



2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 220

June/July 2014

On This Date-150 Years Ago

Submitted by Lt. Cain

The men of the Second Minnesota veteranized in March of 1864 and earned a furlough home. Those who were not eligible to reenlist did not get the furlough, so they went to the Second Illinois Battery I. The following is where they served in June and July of 1864.

June 1-5—Battery moves to vicinity of New Hope Church and held in reserve.

June 6—Moved to Acworth, GA. Camped near railroad.

June 10—Division moved south towards Big Shanty.

June 1 to 19—Hotchkiss and the furloughed men arrive at Nashville. Ordered to mount as Cavalry and escort a cattle drive to the field beyond Chattanooga.

June 14—Pine Mountain, Sherman orders Battery I and one Indiana Battery to fire on Rebel positions killing Confederate General Leonidas Polk. Shelled Rebel positions on the 15th

June 18—Guns moved forward and bastions built. Tried shelling Little Kennesaw Mountain but range to great.

June 19—Guns forward. Shelled Little Kennesaw Mountain

June 20—Battery becomes part of a 24 gun battery under corps command that moves to within 1400 yards of Big Kennesaw. Total number of rounds fired in two days was 1429. Hotchkiss ordered to take horses to the batteries in the Atlanta Campaign near Altoona, GA. Turns in horses and equipment and returns by train to Chattanooga on July 18th, going into the old camp at Stringer’s Farm

June 27—Failed assault on the Kennesaw Mountain line cost Sherman over 3000 casualties. Colonel Dan McCook was mortally wounded in Davis’ Division attack on the Dead Angle aka. Cheatham Hill.

July 2—Battery I rejoins Davis’ 2nd Division, 14th A.C. (Palmer) all artillery batteries of the 14th A.C. (Palmer) were formed into brigades under the control of the Corps Commander, J.M. Palmer, in July.

July 3—Division passed through Marietta, GA. Met the enemy 5 miles from town and in front of Smyrna Church. In the afternoon of the 3rd they fired over 100 rounds into Rebel lines. They had to move forward in front of one of Hooker’s Divisions where they received case shot from one of Hooker’s batteries causing a substantial rift between Hooker and Sherman. Rebels fell back to the north side of the Chattahoochee River

July 4—The Battery goes into camp near Marietta. At Vining (Station) the Battery men could see the spires of churches in Atlanta. During the night of the 9th the Rebels fell back across the Chattahoochee where some guns of the Battery

shelled the enemy in their works the following day.

July 16—Battery I received new guns. Were inspected & condemned as each fired over 1200 rounds in the campaign.

July 17—The Battery moved 5 miles upstream of the R.R. bridge over the Chattahoochee and crossed, pressing on to Peach Tree Creek. Arrived on the north side of the creek, but are in reserve, not engaged in battle. General Hood replaces General Johnston as Confederate commander at Atlanta. Hood goes on the offensive.

July 22—General McPherson killed in battle. The Battery marched a short distance and found the Rebels strongly entrenched around Atlanta

July 23—Built breastworks facing Atlanta and fired a few shells at maximum range into the city, no report of damage.

July 27—Davis’/ Morgan’s 2nd Division with the Battery moved to Proctors Creek, northwest of Atlanta.

July 28—Morgan’s/Davis’ 2nd Division was out of line, ordered by Sherman to march to Turner’s Ferry then eastward towards East Point with orders to engage the Rebels when found to protect the Federal Right Flank. Battle of Ezra Church was in progress.

July 29 to 31—2nd Division advanced the line of battle. Battery went into position at the front each of three days, returning to its first position on the 29th..

Upcoming Events

June 29

Mondovi, WI

This event is an encampment & gun demos for the soldiers and the Soldiers’ Aid Society for the ladies. The event runs from 11:00—4:00. Please plan to arrive not later than 9:00 to get everyone organized and set up in time since we will need to be sure each station is covered when we are firing the gun. We will run this event with “stations” for the public to wander through and visit, asking questions along the way

July 12-13

Wauconda, IL

This event is an invitation from our friends in battery G. It is a well established event, going into its 23rd year with lots of information on their website:

http://www.lcfd.org/html_lc/civilwardaysweb/main.html

Directions and maps are available on the website. If you are planning to attend and have not contacted John Cain or Daryl Duden, please do so ASAP!

Next Meeting

June 29

After the Event

We will meet immediately after the event in Mondovi, WI.



Battery Profile

William Costello

William was 28 years old, working as a teamster in Faribault, Minnesota, when he decided to enlist in the Second Battery on February 14, 1862. The Battery was just forming and William was one of the early recruits. His descriptive role entry showed him to be 5' 8" tall, with hazel eyes, dark hair and dark complexion. William was Irish, having been born in Derry, Ireland, and was married.

The military life didn't seem to bother William as no records tell of his spending time in the hospital during the war and his later pension claim was due simply to "old age" rather than illness or injury from military service. His job with the Battery was that of blacksmith, though he was detailed to "daily duty" on December 1, 1862. In March of 1864, William agreed to reenlist for another three years. He earned a veteran's furlough and went home. He was late reporting in, the morning report showed him absent without leave on June 23. William returned to the Battery and reported for duty on July 2nd.

William was promoted to corporal on October 12, 1864, the rank he held until his discharge in August of 1865. When he went home at the end of the war, William had money in his pockets. He was due \$400 in bounty money and had only been paid \$110 of it. He received not only his back pay--the Battery had not been paid for quite some time before they mustered out--but \$290 in bounty money. William also decided to keep his knapsack, haversack and canteen.

William and his wife had three sons and a daughter. In the 1870's, William moved to Bismarck, North Dakota, where he stayed nearly 20 years before moving west again to Great Falls, Montana.

In Great Falls, William worked for the Boston and Montana silver and copper mining/smelting operations. At his death in 1898, it was said he was one of the oldest employees of the company. William died on April 8, 1898, and was laid to rest in the veteran's section of the Old Highland Cemetery in Great Falls.



Old Abe, The War Eagle

From the Wisconsin Veteran's Museum

One of the most well known figures in Wisconsin from the Civil War is Old Abe, an American bald eagle who served as the mascot for the Eighth Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry Regiment. He participated in over thirty battles, narrowly avoiding significant wounds on several occasions. During the war, he became a rallying point to Union troops and an anathema to Confederate soldiers, who called him the Yankee Buzzard and set bounties on him. His service to the Union resulted in widespread fame, and his life after the war reflected the esteem with which Wisconsin and other states held him.

Stories vary as to Abe's capture, but he was taken as a young eaglet by an Ojibwa man. He traded the eaglet, for a bushel of corn, to Margaret McCann in the tiny community known as Jim Falls, Chippewa County. McCann's husband, Daniel, had difficulty walking due to a childhood accident and wanted to contribute to the war effort in some way. Upon hearing of the formation of a militia company in the Chippewa Falls area, he decided to offer the young eagle as a mascot. The Chippewa Falls men refused the offer, but a company from Eau Claire agreed to purchase the eagle for their mascot. One of the men from the Eau Claire company, Lt. James McGuire, approached the unit's

captain, John E. Perkins, and asked permission to obtain the eagle for a mascot—Perkins granted it. The men of the company pooled their resources to gather \$2.50 to purchase the eagle from McCann. The infantry company had been known as the Eau Claire Badgers, but during their journey to Camp Randall in Madison with their new mascot, they quickly changed their nickname to the Eagles. It was also during this trip that the eagle was named Old Abe, in honor of President Abraham Lincoln.

Upon reaching Camp Randall, a band's impromptu performance of "Yankee Doodle" excited Old Abe. He grabbed a corner of one of the flags that were carried on each side of him in his beak and held it while flapping his wings. Local newspapers raved about the incident and cited it as a good omen. At Camp Randall, the Eau Claire men were mustered into federal service as Company C of the Eighth Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry Regiment and went through basic training. While on their way to the fighting front, the Eighth passed through St. Louis, where Old Abe was subjected to scattered taunts and jeers of "wild goose" and "Yankee crow" by Southern sympathizers. In this excitement, Old Abe became flustered and broke the tether that secured him to his post. His freedom lasted only a short while as several men in the company broke ranks to recapture their beloved mascot and return him to his shield perch.

(Continued on page 3)

(continued from page 2)

Old Abe saw his share of fighting during his time in service. The first major action the Eighth Wisconsin experienced took place at Farmington (Mississippi) in May 1862. During the battle, Captain Perkins ordered James McGinnis, who carried Old Abe, to the rear for protection. Later in the battle, the regiment took cover from Confederate artillery fire. McGinnis realized that he was out of the range of the artillery and did not lie down with some of the others in the company. Old Abe, imitating the men, leapt down from his perch. Seeing this, McGinnis picked him up off the ground and placed him back on his perch, only to have him jump back off the perch to the ground. After several attempts to get Old Abe to remain on his perch, McGinnis reluctantly joined the mascot, taking cover on the ground. When the regiment rose from cover, Old Abe leapt back on his perch and flapped his wings to convey his readiness.

While the Eighth was at Camp Clear Creek after the fall of Corinth in late 1862, eagle-bearer Thomas Hill gave Old Abe relative freedom, a rarity in the field. This "liberty" allowed Old Abe to cause a great deal of mischief. Some of his adventures in camp included tipping over fire pails full of water to the frustration of soldiers who had to refill them, chasing large insects that caught his eye through camp, learning to play catch with soldiers as they rolled round bullets along the ground, visiting the sutler's tent, ambushing freshly laundered clothes left out to dry, and raiding the provisions of various companies within the boundaries of the camp. Old Abe also became drunk on at least two occasions from spirits that soldiers left unattended.

The Eighth's initial three-year enlistment came to an end in the summer of 1864, and Old Abe joined the reenlisting soldiers on their trip back to Wisconsin for a furlough. Upon returning to the field in late July or early August 1864, the men who had remained at camp almost did not recognize the eagle. Old Abe had achieved maturity, and the white head and tail feathers that came with it, while on furlough. With the original enlistments coming to an end, the men decided that Old Abe, who had also survived three years of war, would not reenlist. They struggled to choose a permanent home for the eagle, with proponents for Eau Claire, Madison, and even Washington, DC. In the end, a unanimous vote from the entire regiment presented Old Abe to state authorities in Madison.

In September 1864, the state of Wisconsin took possession of Old Abe and reclassified him as a "War Relic." A newly created "Eagle Department" in the Capitol building included a caretaker, two room "apartment," and custom bathtub for Old Abe

Old Abe became a nationally-known celebrity with individuals and organizations from around the state and country requesting his presence at their events. The majority of these events were either reunions of Civil War veterans or fundraisers for various charities,

though he did attend larger events like the Philadelphia Centennial in 1876. Some of the charities Old Abe "supported" included the Soldiers' Home Fair, Soldier's Orphan's Home, Harvey Hospital, and the Ladies Aid Society of Chippewa Falls. As happened during the Civil War, offers to purchase Old Abe continued after the war. While at the Northwest Sanitary Fair in Illinois in 1865, a wealthy individual offered \$10,000 and P. T. Barnum, the famous circus showman, offered \$20,000.

A small fire broke out in the basement of the Capitol in February 1881 and, after Old Abe raised an alarm, the fire was put out quickly. However, the eagle inhaled a large amount of thick black smoke, which had an immediate negative impact on his health. About a month later, on March 20, 1881, Old Abe began refusing food. He visibly lost strength and continued to decline in spite of the care and attention of numerous doctors. On March 25, he began experiencing spasms and the next day, March 26 1881, Old Abe died in the arms of his final caretaker, George Gilles. Following his death, veterans from all over Wisconsin volunteered to serve as pallbearers at Old Abe's funeral. A debate also arose over the ultimate disposition of his remains. Many championed Union Rest at Madison's Forest Hill Cemetery as the appropriate location for burial. Even after Governor William E. Smith decided on taxidermy to allow future generations to see the legendary bird, debate continued over where the mounted eagle should be displayed. Smith ultimately chose the Capitol building and placed Old Abe's remains on display in a glass case located in the rotunda on September 17, 1881.

Four years later, Old Abe was moved from the rotunda to the G.A.R. Memorial Hall, also located in the Capitol. In 1900, his remains were transferred to the new State Historical Society of Wisconsin building on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus. However, pressure from veterans convinced Governor Robert M. LaFollette to return Old Abe to the Capitol building in 1903. During a visit that same year, President Theodore Roosevelt stopped at the Hall to view Old Abe's remains and expressed his pleasure at being able to view the eagle he had studied in school as a child. Tragically, less than one year after this last move, Old Abe's remains and glass case were destroyed in a 1904 fire that also razed the entire Capitol building.

Wisconsin continues to honor Old Abe to this day, with mounted eagles representing Old Abe featured prominently in two state buildings: the Assembly Chamber in the State Capitol and the exhibit gallery of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum.

Old Abe cards were sold as a fund raiser for the Sanitary Commission in 1864-65. The cards were 10¢ each or 15 for \$1.



Recap

May 5 Calvin Christian School, Edina MN



As in past years, this school is a highlight. The students are always well prepared and well behaved, so it is fun to share history with them. The day was cool, but sunny as we setup stations for the students to rotate through. Corporal Ritchie and Bugler Bill shared the enlisted man's station, Lt. Cain, the officer's tent, Corporal and Mrs. Graves handled the generals and ladies station, Mrs. Wendel did the laundry and Sgt. Duden and Private Wendel ran the gun station. It was a fun day with good students.



May 26 Memorial Day, Red Wing, MN

A warm sunny morning greeted the 650 citizens who came to Bay Point Park to attend the 8:45am Red Wing Memorial Day Observance. The 2nd Minnesota Battery was well represented during the ceremony. To open the ceremony, our Vietnam veterans, Pvt. Norman, Sgt. Duden and Pvt. Arnoldy marched in the entrance parade carrying "a big flag on a stick". During the program, Ms. Rose King-Bruce read Logan's Proclamation. Following the musical interludes, patriotic speeches, floral tributes and rifle salutes, our 10 pdr Parrott fired three rounds to honor our departed comrades. The seventy five men and women, veterans from Red Wing, who passed since last Memorial Day comprised this list. The one hour ceremony concluded with the playing of *Taps*. Battery members participating in the gun crew during this Memorial Day Observance were Pvt. Bruce, Pvt. Golden, Pvt. Norman, Pvt. Arnoldy, Pvt. K Cunningham, Cpl. Ritchie, Cpl. Graves, Sgt. Duden and Lt. Cain. LEST WE FORGET is the motto of the Red Wing Memorial Day Committee. Sgt. Duden and Lt. Cain are committee members

June 2 Oakdale Elementary, Oakdale MN

Despite the change in curriculum for 5th graders, the Battery was invited back to this school where we have been going for many years. Though the students had not yet studied the American Civil War, their questions were well thought out and inquisitive. One of the biggest challenges was finding dry ground on which to set up our stations as several inches of rain in the preceding hours thoroughly saturated the field, though our day there was actually dry and sunny. Corporal Ritchie and Pvt. Hokestra Bill shared the enlisted man's station, Lt. Cain ran the officer's tent, Miss Katie had a station on the Soldiers' Aid



Society, Mrs. Wendel did the laundry with Bugler Bill and his music as their station, and Sgt. Duden, Private Wendel, Pvt. Arnoldy, and Pvt. Golden ran the gun station. Miss Mandy, recently back from her studies in the Sandwich Islands, attended as well, though she rotated through the stations with the students to take photos of the stations.

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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