



2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 218

April 2014

On This Date-150 Years Ago

St. Paul Pioneer

12 April 1864

SECOND BATTERY. -- The adjutant has been notified of the re-enlistment of the Second Minnesota Battery, and that the veterans will be furloughed and will arrive in St. Paul about the middle of April.

WILLIAM KINKEAD, of the Second Minnesota Battery, just released from a Richmond prison, has been detailed as a Clerk in the War Department at Washington.

St. Paul Pioneer

Saturday, April 23, 1864

ARRIVAL HOME OF THE VETERANS OF THE SECOND BATTERY. -- It is proper for us to say, in excuse for no reception having been given to Captain Hotchkiss and his men, that their coming was not known until a late hour of Thursday, and even then was not generally known. But it is to be regretted that there is not in St. Paul some association as in other places to take charge of the reception of all soldiers, doing enough for them at least, to show the good will of the loyal people towards their representatives in the army. In all other places of any pretensions, any soldier or body of soldiers is made welcome--to refreshments and comfortable lodgings. In Winona this has been done by the Ladies Aid Society, and none of our Minnesota soldiers have been neglected there. The people of St. Paul are either too, selfish or indifferent.

Capt. Hotchkiss' company has been in active service over two and a half years. Fifty-eight of the men having re-enlisted for a second term of three years were permitted to return home. They left Chattanooga on the 12th inst. A few were furloughed at Winona and other towns below. The remainder were furloughed here yesterday.

Upcoming Events

April 12, Rum River Library, Anoka

4201 6th Avenue, Anoka, 10:30-1:00

Civil War Camp and Ladies' Aid Society

There are always two fronts in any war—the battle front and the home front. We will recreate what soldier's life was like in camp while the ladies hold an Aid Society meeting back home at the Rum River Library. Ladies will share their support efforts from the home front while the soldiers talk of the hardships, uniforms, and tools of war carried by soldiers. Ladies, bring your hand work!



A Soldiers' Aid society meeting, 1863.

Next Meeting

April 12, 2014

ca. 2:00 pm

We will meet immediately after the event at the Rum River Library in Anoka. Call Vickie Wendel if you need directions, (763) 754-2476. Address above in Upcoming Events.



A NOT Battery Profile

By Katie Demarco



Major Belle Reynolds

1840 – 1937

“...for meritorious conduct in camp and on the bloody field of Pittsburg Landing ...”

On April 16, 1862, Governor Richard Yates, Commander-in-Chief of the Illinois Militia, awarded the commission of Major to Arabella “Belle” Reynolds. She was now the only woman who was ever commissioned regularly in the United States Army.

Arabella Loomis Macomber was born on October 20, 1840 in Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts. She moved with her family to Iowa in 1854. In April of 1860, Arabella married William S. Reynolds, a druggist in Peoria, Illinois.

Belle and William had been married only a year when the attack on Fort Sumter occurred. William immediately joined the 17th Illinois Infantry as a lieutenant in April of 1861. As was allowed in the Civil War, Belle became a “camp follower”. In August of 1861, Belle joined her husband in Bird’s Point, Missouri where his regiment was stationed. Serving as a nurse, Belle traveled with her husband and lived in the camps, enduring the soldier’s life with long marches, sleeping on the ground, and weathering the elements.

It was while she was with her husband’s regiment at the battle of Shiloh that her exploits led to her commission. When the camp came under attack, Belle and the other camp followers were ordered to leave. As they were leaving, they encountered surgeons attending the wounded. Belle stopped and immediately assisted the surgeons in tending to the

wounded and helping to move them to the quartermaster’s boat which had been turned into a hospital. On board, the wounded came pouring in, and Belle worked tirelessly to comfort the soldiers. At one point, she was also issued a gun with which to help defend the boat. After two days, Belle and two other nurses left the boat and made their way across the battlefield to the little log church in Shiloh which had been turned into a hospital. They encountered ghastly conditions. Belle organized a water brigade, distributed coffee, hardtack, and whatever food she could acquire. She bathed and bandaged the wounds, and provided as much care as she could for the suffering soldiers. At night, Belle returned to the boat which had taken on more wounded. For the next several days, Belle would go to the hospital during the day, and return to the boat at night, tending to the soldiers. From Belle’s writings, she describes what she encountered:

“At the Landing it was a scene of terror. Rations, forage, and ammunition were trampled into the mud by an excited infuriated crowd.... Trains [wagons] were huddled together on the brow of the hill and in sheltered places. Ambulances were conveying their bleeding loads to the different boats, and joined to form a Babel of confusion indescribable. None were calm, and free from distracting anxiety and pain, save the long ranks of dead, ranged for recognition or burial, at the hospital on the hill-side.”

For seven days, Belle had little time to rest or sleep. When Illinois Governor Richard Yates and a corps of physicians arrived, they insisted she return home to recover. The next day she left for Illinois on the governor’s steamer. While on board, the Battle of Pittsburg Landing was the chief topic of conversation. Having been an eye witness, Belle was asked many questions. She answered with detailed descriptions of the battle and the battlefield conditions. A passenger remarked that Belle deserved a commission more than some of the officers. Governor Yates agreed and completed the commission form. It was said the governor asked the rank of her husband. When he learned it was lieutenant, he said he believed in giving the women the best of it, and awarded the rank of major to Belle.

After she recovered, Belle returned to her husband’s unit and remained there until it was mustered out of service in June of 1864. In 1884, William and Belle divorced. They did not have any children.

Belle continued her education in medicine. She became very active in the Red Cross. During the Spanish-American War, she sailed for Manila to open a Red Cross hospital there. Belle opened an office in Santa Barbara, California, specializing in pediatrics and women’s medicine. Dr. Reynolds closed her practice in 1915, but remained vital and active. Belle died in Santa Barbara on July 30, 1937.

Copy of a newspaper clipping received with a picture of Richard L. Dawley from Col. Charles R. Dawley, which he had received from a descendant of Mary Dawley Miller, sister of RLD. It is a letter, written from the field, to the newspaper back in Minnesota.

FROM THE ARMY OF THE CUMBERLAND
SWORD PRESENTATION
Chickamauga, GA, April 12th, 1864

Editor Democrat: A very interesting scene took place at the camp of the 2nd Minnesota light artillery a few days ago. The non-commissioned officers and men of the Battery raised a voluntary subscription and purchased a sword, sash and belt to present to 1st Lieut. L. Dawley. The presentation took place at the quarters of the lieutenant and the following remarks were made in behalf of the company, by Rich'd. D. Bloomfield:

"1st LIEUT. RICHARD DAWLEY - it has become my agreeable duty, at the request of the non-commissioned officers and men of the 2nd Minnesota light artillery, to address and present to you on their behalf this gift as a token of their esteem and high appreciation of your character as a gentleman. In the long and various relations in which you have been connected with us, we have ever found you bearing the impress of those qualities which mark the true officer. In the hour of danger, of peril, of battle, your judgment, coolness and bravery have won our admiration and commanded our respect.

"As a patriot, ever ready in the hour of duty; as an officer, unremitting in those attentions which are conducive to our welfare; sharing alike with us the danger and glory of the battlefield, the fatigues, hardships and privations of the march, considerate and kind in the camp - we take this occasion as a fitting time to express our warmest thanks and extend to you the right hand of fellowship, with that true, manly, hearty honesty which is our pride as soldiers.

"And when it pleases God that this weapon shall be sheathed and we return to our homes we love so well and resume our peaceful avocations, may we look back through the window of memory upon this scene and its surroundings and again call to our hearts these pleasant reminiscences that speak to us of a brother soldier, a true patriot and an honorable man, whom we love, honor and respect. On behalf of my comrades I take you by the hand and with heartfelt feelings wish you a bright and successful future."

Lieut. Dawley responded warmly, and conveyed to the men very briefly his hearty thanks for this entirely unlooked-for honor. His remarks were short, owing to the unexpectedness of the gift and to his not being addicted to speech making, having yet to make his maiden effort in oratory. His remarks accorded so well with his well-known quiet and unassuming manner that the boys felt that which language failed to convey to them.

Immediately after the ceremonies the sword and its appurtenances with an engrossed copy of the address, were placed upon a table covered with a red artillery cloth and exhibited.

The sword is of elegant manufacture, chastely ornamented and is of the regular cavalry or artillery pattern. Upon the scabbard, which is of steel, are engraved, "Presented to 1st Lieut. R. L. Dawley, by the non-commissioned officers and men of the 2nd Minnesota Battery". Then follow the names of the different battles and skirmishes participated in by the Lieutenant during the present war. On the reverse of the scabbard is a list of the various battles in which he was engaged in Mexico, during the Mexican War. The committee are indebted to Lieut. Alex. Kinkead for the good taste and judgment shown in purchasing the gift and having an appropriate inscription engraved thereon.

You are probably aware the 2nd Battery is now a veteran Battery, and by reason of their re-enlistment will leave for the State on the 14th, and will probably arrive at St. Paul on the 25th. They have already the order to leave and have been relieved by an Illinois Battery. Capt. Hotchkiss and Lieut. Harder will accompany the veterans to the State. We understand that Corp. Dan'l Fry, A.C. Gowdy, and R.D. Bloomfield of St. Cloud, will start for Minnesota in a few days on recruiting service. Chas. N. Earle, 2nd Lieut., resigned a few days ago and left for Minnesota. He is from Anoka.

The 2nd Minnesota Regiment passed here on the 9th of April, on their way to join their Division at Ringgold, GA, They left Nashville on the 25th of March and marched here in fourteen days. Many other regiments were also required to proceed from Nashville to the front on foot, in consequence of railroad transportation which is now taxed even beyond its capacity.

Everything is very quiet along our front.

Winona Daily Republican

April 20, 1864

LIEUT. R. DAWLEY of the Second Minnesota Battery, having resigned his commission, has returned home from the field, and arrived here yesterday, after an absence of two years. From him we learn that three-fourths of the men in the battery have reenlisted -- 47 in number, exclusive of the sick and new recruits -- and that they will return to the State on furlough within the coming week. The battery had been doing service in GEN. THOMAS' department, near Mission Ridge, during the past winter.

Recap

March 24 — Twin Bluff Middle School, Red Wing

Submitted by Sgt. Duden

Lt. Cain and Sgt. Duden spent a day teaching Civil War History to the 6th grade at Twin Bluff Middle School. In total, approximately 170 students attended the five individual class periods of instruction. Each period was an interesting experience because of the volume of information that was included. Topics covered included events leading up to the war, Minnesota war efforts, uniform & equipment, weapons, rations and flags. In each class one student was given the opportunity to serve. Unfortunately, although all passed the physical requirements, not one could meet the minimum age requirement.

March 15 — Mankato Civil War Symposium

Submitted by Cpl. Ritchie

Four members of the Second Minnesota Battery attended the Civil War Symposium “1864...This Mighty Scourge of War...” The symposium was hosted by the Blue Earth County Civil War Memorial Project, a group raising funds to restore the “Boy in Blue” Civil War monument that in Mankato’s Lincoln Park.

The LT, Sgt. Duden, Bugler Bill Crowder, and Corporal Ritchie were at the symposium, with Bugler Bill pulling double duty giving his demonstration of bugle calls used during the Civil War. The LT. also worked the Boys of ’61 table at the meeting.

The opening program was a presentation by Lincoln interpreter Bryce Stenzel, titled “Don’t Swap Horses in Midstream,” which covered the politics of 1864 and Lincoln’s reelection campaign. After the opening session, the Symposium had a three track format, so it was impossible to attend every presentation.

Arn Kind, of the First Minnesota Volunteer Infantry, presented a session on Civil War technology that covered the effect of railroads, the telegraph, and the changes in weapons during the war. He also talked about naval war innovations such as iron clad ships and submarines. He had a display of flags used during the war.

Two of the sessions dealt with women in the Civil War from perspectives not often addressed at this type of meeting. Both presenters did an excellent job of covering their subjects. “Nursing Roles in the Civil War” was presented by Marta Arch. Ms. Arch is a Registered Nurse with more than 30 years’ experience. She talked about the challenges faced by women trying to be accepted as military nurses and the duties and tasks they performed.

“Women Soldiers in the American Civil War” covered women who served in the ranks as soldiers on both sides. The presenter, Dr. Tara L. Harl, discussed how some women were able to hide their gender, and the effect upon their lives after returning home. According to Dr. Harl, many of these women soldiers may have continued to live as men after the war. She stated that those women discovered in the ranks of the Union Army were sent home, but that the Confederate Army sometimes allowed them to continue to serve. Dr. Harl has a database that contains the names of over 300 women who served as soldiers on both sides during the war. The presenter also discussed problems faced

by women reenactors participating as soldiers, and she suggested that part of the controversy could be averted if the women tried to look like men while on the field. She illustrated the point with photos taken at reenactments. One photo showed a young woman in Union blue who was wearing eye makeup, and another showed a woman in a vivandier outfit. According to Dr. Harl, there is no documentation of anyone dressed as a vivandier serving on the line during the War and that reenactment organizers striving for authenticity on the battlefield are justified in excluding vivandiers.

The Symposium also included several other presentations I was unable to attend, and an excellent display of Civil War artifacts. The organizers hope to host another Symposium next year. For more information, check out the The Boy in Blue website: www.boyinblue.org.

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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