



## 2ND MINNESOTA BATTERY OF LIGHT ARTILLERY

### Bethuel Thew

Bethuel left very few records of his short life. He was born in Peru, New York, about 1830. By 1860, he was living in Minneapolis where he and Mary Blake were married there on the 11<sup>th</sup> of May. Bethuel was working as a wheelwright. They had a daughter, Lilly Bell, on May 23, 1861.

The first shots of the Civil War had been fired by then and it would soon demand more men from Minnesota. Bethuel answered the patriotic call and was mustered into the Second Battery on the day it was formally accepted in the service of the United States, March 21, 1862.

Bethuel went South with the Battery in May, but his health began to trouble him. In July, he was sent to the hospital in Farmington, Mississippi. Not long after, he was moved by riverboat to the hospital at Keokuk, Iowa, still suffering from what was called "ulceration of the bowels". The disease would take Bethuel's life on July 30, 1862.

Although the cemetery at Keokuk was one of the original 12 established as National Cemeteries, Bethuel is not listed as buried there. Neither is he listed as buried in any of the nearby local cemeteries. Nothing indicates his body was brought back to Minnesota. Where his final resting place may be will probably never be known. It is suspected that he was first buried in a local cemetery and later moved to the national cemetery. As was too often the case, the identities of these bodies failed to keep up with them and they are consequently buried as "unknown".

Two letters, one written by Captain Hotchkiss and one by Lieutenant Albert Woodbury, confirmed Bethuel's death and testified to it being caused by his military service. This allowed Mary, Bethuel's wife, to apply for a widow's pension, but it was not until after a special examination of the signature on the letter from Hotchkiss certified it as genuine did she receive the pension. That certification took until July 1, 1863, and was not until October 12<sup>th</sup> that Mary began collecting her \$8 a month. To the Pension Department's credit, she was given back pay to date from the time of Bethuel's death in July of 1862.

In 1869, when Mary was married again, she had to apply for a minor's pension for Lilly Bell. Again the Pension Department required verification and certification of the truth of the statements made about Lilly Bell's date of birth. No documentation shows if they completed the paperwork for Lilly Bell to benefit from her father's pension.

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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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