

## 2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

# “ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 176

May 2010

### Upcoming Events

**WITH ALL SCHOOL EVENTS:** Please **RESPOND ASAP** which schools you can help at! We need to know what stations to plan at which schools and who will be staffing them. **Arrive on time** as we need everyone to set up and be ready when the kids come.

**May 5 Bluffview, Lake City, MN, 1/2 day**  
Arrive by 8:00 to be ready for the students at 8:45. This is a half day presentation.

**May 14 Eagle Point Elementary, Oakdale MN**  
**7850 15th Street North, Oakdale** Arrive by 8:30 to be ready for the students at 9:15. We will set up 4-5 stations and rotate students through.

**May 17 Calvin Christian School, Edina MN**  
**4015 Inglewood Ave. S, Edina.** Arrive at 8:50 to set up, students arrive at 9:50. We will set up 4-5 stations and rotate students through.

**May 27 Oakdale Elementary, Oakdale MN**  
**821 Glenbrook** Arrive at 8:30 to set up for students at 9:15. We will set up 4-5 stations and rotate students through.

**May 31 Memorial Day, Red Wing, MN**  
Arrive at Bay Point Park by 7:30 to set up.

Arrive by 8:30 to be set up for students at 8:55. We'll be doing two sessions in a half day presentation.

**Bring your bag lunch for the school events (period correctness NOT required) as there will be NO time to go get anything.**

### **NEW EVENT ADDED!**

**June 5 Anoka County Library, Anoka, MN**  
4201 6th Ave., Anoka. We have been offered \$1750 for this four hour event, 10-2. We'll set up the gun, do firing demos, and other stations much like schools. They expect hundreds of people at these 'Live at the Library' day, so we need to get a lot of people there and make a good show. Contact John Cain of Daryl Duden ASAP if you can be there! Ladies, does someone want to do laundry? The Wendel women will be at a graduation—but the tubs are available!

### **A Letter Home**

This letter was written by George Murphie. He had enlisted in the Battery on January 16, 1862 and trained with the unit as they prepared for war. George sent this letter to his father, describing the journey South.

*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 by 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 fas 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 s soldier is and should be.*

*Your affectionate Son  
Geo. Murphie*

### **Next Meeting**

Next meeting will be during lunch at the Oakdale School event, May 27.



# ***The Legend of Saint Barbara***

## **Patron Saint of Artillery**

Submitted by John and Brenda Crozier



According to legend, Saint Barbara was the extremely beautiful daughter of a wealthy heathen named Dioscorus, who lived near Nicomedia in Asia Minor. Because of her great beauty and worried that she would be demanded in marriage and taken away from him, he jealously shut her up in a tower to protect her from the outside world.

Shortly before leaving on a journey, he commissioned a sumptuous bathhouse to be built for her, approving the design before he departed. Barbara had heard of the teachings of Christ, and while her father was gone, spent much time in contemplation. From the windows of her tower, she looked out upon the surrounding countryside and marveled at the growing things; the trees, the animals and the people. She decided that all these must be part of a master plan, and that the idols of wood and stone worshipped by her parents must be condemned as false. Gradually she came to accept the Christian faith.

As her belief became stronger, she directed that the builders re-design the bathhouse her father had planned, adding another window, so that the three windows might symbolize the Holy Trinity.

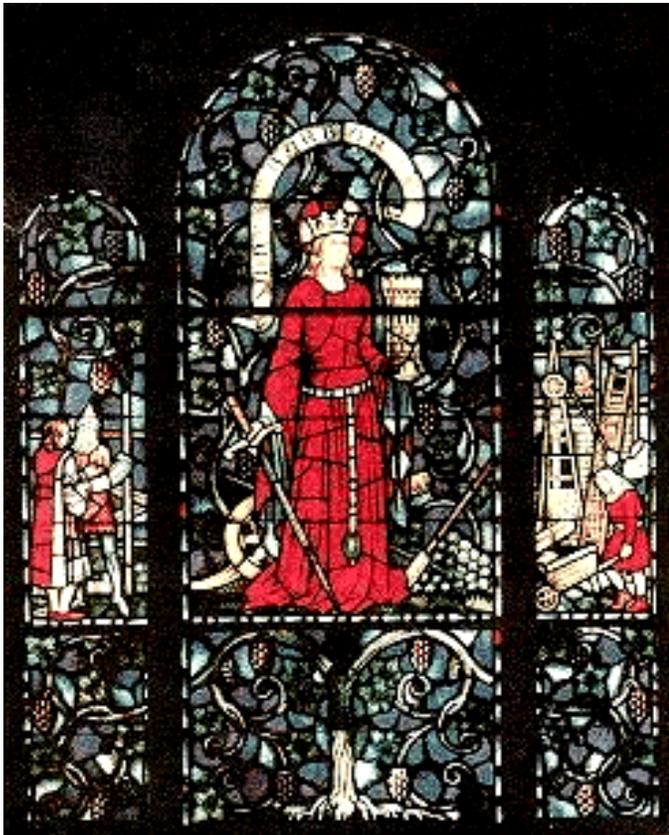
When her father returned, he was enraged at the changes and infuriated when Barbara acknowledged that she was a Christian. He dragged her before the prefect of the province, who decreed that she be tortured and put to death by beheading. Dioscorus himself carried out the death sentence. On his way home he was struck by lightning and his body consumed.

Saint Barbara lived and died about the year 300 A.D. She was venerated as early as the seventh century. The legend of the lightning bolt which struck down her persecutor caused her to be regarded as the patron saint in time of danger from thunderstorms, fires and sudden death.

When gunpowder made its appearance in the Western world, Saint Barbara was invoked for aid against accidents resulting from explosions, as many of the early artillery pieces often blew up instead of firing their projectile. Saint Barbara became the patroness of the artillerymen.

Saint Barbara is usually represented standing by a tower with three windows, carrying the palm of a martyr in her hand. Often, too, she holds a chalice and a sacramental wafer and sometimes cannons are displayed near her.

In the modern calendar, the feast of Saint Barbara falls on December 4th.



## Battery Profile

### Jesse F. Byam

Jesse was born in Canada, but he was the son of an American born Methodist minister who had been sent as a missionary to Lyon's Creek, Welland, Ontario. As such, Jesse, too, was an American citizen, born on August 14, 1827.

The family remained in Canada for some years as Jesse grew up there. On August 2, 1849, he married Adeline. In 1853, their first son, Charles, was born while they were living near Belleville, Canada.

By March 1, 1860, when daughter Carrie was born, the family was living in Wright County, Minnesota. Jesse was a farmer and was elected as Justice of the Peace that year and the next. In January of 1862, Jesse went to Fort Snelling to enlist. He was mustered into the Second Minnesota Battery on January 7, 1862, and agreed to serve three years. He was 34 years old with dark hair, blue eyes, and a light complexion. A farmer by occupation, Jesse stood 5' 6 1/2" tall.

What prompted Jesse to enlist is unknown, but he left Adeline with Charles at nine years old, Carrie at two and Adeline expecting their third child in April.

Jesse did not serve his three years in the army. He was discharged for disability on August 25, 1863, at Louisville, Kentucky. The examining surgeon said the cause was "chronic pleurisy of the left side with Pericarditis." Jesse was deemed unfit for the invalid corps and sent home.

Jesse went back to his farm and family in Wright County. They added another child to the family in 1864 for a total of four; three boys and one girl. Jesse was elected coroner for the county and began keeping a store in addition to farming.

In 1867, Jesse took the family and headed north. They settled in Bellfountain, Canada, until 1873 when they moved to Toronto. Health problems made it hard for Jesse to work enough to support himself and Adeline, so he applied for a pension in 1890. It was granted and he began receiving \$8 a month. In 1902, the elections for officers of the Armstrong Lodge #37 were held and Jesse was elected as treasurer.

Adeline and Jesse's children stayed near them in Canada as a granddaughter's birth announcement appeared in the Toronto Daily Star on April 2, 1903.

Their third child, Fremont, advertised to sell his farm in 1905. It did not sell quickly as the same ad ran frequently for almost a year until, in June of 1906, it carried an additional line stating Fremont would trade the farm for "city property" in Toronto.

In May of 1904, Jesse applied for an increase in his pension, but it is not known if he received it before his death on December 8, 1906. He was 81 years old and the cause of his death was attributed to heart disease and bronchitis. Adeline wrote that he had "died suddenly in his sleep." He was laid to rest in the Mount Pleasant Cemetery in Toronto, Canada.

Adeline's first letter to the Pension Department was to ask for the forms to allow her to cash the last pension check Jesse received two days after his death. She also asked for the forms to apply for a widow's pension.

There was no obituary placed in the Toronto Star for Jesse when he died, but the report of his will was published on January 18, 1907. Jesse's estate was valued at \$13,642. Most of his wealth was in houses and lots he owned. There were eight properties, six in Toronto and two in Bellfountain. The entire estate was left to Adeline. At her death, Jesse's will directed the estate to be divided equally between his living children and grandchildren.



# Recap

## May 1-2 Reenactment at Mantorville, MN

Reports are that this was a smaller event, but very nice, though the weather was a little on the cool and breezy side. Miss Becky brought a new gun crew member, "Flat Stanley." (Flat Stanley, for those who have not met him, is a very thin young man of school age who travels about, then returns home to report on his adventures to his young master (who is full 3-D). In this case, that young master resides in California and calls Miss Becky and Private Ritchie family.)



Flat Stanley and the gun crew.



***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.*  
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