



2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 213

October–November 2013

On This Date-150 Years Ago

A letter written by Second Battery member, Pvt. Frank Flint, dated 11 October 1863.

I will try to write you a few lines. I have written two letters since I read one from you but we have had mail captured and I thought they might have been lost. I am well as can be expected. The Boys are all well. Newb is on his pins yet. We have just been reorganized. We now belong in the same Div. with the 2nd regt. In the 14th Corps commanded by Gen. Thomas. Our Division is the same Gen Davis. We rather like the change.

I suppose that you have heard all about the battle so I won't say much about it except that we were in it and came out pretty well. Lieut. Woodberry D., one private wounded and one horse killed but we have been in considerable danger since we came here as the Rebs have several guns on the mountains that they like to bother us with. They throw shells all around and into the Baty. But all the damage that they have done yet is in the smashing of one wheel and one tent. It seems as if we are the most lucky battery in the army. There were batteries on both sides of us and when we got orders to leave (the Rebs were charging) they got the same orders at the same time. We got off all of our guns but the 8th Ind. left four guns and they were taken by the Rebs but they did not hold them long for our Inf. retook them but that was no thanks to the battery. I hope that we never leave any of our guns for the Inf. to pull off for us.

It is Sunday here and I wonder if it is Sunday there. If it is, I would like to be there and go to meeting with some pretty girl, but I'd like the supper that she'd get me when we got home from meeting even better. You see we are short of rations here at present and at such times my head is full of visions of good suppers up home and at the neighbors. I wish I could be there to help Robert dig his potatoes. We don't get any here and very little of anything else at present but are in hopes that it will be more plenty soon.

We are expecting the Minn. Troops down here. I should like to see some of the 7th boys first rate but wish that they could stay there. They would have it much easier. The Rebs are only about two miles from us. We can see their tents and camp fires but the battery that they shell us with we can't see. I had a letter from Harvey last week but haven't had one from home for some time, finally, there don't much from anybody come.

Frank

Upcoming Events

November 9 — Ladies and Gentlemen's Tea

“Autumn of 1863 on the Home front” at the Historic St. James Hotel, 406 Main St., Red Wing, Minnesota. This event is sponsored by the Third Minnesota and all are welcome. 2:00~4:00 p.m.

Period Civilian and Military Dress is Highly Encouraged for women and men, but not required for an enjoyable time. (Age 14 and over event.)

Suggested donation per Ticket: \$20. For questions, and to reserve your Seats at this price, please contact us and mail your check as soon as possible. Pre-registration has ended, but if you want to attend, contact either of these ladies for more information.

Bobbie Christen – email: natasha_sokov@hotmail.com ; phone: (651)388-5256, Mail: 322 6th St. E. Red Wing, MN 55066

Marie McNamara – email: maclane@sleepyeyetel.net ; phone: (651)258-4506, Mail: 35815 165th Ave. Goodhue, MN 55027

November 11 — Veterans Day in Winona

The Winona Area Veterans Day Program for 2013 will be held at Veteran's Park on Lake Winona starting at 11:00 am. The program has been awarded the 2013 Veterans Day Regional Site Status by the US Department of Veterans Affairs, Washington, DC. Nationwide, there are only about 60 programs that are granted this status.

We will participate with our cannon, providing honor volleys for this special event. All ladies are welcome to attend in hoops to add color to the event and show your support for all veterans, past and present.

Contact Daryl or Brian if you are planning to attend this event and have not yet done so.

Next Meeting

January, 2014

No meeting in November or December. Information on the January meeting will be announced later.



Battery Profiles

Seneca W. Lent

Seneca's signature on his enlistment papers was his own, but another set of signatures was needed for him to join the Second Minnesota. Seneca was "20 years and 2 months of age", making him not yet of legal age, so his mother needed to give her permission. Her name was signed, "C.L. Fales", so it is believed she remarried after the loss of Seneca's father.

The witness who also signed the enlistment papers was Charles T. Woodbury, brother to the officer who was doing the recruiting. Lieutenant Albert Woodbury was back in Minnesota in the late summer of 1862 on recruiting duty. He was recruiting in his home county where his family was well known and his brother was an easy choice for a witness.

Seneca was helping with the farm in what he called Baldwin in Anoka County on August 26, 1862, when he enlisted. Baldwin was probably a small neighborhood name as it does not appear on any map for Anoka County in 1862 nor any time since. The descriptive roll put Seneca as 5' 6" tall, with blue eyes, dark hair, and a light complexion. He was born on June 1, 1842, in Stillwater, Onedia County, New York. Seneca received a bounty of \$100 for enlisting to serve a term of three years. He was given \$25 upon signing and the balance due at a later date.

Lt. Woodbury went south with 26 new recruits in September, Seneca being one of them. They arrived at the Battery on September 27th at Louisville, Kentucky. Ten days later, the Battery took part in their first major battle at Perryville. Seneca served in the battles at Perryville, Knob Gap, and Stones River before the harsh army life began to take its toll on his health. In July of 1863, Seneca was treated for chronic diarrhea in the convalescent camp near Shelbyville, Tennessee. A month later, on August 17th, Seneca was left sick at the hospital in Winchester, Tennessee. Another month and his name was transferred to the Invalid Corps. He never returned to the Second Minnesota Battery.

Seneca was eventually transferred to the Veteran Reserve Corps where he served from February of 1864 to November 12, 1865, when he was discharged.

When the war was over, Seneca tried living in San Francisco, California, for a while, but he came back to Anoka, Minnesota, where he worked as sawyer in the lumber

mill.

On the 4th of July, 1869, Seneca was married to Miss Margaret M. McConnell. She was from Brooklyn, a small community just south across the Mississippi River from Anoka. The couple made their home in the Anoka area until about 1890 when they moved to Sioux City, Iowa. They had one son, Edward.

Sioux City had a GAR Post, the General Hancock Post, and Seneca was an active member. The couple celebrated their Golden Anniversary in 1919 and it was quite the talk of Sioux City.

Seneca died on February 13, 1921. He was laid to rest in the Graceland Park Cemetery in Sioux City. Margaret, or Maggie as she was known, struggled to pay his doctor bills and funeral expenses. The little money she had saved was soon gone. The Pension Department was holding Seneca's last two months of allowance and not acting on her application for a widow's pension. It was a year after Seneca's death that Maggie wrote a letter explaining that she had sent everything asked for by the Pension Department, but she still had no word or even the last of the money owed Seneca. She concluded her letter with, "I don't like to bother you any more than is necessary but I am greatly in need of the money."

The records are not clear if Maggie ever received any help from the Pension Department and that may explain why Seneca's grave was unmarked.

In 2002, the Second Minnesota Battery of Artillery Reenactors discovered Seneca's grave and ordered a veteran's marker from the Veteran's Administration stone to be placed there. The stone setting was paid for by the reenactors as contacts to local veterans groups brought no response.



Winter Encampments

The Long and Frozen Road — by the Civil War Trust

Civil War winters were particularly trying and monotonous for the armies. Impassable, muddy roads and harsh weather precluded active operations. Disease ran rampant, killing more men than battles. But with all of its hardships, winter also allowed soldiers an opportunity to bond, have a bit of fun, and enjoy their more permanent camps. Through these bleak months all soldiers, Union and Confederate, had to keep warm and busy in order to survive.

"The view is wild, bleak, and desolate. The elements, which have been warring for the last fortnight, have called a truce and left a sea of mud." – George P. McClellan 155th Pennsylvania Infantry.

While on the move in warmer weather, soldiers often slept in easily-erected canvas tents or they simply slept without cover, under the stars. In the winter, large camps were established with more substantial shelter. Winter huts were built by the armies out of the surrounding materials including: trees, mud, leaves, and soldiers' canvases. These huts usually included a chimney, which kept the small space warm, but some were more effectively built than others.



Winter quarters at Brandy Station, VA. 1864 (Library of Congress)

"We then rake up dry leaves and fill the dog house about ten inches deep with the leaves, which makes us a good warm bed." - Private John W. Stevens, 5th Texas Infantry.

"Thursday Dec. 17th – Last night was very stormy – this morning no better. Our house leaks all over, and our chimney works badly, which make things rather uncomfortable." – Lieutenant Charles Stewart 124th New York Volunteers.

The camps were set-up much like small villages complete with crisscrossing lanes called "company streets", churches, and sutlers' shops. While this may seem cozy, these temporary villages lacked the appropriate systems to provide clean water and clear away waste; additionally, food was scarce. Disease and death abounded and spread easily.

"...within a few hours of Washington, men are dying of scurvy because they haven't transportation enough to give us potatoes & onions. Some of my men are in a horrible state. They can press their thumb into their legs & leave the dent there exactly as if they were putty." – Captain Henry Livermore Abbott, 20th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, January 3, 1863.

However bad the weather, boredom was an ever-present problem. Commanders and soldiers alike tried to establish regular activity and work to break the monotony. Drilling, camp up-keep, religious services, letter writing, card games,

storytelling, and even the occasional snow ball fight were all part of camp life.

"Dec. 20/64 – The weather is cold, but we keep up our drills believing it is to be better for the men." – Elisha Hunt Rhodes, 2nd Rhode Island Volunteers.

"There is a string band in the regiment, and occasionally they have a serenade around the different companies and call out the Colonel and captains to make them a speech, which is generally responded to." - Sergeant Henry G. Orr, 12th Texas Cavalry, December 21, 1861.

"The usual routine of army life was carried on day by day, with not many incidents to vary the monotony of camp life. But occasionally the soldiers would engage in a snow ball battle, in which generals, colonels, captains and privates all took part." - Sam Watkins, Co. H., First Tennessee Regiment, Winter of 1864.

Despite the best efforts of their officers, or lack thereof, many soldiers strayed to less desirable activities. *"It is a bad thing for an army to remain too long at one place. The men soon become discontented and unhappy, and we had no diversion or pastime except playing poker and chuck-a-luck."* - Sam Watkins, Co. H., First Tennessee Regiment, January, 1863.

"Christmas caught up with us again and came on in full sympathy of the times, boisterous and stormy. It seemed there were more fighting and drinking in camp than

usual, gambling was again on the rampage." – Dr. W. J. Worsham 19th Tennessee, December, 1863.

As the war progressed, winter encampments displayed the resources available to each army. The Confederacy began to run low on supplies and food, and their camps suffered while Union might, supplies, and transportation facilitated more comfortable winter for its soldiers.

"We bivouac on the cold and hard-frozen ground, and when we walk about, the echo of our footsteps sound like the echo of a tombstone. The earth is crusted with snow, and the wind from the northwest is piercing our bones. We can see our ragged soldiers, with the sunken cheeks and famine-glistened eyes." - Sam Watkins, Co. H., First Tennessee Regiment, December, 1864.

When the spring arrived, soldiers gathered their belongings including their canvasses and marched away. However, remnants of the camp remained and in some cases, soldiers saw their old camp again. *"When we arrived at Dalton, we had a desire to see how the old place looked; not that we cared anything about it, but we just wanted to take a last farewell look at the old place."* - Sam Watkins, Co. H., First Tennessee Regiment.

Recap

September 29, 2:00 pm, St. Francis, MN
**Albert Woodbury Commemoration Event, 150th
 Minnesota Civil War Task Force Event**



Our own Lt. Albert Woodbury was the focus of this latest in the series of State events to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the Civil War. State Representative Dean Urdahl was present, other officials from the State 150 Civil War Task Force, the Mayor of St. Francis and about 75 visitors. The Patriot Guard was also on hand to form a walkway of flags during the program. Privates Tomashek, Norman, and Bruce read the names of all the Minnesotans killed at the Battle of Chickamauga. Sgt. Duden lead a wreath laying, flowers and a flag in a special GAR ceremony for Lt. Woodbury.



of all the



Pvt. Tim Watkins was our bugler for Taps.

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

John Cain
 1640 Woodland Drive
 Red Wing, MN 55066 Phone: (651) 388-9250

Treasurer

Daryl Duden
 1210 West 4th Street
 Red Wing, MN 55066 Phone: (651) 388-6520

Twin Cities Metro Area Contact

Ron & Vickie Wendel
 12419 Redwood Street NW
 Coon Rapids, MN 55448 Phone: (763) 754-2476

E-mail: momwendel@hotmail.com

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

The Battery ladies were all beautiful in their finest and added a great visual element to a special day.

