



2ND MINNESOTA BATTERY OF LIGHT ARTILLERY

Edwin A. Whitefield

Edwin was another of the men who left few records behind to tell of his life. He was born on October 12, 1838 in Bedford, New York. When he enlisted in 1862, he was farming in Stearns County, Minnesota, and he already had a connection to the Second Battery. His brother-in-law, Alexander Kinkead, had joined the Battery on February 2, so when Edwin joined on February 21, he already knew at least one man in the Battery. Edwin was 24 years old, had black eyes, black hair, and a dark complexion. He stood 5' 8-1/2" tall.

Life in the army seemed to be agreeable to Edwin since he was never in the hospital for any illness. He did spend some time in the hospital, but it was for a wound he received at the Battle of Stones River on December 31, 1862. Little detail was recorded about his wound. On the Battery's morning report which listed the killed and wounded, Edwin's name was on the wounded list with no detail of the wound was provided.

Edwin reported for duty after his hospital stay on March 6, 1863, and continued to serve. When it came time to reenlist, Edwin agreed to stay in the army for another three years or the duration. It earned him a bounty and a 30-day furlough. On November 16, 1864, Edwin was promoted to corporal and on the 9th of February, 1865, he was promoted to sergeant with the promotion to back date to November 1, 1864. It appears he was already acting in the role of sergeant since he was referred to as such in the morning reports after November of 1864.

Edwin was not there to know he had officially been promoted to sergeant since he had been granted a 14-day furlough on the 6th of February. He and another private were both gone on furlough and due back on the 20th, but neither of them returned at their appointed time. Edwin returned to the Battery on March 13; no report of any punishment was noted in the morning reports or order book for his tardiness.

The war ended and Edwin was with the Battery as they mustered out of the army on August 16, 1865.

In 1898, Edwin applied for a pension, citing the chronic diarrhea he first had during the service. He made no mention of any wound in his pension application. The application asked where he had lived since leaving the army and Edwin wrote in "numerous localities" rather than list them. He also changed his occupation, saying he had worked as a carpenter even since leaving the army. He told the Pension Department he was not married and had no children. The pension application was filed in Washington State and it was granted.

In 1906, Edwin applied for an increase in his pension allotment. The application was filed in Santa Cruz, California. He was rated at \$10 per month as he was no longer able to earn his support by manual labor.

Edwin died suddenly after an illness of only a few days on December 10, 1906. His obituary noted he was living alone at the time since his wife had died a few years earlier. Edwin had told the Pension Department he was not married, so it raises a question.



Edwin was buried in the Santa Cruz Memorial Park where his name and dates are carved on a plain gray stone. Beneath them are the name and dates of Cordelia Kinkead. Cordelia was Edwin's sister. She had been married to Alexander Kinkead, the lieutenant of the Battery her brother served with in 1860. They were divorced in 1876 and Cordelia was living either near or with her brother in California at the time of her death in 1906. She may have been confused as being Edwin's wife in his obituary or, Edwin's wife may have died before he applied for a pension and that was why he said he was not married. The answer is unknown.

No evidence has been found to support it, but the fact that Edwin is buried two graves away from another man who served in the Second Minnesota Battery would indicate they probably were friends. George Crowson rests only a few feet from Edwin. A third Battery member, Philip Hymes, also lived in Santa Cruz at the same time as George and Edwin.

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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