



## 2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

# “ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 198

May 2012

### On This Date-150 Years Ago

#### May, 1862

The boys of the Battery were in the South! At least as far as St. Louis where they had arrived on April 25th. They received their guns, 115 horses, 18 mules, and other equipment. Then they spent a great deal of time drilling and drilling and drilling some more according to Private George Murphie. This was probably to get them used to their own guns, their own horses and mules, and polish their skills with the equipment they would use when they faced the enemy.

On May 21st, the boys left Benton Barracks and boarded the steamer, *Warsaw*. They continued on their southward journey to Tennessee, stopping at Pittsburg Landing. The boys saw the aftermath of the battle of Shiloh some six weeks earlier.

They continued on to Hamburg, Tennessee, where they arrived on May 25th. The Battery's travels on the river took them 480 miles deeper into the South.

They unloaded the boat and set out on the road toward Farmington. They marched five miles and set up camp. The next day, they marched the remaining 13 miles to Farmington where they would remain until the 31st when they marched another seven miles to a camp near General Pope's Headquarters.

The Battery Returns state that this camp was three miles from Corinth, Mississippi.

### Upcoming Events

*This is our bread and butter month. All members—help earn our operating funds for the year. Please contact Daryl with a list of those events you can attend ASAP!!* We need to know what stations to plan at which places and who will be staffing them. Please arrive on time as we need everyone to set up and be ready.

**May 7 Calvin Christian School, Edina MN**  
4015 Inglewood Ave. S, Edina. Arrive at 9:00 to set up, students arrive at 9:50. We will set up 5 stations and rotate students through.

**May 11 Eagle Point Elementary, Oakdale MN**  
7850 15th Street North, Oakdale Arrive by 8:15 to be ready for the students at 9:15. We will set up 5 stations and rotate students through.

**May 24 Oakdale Elementary, Oakdale MN**  
821 Glenbrook Arrive at 8:30 to set up for students at 9:20. We will set up 5 stations and rotate students through.

**May 28 Memorial Day, Red Wing, MN**  
Arrive at Bay Point Park by 7:30 to set up. There will be a reading by one of our Battery ladies for the Memorial Day service and honor volleys from our gun.

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

**June 9 Rum River Library, Anoka, MN** 4201 6th Ave., Anoka. This is a four hour event, 10-2, for the Library's Live at the Library event. We'll set up the gun, do firing demos, and other stations much like schools. We saw hundreds of people at 'Live at the Library' last year, so we want to put on a good show again.

### **Battery Baby Shower June 9!**

First babies are always special and we have Battery members who are looking forward to their first baby—and it's a boy! Baby Overby will arrive in August. We'll have a Battery Baby Shower for Stacy and Jay for ALL Battery members following the event on June 9 at the Library. It will be a potluck lunch and Baby Shower at the Anoka County History Center in their meeting room. More details coming soon! Watch your email!

### Next Meeting

#### May 24, lunchtime

We will hold our meeting during the lunch break at the Oakdale Elementary School event.



# Battery Profile

## George Franklin Murphie

*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.*

Those were the opening lines of the first letter George mailed home to his father in St. Anthony after the Battery left Minnesota. George had enlisted in the Battery on January 16, 1862, trained, and finally went South in late April. He should have felt right at home on the riverboat as he had spent some time at sea prior to 1860 when he came to Minnesota. He listed his occupation as sailor on his enlistment papers. He was 23 years old, had blue eyes, dark hair, a dark complexion, and stood 5' 5" tall.

George described the trip south, relating how the troops were cheered at each stop along the way and that the only incident was being blown ashore near Nauvoo. He then described his military life. *This life is new and exciting...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*

The battle at Pittsburg Landing, also known as Shiloh, had been fought just over a month earlier. George provided his father with new mailing instructions for letters, so George obviously expected to get news from home often. He noted that he had enclosed a check for his father to cash and reassured everyone about his health being good even though there were "a good many men" from the Battery who were sick. He continued, *"We are all in good spirits and glad to go as far 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 friends and all the handsome girls, who know what a soldier is and should be."*

George never gathered up a cotton bale, gold watch, or "darkie". When the Battery was in camp at Clear Creek, Mississippi, George contracted typhoid fever. By June 27th, he was dead. A notice appeared in the St. Anthony newspaper that said George died from typhoid fever; was the eldest son of E.D.W. Murphie, 23 years and 11 months old and had served as a cannoner in the Second Minnesota.

George's father had depended on the money George sent and needed help, so he applied to the Pension Department. The depositions filed indicated that George had been supporting his father with money, clothes, provisions, and more ever since George had arrived in Minnesota in 1860. George lived with his father and stepmother and was the major breadwinner for the family, continuing to provide for them even after he had enlisted. George's stepmother wasn't sure the last letter they had received was in George's handwriting. She thought he may have had someone else write it for him, but she believed it to be his words. She also verified that the check he sent was for \$60, drawn on a New York bank. That amount would have been nearly all of George's pay for the few short months he served in Uncle Sam's Army. As proof George had supported his father, one of the letters George wrote was mailed to the Pension Department. The Pension Department kept the letter—the letter that described the riverboat ride south.

George was buried in the cemetery at Corinth, Mississippi. It was included in the National Cemetery system when it was established and remains a field of honor for those who gave their lives while serving their country.



# ***The U.S Sanitary Commission and the Civil War***

By Isobel Paoral (online article)

We've all heard the statistics about Civil War deaths. It was the bloodiest war in American history. Few of us realize, however, that many Civil War casualties were the result of disease rather than wounds. As terrible as that sounds, there would have been many more deaths without the Sanitary Commission.

Disease had caused four out of five British soldiers' deaths in the Crimean War, which ended in 1856. Many civilians in the United States were determined that the same thing should not happen to Union soldiers. Not long after the battle of Fort Sumter, these civilians created the Sanitary Commission to provide private relief to the army.



This image of the Sanitary Commission at Gettysburg after the battle is in the collection of the New York Public Library.

This relief effort took several forms. Commissioners prowled Union camps and hospitals, insisting that they be cleaned up. They demanded better food for the men, and they made sure that supplies from home -- blankets, shoes, medicines -- were distributed fairly. Often, they brought their own supplies for the soldiers.

Army officers didn't like their interference. One surgeon referred to them as "sensation preachers, village doctors, and strong-minded women." But the men loved them.

Prominent men headed the Sanitary Commission. George Templeton Strong was the treasurer. Frederick Law Olmsted, the landscape designer who created Central Park in New York City, was the general secretary. His organizational genius ensured that Sanitary Commission volunteers were among the first to reach any battle site, and that they were properly equipped to help the wounded.

It was the hundreds of thousands of women, grouped into seven thousand local auxiliaries all across the North, who made the Commission successful. A small number of them served as nurses. The great majority knitted, baked, wrapped bandages, organized rallies, and raised badly-needed funds.

Their fundraising efforts were astonishingly successful. In 1863, the Chicago headquarters of the commission sponsored a fair. They hoped to raise \$25,000 for the relief effort, even though very few people believed it would be possible to raise such an enormous sum.

Hoping to collect wonderful items to sell at the fair, the committee offered a fine gold watch for the largest contribution. Donations poured in, not just from the Chicago area, but from across the country. President Lincoln sent his personal copy of the Emancipation Proclamation, though he had planned to keep it. "If it shall contribute to the relief and comfort of the soldiers, that will be better," he said.

The fair lasted for two weeks in September. At its end, the astonished organizers realized they had raised more than \$100,000. The great success of the project encouraged auxiliaries across the North to attempt more fairs, both large and small. The Brooklyn chapter raised \$300,000 and the Philadelphia Sanitary Fair raised slightly over \$1 million.

Their efforts saved the lives of literally tens of thousands of soldiers. In the Crimean War, four out of five soldiers had died of disease; in the Civil War, the number was reduced to two out of five. Equally important, the skillful nursing and good food that the Sanitary Commission provided meant the difference between life and death to many Union wounded. It was an unprecedented effort -- and it yielded unprecedented results.

# APPROVED 2012 Schedule

March 29 – April 1 - Shiloh, Tennessee  
April 7 – Dedication at Oakland Cemetery in St. Paul.  
May TBD — Bluffview, School  
May 7 — Calvin Christian, Edina  
May 11—Eagle Point, Oakdale  
May 24 — Oakdale Elem, Oakdale  
May 28 — Memorial Day event in Red Wing, Battery I may join us for section firing.  
June 9th – Rum River Library event  
August 4-5 – Boscobel, WI  
August 11-12 – Pipestone, MN  
August 25-26 – Ahlman's, Morristown, MN  
September 15 – Anderson Center, Red Wing, MN  
October 5-7, Perryville, KY (with Battery I as a section)  
November 11 — Veteran's Day event in Winona, MN (weather permitting)  
December TBD — Christmas at the Library

## Recap

### **Shiloh Remembrance Cemetery Event, April 7**

The Battery was invited to be part of the first official event of the Minnesota 150 Civil War Task Force, a rededication of the only Minnesota man killed at Shiloh whose body was returned to Minnesota for burial. Several speakers provided the context for the event, then a rifle volley by the First Minnesota Infantry followed by a volley from our gun. The same volleys were repeated at the grave of Captain Emil Munch of the First Minnesota Light Artillery. Just as the event ended, there was a long, rolling clap of thunder, adding to the drama of the day. It was especially meaningful to those Battery members who had just been on the actual battlefield at Shiloh less than a week before.



***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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The rain that began almost at the same time as the event was cold, but it didn't dampen the spirits of those in attendance.

Following the formal ceremonies, we held our own quiet dedication by laying flowers on the graves of Edward Tillotson and Benjamin Joy, both of whom served in our Battery. Neither of these men had a marker on their graves until we found them and alerted the cemetery, who ordered and placed the markers.

