



## 2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

# “ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 185

March 2011

### On This Date-150 Years Ago

March 4, 1861 -- Lincoln's Inauguration  
(from Wikipedia)

Abraham Lincoln's inaugural address was delivered by the new President on Monday, March 4, 1861, after being sworn in as the sixteenth President of the United States. The speech was primarily addressed to the people of the South, and was intended to succinctly state Lincoln's intended policies and desires toward that section where seven states had seceded from the Union and formed the Confederate States of America.

Indeed, the new flag of the Confederacy—the Stars and Bars—had been adopted and raised over Montgomery, Alabama, on the same day.

Written in a spirit of reconciliation toward the rebellious states, Lincoln's inaugural address touched on several topics: first, his pledge to *“hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the government”*—including Fort Sumter, which was still in Federal hands; second, his argument that the Union was indissoluble, and thus secession was impossible; and third, a promise that while he would never be the first to attack, any use of arms against the United States would be regarded as rebellion, and be met with force.

Lincoln denounced secession as anarchy, and explained that majority rule had to be balanced by constitutional restraints in the American system of republicanism: *“A majority held in restraint by constitutional checks and limitations, and always changing easily with deliberate changes of popular opinions and sentiments, is the only true sovereign of a free people.”*

Desperately wishing to avoid a war, Lincoln closed the address with this impassioned plea: *“We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.”*

### Upcoming Events

**March 12, Anoka County Library, Rum River**  
**Arrive at 9:30 to be set up and ready for the public at 10:30!** The event runs to 1:30, so pack a period “snack” if you want.

We will be portraying a “winter camp” at this indoor event. The ladies will be sewing, writing letters, preparing things to send to the soldiers. Soldiers will be playing checkers, explaining equipment, whittling, and whatever else they can think of that is appropriate for “winter camp.” Bring lots of blankets, great coats and mittens to make it look like winter inside. **This is a paid event.** The library has been given the names of those who replied they could come, so they are counting on you!! Everyone is welcome, the more the merrier! If you have questions, contact Vickie at 763-754-2476.

#### **April 9, Flag Return to the Capitol, St. Paul**

The Second Battery is providing two color guards for the ceremony of returning restored battle flags of Minnesota regiments to the State Capitol after restoration. Privates Brian Tomashek and Bart Hokestra have volunteered for the honor of guarding the flag of the First Minnesota Battery.

Everyone is welcome to attend and encouraged to dress in period attire. **Color guards need to arrive at the Capitol by 12:15**, Linda Cameron is your contact. The event begins at 1:00.

This event is open to the public and should get a fair amount of media coverage.

#### **Dues...**

There are just a few people who have not yet submitted their 2011 dues. The form is attached on page 5. Your prompt attention is appreciated.

#### **Next Meeting**

Saturday, March 26, 11:00 a.m.  
Marie's Restaurant, 217 Plum Ave., Red Wing  
Contact John Cain with any questions, (651) 388-9250



# HARPER'S NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

No. CXXX.—MARCH, 1861.—VOL. XXII



Happy  
St. Patrick's Day!



MY boy left me just twelve years ago—  
'Twas the black year of famine, of sickness, and woe,  
When the crops died out, and the people died too,  
And the land into one great grave-yard grew;

The famine of 1844 drove many Irish immigrants to the U.S., but political unrest, poverty, and religious issues added more reasons to leave.

From 1820 to 1860, one of every three immigrants to the U.S. were Irish. By 1840, half of all immigrants to the U.S. were coming from Ireland. Britain tried to deflect the loss of its citizens by offering discounted fares to Canada. The fare to Canada was lowered to 15 shillings as compared to the 4-5 pounds it cost to get to New York. Enterprising Irish took the cheap fare to Canada where they could get another cheap ticket to the U.S.—or even cheaper, walk across the border.

By 1880, nearly 3.5 million Irish had left Ireland and moved to America.

Life was not easy for these immigrants, so when the Civil War began, Irish men enlisted. More than 150,000 Irish born soldiers served in the Union Army before the war was over.

A handful of former Irish leaders saw the possibility of taking an experienced army back to Ireland to overthrow the English once the Civil War in America was over. They encouraged Irishmen to enlist to gain the experience they would need to win freedom for Ireland. The plan never came to fruition because few Irish were willing to go back to Ireland where life had been so hard.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1861, by Harper and Brothers, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

VOL. XXII.—No. 130.—E B

## Battery Profile



## John Craven

John Craven was born in Pennsylvania on May 21, 1832, and came to Minnesota in 1854. He settled in the town of Forest in Rice County. He joined the Second Minnesota Battery of Light Artillery on March 20, 1862. He was 28 years old and single when he enlisted, had gray eyes, sandy hair and complexion. He stood 5 foot 11-1/2 inches tall.

On June 27, 1863, another member of the Battery (Spaulding) noted in his diary that John had gotten hurt. Another mention in the Battery's Christian Class book further explains that John had been disabled when a caisson ran over his ankles.

The Christian Class, also called the Bible Class, was a group within the Second Minnesota Battery. Craven was elected class leader for a Christian Class near Rossville, Georgia, in 1864. These men gathered together to worship and pray, both for themselves and for their comrades. Craven kept a "Class book" of their activities and another member wrote in it while he was injured.

A casualty sheet for John describes the injury as "one leg broken near ankle the other badly crushed. Run over by Caisson." This happened on June 25, 1863, near Liberty Gap, Tennessee.

John did not leave the service because of his injury, though he chose not to reenlist. Since he did not reenlist, he served with Battery I, Second Illinois Light Artillery while the Minnesota Battery went home on their veteran's leave. This temporary duty put John in the action of the battles for Atlanta, Georgia, in the summer of 1864. He eventually returned to the Second Minnesota and continued to serve with the Battery until his term of service expired in March of 1865.

John kept a diary for at least one year of his military service, from September of 1863 through his discharge in March of 1865. Many pages of his diary covers the Bible Class activities and the sermons John either gave or heard and recorded. The bulk of his active service at this time came with the Second Illinois, but does provide insights to life on the drive to take Atlanta including a table of fire with distances and fuse lengths, notations how many rounds fired at each engagement, and some of the positions the Battery occupied. The last pages of the diary are more reflections and sermons, and describe without much detail his journey home to Minnesota in March of 1865.

Several letters were included with the diary and one is a lady who explains as gently as possible that she hoped John had not misunderstood her intentions in writing to him. She was writing as a friend, nothing more. It was her effort to support a soldier, not as he must have indicated in a letter to her that we do not have, an interest in John romantically. The letter was signed with her initials, E.J.C.

After the war, John went back to his home in Forest for a few years, then moved into the second ward of the city of Faribault, Minnesota.

By 1870, John was married to Mary and they had two children, two more were added to the family by 1880. John worked his entire life as a farmer and gardener according to census information.

In 1890, John claimed a disability due to "both ankles injured by a caisson running over his ankles" and received a pension.

John died on October 14, 1900, at his home in Faribault. He was buried from the Methodist Church and interred in Oak Ridge Cemetery.



# Approved Schedule

## MARCH

12 "Winter Camp" (inside), Anoka County Library, Rum River Branch, Anoka, MN

## APRIL

9 Flag presentation/honor guard, MN State Capitol  
23- 24 Reenactment, Keokuk, IA

## MAY

3 Bluffview Elementary in Lake City, MN  
13 Eagle Point Elementary, Oakdale, MN  
16 Calvin Christian School, Edina, MN  
21 Rum River Library encampment/Demo, Anoka, MN  
26 Oakdale Elementary, Oakdale, MN  
30 Memorial Day, Red Wing, MN

## JUNE

11 Encampment & Parade, St. Francis, MN  
24- 26 Reenactment, Wasioja, MN

## JULY

9- 10 Reenactment, Seminole Valley, Cedar Rapids, IA  
23-24 Encampment, Birch Coulee Battlefield, Morton, MN

## AUGUST

6- 7 Reenactment, Boscobel, WI  
12-14 Reenactment, Wilsons Creek, MO.  
27- 28 Demo, Ahlmans, Morristown, MN

## SEPTEMBER

16- 18 Demo/Parade, Minneapolis and St. Paul, MN  
24 Demo, Kandiyohi County Museum, Willmar, MN

This is the schedule as approved by membership vote at the February 26, 2011, meeting. There are some changes to the tentative schedule published last month due to event changes or schedule decisions. Please use this version as the officially approved version, but watch *Action Front* for last minutes changes as the year progresses. As always, this schedule is subject to change by membership vote at any time during the year.

## Recap

No event, so no recap other than the quilt Brian got for his birthday!

***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:*

### **President**

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Battery Website:  
**<http://www.2mnbattery.org>**



**Your Country Needs You!**

**And so does the Battery!**

**2011 dues are DUE!!** To remain on the mailing list, your dues are:

Civilian Member	\$12.00
Military Member	\$12.00
Associate Member	\$ 6.00
Junior Member (14-17)	\$ 6.00
Junior Member (under 14)	Free

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State and Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send this form and your check to:

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Red Wing, MN 55066