



## 2ND MINNESOTA BATTERY OF LIGHT ARTILLERY

### George Franklin Murphie

*"Dear Father*

*We left St. Paul about four o'clock after leaving the Fort, and arrived at St Louis the next Friday morning about sunrise and started immediately for this camp or barracks which we reached about noon."*

Those were the opening lines of the first letter George mailed home to his father in St. Anthony after the Battery left Minnesota. George had enlisted in the Battery on January 16, 1862, trained, and finally went South in late April. He should have felt right at home on the riverboat as he had spent some time at sea prior to 1860 when he came to Minnesota. He listed his occupation as sailor on his enlistment papers. He was 23 years old, had blue eyes, dark hair, a dark complexion, and stood 5' 5" tall.

George described the trip south, relating how the troops were cheered at each stop along the way and that the only incident was being blown ashore near Nauvoo. He then described his military life.

*"This life is new and exciting ... Have received our horses 115 and 18 mules. Expect to get our Cannon and the remained of our outfit this week. We have just received orders to hold ourselves in readiness to go to Pittsburg Landing."*

The battle at Pittsburg Landing, also known as Shiloh, had been fought just over a month earlier. George provided his father with new mailing instructions for letters, so George obviously expected to get news from home often. He noted that he had enclosed a check for his father to cash and reassured everyone about his health being good even though there were "a good many men" for the Battery who were sick. He continued:

*"We are all in good spirits and glad to go as far as called for into Dixie. The fighting will probably be over before we get there, but for picking cotton bales, gold watches or darkies, count us in. Give my love to all Mother friends and all the handsome girls, who know what a soldier is and should be."*

George never gathered up a cotton bale, gold watch, or "darkie". When the Battery was in camp at Clear Creek, Mississippi, George contracted typhoid fever. By June 27<sup>th</sup>, he was dead. A notice appeared in the St. Anthony newspaper that said George died from typhoid fever; was the eldest son of E.D.W. Murphie, 2 years and 11 months old and had served as a cannoneer in the Second Minnesota.

George's father had depended on the money George sent and needed help, so he applied to the Pension Department. The depositions filed indicated that George had been supporting his father with money, clothes, provision, and more ever since George had arrived in Minnesota in 1860. George lived with his father and stepmother and was the major breadwinner for the

family, continuing to provide for them even after he had enlisted. George's stepmother wasn't sure the last letter they had received was in George's handwriting. She thought he may have had someone else write it for him, but she believed it to be his words. She also verified that the check he sent was for \$60, drawn on a New York bank. That amount would have been nearly all of George's pay for the few short months he served in Uncle Sam's Army. As proof George had supported his father, one of the letters George wrote was mailed to the Pension Department. The Pension Department kept the letter – the letter that described the riverboat ride south.



George was buried in the cemetery at Corinth, Mississippi. It was included in the National Cemetery system when it was established and remains a field of honor for those who gave their lives while serving their country.

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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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