



2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 242

February 2017

On This Date-155 Years Ago

February, 1862

Recruiting was the main focus of the Second Battery-to-be. As more men were mustered in, the unit was entitled to officers. During the month of February, some 50 men were mustered, entitling it to a full compliment of officers. William Hotchkiss got his heart's desire on Valentine's Day when he was commissioned captain of the Battery. It was a goal he had been working toward since he enlisted nearly five months earlier. It was the Second Battery he was in command of rather than the First, but he was officially a captain in the Artillery.

It is likely Hotchkiss was no longer out recruiting, but rather staying at Fort Snelling to drill and train his fledgling artillerists. By army regulations, the Battery was considered “full” at 145 men, but it was effective at considerably less. Recruiting would continue to bring it to full strength and to replace men who were discharged for various reasons or transferred to other units. Morning reports were kept starting in January, but there is no detail of the daily activities other than who was mustered in. Interestingly, the dates of when a man mustered in according to his personal enlistment sheets do not often match the date the morning report says he was mustered in. What the reason for the discrepancy may be is unknown, but based on other “date” omissions and errors in the morning reports, personal papers of the individual soldiers are probably the more correct date.

On Friday, February 28, the following article appeared on the front page of the **St. Paul Pioneer & Democrat**:

Fully organized.--- We are informed by the Adjutant General that the following named gentlemen have been commissioned to take command in the Second Battery Light Artillery: Captain-- W. A. Hotchkiss, Anoka
1st Lieutenants-- G. Rosenk, St. Paul; Albert Woodbury, Anoka. 2d Lieutenants-- Jackson Taylor, Wright County; Richard L. Dawey, Winona.

The company now numbers one hundred and twenty-five men, and are said to be of the best material in the State. The company is kept in constant drill, and are improving very rapidly. The captain says he is opposed to burning any more powder without affecting something, and is very anxious to get to the scene of the action.

There is an error in the above article, Hotchkiss was not from Anoka. His home was Monticello, in Wright County.

Upcoming Events

February 25—Planning Meeting for 2015

This meeting will continue to work on the potential events for inclusion on the Battery's calendar for the upcoming season. Events under discussion were sent to all members in the minutes from the January meeting.



Happy Valentines Day from *Harpers Weekly*, 1864.

Next Meeting

February 25, 2017 11:00am

Marie's Underground Dining, Red Wing
Call Ken Cunningham with questions or agenda items. 651 388-2945.



Valentine's Day Tidbits

(From the *Civil War Gazette*)

In preparation for this date in 1861, Richard Cadbury, son of the founder and soon-to-be co-owner of Cadbury Chocolate, created the first ever heart-shaped box filled with chocolate. These were promoted, first in England, as a perfect gift for Valentine's Day.

Gift giving to sweethearts on this day of love had been going on since the middle ages and the Victorian Era delighted in frilly cards and gaudy paper. *The Richmond Daily Dispatch*, however, was tired of such things.

To-day, February 14th, is Saint Valentine's day—an occasion set apart for several years past for the transmission through the post-office of printed caricatures of the "tender passion," in its various stages, from skewered beef hearts to sentimental verses. The Saint after whom the day is named, suffered martyrdom in the reign of the Emperor Claudius, for some petty infraction of law — from which circumstance (he being an ardent devotee of love and charity,) has arisen the practice of naming as aforesaid "loving friends" in valentines or remembrances — in these latter days mostly converted into a means of saying covertly that which would entail danger if openly expressed. The practice of sending valuable presents on St. Valentine's day, once in vogue, to use an inelegant, but forcible expression, has long since been "played out."



Though this perhaps bitter author thought the practice "played out," Cadbury clearly disagreed. His success is now obvious in the millions of heart shaped boxes of chocolates found each February.

Scheffer's Bookstore of 18 Market Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, advertised to its patrons a "large assortment of comic and sentimental Valentines of different styles and prices."

Atlanta diarist and bookseller, Sam Richards seemed to agree that it was all played out, though. He wrote in his diary that "the weather has been quite favorable for birds to mate and Valentines to sell for several days previous to this, but this morning was wet and dark. It cleared up however at noon. But the Val' trade has not been as brisk as it was last year...."

Battery Profile

William Henry Shaw

May 7th. Had Revelie at 2 o'clock. Broke camp and moved out at 4 1/2 o'clock...came up to the Rebel Pickets and skirmished with them till they got to a hill where they disputed our advance. We went out and took a position on a knob from which we could overlook the town and could see the Rebs in force behind their breastworks. We opened on a battery in advance of their works and soon made them get out of that. They fell back and took another position but we soon served them the same trick.

These words were what William wrote in his journal on May 7, 1864. He was writing them while he was detailed to Battery I, Second Illinois Light Artillery, and on the campaign to take the city of Atlanta. William was not yet eligible to reenlist when the Battery veteranized in March of 1864, so he was assigned to the Illinois Battery while the Minnesota veterans went home on furlough. The diary William kept was filled with details about the battles and movements, weather, actions they participated in or observed. In a few places, William drew rough diagrams of gun placements, noting where "his" guns were. The portion of his diary that remains and is legible covers April 11, 1864, to July 6, 1864.

When he joined the Second Minnesota Battery, William was a 27 year old farmer with land in Battle Brook, Sherburne County, Minnesota. He moved to Minnesota in 1856 from Maine where he had been born on September 22, 1833. His father was a farmer and William worked with his father until he was 20 when he went to Massachusetts to work in the wool mills. After about a year there, he went back to Maine and then left for good to come to Minnesota.

William enlisted when a lieutenant from the Battery came recruiting in the late summer of 1862. Albert Woodbury was a prominent businessman in the Anoka area and the two may have had common acquaintances or even knew each other. William agreed to serve for three years and was mustered in on August 27, 1862. The roll showed him as 5' 11-1/2" tall, with hazel eyes, brown hair and a fair complexion.

The Battery was already in the South and William was one of the 26 new recruits that caught up to them near Louisville, Kentucky. William and the men of the Second Battery got their first look at "the elephant" on October 8, 1862, at a small village in Kentucky called Perryville.

William's role in the battle was described by a comrade, Daniel Frye. Daniel said William was the "number one" man on the cannon, meaning it was his job to handle the rammer and sponge in the loading process. The middle of a battle shoving bags of powder down the gun tube was a dangerous place to be, but it was the noise that caused William's injury according to Daniel. He said William "received severe injuries which affected his head to such a degree that blood flowed from both ears then and there and was nearly deaf."

Another Battery comrade saw more and knew there had been further injuries than just to William's ears. Lemuel Pratt said William sustained "severe internal injuries occasioned by seizing the wheel of said cannon prior to its discharge to prevent same from recoiling down hill said cannon having to be placed near the declining (?) elevation."

Records indicated William was treated for his injuries, but none show that he was sent to the hospital, at least not then. William did go to the field hospital on June 23, 1863, for chronic diarrhea. He had been troubled with it on and off since the previous December. His first stay was at the hospital at Murfreesboro, then he was moved to the hospital at Nashville, and finally to one in Louisville. He did not return to the Battery until February of 1864. That was just in time to see the veterans reenlist and for William to be assigned to the Illinois Battery.

William continued to serve and was promoted to corporal on April 1, 1865. He came back to Minnesota with the Battery and was mustered out at Fort Snelling on August 16, 1865, just 11 days short of his three years.

Back on his farm, William settled into being a civilian again. On February 17, 1866, he married Angella Hanscom. The couple had five children, but only four lived into adulthood.

The diary William kept during the war proved that he was educated and articulate, and he put those skills to work in his community. He served one term as Sherburne County Commissioner and held the office of town clerk for many years. He was considered one of the "town fathers" of Baldwin in Sherburne County. He was a member of the Masonic Lodge, and was active in the local Grand Army post.

On March 3, 1894, William and Gella, as she was called, visited her brother. After they had dinner, William decided he was going to go down to the creek and catch a fish. Not long after he left, his body was found face down on the slope of the hill. William's brother-in-law found him. The brother-in-law wrote that William had "just risen up from stool and partly buttoned up his clothes." William had not gotten very far and "lay on his face with his arms at his side showing that he had made no struggle or resistance."

(Continued on page 4)

(William Shaw, Continued)

The death was blamed on heart failure, that brought on by chronic diarrhea, and disease of the liver and kidneys. These ailments, said several family members and neighbors, were caused by the "great hardships and exposure, lack of sufficient and suitable food, nursing and medical attention" during William's time in the army. None mentioned any war related injuries.

"He was a good soldier," was what Captain Hotchkiss wrote about William. "Convey my sympathy and best wishes to Mrs. Shaw." The letter the captain wrote was in support of William's wife, Angella, in her efforts to receive William's pension.

Angella wrote to the Pension department as well, explaining her difficulties in trying to get all the necessary paperwork in place. She closed her letter with, "I am sure he died as truly from his army life as tho he was shot in battle."



William died on March 3, 1894. The funeral was at the Methodist Episcopalian Church in Princeton, the city the Shaw's had moved to in 1889. There were so many people in attendance at the funeral that many were not able to fit inside the building and were forced to stand outside. It was noted that the flag on the school was flying at half staff in his honor, and school closed early that day.

He was buried in the Oak Knoll Cemetery in Princeton where three other members of the Second Minnesota Battery also rest.



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

Loan Collection

This program is well underway with some donated clothing items already in the collection. More are needed!

IF YOU HAVE ITEMS TO DONATE, please contact Ron Graves at 612-759-6617 or rgoland@hbc.com or Ken Cunningham at (651) 388-2945 or kecunningham@mail2web.com. If you plan to bring items to donate, let either of these people know prior to the meeting.

Remember, the Battery is a 501 (c) 3 organization, so donations are tax deductible. Please note that BY LAW, the Battery or its members CANNOT provide a value for any donated item. Setting that value is the responsibility of the donor.

Your Country Needs You!
And so does the Battery!

2017 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