

2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 174

March 2010

Upcoming Events

Civil War Era Symposium
Sponsored by Muskets & Memories
March 26 – 28, 2010
Boscobel, WI

This event will focus on the Practical and Fine Arts of the Civil War Era through lectures, dialogue, and hands-on classes.

New this year, on Friday evening at 5:00 p.m., the Blaine Theater will be showing “Love & Valor”, - the intimate letters between a Union officer and his wife. Tickets are available at the Boscobel Hotel or at the box office for \$5.00. This is a joint fundraiser for Muskets & Memories and the Boscobel Rescue Squad.

Saturday March 27

9:00 am—GAR Hall, 102 Mary St., Civil War Firearms
9:00 a.m.—Boscobel High School, Cage Crinoline Construction

*Victorian Mourning – its customs, & collectables
*Fabric and Ribbon Flower Construction

Noon – Lunch at the High School by reservation or on your own.

1:00 pm GAR Hall—Civil War Tokens “Money That Wasn’t Money.”

1:00 pm Boscobel High School—Finish Crinoline
*Hardanger - Norwegian Embroidery
*Victorian Hair Jewelry & Ornament Making

Sunday, March 28

9:00 am Boscobel High School, History of Sewing Machines and Other Dressmaking Devices

**“Needle Turn” Quilt Appliqué

Noon – Lunch on your own

1:00 pm GAR Hall, Wet Plate Photography

1:00 p.m. at the Boscobel High School

*Huck Embroidery – Swedish Embroidery
*“Textiles in Time”

GAR Hall lectures are \$5.00 each; High School programs prices vary plus materials. * classes are hands-on programs and **require pre-registration** to have materials. Contact Marie Leifheit for more information and to register at 872-2274 or cirushwk@mwt.net

Mrs. Wendel is teaching at this Symposium—contact her about possible car pooling, etc.

March Meeting

This is an important meeting to attend if at all possible! We will vote on our leadership positions for both military or organizational leadership as well as taking the final vote on our 2010 calendar. Be sure your dues are up-to-date so you are eligible to vote.

FACEBOOK

The Second Minnesota Battery is on FACEBOOK!

As discussed at the February meeting, a Facebook page has been created for the Battery in the “non-profit” category. It is set up as a public page and can be viewed by anyone. You do NOT need to be a member of Facebook to view this page. Those who are Facebook members, please become a “Fan” so you see the latest updates.

Currently, the settings are such that any Facebook member who is a Fan can upload photos, videos, and write on the wall. If non-members posting on the Battery page becomes a problem, we can change to only administrators having that ability and provide the administrator password to Battery members.

<http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Second-Minnesota-Battery-of-Light-Artillery-Reenactors/371220336239?ref=nf>

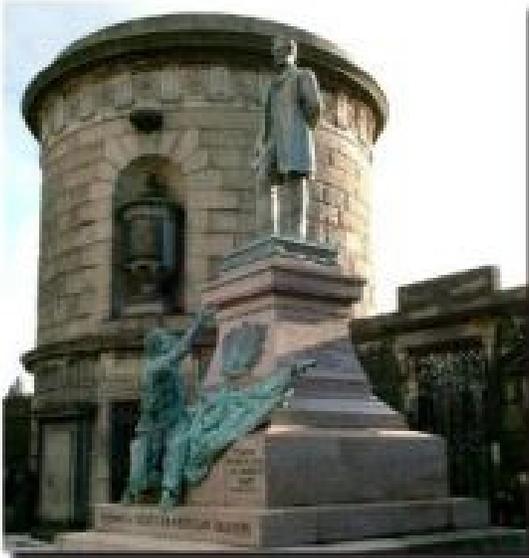
Next Meeting

Saturday, March 20, 4:00 pm
Anoka County History Center
2135 Third Avenue N, Anoka, MN
763-754-2476 (Ron & Vickie Wendel)



Edinburgh's Civil War Memorial

The only American Civil War monument outside the U.S.



Written by Michael Aidin,
submitted to Action Front by John & Brenda Crozier

The imposing Edinburgh monument to the Scots who fought in the Union Army is exceptional as it is the only memorial outside the United States to those who lost their lives in the Civil War. This is remarkable in view of the large number of men from Britain, Ireland and Canada who were killed in the war.

The monument consists of two statues; a crouching, freed slave extends his arms in gratitude to an imposing Abraham Lincoln. The freed man is resting on furled flags, symbols of victory. The statues are made of bronze and that of Lincoln is about 16 ft high. The base is marble. A medallion on the monument has the flags of Britain and the United States surrounded by thistles and cotton plants.

It is not unlike Thomas Ball's Freedman Memorial in Washington DC, where a former slave kneels at the feet of Lincoln like a Mary Magdalene at the feet of Christ - an image that has not appealed to African-Americans. On the east face of the Edinburgh monument is carved, "In memory of Scottish-American soldiers. To preserve the

jewel of liberty in the framework of peace - Abraham Lincoln", and on the west side: "Unveiled 21st August 1893. This plot of ground given by the Lord Provost, Town Council of Edinburgh to Wallace Bruce, US. Consul as a burial place for Scottish soldiers of the American Civil War 1861-5". On the north side the following names are inscribed: "Sgt. Major John McEwan, Co.H, 65th Regt Illinois Vol Infantry; William L Duff, Lt Col., 2nd Illinois Regt of Artillery; Robert Steedman, Co.E, 5th Regt Maine Infantry Volunteers; James Wilkie, Co.C, 1st Michigan Cavalry; Robert Ferguson, Co.F, 57th Regt New York Infantry Volunteers". Only two of the men were buried in the plot and one is in an adjacent grave.

The statue's base is inscribed on four sides: "Suffrage Union Education Emancipation George F. Bissell SCT. 1893".

The story of the monument is poignant. A Scots woman, Mrs. McEwan, applied to American Consul Wallace Bruce, for a widow's pension as her husband had served in the Union Army in the war. Towards the end of Sergeant-Major McEwan's life, his health was so poor and money was so tight that his wife and children had to go out to work to support their little family. Things became so desperate that McEwan even tried to give his precious sword to his doctor in exchange for fees. The doctor said his business was to save life, not to take it, and he wished neither the sword nor other recompense. but pleasant remembrance.

Mrs. Bruce, the consul's wife, met Mrs. McEwan when she went to the consulate to claim her pension. Full of sympathy upon hearing her story, Mrs. Bruce asked, although Memorial Day had passed, whether she might place some flowers on McEwan's grave. Sadly, the widow said her husband had been buried in a pauper's grave which could not be identified.

Consul Bruce approached the Edinburgh Corporation for a burial site for Scots who had served in the Civil War and had returned to their native land. A plot was provided in the Old Calton Cemetery, close to the tomb of David Hume, the historian and philosopher. Bruce also wished to raise a statue of Abraham Lincoln and launched a fund-raising programme in the United States.

A well-known American sculptor, George E. Bissell (1839-1920), who had worked in the United States and in Paris, undertook to execute the bronze statue. Bissell was responsible for statues in New York City, including that of Abraham de Peyzaer, an early Dutch settler, which can be seen today in Lower Manhattan.

Both Bruce and Bissell had served in the Union Army. The statue was intended to be a gift to Scotland from America, so Bruce obtained subscriptions from many influential Scots-Americans, including Andrew Carnegie. The unveiling ceremony aroused so much interest that admission to the burial ground was by ticket only. Crowds of people stood outside in Waterloo Place, even though the weather was wet and windy.

The monument was unveiled on 21 August, 1893, by Bruce's daughter, who was dressed to represent Columbia, wearing a long white dress with a Grecian band of gold in her hair. Bruce gave a long oration but, in view of the weather, postponed reading his 16-verse poem entitled "Columbia's Garland" which he had written for the occasion.

The memorial was rededicated in 1993 on its centenary by Lord Longford. The name of Alexander Smith, G Group, 66th Regt New York Volunteer Infantry, was added on this occasion; his service had been traced, but, as with the other volunteers, little is known about this man.

Battery Profile

Betheul Thew

Betheul left very few records of his short life. He was born in Peru, New York, about 1830. By 1860, he was living in Minneapolis as he and Mary Blake were married there on the 11th of May. Betheul 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. Betheul 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.

Betheul went south with the Battery in May, but his health began to trouble him. In July, he was sent to the hospital at 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 Betheul's life on July 30, 1862.

Although the cemetery at Keokuk was one of the original 12 established as National Cemeteries, Betheul is not listed as buried there. Neither is he listed as buried in any of the nearby local cemeteries and 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 Betheul's death and testified to it being caused by his military service. This allowed Mary 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 it was not until October 12th 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 Betheul'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.

Recently, a descendant of Betheul contacted the Battery through our website. In corresponding with her, the following story emerged about her own military history...

Thank you so much for the paper on Bethuel. It has filled in some gaps and I am most appreciative.

You asked if I had recorded my history and memories as a Vietnam widow, and I have made but a small start. It would be interesting to document the experiences of the families of those lost and wounded in Vietnam and the POW/MIA families. I know I have had a few experiences that really should be set to paper. One is that shortly after my husband's death, I received among his possessions a M-16 rifle. He was a navigator on a B-26 and to this day, I don't know why he had this rifle and why they sent it on to me—a 22-year old widow with a 1 1/2 year-old daughter and 6 months pregnant. I tried to return the rifle, but the Air Force refused my offer and I still have it. Even more alarming was when a short time later I received, in the mail, two ammo boxes filled with ammunition for the rifle. Again, the Air Force didn't want it and I am lost for words - what were they thinking?

And how about hearing over 40 years after the B-26 had been "shot down" that it hadn't been shot down, but the wing had fallen off?! Apparently myself and my husband's family were the only ones who hadn't been told what really happened as not long ago, I made contact with the pilot's widow and she knew the truth all along, as did others in the First Air Commando Group. I believe I grieved even harder with the "second" death as I was so angry at being deceived and I now knew how that one accident affected the rest of my life. It was well-known that B-26s had lost wings before this and still another one lost its wing in an air show at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, a few months after my husband's accident. It's a story in itself how this all came to light.

Then there's the government's official report on the "accident" and the retrieval of the bodies and the wing and the brave men who volunteered to hike through the mountainous jungle to bring my husband, his pilot, and a young Vietnamese (supposedly a navigator trainee) back home. Two trips were necessary under very dangerous circumstances and the brave volunteers received the Distinguished Flying Cross each time for their heroism.

Then there's the shocking story about a fourth death as a result of this accident. One of the volunteers, a Vietnamese military man, was standing guard at the crash site during the night and was attacked and eaten by a tiger. The official report says it may have been the only time this happened in military history.

I've left out some details but, as you can see, there are lots of stories and lots of pain. Just a couple of weeks ago, again decades later, I received pictures of the crash site taken by another flyer on the same mission. Only a small amount of smoke can be seen rising above the jungle, but sitting some distance away resting on the tree tops is the lone wing and, amazingly, a stream of light reflecting off the wing is rising straight up to the heavens.

I wonder, is there more to surface?

You should know that my anger has eased as I CHOOSE to believe that the reason I wasn't told of the plane losing its wing is because I was in California, across the country from where the First Air Commando Group was stationed in Florida. I know that's no excuse and it shouldn't have happened, but it did.

Susan

TENTATIVE 2010 Calendar

This is what we will vote on at our March meeting

March 26-28	Boscobel Symposium
May 1-2	Reenactment at Mantorville, MN
May 5	Bluffview Elementary—Lake City, MN (Confirmed)
May 14	Eagle Point Elementary — Oakdale, MN (Tentative)
May 17	Calvin Christian School — Edina, MN (Confirmed)
May 27	Oakdale Elementary — Oakdale, MN (Confirmed)
May 31	Memorial Day — Red Wing, MN
June 12	Encampment in Woodbury Park — St. Francis, MN
June 19-20	Reenactment at Adams, MN (More info requested)
June 26-27	Reenactment at Franklin Grove, Illinois
July 10-11	Reenactment at Seminole Valley Farm Museum, Cedar Rapids, Iowa
August 7-8	Reenactment at Boscobel, WI
August 14-15	Reenactment at Pipestone, MN
August 28-29	encampment and demos at Ahlman's—Morristown, MN
September 11	Encampment at Anderson Center—Red Wing, MN
September 11-12	Encampment at LeDuc Mansion—Hastings, MN
September 25-26	Reenactment at Wade House—Greenbush, WI
October 2-3	National Reenactment at
Perryville, KY	
November 11-14	National Reenactment at
Collierville, TN	

The Gospel of St. Barbara is from the 2nd US Artillery, Battery B's website and was submitted by John and Brenda Crozier. Battery B is based in the United KINGDOM..

The Second Minnesota Light Artillery Battery is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of Civil War history by living it.

Membership is \$12 per year. Non-member newsletter subscription rate is \$6.00 per year.

For information on the Battery, please contact:

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Battery Website:

The Gospel of St. Barbara

In the beginning there was infantry, and there was chaos, for the infantry was alone. And Fear was with the infantry and they cried unto the Lord, saying, "Lord, save us, for we are alone and afraid."

And the Lord harkened to their pleas, and set certain of them upon beasts of burden, donkeys, and jackasses and mules, and these he called cavalry. The infantry and cavalry together cried unto the Lord, saying, "Lord, save us, for we are so afraid."

And the lord thought, and saw that infantry and cavalry are as babes, and the Lord determined to allay their fears. The Lord spoke unto them, saying, "Lo, and behold, I bring unto you a noble race of men, with great strength of head and heart and hand, and with courage and spirit undaunted, and they shall be called gunners."

And the gunners shall light the dark of your night, and you shall tremble before them. For when you require shot, they shall bring forth shot, and when ye call for shell, they shall bring forth shell, and when thou has need of canister, canister and double canister shall they bring forth.

And the Lord gave unto the gunners to be their own, great pieces for Field and Siege and Garrison, and Mounted and Horse and Foot and Flying. Howitzer and Gun, and huge balls, wondrously wrought.

The infantry and the cavalry saw, and as sheep in the fold knelt before the gunners and their pieces. And the gunners saw, and smiled, and later, smoked.

Now abideth in harmony, infantry, and cavalry, and artillery, and the greatest of these is artillery.