



2ND MINNESOTA BATTERY OF LIGHT ARTILLERY

David Munsey

David was born in February of 1837 in Barnstead, New Hampshire. By 1860, he was living in Anoka, Minnesota, working as a shoemaker. David rented a room from a family in Anoka and had a roommate. On January 2, 1862, David left his shoe making job to join the Second Battery as it was forming up. He was 25 years old, had hazel eyes, brown hair, a dark complexion, and was 5' 8-1/2" tall.

David eventually became the quartermaster sergeant for the Battery, but Army life was not easy for him. He was first taken sick in July of 1862 when the Battery was in camp near Clear Creek, Mississippi. He was treated for diarrhea by a surgeon from Carlin's Brigade as the Battery did not have their own surgeon. In September, while on the march to Louisville, Kentucky, David's diarrhea came back and brought a case of jaundice with it. He was again relieved from duty and was carried in the Battery's ambulance until they reached Louisville where he was treated in what David called the Battery Hospital by a "contract surgeon" named Russell who was attached to the Battery.

After this, David's health grew better and he served at his duties without fail. On December 6, 1863, he was sent by the Battery's commanding officer to get clothing for the men from Nashville. It took ten days for David to return to Chattanooga and his arrival made the men much more comfortable. Several Battery men commented on the arrival of the new clothes in their letters and diaries as some complained at that point, they had only one shirt and it had no sleeves. Several other times during his service, David was sent by order of the commanding officer on special duties.

In March of 1864, David reenlisted and earned both a bounty of \$300 and a veteran's furlough. David made the most of his veteran's furlough, he married Eliza C. Randolph in Anoka on May 17th. Very shortly after, he reported back to Fort Snelling and the Battery returned to the war. David said the diarrhea came back even before the Battery made it as far as Louisville and the weakness it caused him probably added to the sunstroke he then suffered while on the march. He was treated in the Battery's hospital "from time to time as needed" David said, and he continued to serve when well enough to do so until the Battery was mustered out at the end of the war.

David went back to Anoka after the war was over and settled down to farm. In 1869, he filed a complaint about a stray mare colt that had come into his enclosed property. The horse caused some damage. David posted notices with a description of the animal in three of "the most public places" in the town. Town as David described it, was in Grow Township. David decided the care and feeding he had done for the colt combined with the damages it caused entitled him to keep the animal since no one had come forward to claim the colt (and pay the damages).

David continued to struggle with his health. Doctors in Anoka gave him various medicines, but in June of 1875, Doctor Whiteman told David a change in climate would do his health good. At the time, David and Eliza were farming in the township of Ham Lake and it was said David "left Ham Lake with a wagon full of everything they owned, his wife perched on top, for Texas."

Texas did not help his health and David continued to be sick, this time without a doctor to take care of him. David said he had to do his own doctoring as he had no money to pay a doctor. The farm land in Texas did not seem to be able to support David and his family, so they left Lampassas and moved to Burnett County, Texas. They stayed there a while, then moved again to Elk County, Kansas. Throughout all the moves, David said he continued to have trouble with diarrhea and pain in his head caused by the sunstroke he suffered while on the march with the Army.

One of David's acquaintances from before the war, Philip Hymes, wrote a pension deposition for David and described how bad David looked when the group of new recruits arrived in camp in September of 1862. Philip said David "did not have the strength to raise up to greet us" which would have been unusual since the new men were mostly from the Anoka area and probably all knew David. Philip said David's eyes were "very yellow" and that even after the war, David had struggled with his health. Philip believed strongly that David should receive a pension and said so in no uncertain terms.

What caused the problems that brought David to the Kansas State Insane Asylum is unknown, but he was admitted there on January 6, 1887, in "a state of great mental and physical prostration."

David did not remain long under the hospital's care as he died on April 20th of that same year from "exhaustion" according to the hospital's records. He was just 49 years old. David was laid to rest in the cemetery on the grounds of the Asylum in a marked, but unnamed grave. Eliza survived him and applied for a widow's pension. On it, she stated that she had no children who could benefit from the pension offered for minors. Whether she meant they had no children under 16 years or if they never had any children is unclear.

Eliza was granted a pension of \$12 a month, an amount that increased to \$30 a month a few years later. By 1926, she was 84 years old, had had stroke, could no longer dress or feed herself, and required a nurse to care for her. The Bureau of Pensions finally recommended an increase in her pension to \$50 a month.



The cemetery where David was laid to rest was moved and the stone markers moved with the bodies to the new location, though it is not clear if the correctly numbered stone went with the proper body. As of 2003, David rested in the cemetery just outside the hospital grounds with some 342 others who died through the years without relatives or means to bury them elsewhere. What number stone David rests under will probably never be known.

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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