

2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 256

May 2018

On This Date-155 Years Ago

Morning Reports from April and May of 1863 (Numbers indicate the day of the month)

Remarks for the Month of April, 1863

- 1 Emil Solner on Extra duty as Teamster
- 2 Corp. E. A. Rogers & Privates Wm. H. Staples, & John Kennedy finally discharged
- 5 W. A. Spaulding promoted from private to Corporal
- 7 Newbry Briggs returned to duty
- 9 Miles A. Brown reported a deserter Louis F. Benge, J. H. Snyder, Philip E. Sargent, & Andrew W. Jackson transferred from 21 Regt Ill. V. I. & joined bat for duty
- 11 Rec'd official Notice of the Discharge of William Blake at Evansville, Ind. Oct 10 1862
- 15 3rd Sec. Lt. D. went out on picket duty
- 19 D. W. Coulthard returned from Hosp. to duty.
- 20 3rd Sec. ret'd

Remarks for the Month of May, 1863

- 2 Private John L. Kimball discharged on cert. of disability - 1st Lieut. A. Woodbury rec'd leave of absence for 20 days
- 8 Private James W. Boardman was supposed to have been killed in battle of Stones River and dropped from the Company Rolls. He reports himself as captured and paroled and sent to Benton Barracks, Missouri
- 15 Corpl. J. C. Varney returned to Baty from Field Hosp.
- 17 Privates Carter Fuller & Jacob U. Freed sent to Convalescent Camp
- 22 Private A. Spaulding send to Field Hosp. Privt. D. Jarvis on detached service
- 24 John Coleman Pvt. (a recruit) reported for duty

Upcoming Events

May 8 St. Joseph' School
9055 Klein Drive, Waconia, MN
Arrive at 8:15 to set up, students arrive at 9:15. We will set up 5 stations and rotate students through. **BRING A BAG LUNCH!** No time to go anywhere to get anything.

May 14 Calvin Christian School
4015 Inglewood Ave S, Edina, MN
Arrive at 9:00 to set up, students arrive at 9:50. We will set up 5 stations and rotate students through. **BRING A BAG LUNCH!**

May 21 Twin Bluff Middle School
2120 Twin Bluff Road, Red Wing, MN
Arrive at 7:50 to set up, students arrive at 8:50. We will set up 5 stations and rotate students through. **BRING A BAG LUNCH!**

May 28, Red Wing, MN Memorial Day
Arrive at Bay Point Park by 8:00 to set up. There will be a reading by one of our Battery ladies for the Memorial Day service and honor volleys from our gun. **RSVP to Daryl Duden or John Cain.**



Next Meeting

June 2, 2018 11:00am
Marie's Underground Dining, Red Wing
Call Ken Cunningham with questions or agenda items. 651 388-2945.



Battery Profile

Henry A. Simonds

Henry was mustered into the Second Battery on Valentine's Day, 1862. The role shows him as single, with hazel eyes, dark hair, and sandy complexion. He stood 5' 9-3/4" tall, was a mechanic by trade and made his home in Freeborn County, Minnesota. Henry told the recruiting officers he was 24 years old. He had been born on March 27, 1834, in Mansfield, New York, so his birth date makes him 28 years old. Why he "fudged" his age to be younger is unknown.

Army life appeared to be fine with Henry as he was not reported sick or absent until February of 1863. Henry was captured near Franklin, Tennessee, on February 6th, 1863. He and five other members of the Battery were on a foraging mission when they were captured at a house. The men were taken to Columbia, South Carolina, and confined, then moved to Tullahoma where they were given an opportunity to enlist in the Confederate Army. Henry, as well as his comrades, declined the offer, so they were again moved, this time to Libby Prison in Richmond. Once they were paroled, the men were sent to City Point, Virginia, on March 7th. Henry's health did not fare well during his captivity and he was sent to a hospital. He did not return to the Battery until June.

When the time came for the men to reenlist in the first months of 1864, Henry decided he'd had enough of army life and chose not to stay in longer than his three years. As a result, he and other men not reenlisting were assigned to the Second Illinois, Battery I. They served with that artillery battery until October when they were sent back to the Minnesota Battery. Much of the reason it took so long for the men to go back to their own unit was because the Second Illinois was marching and fighting their way to Atlanta with General William T. Sherman. Henry was part of that effort,

It was during one of the battles to take Atlanta itself that Henry said he lost his hearing. One comrade said Henry's hearing was "very bad" after that battle in June of 1864. In later years, Henry claimed a disability for his hearing loss.

Henry was discharged at the end of his three years and he went back to Minnesota. By October 19, 1865, Henry was in Blue Earth City, Minnesota, and it was his wedding day. He and Mary Alice Latham were married and the couple settled down to raise a family.

In 1880, the census showed Henry and Mary living in Leroy, Blue Earth County, with four children. Henry was a sawmill man and had men working for him. When Henry applied for a pension, one of his past mill employees wrote a letter in support stating that he had worked for Henry for about 12 years. The letter said Henry was in fine health before he went into the army, but when he came home, it was not the same. The employee said Henry could not exert himself or it would cause his "heart to flutter and he had to stop." Eventually, Henry's doctor told him he had to give up the saw mill business. Though the letter was written after Henry had moved away, the employee still had kind words for Henry. "I would say what he tells you you may depend on it it is true." Henry's own letter gives more details about his health: *"Since 1873, I have taken medicine 3 times a day up to 1890, since that, the greater part of the time from 3 to 10 times a day, one kind before meals, another every 2 hours when I am at the worst, except at night The Dr. says that medicine is for digestion and healing of the bowels. If I neglect to take it every 2 hours, the gas soon accumulates."*



Mary & Henry, 1908



Another deposition in the pension application provides a glimpse of Henry's life before the war as well. Ms. Tillie Purdie said Henry lived on a farm near where she lived and that he attended the same church as she did. She noted that Henry had been a "school officer" before he enlisted, then added a more personal connection—"As a young lady I was escorted to some places by Mr. Simonds."

When asked where he had lived since leaving the army, Henry provided several places. He said he lived in Freeborn County for eight years, then moved to Idaho where he lived ten years. He next went to Oregon for a year and then his last move to Clinton, Tennessee, where he was living when he filled out the form for the Pension Department in 1911.

Henry and Mary did add one more daughter to their family after the war and she was living with them according to the 1900 census for Anderson County, Tennessee. One son also remained with them and another son and his wife lived nearby. Stories handed down in the family suggest Henry had a lumber mill on the Clinch River in Tennessee.

Henry died on January 13, 1913, and was buried in the Sunset Cemetery in Clinton, Tennessee.



Photographs held by the family indicate Henry took a trip to Chattanooga, Tennessee, in 1916. He is seen here probably seated on the axle of a gun with his face just above the wheel.



Kilkenny Cats

Need an appropriate 1860s term to describe a "no win" situation? How about using Kilkenny cats? People of the 1860s were familiar with the term of Kilkenny Cats. It referred to an Irish limerick that was a metaphor for what we'd today call a no-win situation. The term Kilkenny cat refers to anyone who is a tenacious fighter. The origin of the term is murky at best with many stories purporting to give the true meaning.

To "fight like a Kilkenny cat" refers to an old story about two cats who fought to the death and ate each other up so only their tails were left.

There is also a limerick (with optional added couplet) about the two cats:

*There once were two cats of Kilkenny
Each thought there was one cat too many
So they fought and they fit
And they scratched and they bit
Till (excepting their nails
And the tips of their tails)
Instead of two cats there weren't any!*

The earliest origin for the term suggests it comes from the monster cat of Irish legend, Banghaisgidheach, which made its home in Dunmore Caves in Kilkenny County, about 6 miles north of Kilkenny city. Exactly how that came to mean "no win" is unclear, but it was a famous Irish cat legend.

Another version of the story says that in the mid 17th century, Oliver Cromwell's soldiers tied the tails of all the cats in Kilkenny in pairs of two and hung them over a wire. The cats then fought until they had killed each other.

Yet another version of the tale about Kilkenny cats was told in *Notes & Queries*, written in 1864. A group of German soldiers (Hessians) were stationed in Kilkenny, during the period of the 1798 rebellion. To relieve the boredom in barracks, sadistic soldiers tied two cats together by their tails, hung them over a washing line to fight and place bets on the "winning" cat. Gambling was contrary to military regulations, so the story says the soldiers, alarmed by the impending arrival of an officer, released the cats by cutting their tails with a sword. When the officer arrived and inquired about the scene facing him, he was told that "they've eaten each other up."



THE KILKENNY CATS; OR, OLD AND YOUNG IRELAND "COMING TO THE SCRATCH"

Records show General Grant was warned by General George Meade that the Confederate Army preparing for battle "would make a Kilkenny cat fight of the affair." Grant, according to Lincoln's secretary John Hay, assured Mead, "Our cat has the longer tail." The comment turned into a cartoon published widely in the U.S.

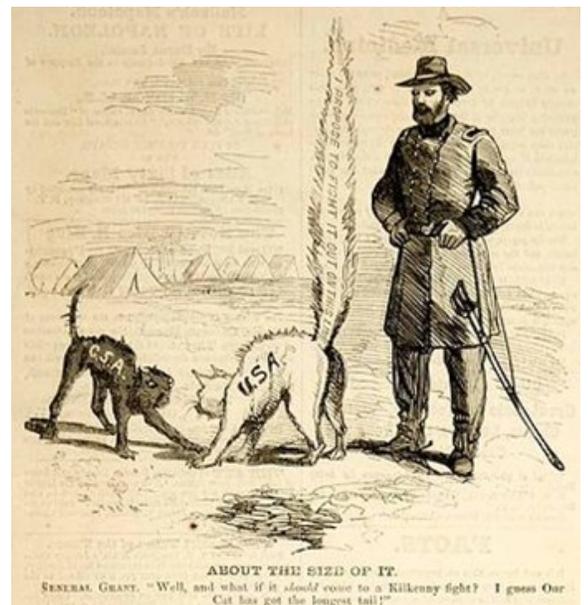
Mark Twain used the term "Kilkenny cats" in his 1872 book, *Roughing It*, making reference to a no win situation.

In 1867, General Phil Sheridan wrote General U.S. Grant about his trials in reconstruction Louisiana where the Union party and former secessionists were at odds. "They are now like the Kilkenny Cats, destroying each other," implying that the cats would leave only the tips of each other's tails.

It's a handy term we can use makes our speech sound more "1860s," and is another story to interpret for the public.

In the British magazine, *Punch*, a cartoon appeared on August 8, 1846, that featured a Kilkenny cat fight, but putting the faces of politicians on the cats with the following verse:

*"Oh, leave them alone,
They'll fight to the bone,
And leave naught but their tails behind 'em."*



2018 PROPOSED SCHEDULE

2nd Minnesota Battery Light Artillery

Please note the changes from the previously published schedule.

March 10, Mankato, MN	Boy in Blue Symposium (Saturday) http://www.boyinblue.org/
May 8, Waconia, MN	St. Joseph' School
May 14, Edina, MN	Calvin Christian School (Monday)
May 21, Red Wing, MN	Twin Bluff Middle School
May 28, Red Wing, MN	Memorial Day (Monday)
Jun 16, Galesville, WI	Arnold House & Eastside Farm (Saturday)
Jun 30–Jul 1, Wauconda, IL	Civil War Days Reenactment http://www.lcfdp.org/education/events/civilwar/
July 3, Menomonie, WI	Wilson Park Concert (Tuesday)
July 14-15, Rochester, MN	Olmstead County Living History Fair & Reenactment https://www.olmstedhistory.com/going-on/142
July 17, Goodhue, MN	Goodhue County 4-H (Tuesday)
July 28, Battle Lake, MN	Prospect House (Saturday)
Aug 11-12, Pipestone, MN	Civil War Days Reenactment http://pipestoneminnesota.com/cwd/Home.html
Aug 25-26, Morristown, MN	Ahlman's Shooters Roundup
September 2, Red Wing, MN	Goodhue County History Center (tentative)
Oct 20-21, Minooka, IL	Dollinger Family Farm Civil War Reenactment http://edmilam.coffeecup.com/
Nov 11, Winona, MN	Veteran's Day Tribute (Sunday)

NOTE: May is bread and butter time, people!! We need a minimum of ten people to do a school event. Please make your best effort to attend as may schools as you can—this is our gunpowder, grocery, and gas money!

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

There is an opportunity for an ON YOUR OWN event by attending with Battery I or Battery G this summer. They are planning to go to the reenactment at Gettysburg, PA, July 5-8. They have more guns than men to man them, so members of the Second Battery are welcome to attend. For more information, contact John Cain or Daryl Duden.

