee, and was due two months pay on the hospital muster role. The regimental muster role dated December 31 listed him as a deserter and again detailed the equipment Cornelius had and its respective values. The desertion was probably a misunderstanding of his being left at the hospital and must have been cleared up as Cornelius returned to duty with the 101st Ohio on January 28, 1865.

However, by February 8th when the Regiment was at Huntsville, he was back under arrest for desertion once again. This time, charges were preferred and the specifications listed desertion. Again, the list of his equipment with its value was noted, but this time the value of some articles had gone down, so he only owed \$28.41.

Despite all the charges preferred against him at one time or another, Cornelius was with his company when they were discharged from the service at the end of the war. His discharge was listed as honorable at Camp Harker, Tennessee, on June 12, 1865. He was owed back pay of \$116.79 since he had not received pay since August 31, 1864. The government got its money back, though, as they held \$25.75 from his pay to cover the cost of lost equipment.

Cornelius did not remain in Ohio. By 1880, he was living in Canaan, Columbia County, New York, with his wife and children and working as a laborer. He and his wife, Ruby, had four children living with them at the time, two girls and two boys. The eldest son was 26 with the occupation of laborer. The youngest two were at a school and the eldest daughter was at home. Cornelius and Ruby must have moved around some as the first two children were born in New York. The third was born in Massachusetts and the last one back in New York again. The next record found is when Cornelius died on September 27, 1887. He was laid to rest in the Red



Rock Cemetery in Red Rock, Columbia County, New York. Ruby was laid to rest beside him on December 10, 1912.

Records only hint at a relationship between Cornelius and another Second Battery man, Henry Harder. A family record lists the children of John and Rebecca Harder. Failing Cornelius was the oldest, Henry was four years younger. With a first name like Failing, it would be little surprise if he went by his middle name. While the family record dates do not correspond exactly with the ages the boys said they were when they enlisted, the locations of birth do match. Henry's apparent downturn in his behavior—according to Captain Hotchkiss—coincides with the departure of Cornelius from the Battery. Henry's urgently needed leave also matches close to the dates Cornelius was in the hospital in Nashville. Were they brothers who managed to connect during the war? The sparse records left leave much room for guessing, but provide few answers.

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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