



2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 247

July 2017

On This Date-155 Years Ago

July, 1862

The Battery was on the move for the first three days of July, continuing the march they had begun in June. They did a lot of marching, but didn't really get too far as several times, they were ordered back to where they had started.

The morning reports read:

- 1 Retreated from Shelby Creek via Ripley to camp on branch of Little Hatchie River, 17 miles
 - 2 Moved to Rienzi Depot -- 16 miles
 - 3 Marching from Rienzi Depot to camp 2 miles east of Jacinto, Miss. 7 1/2 miles
- The rest of the month of July was left blank.

Once they reached Jacinto, the Battery made camp and there they remained for most of the rest of the month. Private Edwin Rodgers worked from July 5-8 shoeing horses—the marches must have been hard on horseshoes! Rodgers was one of the Battery's blacksmiths. Rodgers doesn't tell us what happened in his diary other than he was very sick during the rest of the month. Later in life, he blamed his poor health on all the work he did in the heat of a Mississippi summer. Perhaps the illness he wrote about in his diary for July of 1862 was some level of heat stress, easy to imagine for a Minnesota boy transplanted to the deep South in the dead of summer.

Meanwhile, Lt. Albert Woodbury was sent back to Minnesota to do some recruiting. Illness had taken enough men from the Battery that Hotchkiss wanted Woodbury to bring in new recruits. Woodbury was recruiting in Anoka and its surrounding area.

Next Meeting

August 5, 2017 11:00am

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



Upcoming Events

July 15-16, Olmstead County Historical Society, Rochester, MN

We are portraying the battle events surrounding the Second Battery at the battle of Perryville right down to the details of leaving Pvt. James Hunter (Briar Golden) wounded on the field!

The ladies of the Battery have multiple options for involvement at this event. There are specific ladies assigned to most of these "stations," but we NEED and WELCOME more help! Decide where you would like to be and let us know! Need more info? Contact Vickie.

Soldiers' Aid Fair Station

Half will be articles "collected" for the fair and sharing how fairs impacted the war effort. The other half be the Oracle of Delphi, a fortune telling sort of game played during the Civil War. It would be appropriate for a couple ladies to wear hoops. Bring hand work as it is a great way to share with visitors. Becky, Stacy and Vickie are the main station masters.

Quilt History Station

We will display Civil War era repro quilts on the fence and porch of the cabin. Interpretation is about the history of quilting and quilts sent to the soldiers. Katie is the station master for the quilts.

Apothecary Station

Mandy is the station master for the apothecary station on the back cabin porch. Feeling ill? See Miss Mandy!

Cook Station

We really need extra hands in the cook fly so our soldiers (and ladies) all get fed! We are feeding 30+ members!!! Lunch will be sandwiches, etc., as usual. Saturday night supper is a "stew off" with several members bringing stew. We need breakfast both days for about 20. If someone wants to head up this station, please let Vickie know ASAP.

July 29 Battle Lake, MN Prospect House & Civil War Museum

This event will celebrate the Grand Opening of their renovated Museum. It is a single day event and we are paid for it, so we need to have a good turn out. Besides that, it's a very nice event! It is also a chance to see some amazing artifacts in this special museum. (This event is in red because they pay us WELL for coming!)

Battery Profile

David VanDeren

David was a lawyer living in St. Anthony, Minnesota, when he decided to enlist in the Second Battery. He had been born in Sussey County, New Jersey, was 47 years old, and was married. The descriptive roll said he was 5' 7-1/4" tall, with black hair, black eyes, and a dark complexion. He was one of the very earliest recruits for the Battery, mustering in on October 28, 1861.

He must have served as a good soldier for his name never appeared on the Battery's morning reports, though he remained a private through his term of service.

On September 19, 1863, the Battery was engaged in the fight on the banks of Chickamauga Creek. It was one of the hardest fought battles the Battery participated in, they being in the thick of the fighting on the first day. David was there and was wounded in the right foot. He was sent to the hospital on September 21, after the Union Army had made good its withdrawal to Chattanooga. How long David remained there or the extent of his injuries was not recorded. The next record David left behind was the account of him being on guard duty at the Convalescent Camp near Nashville on December 28, 1863. He was relieved from duty at midnight, but when he tried to go to bed, the storm that was raging had soaked his blankets and bedding. There was no way to dry anything, fuel for fires was in very short supply, and the weather was bitterly cold. David wrapped himself in the wet blankets to keep from freezing. It did not get any better the next day and David spent another night in wet, cold blankets. He said this went on for several days, but couldn't say for sure how many.

The result for David was a deep cough that would not go away and an "increasing physical weakness" that continued to get worse until July of 1864 when he was discharged for disability. He had been discharged from the Battery some months before. The report said David and several others had been "discharged, but no papers given." It was not unusual for men not to be given discharge papers as they were transferring to the Veteran Reserve Corps. David was probably already a part of that corps when he was on his guard duty detail in December of 1863. By July, David was not even fit to help out in the hospitals or convalescent camps, so he was discharged from the Veterans Reserve Corps and sent home.

David went back to St. Anthony and his wife, Sarah. For a well educated man in a professional field, David did not leave much behind to tell of his life. One source noted that he was both a lawyer and an author, but no works under his name have been found. In 1871, David applied for a pension, citing the ailments for which he was discharged as getting worse. David received the pension, but he also continued to practice law.

The 1880 census showed the family living in St. Anthony. David was practicing law, Sarah kept the house and their son, Fergus, was 23 years old and working as a printer. They did have one more unrelated man living in the household and he was noted as a laborer. He may have worked for the VanDerens.

In October of 1884, David went to the Territory of Dakota for a land claim. He had a cabin on the land, but for at least three days prior to his death, he was in the care of a person living about two miles away. Exactly what caused David's death on October 28, 1884, is unknown, but Fergus went to Dakota Territory to claim his father's body and bring it back to Minnesota for burial. David was buried in the Maple Hill Cemetery in Minneapolis.

The Minneapolis Health Department closed Maple Hill Cemetery in 1890, citing poor maintenance and vandalism. As streets needed to be widened around the cemetery with city growth, the cemetery began to be encroached upon. The city notified families to move their loved ones and some 1,300 bodies were reported to have been moved. In 1908, the cemetery was turned into a park because care of the cemetery was not forthcoming and many stones were broken, stolen or vandalized.

Records were not well kept to start with and time did not help that situation. When the city later renovated the park, piles of tombstones were uncovered and the names were recorded by the Minnesota Genealogical Society. David's name was not among them. What happened to the 2,000+ bodies that were not moved is unknown.

David is one of those not known to be moved and his remains are probably still beneath the play ground of Beltrami Park in Minneapolis.



The Battle of Perryville

From an article by Jonathan Swegles, Bangor, Michigan, posted on the Kentucky state website, <http://history.ky.gov/landmark/the-battle-of-perryville/>

When General Buell's Army of the Ohio met General Bragg's Army of the Mississippi on the rolling hills of Perryville, the conflict would last five hours, short in terms of Civil War battles, but a major blow to the regiments on both sides. General Bragg, fighting with a force of 16,000 men, lost 532 soldiers (3%) and had another 2,641 (16.5%) wounded. Bragg's army did not fare much better losing 894 (5%) and having another 2,911 wounded (16%). Due to the terrain of undulating hills, soldiers were fighting in close proximity and the results were brutal. In one mysterious example, four Confederate soldiers looked as if they met the same fate from the same cannon ball by the peculiar way they had fallen on the battlefield. A reporter for the *Louisville Journal* took note saying: "I saw this morning four dead rebels who had been killed by a single shot. The top of the head of the first was taken off, the entire head of the second was gone, the breast of the third was torn open, and the ball passed through the abdomen of the [fourth]. All had fallen in a heap, killed instantly."

It was this scene, and others like it that led Captain Robert Taylor of the 32nd Kentucky Infantry to say "we started upon our mournful mission" of removing injured soldiers from the battlefield shortly after the fighting ceased. While some soldiers had met their final resting place, others lay in unthinkable agony "shot in all conceivable ways and places...a sickening sight to see."

Being removed from the battlefield was not a guarantee of survival as proper care, surgeons, and supplies were limited. A soldier in the 38th Indiana infantry was "shot thought the right shoulder, the ball passing through the lower edge of the shoulder blade. It was seven days before his bloody clothes were removed and proper surgical attention given him." One thing that was not limited, however, was the large number of diseases and bacteria passing through the wounded soldiers. Typhoid fever, pneumonia, diarrhea, and dysentery affected many of the soldiers left behind at the makeshift hospitals. Measles was also very prevalent, even killing two brothers, Privates Marion and Phillip Clemens of Kentucky's 15th Infantry fighting for the Union two months after they were both wounded in battle. Andrew Phillips, the father of George Phillips, a sick soldier from the Battle of Perryville wrote in a letter home that Andrew "had become so reduced by diarrhoe etc that he had to be brought in & was not able to get up alone."

While hundreds lay dead on the battlefield and thousands more suffered in homes, barns, and churches that were made into hospitals, both armies moved on leaving the people of Perryville with arduous task of caring for the wounded, burying the dead, in addition to recovering from the material losses brought on war. One such person, arguably affected the most by the events at Perryville, was Henry P. Bottom.

Henry P. Bottom was a resident of Perryville whose home, land, and surrounding buildings were affected by the action. Due to extensive damages and confiscation of property, he filed a claim to the federal government for damages in the amount of \$4,800, over \$108,000 in today's dollars. He was compensated



Henry Bottom House as it looked in 1862.



Henry Bottom House as it looks today.

\$1,715 in 1914. Not only was Bottom hurt financially, but he incurred psychological damages as well, and understandably so. A top a hill in the Perryville battle site, Bottom, a Union supporter, buried "several hundred Confederates in two large pits" and did so very meticulously and methodically. Bottom took to noting how many corpses, the location of their burial, and personal belongings to help with identification. Bottom was not alone in his efforts. The United States Sanitary Commission was not pleased with the Confederate soldiers who had yet to be buried, and the citizens of Perryville, many of whom were Southern sympathizers were forced to help bury them.

Recap



June 10-11 Fort Ridgley, MN

Fort Ridgley lived up to its reputation for some of the louisiest weather of any event we attend! Saturday started off hot and got hotter, reaching the lower 90s by mid afternoon. The only thing that made it bearable was the 50+ mile an hour wind whipping across the prairie.

Sunday morning, a heavy thunder storm rolled in and the event was cancelled. We were well prepared, though. The only wind casualty was Sgt. Duden's tent suffering a 4-5 inch tear near the back end at the ridge pole. We even had breakfast cooked, eaten and dishes washed before the rain came.

That said, it was still a very nice event on Saturday with about 125 people attending. Visitors stayed a long time and did a lot of interacting with the "stations" set up around the fort. It was also fun to camp with friends from the 5th Minnesota, Battery I and the New Ulm Battery. We presented Papa John Fritchie from the New Ulm Battery with a special quilt in honor of his birthday. He was quite taken with the gesture and could hardly wait to take it to show his wife.

The gun crews also proved one of the statements we often see made about Civil War artillery—a good crew can fire 2-3 aimed shots in a minute. All the guns present lined up and had a minute to fire as many rounds as they could SAFELY. There are added steps we take now that were not done in a real battle. It took 1:10 for all guns to fire three rounds. There is a video of the action on the Battery's Facebook page thanks to Mrs. Overby.

A good time was indeed had by all, even if we did miss out on Sunday.



July 4, Patriotic Concert, Menomonie, WI

Four members of the 2nd Minnesota Battery went to Wilson Park in Menomonie WI on the 4th of July to participate in the Patriotic Concert by the Ludington Guard Band and Menomonie Choir. We took the 12 Pdr. Mountain Howitzer to this event and fell in line with the 5 guns of Battery I, 1st U.S. (M1841 12 Pdr. Napoleon, M1861 10 Pdr. Parrott, M1863 3-inch Parrott and two more 12 Pdr Mountain Howitzers). The "big guns" provided the left half of the battery and the Mountain Howitzers were in the right half. When we were introduced, we fired by the piece from the left with no interval to "acknowledge" our presence and drew a standing ovation from the many citizens in attendance. We also provided "thunderous hi-lights" during

the concert when the band played the "1812 Overture" and "Stars and Stripes Forever". The concert was conducted in two sessions with an intermission, which allowed

everyone time for popcorn, pie and ice cream. Thanks to our friends at Battery I, we had a little room in our stomachs for such treats. Before the concert, we were treated to a full picnic meal of "all you can eat" ribs, beans, salads, cookies and soft drinks. At 10:00p.m., the concert concluded and we packed up and departed.

Battery members who attended were James Livingstone, Ken Cunningham, Bart Hoekstra and Daryl Duden. Teresa Bergdale

was serving with Battery I for the evening. Our Corporal's wife, Rebecca Livingstone also enjoyed the picnic and concert.



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

Ken Cunningham
1170 Golf Ridge Circle
Red Wing, MN 55066

Phone: (651) 388-2945

Treasurer

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

Phone: (651) 388-6520

Twin Cites Metro Area Contact

Ron & Vickie Wendel
12419 Redwood Street NW
Coon Rapids, MN 55448

Phone: (763) 754-2476

E-mail: momwendel@hotmail.com

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

Special thanks to Rebecca for the photos of the event.