



2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 190

September 2011

On This Date-150 Years Ago

(The following is taken from the *Mankato Semi-Weekly Record*, September 6, 1861.)

SHARPSHOOTERS—Capt. Peteler’s company of sharpshooters are ordered to rendezvous at Fort Snelling, on the 16th of September. Each man accepted and mustered into the service is expected to be able, when firing his own or an ordinary hunting rifle off hand, at a distance of one hundred yards, to put five consecutive shots in a target, the average distance not to exceed five inches from the center of the bull’s eye to the centre of the ball, and all volunteers for this service will be required to submit to this test, and be approved by a committee, consisting of Francis Peteler, Frederick Maltby, and Geo. W. Cummings.

We are authorized by Mr. Cummings to state that all desirous of joining this company will meet in Mankato on Thursday next, and start for the Fort on Friday morning.

The article went on to encourage men to volunteer quickly, as there were “superior inducements” for those joining the sharpshooters and “some 30 men” had already signed up. The usual rhetoric followed about being a “credit to themselves” and how important their service was going to be. The sharpshooter company was expected to be mustered in within just a few days after the publication went to print.

Upcoming Events

September 16,17,18, Parade & Ceremonies

September 16—Arrive at the Capitol in St. Paul no later than 9:00 am. Program begins at 10:00 in the rotunda. The ladies are welcome in their finery, but will have no formal part. Everyone will be ushered out to the steps at the end of the program. Gun crews will be on the guns already. There will be two flyovers by WWII airplanes followed by artillery and musket volleys on command. We will have not less than 90 seconds to reload for a total of three rounds. At the end of the volleys, *Taps* will sound in echo, a flag will be properly folded and presented to the stepfather of a soldier KIA overseas.

September 17—The FREE BUS stops running at 9:00 AM. It leaves the parking lot at 3rd and Nicollet in Minneapolis and goes to the Convention Center on Nicollet. The Lt. highly recommends carpooling and arriving at the parking lot as early as possible. It’s a long walk to 14th Street. The Boys of ‘61 have the entire block of 14th Street west of the convention center. After getting off the bus, proceed to the Marshals Tent outside the Convention Center to register as a participant under the Boys of ‘61, then go to 14th Street. Registration is mandatory!

UNIFORM : All cannoneers must have light artillery jacket, haversack, belt, and full canteen. If you have a saber AND belt, wear them. All should wear the forage style cap. If you are not wearing stripes, do not carry a sidearm. It is recommended to carry a snack of some kind in your haversack. There will be a concession stand near the Registration Tent. The Parade starts at 11:00 and we will be in the last half of the parade.

September 18—Arrive at the Capitol in St. Paul not later than 11:00 am. The program starts at noon. The guns at the Capitol steps will fire three volleys, followed by musketry. Program ends at 2:00.

September 24 — Kandiyohi County Historical Society, 610 Hwy 71 NE, Willmar, MN.

We will be setting up stations much like a school event. Arrive by 9:00 to be ready for the public at 10:00. The event runs until 6:00, so bring a period correct lunch. For more, go to: <https://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Kandiyohi-County-Historical-Society/44341653104>

Next Meeting



To be announced—watch your email!

Battery Profile

Peter Streicher

Peter was one of the older men when he decided to enlist in the Second Battery as it was forming up in January of 1862. He was 44 years old, born in France, and was living in St. Anthony at the time he enlisted. Peter was married, his wife was Susanna Schmidt and they had married on January 29, 1856, in Cook County, Illinois. Peter mustered into the army the day before their sixth anniversary.

The descriptive role gave two occupations for Peter, that of farmer and of laborer. He was 5' 6-1/2" tall, had hazel eyes, dark hair and a dark complexion.

Peter served with the Battery as a private, doing his duty without illness or injury as his name appears in the Battery's records only on his coming and leaving. When the time came for the men of the Battery to reenlist, Peter decided not to sign up for another term in the army. His decision meant that while the men who had reenlisted went home for a veteran's furlough, he and others not reenlisting were assigned to Battery I, Second Illinois Artillery.

Battery I was one of the units under General William T. Sherman's command as he drove the Confederates back through northern Georgia and out of Atlanta in the summer of 1864. Peter was serving with Battery I on the 21st of August when they came under particularly heavy fire. Three men of the Second Illinois Battery wrote a history of their Battery and described the fighting that claimed Peter's life. They said they were in their position facing the Rebel lines when the Rebel artillery opened fire on their position. Just as the Illinois Battery fired one of their guns, a Confederate shell exploded through their embrasure. A piece of the shell tore through one of the Illinois men, then through the "bowels" of Peter. Both men were members of the crew firing the gun. The first man was killed immediately, Peter lived about three hours.



The Illinois Battery men called Peter "one of the Minnesotans" and "a Norwegian." The Norwegian name was probably a generalization as Peter was not from Norway, but had been born in France. The Illinois boys did not provide Peter's name, but in the official reports for the fight, Peter was the only Minnesota man to be killed that day.

The report filed on Peter noted that he had "served honestly and faithfully with his company in the service" and that he was "killed in action on the 21st day of August, 1864, in front of Atlanta, Ga." Peter owed \$31 for the clothing he had been issued since the account was last settled, but he owed nothing to the sutler or laundress.

Back in Minnesota, Susanna filed for a widow's pension that was granted almost immediately. She received \$8 a month beginning on September 6, 1864. She needed the help of a clerk of court in St. Paul since Susanna was not able to write her name, instead she made her mark and two people witnessed it. No mention was made in the records if she received any minor's pension for their son, August.

Peter was first buried at Utio Creek in Georgia, but his body was later exhumed and moved to the Marietta National Cemetery in Cobb County, Georgia.

The Scientific American

Volume 1005 Issue 10 (Sept 7, 1861)

This was a magazine Americans were reading in 1861, keeping them up to date with the latest in scientific breakthroughs. Since it involved cannons, it was copied here for your perusal.

Trial of the great "Union" Gun.

On the 22d of August the great 12-inch rifled cannon, carrying a shot weighing 423 lbs., was tried at Fortress Monroe for the first time. This gun is 16 feet in length, and it weighs 52,000 lbs. It was cast at Pittsburgh by Rodman's Improved process. The firing was done under the charge of Lieutenant Baylor, of the Ordnance Department, and we are indebted to the correspondent of the New York Tribune for a very spirited description of the experiment. He says:—"All things being ready, the process of loading the gun was commenced. Sergeant Welch, at the head of his black battalion of gunners, had already cleared the docks, whosled the monster so that his muzzle was over the waters, and arranged the platform or staging on which the men could stand and be up even with the muzzle. First, the swab, which two men insert, cleans the interior; then comes a man with a red flannel bag, filled with powder, on his shoulder; it is the cartridge; and the ramrod, worked by four men, sends it home. Then comes the process of getting the shot to its place, a mass of metal that four men carry with difficulty. It is first rolled into an iron cradle or wide strap, looped with a rope, through which a piece of strong wood, several feet long, is inserted. Thus slung, the men tug the shot up the steps of the platform, some ten feet high, to the mouth of the gun. Another lift brings it on a level, and it is slid into the muzzle and pushed to its place. The gun is then elevated by means of an iron bar, the gun being nicely balanced on its trunnions. The priming wire performs its office, the fuse is inserted, and the lanyard is attached. Then Lieut. Baylor, who, though everything has been done under his minutest inspection, has moved about more like a modest spectator than the responsible director, gives warning that the gun has never before been fired, and moves a short distance to the rear, in which he is imitated by the others. The men who are to calculate the flight of the shot are at their table. The flag is up. The man with the lanyard retires to its extreme length. "Ready," says Sergeant Welch. Lieut. Baylor gives the word: "Ready—fire!"

A terrific crash, a sheet of flame, and the trembling of the earth follow. At the same time there is a screech and a scream caused by the shot, a black mass

which you can see, in its flight, yelling like an infuriated devil let loose from the infernal regions. We count the seconds, and watch to see the shot strike. A column of water away off on the bay shoots up to the height of a ship's mast. The elevation of the gun was but ten degrees, little more than blank shot, consequently the distance was not great, say two miles, the time of flight fifteen seconds. The terrible engine, the echoes of whose thunders have scarcely yet died away over the waters and along the shore, whose breath, a dark sulphurous cloud, flirts before the wind—the thing which we would naturally associate with the idea of a glowing fiery monster the embodiment of all the ferocious, is next the object of attention. It is as passive as anything can be. The sergeant pats familiarly its massive smooth breech, the smoke curls slowly from the mouth of the chamber from which the 420-pound shot has just been vomited, and for the instant it is difficult to reconcile the crash, the flame, the trembling earth and the screech, with the thing that neither trembles nor glows nor makes other sign of its truly awful and almost supernatural endowments.

The next time a shell is fired at the same range, but it fails to explode. And here let me remark that both shot and shell seemed to be not the thing for the gun. The soft metal with which they were coated stripped and flew in all directions when only a few hundred feet from the gun, so that one might mistake the pieces for a charge of grape from a howitzer. The idea of filling the grooves and thereby obtaining a rotary motion must have been but imperfectly realized.

The gun was again loaded with a solid shot, and elevated twenty-eight degrees. This and the next shot, which was at the same elevation, were very fine features of the experiment. As you watched the progress of the shot, which in its circuit attained an elevation probably of not less than 800 or 1,000 feet, you might easily convince yourself that it was a wild, screaming, roaring monster, dashing through the skies, mad at the sun, or an affrighted spirit from the bowels of the earth seeking safety in the clouds. The range was about three and a half miles; the time thirty seconds.

Two shells with percussion fuse were then fired into a sand bank not more than 25 feet from the gun. The result gave some idea of what the gun would do against sand batteries. The sand was thrown in every direction, and the experiment seemed to prove that the shell accurately fired would undermine and destroy a sand battery quite as rapidly as a battalion of men with shovels. The shell burst into a great number of pieces, the parts found weighing but a few pounds.

The following is an analysis of the firing, for which I am indebted to Lieut. Baylor. It will be read with interest, not less by the public who have heard so much of the Big Gun, than by those who watch such experiments with a professional interest:

- No. 1. Elevation, 10°; solid shot, weight 423 lbs.; cartridge, 42 lbs.; flight—; range, 2,813 yards.
- No. 2. Elevation, 10°; shell, weight 342 lbs.; cartridge, 35 lbs.; flight, 12 seconds; range, 2,500 yards.
- No. 3. Elevation, 20°; solid shot, weight 423 lbs.; cartridge, 42 lbs.; flight, 20 seconds; range, 5,877 yards.
- No. 4. Elevation, 28°; shell, weight 351 lbs.; cartridge, 35 lbs.; flight, 29½ seconds; range, 6,090 yards.
- No. 5. Elevation, 0°; shell, weight 351 lbs.; cartridge, 35 lbs.; fired into sand bank.
- No. 6. Elevation, 0°; solid shot, 423 lbs.; cartridge, 42 lbs.; the same.

Recap

August 6- 7 Boscobel, WI



Being it was Boscobel, it was hot and it rained, but neither did anything to dampen the spirits of Battery members at this event! Most of the ladies of the Battery moved into the cave on Saturday morning and were joined by a number of people from other units. The hot sun was a bit much, so the shade of some nearby trees was made good use of until the battle started and we retired "out of sight." When the battle was finished, visitors were invited across the field to talk to Confederates in the trenches and the residents of the caves. The caves had hoards of people around them long after the battle was over! Several of our ladies



participated in the evening camp tours of the caves and our gun crew fired in the night firing demos. That was AFTER going downtown to partake in the Pie Social!!



Sunday started out with a downpour, but by the time the day was over, everything was dry. The battle was nicely scripted and not as hot as the day before.

Though not quite as many Battery members were at this event as our record number of people last year, it was a well attended event that everyone enjoyed. Feedback from event organizers said the caves were the "talk" of everyone they spoke with and they were well pleased with the Battery's participation.



August 27- 28 Ahlmans, Morristown, MN

Fourteen members of the battery traveled to Morristown to occupy Fort Ahlman during the Shooter's Roundup event at Ahlman's Gun Shop. Weekend participants were Lt Cain, Sgt Duden, Cpl Overby, Cpl Graves, Pvt Arnoldy, Pvt Golden, Pvt Hoekstra, Pvt McHugh, Pvt Mickelson, Pvt Ritchie, Pvt Tomashak, Pvt John Watkins, Ms Graves and Ms Overby. Three sets of bleachers constructed just outside Fort Ahlman

specifically for our "show" were full for the majority of our demonstrations with a knowledgeable crowd of shooting enthusiasts. The schedule called for cannon demonstrations by the 2nd Minnesota Battery at 10:00am, 12:00pm, 2:00pm & 4:00pm each day, which gave battery members an opportunity to visit the numerous other venues that take place during this Shooters Roundup weekend. Moderate temperatures both days allowed members of the gun crew to wear their shell jackets during the firing



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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demonstrations, but did not prevent Battery members from earning a free shaved ice on Sunday for their numerous trips to the shaved ice vendor during the weekend. Although overcast skies modestly reduced the number of spectators on Sunday, during the participants dinner Saturday evening, Larry Ahlman reported that this year's Shooter's Roundup had already set a new record for attendance.

