



## 2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

# “ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 194

January 2012

### On This Date-150 Years Ago

#### January 1862

William Hotchkiss had a bruised ego in the last weeks of 1861 after command of the First Battery of Artillery went to Emil Munch. By January, he had secured command of the Second Battery and now had to recruit men to serve in it.

A few men were assigned to the Second in 1862, but it was in January of 1862 that Hotchkiss really began to add men to the unit he wanted to command.

Hotchkiss was recruiting in Wright County in the first weeks of the month, the county where Hotchkiss had a farm in Monticello. Other men from around the state began trickling in, but it was January 28th when the most men at a single muster joined the Battery. That day, 16 men were mustered into service with the Battery, among them, Richard Dawley. Dawley and Hotchkiss were both veterans of the artillery during the Mexican War and may have known each other, something that would explain how the two got together even though they lived so far apart. Dawley recruited in his home county of Winona and most of the 15 men who joined on the same day as Dawley were from Winona County.

The following ad began running on Christmas Day in the St. Paul newspapers and ran for several weeks into the new year of 1862.

### **W**ANTED.

For the 2d Battery of Artillery;  
MINNESOTA VOLUNTEERS.  
ABLE BODIED MEN AND MECHANICS TO SERVE  
THE U.S. DURING THE WAR.

By special order No. 30, received, the War Department has accepted said Battery--which will be completed at the earliest time convenient.

Therefore, notice is hereby given to those who desire to avail themselves of becoming members of said Battery, to call on the undersigned, who will be found at his residence on Tenth street near the Capitol, in Heyward's Brick Block, St. Paul, or at Bergholtz Saloon, Third street, or at Fort Snelling.

N.B. --No connection with Dr. Rosenk from this date  
St. Paul, Dec. 20, 1861.

B.A. Froiseth

Authorized Recruiting Officer for the Second Battery  
of Artillery M. V.:

### Upcoming Events

#### February 11, Centennial Library

100 Civic Heights Circle, Circle Pines, 763-717-3294 ,  
**Civil War Winter Camp, 10:30 to 1:30**

Arrive by 9:30 for setting up. We will be setting up in the City Hall, directly across the sidewalk from the library and this building will be opened for us by 9:30.

The Wendel indoor tent will be available for the “camp” part of the room as well as some other usual camp items. Please bring whatever kind of props you can for what you want to do and to make this more “camp-like.”

Ideas for soldiers include writing/reading letters, whittling, drill, repairing or caring for uniforms and equipment, etc.

Home front activities can involve the Sanitary Commission, making butter, getting things ready to send to the soldiers, sewing, etc.

Other ideas are encouraged! Please let Vickie know what you plan to do so she can coordinate the activities—we don't all want to be doing the same thing!



### Next Meeting

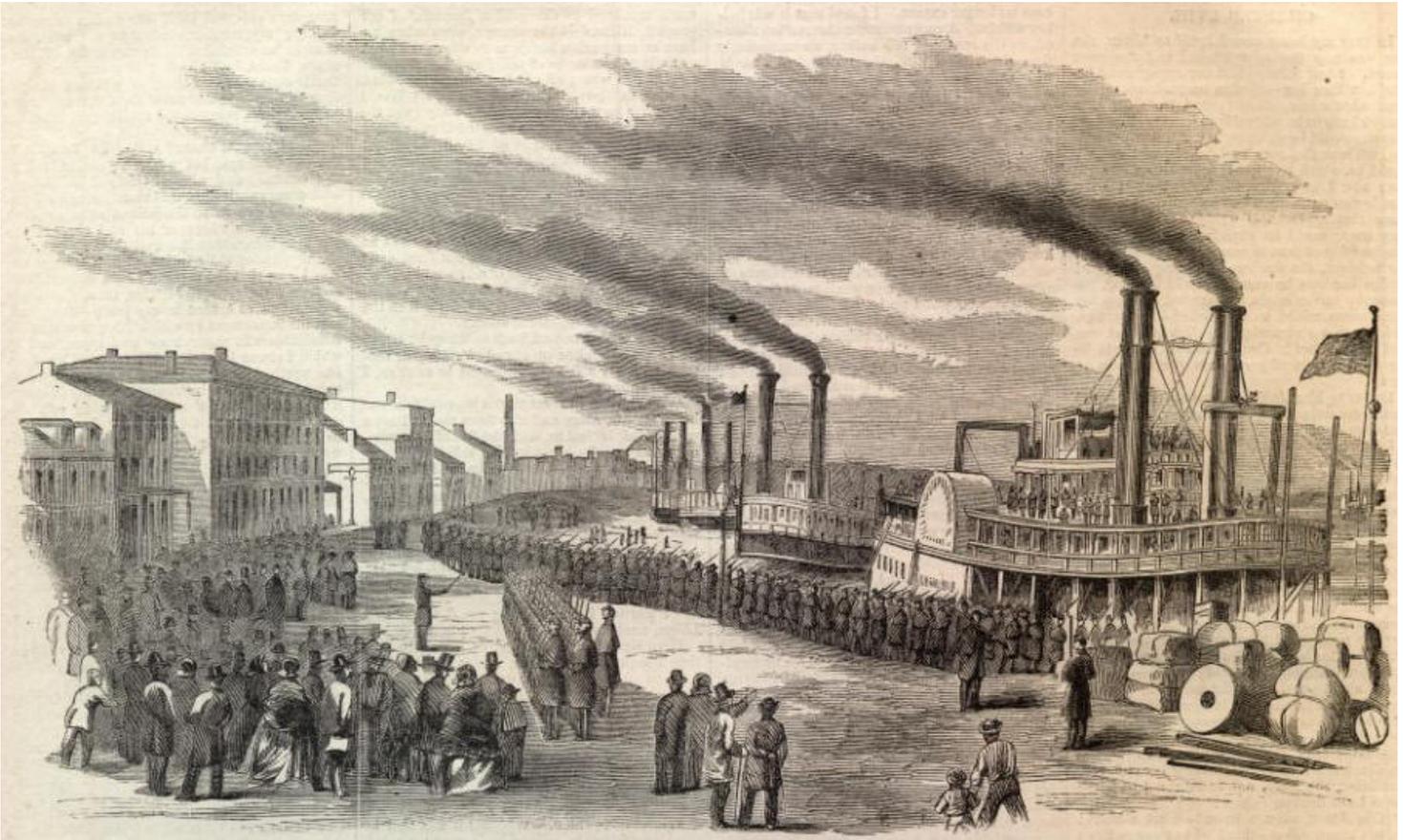
**January 28, 11:00 a.m.**

Marie's Family Dining in Red Wing

This meeting will begin planning for the 2012 season with special planning for the National Event at Shiloh in March/April.



*Harpers Weekly Magazine*, January 11, 1862. It was titled "The landing for Ohio troops at Louisville, Kentucky," sketched by Mr. H. Mosler.



## **Commissioned 150 Years Ago—A New Development in Naval Warfare**

*USS Monitor*, a 987-ton armored turret gunboat, was built at New York to the design of John Ericsson. She was the first of what became a large number of "monitors" in the United States and other navies.

*USS Monitor*'s construction resulted from a study of ironclad warships mandated by the Congress in July 1861, as the Civil War moved rapidly from crisis to serious armed conflict. During August and September, the study board's members, Commodores Joseph Smith and Hiram Paulding and Commander Charles H. Davis, reviewed seventeen proposals and selected three for construction. Two were relatively conventional designs and became *USS New Ironsides* and *USS Galena*. The third, unconventional in virtually every way, became the *Monitor*.

Swedish engineer John Ericsson was personally responsible for *Monitor*'s conception and the details of her design. Perhaps with Scandinavian coastal defense conditions in mind, he had been developing the concept on paper for several decades. What emerged was well-suited for the Civil War's inshore fighting: a relatively shallow-draft iron hull, topped by an armored raft that provided good protection against ramming and cannon fire. Freeboard was less than two feet, sufficient for coastal requirements, though a real problem when the ship went to sea. Engine power was modest, but again sufficient to the need, and a Navy requirement for masts and sails was quite appropriately ignored.

The most stunning innovation, on a ship whose design was dominated by innovations, was the method of carrying her guns: a thickly-armored round turret, twenty-feet in diameter, rotated by steam power to permit nearly all-around fire from a pair of eleven-inch Dahlgren smoothbore shell guns, the heaviest weapons then available.

Iron fabrication began even before the *Monitor*'s contract was issued in early October. Rapid construction was a necessity, as the Confederates were known to be pushing work on their own ironclad, which became *CSS Virginia*. The new ship's hull was built by the Continental Iron Works, at Greenpoint, Long Island, with iron stock, machinery and much equipment furnished by other firms.

*The Monitor* was launched on January 30, 1862. She was outfitted over the next month and placed in commission on 25 February, under the command of Lieutenant John L. Worden.



# Battery Profile

## Miles Obert

Miles joined the Second Battery quite early in its formation, mustering in on January 16, 1862. Since he was one of the first enlistees, he was promoted to corporal when more men came to fill the ranks of the Battery. The descriptive roll listed his occupation as a carpenter, but other information suggests he had some specialized skills and noted him to be a millwright and a draughtsman. He had been born on April 13, 1840 in Friendship, New York. He came to Minnesota in the fall of 1856 and was living in Stearns County when he enlisted in the Second Battery. He was single, had hazel eyes, dark hair and a sandy complexion. He was 5' 5-1/4" tall.

Being a corporal put Miles into the position of gunner on the cannon he served. It was his job to aim the piece, call for the rounds, and watch everything that was going on to be sure his men were safe and proficient as possible when they served the gun.

In the fall of 1863, Miles was sent on detached service, not returning to the Battery until December 10. When the Battery men were asked to reenlist the following spring, Miles decided not to stay in the Army. He had enlisted for three years and he chose leave the army at the end of his obligation. While the men who did sign on for another three years went home on their veteran's furloughs, Miles and the remainder of the Minnesota Battery were assigned to Battery I, Second Illinois Artillery. They were with the Illinois Battery during the campaign for Atlanta and saw some hard fighting.

Miles was mustered out of the Army on March 28, 1864, at Chattanooga, Tennessee. He went back to Minnesota, but his military service was not quite over. Miles accepted a commission as a second lieutenant in the Third Minnesota Battery of Light Artillery in the Minnesota Militia on January 30, 1866. This unit did not see much real action as the Civil War was long over and most of the Indian fighting was further west than Minnesota.

For a while, Miles went into the milling business with a partner, R.P. Russell, and they opened the Diamond Roller flour mill near Elk River, Minnesota. After the milling venture, Miles changed directions and got into a drug selling business in Minneapolis.

On October 24, 1867, Miles married Sarah A. Peat. After leaving Elk River, the couple made their home on Stevens Avenue in Minneapolis. During the last three years of his life, Miles began suffering with a form of dementia. A doctor's statement said, "his mental powers have signally, by reason of Arterio-

Sclerosis and advancing years, deteriorated, to such a degree as to render him largely irresponsible for his actions and render his surveillance by a second person imperative, to prevent his wandering away and becoming lost and exposed to danger."

Miles died on May 6, 1921. The cause of death was a fall from a ladder. He was laid to rest in the Lakewood Cemetery in Minneapolis. He has a large family stone in addition to his own footstone.

At the time of his death, Miles was receiving a pension for his military service. This pension was transferred to the "Widow's Department" after his death and Sarah was given \$72 per month.



# Recap

## December 10, Rum River Library, Anoka Civil War Christmas!

Wow, what a turnout by the public for this event! They were lining up even before 10:30 and there was a steady flow of



people throughout the three hours of the event. The library staff was thrilled to have counted 158 people and many staff members commented on how long people stayed! They also were impressed at the “depth of knowledge”



Battery members had and how approachable everyone was. Needless to say, the staff at the library were pleased beyond measure.



Thankfully, a Battery friend attended and took Mrs. Wendel’s camera to get photos—we were all far too busy to take any!



**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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“Santa” (Ray Steinke, former mayor of St. Francis & Battery member descendant) should probably be an honorary member—he loves to be Santa for us!

