



2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY “ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 230

September 2015

On This Date-150 Years Ago

With the end of the fighting in the spring and early summer of 1865, the Federal Government began the Era of Reconstruction.

The idea of Reconstruction was deeply political and addressed how the eleven seceding states would regain what the Constitution called a "republican form of government." They needed to determine how the seceding states would be reseated in Congress, what the civil status of the former leaders of the Confederacy would be, and the Constitutional and legal status of freedmen, especially their civil rights and whether they should be given the right to vote.

Intense controversy erupted throughout the South over these issues.

The laws and constitutional amendments that laid the foundation for the most radical phase of Reconstruction were adopted from 1866 to 1871. By the 1870s, Reconstruction had officially provided freedmen with equal rights under the constitution. Former slaves and free Blacks were voting and holding political office. Republican legislatures and coalitions of whites and blacks established the public school systems and numerous charitable institutions in the South aimed at improving the lives of the former slaves.

White paramilitary organizations, especially the Ku Klux Klan, the White League and the Red Shirts were formed with the political aim of driving out the Republicans. These organizations also tried to disrupt political organizing and terrorized Blacks to keep them from voting or running for political office.

The “end” of Reconstruction began when the Democrats, who strongly opposed Reconstruction, regained control of the House of Representatives in 1874.

The military enforcement of Reconstruction policies ended in 1877 as part of a Congressional bargain to elect Republican Rutherford B. Hayes as president.

Most historians agree that Reconstruction was a failure and created divides that still echo today.

Upcoming Events

September 12 1812 Overture, New Ulm

The monument is located at 14 Monument Street and the festival is held in the park below the statue which at **101 North Garden Street in New Ulm.**

Daryl Duden is the contact for this opportunity to be part of the concert by serving on one of the New Ulm Battery’s guns. If you were not at the August meeting and want to attend this event, contact Daryl.

The concert is part of the Hermann Fest event in New Ulm and includes Dancing to live German music throughout the day, German and American food, and Schell’s beer and 1919 Root Beer on tap all day. Festivities begin at 10am. The Thunder In The Valley by the New Ulm Battery and New Ulm Municipal Band (cannon shoot with 11 guns!) begins at 6 pm, followed by the Fantastic Fireworks over the Hermann Monument at 8:30 pm. Music continues into the night.

September 26, Kandiyohi County Historical Society, Willmar, MN

610 Hwy 71 Service Road, Willmar, MN.

This event runs from 9-5 on the grounds of the Historical Society. Those members who want to arrive on Friday evening are welcome to camp there—bathroom facilities will be made available. We will be setting up our “stations” for visitors to explore and will fire the gun four times throughout the day.

For those arriving on Saturday morning, please arrive early enough to get everything set up before the event open to the public at 9—arrival around 8 am would be best. **This is a paid event, so a good showing is important.**

Next Meeting

September 19, 2015 11:00

Marie’s Underground Dining, Red Wing
For more info or directions, contact Ken Cunningham, (651) 388-2945.



Battery Profile

David William Coulthard

David's parents were Scottish immigrants to Canada where David was born about 1838. Various records give conflicting years for his birth. By 1862, David had moved from Canada to Minnesota and was working as a saddler in St. Cloud, Stearns County, when he chose to enlist in the Second Battery of Light Artillery. He signed his enlistment papers on August 13 when the Battery had officers in the state recruiting as the unit was already serving in the south.

David said he was 24 years old, had blue eyes, light hair and a fair complexion. He stood 5' 9-3/4" tall and was paid a \$25 bounty at his enlistment.

The duties to which David was assigned when he reached the Battery at the end of September fitted his prewar occupation. He was made an artificer, a person in charge of the military hardware the Battery needed to function.

Civil War camps were not always good places for young men who had never been exposed to the diseases fostered by crowded human conditions and David fell victim to poor health shortly after the battle at Perryville, Kentucky. He was sent to the hospital in Nashville on November 13 and remained there five months, his discharge from the hospital coming on April 19, 1863. David believed that exposure to the weather while on the Perryville campaign caused him to contract typhoid fever.

When he was finally well enough to return, David's duties were changed to make him the saddler for the Battery, again, a job suited to his prewar occupation, but it was not a long assignment. David was soon sent on detached service at Stevenson, Alabama, where he remained until December.

By March of 1864, many of the men who had enlisted in the Battery as it was forming up were eligible to reenlist and get a 30 day veterans furlough. Having not enlisted until August, David was not yet eligible, so he was sent to serve with the other Battery men not reenlisting on the guns of the Battery I, Second Illinois Light Artillery. David was with them when they fought some of the difficult battles on the march to Atlanta, Georgia.

When the men sent to the Illinois Battery

went back to their own Minnesota Battery on October 16, 1864, David was with them, but their fighting was limited during the rest of the war. The Second Battery was assigned to garrison duty in Tennessee and saw little more hard fighting with the Confederates.

Trees, however, were an enemy upon which the Union Army continued to mount assaults. Many men of the Battery were detailed to cut logs for the garrison. David was assigned to this duty from December of 1864 to April of 1865.

By June of 1865, the war had ended and the men were being sent home. Troops were arranged and rearranged as this mustering out began and the Second Battery was given orders to move by freight train from Philadelphia, Tennessee, to Knoxville, Tennessee. Men filled the cars and many were sitting on the roofs as they traveled. Many of the Second Battery chose to ride on the roofs and their ideas conflict as to where was a better place to be when the cars began jumping the tracks and rolling down an embankment.

David was on top and he decided jumping was a better plan than riding the car down. He said the jump was a little over 20 feet, but since the train was moving, it magnified the impact and he was thrown against some timbers laying there. The shins of both legs were badly scraped, the right leg being scraped to the bone from ankle to knee. David was treated as best as he could be by the men around him as there was no surgeon on the train.

Other men in the Battery who described the wreck said the jump David and others made was anywhere from 15 to 50 feet, but all note the steep embankment and timbers piled along it. The car David was riding on did not go fully over the embankment, instead it hung by the coupling.

The injuries did not prevent David and the men of the Battery from going back to Fort Snelling to be mustered out of the Army on August 16, 1865. David served three years and three days.

David remained in Minnesota and married Mary C. Kuntsman on January 10, 1871, in Shakopee. The 1880 census listed

them living in Loreno in Brown County. Now they had a daughter named Mary and a son named Walter. David's brother-in-law was also living with them. David was working as a mail agent.

In 1891, David filed for an invalid's pension. He cited the continuing trouble he was having with his legs and hips as the primary cause for his application, but he noted deafness and rheumatism as well. The pension was approved, but for disease of the kidneys. By then, the family had moved again; they were then living in Fairmont in Martin County.

David's health was failing and on December 4, 1894, he breathed his last. His obituary noted he had struggled with his health for years, but it had seemed as if things were getting better until "that dreaded disease pneumonia attacked him and marked him for its victim."

The newspaper cited David as a "bright, intelligent, generous-hearted citizen, kind and affectionate in his family and liberal in all the impulses of heart and brain."

The funeral was conducted through the Episcopal Church in Fairmont and the Masonic Lodge provided their honors at the graveside in Lakeview Cemetery in Fairmont.

A white marble veteran's marker was placed on David's grave, but at some point, the marker either fell or was laid flat rather than standing upright as was intended.

Grass, leaves and dirt eventually covered the stone as it lay and it began to sink until it was completely hidden.

Cemetery records were vague. Only a reference to the Coulthard's buying a plot in section 59 could be found, and even then the name was spelled quite differently.

Church records provided proof that David was buried in that cemetery and a careful inspection of the area finally turned up a tiny glimpse of a stone with no engraving visible.



The hole left when David's stone was dug up and repositioned upright can be seen to the right of the stone.

When the sod was cut off and the mud scraped away, the lettering proved that it was indeed David's stone.

Members of the reenacting Battery saw to it that arrangements were made to have the stone reset in the upright position over David's final resting place. Over time, the exposure to sunlight should eventually bleach the stone white again, but even if it does not, the stone is still legible and marks David's grave.



Recap



August 1-2 Boscobel, WI

This is always one of our best attended events, seeing 35 Battery members in camp this year. We had enough soldiers for two full gun crews, so the crews were rotated during the battles. It was Boscobel, so it was hot, but not oppressively so, and the weekend was dry. The pie social was, of course, one of the highlights and several Battery members (You know who you are!) danced the night away on Main Street. We celebrated the birthday of Papa John Fritchie of the New Ulm Battery. He had kegs of beer and root beer to mark the occasion, so a great deal of toasting was done in his honor.



There was one bit of contention when Miss Becky found evidence of a "floozy" having been in camp and she was determined to find out who might have invited such low moral influence into our camp, especially since we had a number of children in our midst! The matter did end peacefully, but Miss Becky still has her suspicions...



August 22-23, Morristown, MN

We made the *Waterville Lake Region* news and the Battery took top honors this year for its demonstrations. The temperatures were decent this year and we had our share of downpours, but only the tents got wet. Demonstrations went picture perfect and the shaved ice made its appearance, although not in as many flavors as in the past. We also seemed to have an unusual number of saloon girls go through the fort this year trying to get our attention, but the Sargent kept us on the straight and narrow, focusing our attention on shaved ice.

New this year was an 1840s infantry unit from Iowa wearing off white uniforms, carrying flintlock and early cap and ball muskets. They drilled smartly. They also had a cook fly with 8ft. corner poles and 10 ft. ridge poles—high enough to build a cook fire underneath that was kind of interesting—until we went over to help set it back up from the evening rains. Also joining us were Patience and her husband, Vince, who both fell in on the gun and performed their duties exceptionally well. President Cunningham made a new friend as seen at left. Who do you think is the "stinker" here?!



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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