



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. (See more of the letter below)

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 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.

The 1857 census showed the family living in Shakopee, Scott County, Minnesota, with parents, five children—George was the youngest—and another young woman named Christine Baine, age 21.

The 1860 census places the family still on a farm in Shakopee and paints a picture of a prosperous farm with a taxable real estate value of \$16,000 and personal property valued at \$1000. There is a woman listed as a servant and a man noted as a "farm laborer" in addition to George. He is the only child listed.

George enlisted in January of 1862 and by spring, the Battery was on the move. 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. We have drilled but little since coming here Have received our horses 115 and 18 mules. Expect to get our Cannon and the remainder 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 less than 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" from 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 "picked" a cotton bale, gold watch, or "darkie". When the Battery was in camp at Clear Creek, Mississippi, George contracted typhoid fever. By June 27th, he was dead. A notice appeared in the St. Anthony newspaper that said George died from typhoid fever and was the eldest son of E.D.W. Murphie. He was 23 years and 11 months old and had served as a cannoneer in the Second Minnesota.

George's father told the Pension Department he had depended on the money George sent and needed help, so he applied for a "dependent parent" pension. The depositions filed indicated that George had been supporting his father with money, clothes, provisions, 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 never returned the letter and it remains in George's pension file.



It would seem what was told to the Pension Department conflicts with information in other records.

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

This is the text of a letter written by George Murphie.



Camp Benton, St. Louis

May 7, 1862

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. We had as pleasant a passage down as could be expected with some 800 passengers. At all the towns on the river the people flocked to the banks as we passed, or stopped for a few minutes while our band struck up Hail Columbia, or Yankee Doodle, and cheer after cheer greeted us on landing and leaving. We met with no accident, except being blown ashore at Nauvoo, where we lay until morning. This life is new and exciting. We have drilled but little since coming here. Have received our horses 115 and 18 mules. Expect to get our cannon and the remainder of our outfit this week. We have just received orders to hold ourselves in readiness to go to Pittsburg Landing. It is thought we shall leave about Monday next, in five days, but you had better direct your letters to this place.

*Mr. George Murphie
2nd Battery, Min Vols
Camp Benton
St. Louis
Missouri*

and if we leave it will be forwarded.

Inclosed you will find a check. I am well and healthy. Although a good many of our men are sick. We are all in good spirits and glad to go as fast 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/?? and all the handsome girls, who know what a soldier is and should be.

*Your affectionate
Son
Geo. Murphie*

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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