



2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 211

August 2013

On This Date-150 Years Ago

Monthly Report of the Battery, August 1863

- 2 Wm Helm contraband Employed as teamster
- 3 D. Jarvis on detached service on U.S. Gun Boats "Silver Lake No. 2" since July 20, 1863 by S. O. No. 190 July 20 '63 - Rosecrans. Sergt. Pratt ret'd to duty
- 6 Tennis Hanson returned to duty from Hosp.
- 7 Giles C. Wiltse rec'd Furlough of 20 days to go to Racine, Wis. Privt. Douglas ret'd to duty
- 13 Sergt. H. N. Joy & Wag: J. W. Johnson on detached service on U. S. Gun boat Newsboy
- 17 Quit camp at Winchester & marched toward Stevenson, Ala. 5 miles Sergt. Hamilton, Artificer J. H. Arnell & Privts Taylor. Smith, Stump, Siamonds & Lent left sick at Winchester, Tenn. Turned in 2 Horses
- 18 Marched -- crossing the Tenn. & Ala. line
- 19 Marched toward Stevenson to camp
- 20 Marched to camp on {left blank}, 1 miles W. of Stevenson Ala.
- 22 Artificer J. H. Arnell ret'd to duty from Hosp. -- D. W. Coulthard on daily duty as Saddler
- 27 Privt. A. Jackson under arrest for disobedience of orders & Mutinous conduct & del'd to PM Christopher - fined
- 28 Giles C. Wiltse, Private, not reported for duty at Expiration of furlough, given 7" Aug. for 20 days.
- 29 Marched to Capertons Ferry on the Tennessee river. D. Coulthard, Giles, ret'd to Co. duty
- 30 Crossed the Tennessee River, marching 1/4 mile
- 31 Climbed the Raccoon Mountain .

Upcoming Events

August 3-4, Boscobel, WI

Save the dates for this annual favorite! Bring your gray uniforms as well as the blue since we have registered as Confederate artillery for this event. If you do not have a gray jacket, you can go in shirt sleeves, vest and an anything but Union hat, a straw hat will do if all else fails.

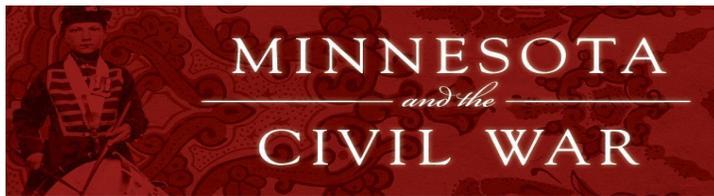
We are asking for a good head count for the meals, so if you have NOT responded to Mrs. Wendel yet, you had better do so soon since she is packing her laundry stick along!

August 24-25, Morristown, MN

Fort Ahlman Encampment & Firing Demonstration at what is without question the wildest event we attend all year. We'll be firing our gun on a regular schedule so members will have plenty of time to visit the many other activities happening at this event.

September 7, New Ulm

We were invited to join the New Ulm Battery in a performance of the 1812 Overture. More details will be coming, but as this is an early in the month event and there is a holiday just ahead of it, so this is a reminder that we will need a gun crew to participate.



If you have not yet been to the Minnesota Historical Society History Center to see this exhibit, your time is running out! The exhibit closes on September 8, so you have only one more month to see it. The exhibit features many unique artifacts from Civil War soldiers around the state, as well as their words from letters, journals and diaries. The exhibit is well done and very engaging—check it out! www.mnhs.org for hours and admission information.

Next Meeting

TBA

There will be a brief meeting to take care of some business at the event in Boscobel.



Battery Profiles

Alfred Colburn

Alfred Colburn was already a veteran when he enlisted in the Second Battery of Light Artillery. His first enlistment was with the First Minnesota Volunteer Infantry, the first unit tendered to President Lincoln after Fort Sumter was surrendered. Alfred joined the First Minnesota in November of 1861. He was living in Isanti County, Minnesota, at the time and had held the position of county surveyor.

Serving in the Army of the Potomac, Alfred participated in the Valley Campaign and the Peninsula Campaign. Just after the battle of Fair Oaks in May of 1862, he was detailed to cut some trees in the front of the First Minnesota's lines. The skirmishing was still going on, but the trees needed to be gotten out of the way. While working, a tree cut by other members of the detachment fell, striking Alfred on the head. He was knocked unconscious and carried from the field to the hospital where he remained for four or five days. Because of the closeness of the fighting, he was moved to a hospital near Harrison Landing where he stayed for a couple weeks. Finally, Alfred was put on a hospital ship, the *Daniel Webster*, and sent to New York where he was discharged on August 8, 1862. The discharge said his disability was from "compression of the brain" and he was entitled to ¼ pension.

Alfred went back to Spencer Brook in Isanti County, but he did not apply for the ¼ pension his discharge said was due him. Instead, he decided to enlist again. On August 30, 1864, the Army accepted him into the Second Battery of Light Artillery. He was 30 years old, stood 5' 81/2" tall, had gray eyes, sandy hair, and a fair complexion.

The rank of private was as high as Alfred got during either term of service. In March of 1865, he was once again detailed to cut logs for a Major Church, but this time he managed not to get hit on the head. Alfred was discharged with the Battery on August 16, 1865.

Alfred's personal life also had a few bumps. He was born in Lyme, New Hampshire, on March 25, 1834. By 1852, he wanted to move west and was making preparations to leave when his parents decided they would go with him. They arrived in Wisconsin where Alfred began working on the river. He managed to buy a piece of property that he deeded to his parents. While in Wisconsin, Alfred married Adamantine Butterfield. In 1858, Alfred and Adamantine moved further west to Spencer Brook, Isanti County, Minnesota, where he was elected the county surveyor and served in that position until he enlisted.

Alfred came back to Spencer Brook after his disability discharge from the First Minnesota Infantry. In July of 1864, he was in court with a divorce petition against Adamantine. The divorce was declared final on August 5, 1864, by the district court in Anoka and Alfred almost immediately enlisted to serve the last year of the war with the Battery. When the war was over, he went back to Spencer Brook and was elected county surveyor again, a post he held for 16 years.

In May of 1866, Alfred was married a second time to Mary M. Henry. They had two daughters before Mary died on February 8, 1871. In November of 1873, Alfred was married a third time to a widow with four children of her own. Cassandra Whitaker Morton lived in Spencer Brook and had lost her husband to death a year before.

The lure of the west again called Alfred, so their blended family moved to Slayton, Oregon, where Alfred operated a sawmill and later built a flour mill.

In 1878, Alfred was on the move again, this time with a herd of 500 sheep. He and several others, with their families, were heading for land in Idaho. Their timing was not the best as conflict between the Nez Perce Indians was at its height. Everyone but Alfred decided it was too risky to continue and took refuge at Dalles. Alfred and his family, with their sheep, kept going and made it to Latah County, Idaho, without incident. There, he took a homestead and made improvements to his land until he had a prosperous farm. He raised sheep and cattle, grew various kinds of crops and had an orchard. Alfred and Cassandra also raised children; they had three more daughters, but only one lived to adulthood.

Alfred was elected the county surveyor once again in Idaho, a position he "filled well." He was active in the local GAR Post and they attended the Baptist Church. It was said that "In political matters, Mr. Colburn always took the part of the intelligent citizen, and is ever found registered on the side of progress and good government."

Alfred died June 12, 1903, at the age of 69 years. He was buried in the church cemetery in Freeze, Latah County, Idaho. The church and cemetery stand at the top of a tall hill, surrounded by wheat fields in all directions.

The will Alfred left was very specific. His two living daughters each received \$1.00. Everything else he owned went to Cassandra. While she had the land and buildings, the value had decreased and her deposition to the Pension Department spelled out what she paid in taxes on the land, what it cost to have crops put in and harvested, expenses associated with the crops, and all of the income she had from the land and crops. At the end of the year, she showed a profit of only \$11.54, reason enough she believed, to apply for a widow's pension. Cassandra died in 1937 and was laid beside Alfred in the church cemetery.



The Weather at Gettysburg in 1863

A Gettysburg man by the name of Rev. Dr. Michael Jacobs, a math professor at what was then called Pennsylvania College, had a strong interest in weather and recorded his observations three times a day, every day, even during the battle. As a result, the *Meteorology of the Battle* was published, and gives very specific details on the weather at the Battle of Gettysburg and the role it may have played in battle.

Ben Neely, Executive Director at the Adams County Historical Society, emphasized that the most damaging aspect of the weather for this event actually occurred July 4, the day after the battle had ended. Rain fell across the area for most of the day, Rev. Dr. Jacobs put the total at 1.39 inches. Some wounded soldiers had still not been moved from low-lying areas by the Plum Run Creek, which overflowed its banks. The wounded soldiers who were near the flood waters and unable to move, reportedly all Confederate, drowned.

For its part, the weather was more cooperative at the battle's start. July 1, the first day fighting began, had a sky covered by cumulostratus clouds all day, according to Rev. Dr. Jacobs' detailed reports. The breeze was typically southerly at only 2 mph; the afternoon temperature was a comfortable 76 degrees.

The second day started with similar cloud cover, but Rev. Dr. Jacobs wrote that the sky was three-tenths clear by the afternoon, when temperatures went up to 81. Likewise, the cloud cover started the third day and cleared considerably by the afternoon. The clouds that remained, however, was the "massive thunder-cloud of summer." A thunderstorm started around 6 p.m. "The thunder seemed tame, after the artillery firing of the afternoon," Rev. Dr. Jacobs wrote.

The temperatures were not as severe as they could have been. Current records from 1981 to 2010 put the average high for the area at 87 for every day in July, but most of the Battle of Gettysburg was fought in the 70 to 80 degree range. The cloud cover also offered a break from direct sunlight. Had these conditions been less favorable, there may have been even more casualties.



A Few More Pictures from Gettysburg

Just a sampling of the photos taken during the four day event! For even more photos, go to the photo gallery on the Battery's Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Second-Minnesota-Battery-of-Light-Artillery-Reenactors/371220336239>

Congratulations to Ron and Tanya! They celebrated the 45th wedding anniversary at Gettysburg!



Recap

July 4-7, Gettysburg, PA

The 150th anniversary of the battle was indeed a once-in-a-lifetime event with 10,000 preregistered reenactors and an expected 1,500-2,000 more who registered at the event. There were twelve Second Minnesota Battery members who made the journey and were sectioned with our Minnesota friends in Battery I. Our gun was part of Schmeltzer's Battery in the First Federal Artillery Division. (Yes, there was enough artillery that we had two divisions!) While there were two battles each day—three on Saturday—most units only participated in one per day. Our Battery was in the Thursday morning battle, the Friday and Saturday evening battles, and the Big One—Pickett's Charge on Sunday afternoon. One news report stated there were 8,500 soldiers who participated in the recreated Pickett's Charge. It was quite the spectacle to see! And probably smell. The weather did not cooperate so well and temperatures were in the low to mid 90s every day with humidity levels to match. It finally broke with a thunderstorm that began just as the battle ended on Sunday. Of course, that meant we hauled home wet canvas and everything else for two days before we could get it home to dry out. Still, the trip was once-in-a-lifetime!



July 13, Anoka—All For The Union

This was a "demo day" for members who participated, talking to people and showing off the gun or the Soldiers' Aid Society activities. It was part of the city celebration of Riverfest, which draws several thousand people into downtown

Anoka. Our part was to be a visible hook to draw people into the museum to see the Civil War exhibit, *All For the Union*. It worked and ACHS was very pleased with the day. More than 300 people came into the History Center that day and most toured the exhibit. It was a great event!



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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