



2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 215

March 2014

On This Date-150 Years Ago

Many of the men in the Battery were eligible to reenlist--“veteranize”-- in March of 1864 and thus be granted a furlough in Minnesota. Those who had not yet served two years or who chose not to reenlist, were sent on detached duty to serve with the Second Illinois Battery. According to Private Frank Lewis, not only the men went to the Illinois Battery, but the Minnesota Battery’s guns and horses went, too. The order book of the Battery shows 39 men sent to the Illinois Battery while the rest of the Minnesota boys went home.

However, things were not as smooth as military good order and discipline should have dictated.

In a letter to “Friend Benson”, a member of the Minnesota legislature, Charles Earl, then serving as a second lieutenant in the Second Battery, said, “*A large number of the men in this battery wish to re-enlist as veteran volunteers -- provided -- a reorganization can be had by which the man of their choice shall be Captain.*” He continued, “*Lieut. R.L. Dawley - Comdg. -- is the choice of the Co. for Captain. He is an old soldier - and a truer man never wore a uniform. The Co. will reenlist under him, but will not if Capt. Hotchkiss has anything to do with or in the battery.*” The underlining was done by Earl.

Despite the unhappiness of the men with Captain Hotchkiss, 46 men reenlisted and Hotchkiss did continue to have command of the Battery. Records do not indicate how this happened and none of the men wrote about that we know of. Not long after, Earl submitted his resignation, citing “my inability to cooperate harmoniously with the commanding officer of said battery”.

It took until into April before the promised furlough actually saw the men leaving camp and heading north. The men were granted a 30 day furlough to start after they arrived at Fort Snelling. The men scattered, most returning to family and friends.

2014 Dues are due NOW!

If you have not yet paid your dues, this is the LAST NEWSLETTER you will receive from the Second Minnesota Battery.

Please send your dues, along with the form on the last page, to Daryl Duden, 1210 West 4th Street, Red Wing, MN, 55066.

The form is requested to be sure we have all of your contact information up to date with correct email and cell phone numbers.

Thank you!

Upcoming Events

March 15, Civil War Symposium, Mankato

A full day of presentations, storytelling, interactive exhibits, authors, and more with a focus on 1864. This is a fundraising event to restore a Civil War monument in Mankato. For more information, see their website: www.boyinblue.org

April 5, Civil War Symposium, Fort Snelling

A full day of presentations focused on Minnesota’s role in the war in 1864. **ADVANCED REGISTRATION REQUIRED** by March 31, though the only cost is for the meal. <http://www.tccwrt.com/symposium.html>

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. Ladies will share their support efforts while the soldiers talk of the hardships, uniforms, and tools of war carried by soldiers. Ladies, bring your hand work!

Next Meeting

March 29, 2014

11:00am

We will meet at Marie’s Underground Dining in Red Wing. Call John Cain if you need address or directions, (651) 388-9250.



Battery Profiles

Emil Solner

Emil was a young man in Christiana, Norway, when both of his parents died. He had a sister, Hilda, and in 1859, Hilda married Gulbrand Toftner. By 1861, Emil, Hilda and Gulbrand were all living in Winona County, Minnesota, so it is probable they came to America together. Emil was working as a mechanic and lived in the community of Utica.

Gulbrand and Emil were both mustered into the Second Battery on February 21, 1862. Both men were most likely recruited by Richard Dawley, a Mexican War veteran who lived in Winona County and brought many men to the unit through his efforts. Dawley was commissioned the Battery's lieutenant one week after Gulbrand and Emil were mustered in.

Emil spoke very little English, having only been in the U.S. for a few months when he enlisted. His said his birth was on February 13, 1841, in Christiana, Norway. He had blue eyes, light hair, a light complexion, and stood 5' 9 -1/4" tall.

The time in the army was rather uneventful for Emil. He was detailed to work as a teamster in April of 1863 and stayed at this duty until September when he returned to the Battery. In March of 1864, Emil was among those who agreed to serve another three years or the duration of the war, he reenlisted. It was while he was on his veteran's furlough that the trouble--at least in the army's opinion--began.

Instead of returning to Minnesota, Emil left the command in Chicago. Hilda had gone to Chicago after her husband and brother left for the army and Emil wanted to see her. Gulbrand was dead, having been discharged for disability in November of 1862 and died in the summer of 1863.

While Emil was in Chicago visiting Hilda, some men began talking to Emil about serving in the navy. They said Emil's skills as a mechanic and fireman on steamboats were needed in the navy more than the army and he could easily transfer from his artillery battery to a steamboat. Emil thought the idea sounded very reasonable and as he had worked on ships in Norway, he had the right experience. Emil said he thought he would like that, so he agreed to serve in the navy and was sent to New York City under the charge of the enlisting officer. No bounty was offered to Emil and his command of English was still limited, so he did not question the process. To his way of thinking, everything was fine and he was serving his new country to the best of his abilities.

The army did not see it that way. They only knew Emil had gone to Chicago on his veteran's furlough and had not returned. In the Second Battery's records, Emil was marked as a deserter.

Emil was assigned to the *U.S.S. Faugh Kee* where he served honorably as a mechanic and fireman until he was discharged at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, at the end of the war.

The only family Emil had in this country was his sister, Hilda, and she was still in Chicago, so Emil did not return to Minnesota. He went to Chicago to live.

On January 14, 1867, Emil married Jennie Malatesta, and Italian woman from Chicago. She was a widow, and though Emil's records do not show her as having had children from this marriage, she probably did. The 1870 census listed four children living with them, but the only one of the four Emil cited as his was Anna, the youngest born in December of 1868. The first three were most likely Jennie's by a former marriage. Emil's occupation was that of saloon keeper, quite a change from the machinist he had been before and during the war.

The great Chicago fire in 1871 took Emil's home and everything they owned. The family had to start over. That may have been when Emil went back to being a machinist as he was called on the 1880 census. Getting a job would be easier than rebuilding a saloon. Also by 1880, they had six children and Emil was called "father" by all of them. He listed them as his on later pension applications as well.

In 1904, Emil decided to apply for a veteran's pension and was told he was ineligible as he was a deserter. The Pension Department had the records of the Second Battery. No transfer had ever been made for Emil to leave the army and join the navy. Emil wrote detailed letters explaining why he had gone to the navy—he had learned to speak English quite well by this time—and that he really believed he was doing nothing wrong. When the Pension Department asked for proof of his honorable discharge form the navy, Emil had to admit he had none. His discharge papers were among his possessions lost in the Chicago fire. So was the only copy he had of his birth records. He could prove nothing! Several people wrote letters confirming Emil's story and suggested that Emil's lack of language skills should count in his favor. It was easy to get talked into believing something was right when you didn't really understand the language someone was using to persuading you.

Finally, in 1912, the Pension Department concluded that the navy records they had obtained backed up Emil's story and they agreed that he had been a faithful soldier and sailor for Uncle Sam, so they awarded his pension. This after a very lengthy investigation as to whether Emil had been given a bounty for his enlistment in the army or enlistment in the navy. Emil never understood he should have gotten a bounty and had never asked for it, so he was never given any from either service.

In 1922, paperwork was filed for Emil with the Pension Department once more. He was 81 years old and disabled from a "complete ankylosis of the left knee following compound fracture of the patella and an extreme genu valgum of the right knee in compensatory origin." The witnesses were Rosalie Mackay and Anna Solner, Emil's stepdaughter and daughter. From the certificate, it appears that Emil was living with Rosalie in Gulfport, Mississippi, though Anna was still in Chicago.

Where Emil went or when he died is still unknown.

Desiccated Vegetables

One of the most reviled rations during the Civil War were the small cubes of dried carrots, onions, and celery distributed to both armies. Known as desiccated vegetables, these cubes were supposed to provide a reliable and portable source of fiber and vitamins. Scurvy was well understood and it was known vegetables were the best preventative. Still, the dried versions were something the soldiers regarded as little more than bird food and soon the cubes were called by a new name: “desecrated vegetables.”

Abner Small, an officer in the 16th Maine, described the dried vegetable cubes like this, “*a vegetable compound of portable form, and it came – tons of it- in sheets like pressed hops. I suppose it was healthful, for there was a variety enough in its composition to satisfy any condition of stomach bowels. What in Heaven’s name it was composed of, none of us ever discovered. It was called simply ‘desiccated vegetables’ Ben once brought in just before dinner a piece with a big horn button on it, and wanted to know ‘if dat ‘ere was celery or cabbage?’ I doubt our men have ever forgotten how a cook could break off a piece as large as a boot top, put it in a kettle of water, and stir it with a handle from a hospital broom. When the stuff was fully dissolved, the water would remind one of a dirty brook with all the dead leaves floating around promiscuously. Still, it was a substitute for food. We ate it, and we liked it too.*”

Private Charles E. Davis of Company B, 13th Massachusetts, wrote: “*it was at Darnestown that we were first made acquainted with an article of food called ‘disiccated’ vegetables. For the convenience of handling, it was made into large, round cakes about 2 inches thick. When cooked, it tasted like herb tea. From the flow of language which followed, we suspected it contained powerful stimulating properties. It became universally known in the army as desecrated vegetables, and the aptness of this term would be appreciated by the dullest comprehension after one mouthful of the abominable compound. It is possible that the chaplain, who overheard some of the remarks may have urged its discontinuance as a ration, inasmuch as we rarely, if ever had it again.*”

Dried fruits were considered a great treat and few soldiers mention having them other than in packages from home.

How Much Food?

Army regulations specified exactly what foods and the amounts believed necessary to keep soldiers healthy and in fighting condition. There were some differences between marching rations and garrison (or camp) rations.

Garrison Rations:

To Every Individual:

Meat: 12 ounces of salt pork or bacon, or 1 pound 4 ounces of salt or fresh beef

Bread: 1 pound 6 ounces of soft bread or flour, or 1 pound hard bread (hardtack), or 1 pound 4 ounces of corn meal

To every 100 men (Company) these additional items were issued:

15 pounds of dried beans or peas

10 pounds of rice or hominy

10 pounds of green coffee or 8 pounds of roasted coffee, or 1 pound 8 ounces of tea

15 pounds of sugar

4 quarts of vinegar

1 pound 4 ounces of candles

4 pounds of soap

3 pounds 12 ounces of salt

4 ounces of pepper

30 pounds of potatoes

1 quart of molasses

Marching Rations:

To Every Individual:

Meat: 12 ounces of salt pork or bacon, or 1 pound 4 ounces of salt or fresh beef

Bread: 1 pound 6 ounces of soft bread or flour, or 1 pound hard bread (hardtack), or 1 pound 4 ounces of corn meal

To every 100 rations (Company) these additional items were issued.

10 pounds of coffee

15 pounds of sugar

3 pounds 12 ounces of salt

By the later half of the war, Federal soldiers were sometimes issued desiccated compressed mixed vegetables as a substitution to beans, peas, rice, hominy or fresh potatoes. These “desecrated” vegetables, as soldiers called them, were almost universally disliked and were prepared by dropping the dried block into a kettle of boiling water to yield a thin vegetable soup.

Recap

The ladies of the SAS gathered all their bits and pieces left over from dresses, shirts, aprons, and whatever else to make a “welcome back” quilt for our Lt. It is great to see him back from the “Invalid Corps” and ready for duty. It was presented at the February meeting (held on March 1.)

The quilt was made to Sanitary Commission specifications—four feet by seven feet and it has a proper label on the reverse.

Look carefully at the Lt.’s quilt and you will be able to pick out various dresses and shirts worn by members of the Battery!

Welcome back, Lt!



A Few Random Facts About the Civil War

If the names of the Civil War dead were organized similar to the names on the Vietnam Memorial wall, the Civil War memorial would be over 10 times longer.

One of every 65 Federals and 1 of every 45 Confederates were killed in action.

More Americans died at the Bloody Angle at Spotsylvania, Virginia, in May 1864 than at Omaha Beach on D-Day in 1944.

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

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Treasurer

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

An estimated 800 wounded men burned to death at the Battle of the Wilderness because they were unable to crawl away from advancing brush fires started by gunfire.

In the 20 years after the Civil War, the national divorce rate increased 150%. (PTSD?)

Three future presidents fought in the Civil War: Ulysses S. Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes, and William McKinley.

The Civil War prison camp, Elmira, had two observation towers constructed for onlookers. Citizens paid 15 cents to look at the inmates. Concession stands by the towers sold peanuts, cakes, and lemonade while the men inside starved.

When the Southern states seceded in 1860 and 1861, they did not leave in order of their geographic location, economic standing political qualities, or level of industrialization. They left in almost the exact order of their percentage of slaves.

The Civil War lasted 48 months. The 13th Amendment consists of 48 words

2014 Calendar Considerations

Please look over the events listed here and be prepared to vote on what events you want to see on the calendar and plan to attend. We will VOTE ON THIS CALENDAR at the March meeting.

February 21 Daryl Duden will be visiting Twin Bluffs school. POSTPONED to a later date

March 15 Mankato, MN. Civil War Symposium. <http://www.boyinblue.org>
Bugler Bill Crowder will be one of the presenters. John Cain and Michael Ritchie indicated they would be attending.

April 12 Anoka County, Rum River Library; 10:30am – 1:30pm. "Bringing Local History to Life: Civil War Camp and Ladies Aid Society This is a paid event.

April 26-27 Keokuk, IA <http://keokukiowatourism.org/civilwar.htm> Reenactment and encampment.

May 5 Calvin Christian School. This is the only school event on the calendar this year.

May 26 Red Wing, MN. Memorial Day event. Need a gun crew.

June 14-15 Waukon, IA Allamakee County Thunder in the Park. Reenactment and encampment.

June 28-29 Fort Ridgely, MN. Encampment. This is an invitation from New Ulm.

July 12-13 Wauconda, IL http://www.lcfdp.org/html_lc/civilwardaysweb/main.html
Encampment and reenactment at the Lakewood Forest Preserve. Wauconda is located in the northern suburbs of Chicago.

July 12-13 Cedar Rapids, IA Seminole Valley reenactment and encampment.

July 26-27 Battle Lake, MN <http://www.prospecthousemuseum.org/> 150th event. Encampment.

August 2-3 Boscobel, WI Reenactment and encampment.

August 9-10 Pipestone, MN <http://www.pipestoneminnesota.com/cwd/> Reenactment and encampment.

August 23-24 Morristown, MN Ahlman's Shooter's Roundup. <http://www.ahlmans.com/events.html>

Sept 6-7 Tunnel Hill, GA
<http://www.gacivilwar.org/event/9423-battle-of-tunnel-hill-civil-war-reenactment-civil-war-150th-commemorative-event> Tunnel Hill was one of the battle locations where the 2nd MN was engaged.

Sept 19-21 Hampton, GA <http://www.atlantacampaign.com>
150th anniversary event. This is a smaller event. The reenactment will include the battle of Cheatham's Hill. Hampton is located north of Atlanta.

Sept 27-28 Pilot Knob, MO <http://www.battleofpilotknob.org> 150th Anniversary of the Battle of Pilot Knob. Held at Fort Davidson State Historic Site, about 1 1/2 hours south of St. Louis.

Nov. 11 Winona, MN. Veteran's Day program.

Nov. 15-16 Franklin, TN <http://150thfranklin.com/> The 150th Anniversary of the Battle of Franklin

Nov. 29-30 Spring Hill, TN. 150th Anniversary of the Battle of Spring Hill.

Your Country Needs You!

And so does the Battery!

2014 dues are DUE!! To remain on the active member list, your dues are:

Civilian Member	\$12.00
Military Member	\$12.00
Associate Member	\$ 6.00
Junior Member (14-17)	\$ 6.00
Junior Member (under 14)	Free

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City, State and Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

E-mail address: _____

Please send this form and your check to:

Daryl Duden
1210 West 4th Street
Red Wing, MN 55066