



2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 276

April 2020

On This Date-157 Years Ago

St. Cloud Democrat (Saint Cloud, Stearns County, Minn.), April 16, 1863. Transcribed by Keith & Elaine Hedlund.

HOW TRAVELLING IN DIXIE AFFECTS ONE'S SENTIMENTS.

A letter received by a friend in this city, from Wm. Kinkead, of the Second Battery, has been handed us for perusal. We cannot resist the temptation to copy several extracts; and it will be seen that the trip in the Corn-fed-eracy" has somewhat changed the writer's sentiments with regard to who are responsible for the war. Mr. K. was a member of the Democratic Congressional Convention of last Spring, which adopted an anti-war, anti-Administration platform, and charged the whole cause of the rebellion on the "Abolitionists." Here are a few paragraphs from the beginning of the letter:

"Since my last was written I have been traveling 'away down south in Dixie.' In my tour of more than seven hundred miles in the Corn-fed-eracy I saw, and heard a great deal that I would like to tell you about; entirely too much to think of placing on paper. The fact is, a retrospective view of the twenty-nine days passed with the rebels is truly sickening. I would scarcely know where to begin, or what to say first, about the hypocrisy, falsehood, fraud, murder, and I might name the whole catalogue of crimes, and there would be but few but what came under my notice during my captivity.

I met some officers who were courteous and kind, and far from exultant; but most probably, my next encounter would be with one of those acrimonious politicians who could not refrain from exhibiting the most violent manifestations of ill-will and hatred toward us. This class was the most disgusting and revolting characters I came in contact with; for after exhausting all their well-chosen arguments in defense of their wicked cause, without any effect; then would follow a pusillanimous abuse of the whole 'Yankee nation,' always laying great stress on 'Abolitionists,' 'Old Abe' and many such (to them very denunciatory) epithets. Another source of great delight was to call us 'ignorant,' but this only proved a mutual gratification; for out of twenty seven, (the number composing the squad I came to Richmond with) there were ten men who were natives of Tennessee, and not one of them could either read or write, and so universally untutored are the poor, that one was perfectly safe in laying a wager that four out of five, right through, could not read or write; for such is an actual fact. These men would come to us with a budget of most amusing interrogations, beginning almost invariably with, 'What's you'ns figin we'ns for?'

Now, this is very uncouth, but only a fair sample of the whole. I wish our entire army could pass through just what I did, and witness the cruelty and wickedness administered wholesale by the demons running the sham government. I am sure they would fight much better. I know I can go into the business again with a very good grace indeed, for what little sympathy I ever entertained has left me now; and just as soon as I am 'exchanged', I am again "Pret pourmon pays."

The rigid enforcement of their unjust Conscriptio Act has added ten-fold to the suffering of thousands of poor families whose wretchedness as pen records, no heart knows of how the hearts that suffer, and for which, it is sad to think, there cannot be any remedy or relief. I have seen many a poor 'conscript,' pushed into prison, and the door shut against a wife and several 'little ones,' who had followed the unhappy man as far as the law would allowed. The initiatory steps of the conscript soldier begins with a few weeks imprisonment where his hunger is partially appeased by a very limited decoction of corn meal and water, without any salt, (the article being too scarce to be used by common folks) after which he is considered manageable in the open air, and is transferred to a conscript camp, where one of Davis' gray clad minions puts him through the requisite training to kill the 'Yankees.' In the Knoxville jail, the victimized would come to me and say, "I say, mister, one man can lead a horse to water but a thousand can't make him drink;" by this expression intending to show, at least, their unwillingness to fight us. Others would say, 'Mister, it will take more than four men to keep me in the ranks,' 'I will die before I will fight,' etc.

The leading men of the South have no hesitancy in proclaiming that perpetual slavery of the negroes is the cornerstone of their political edifice; and I am now fully convinced that even so black a foundation, is by far too good for the rotten material that would compose the all super-structure; neither would it now be desirable to have a cessation of hostilities unless there is a removal of the causes which led to the beginning. When this is the cause we shall have peace, and I think not until then."

Next Meeting

Maybe May? June? 11:00am
Marie's Underground Dining, Red Wing
Contact Ken Cunningham with questions or agenda items. 651-388-2945.



Battery Profile

Christopher Johnson

Christopher Johnson was an immigrant from Christiana, Norway, who arrived in Minnesota before the outbreak of the Civil War. He took land and was farming Utica, Winona County, when another man from the area was recruiting for the Second Battery at the outbreak of the war. Richard Dawley lived near Utica and it is possible Christopher may have decided to enlist because of his acquaintance with Dawley. Christopher was 21 years old when he was mustered into the Battery on March 13 of 1862. He was 5' 8 1/3" tall, had gray eyes, light hair and a light complexion.

Life in the army seemed to agree with Christopher as he was never sent to the hospital for any illness. He was promoted to corporal and was serving as the driver on the swing team on the center section of the Second Battery's guns during the battle at Stones River, Tennessee. It was a fight the men remembered well, including Edward Pratt who described what happened to Christopher in the battle.

Christopher Johnson and myself (Edward Pratt) wer in the same detachment of 2nd Minn Battery at the battle of Stones River Tenn. on the morning of Dec 31st 62 and wer ordered to retreat and went back across a corner field into the edge of the timber and there unlimbered and fired a few shots with the enemy in close pursuit and wer then orderded to move back soon after striking a shell burst over head killing lead driver and his Saddle Horse and disabled his other horse. I came forward and helped Johnson off his horse he (Christopher Johnson) was driving the swing teem he was then bleeding from Ears Nose and Mouth. I then unhitched from lead teem and came back and forcably put Johnson on his horse and saved the gun.

He was very deaf for a long time and has never recovered

The spelling, grammar, and lack of punctuation are Pratt's.

The account by Captain Hotchkiss agreed with Pratt's tale, stating that Hotchkiss had been a witness to shell that damaged Christopher's hearing.

How long Christopher may have been out of action, if he even was out, is unknown, as records do not indicate him absent from the Battery at any time during the war. When their enlistments were up in March of 1864, Christopher was one of the 46 men to reenlist, earning him a furlough home to Minnesota that spring.

When the war was over, the Battery went back to Fort Snelling to be mustered out and Christopher was still with them. He received his final pay and went home to southern Minnesota.

On October 8, 1865, Christopher married Inger Steensgard at the home of John Lemgoord in front of two witnesses. Reverend Jenson officiated at the ceremony in Norway Township, Fillmore County, Minnesota.

The couple soon began a family and had five children. The first, Hanna Marie born in 1868, died young. The other two girls and two boys were born from 1870 to 1882 and all survived to adulthood.

Christopher and Inger moved around some. In 1883, they were in Albert Lea and Christopher was receiving a pension of \$2.00 a month for an injury to his hand, though no military record indicates any such injury in the army.

By 1890, they were calling Grand Forks, North Dakota, home, but they did not remain there. In 1891, while they were living in LeRoy, Minnesota, Christopher applied for a pension, citing his loss of hearing as his disability. He blamed the action at Stones River for his deafness. In 1898, the disability claimed on the application was for "rheumatism and disease of heart". The final pension claim, filed in 1900, said Christopher needed a pension due to his "inability to earn support by manual labor." The pension he received was \$8.00 a month with periodic increases. In 1916, the amount Christopher received was \$30.00 a month for his pension, this increased to \$50.00 in 1920.

At some point in his life, Christopher had given up farming and was working as a "common laborer" according to records. His death certificate stated he died in Minneapolis at the Soldier's Home and he was considered a nonresident of Minneapolis. He died on May 14, 1920; the cause of death was a cancer in his bowels.

Christopher's body was taken to LeRoy, Minnesota, where he was buried in the Lutheran Church Cemetery, but his grave was not marked with a permanent marker. In 2004, a marble marker from the Veteran's Administration was placed on his grave by the Second Minnesota Battery of Reenactors.



The US Army and the Camel Corps

From: <https://armyhistory.org/the-u-s-armys-camel-corps-experiment/>

By Vince Hawkins

In the 1830s, America's westward expansion was being severely curtailed by the inhospitable terrain and climate faced by pioneers and settlers. This was particularly the case in the southwest, where arid deserts, mountain peaks and impassable rivers were proving to be an almost insurmountable obstacle to men and animals alike. In 1836, U.S. Army LT George H. Crosman hit upon an unusual idea to deal with the situation. With the able assistance of a friend, E. H. Miller, Crosman made a study of the problem and sent a report on their findings to Washington suggesting that:

"For strength in carrying burdens, for patient endurance of labor, and privation of food, water & rest, and in some respects speed also, the camel and dromedary (as the Arabian camel is called) are unrivaled among animals. The ordinary loads for camels are from seven to nine hundred pounds each, and with these they can travel from thirty to forty miles a day, for many days in succession. They will go without water, and with but little food, for six or eight days, or it is said even longer. Their feet are alike well suited for traversing grassy or sandy plains, or rough, rocky hills and paths, and they require no shoeing..."

Their report was disregarded by the War Department. It was with this rather simple suggestion, however, that Crosman first introduced the concept for what would later become the most unique experiment in U.S. Army history.

MAJ Henry C. Wayne, an officer in the Quartermaster Department, was one of the early advocates for the Army's use of camels. He resigned from the Army on 31 December 1860 and was later commissioned a brigadier general in the Confederate Army.

The idea lay dormant for several years until 1847 when Crosman, now a major, met MAJ Henry C. Wayne of the Quartermaster Department, another camel enthusiast, who would take up the idea. MAJ Wayne submitted a report to the War Department and Congress recommending the U.S. government's importation of camels. In so doing, he caught the attention of Senator Jefferson Davis of Mississippi, who thought Wayne's suggestions both practical and worthy of attention. Davis, as chairman of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs, tried for several years to acquire approval and funding for the project, but to no avail. It was not until 1853, when Davis was appointed Secretary of War, that he was able to present the idea of importing camels to both President Franklin Pierce and a still skeptical Congress.

In his annual report in 1854, Davis informed Congress that, in the *"... Department of the Pacific the means of transportation have, in some instances, been improved, and it is hoped further developments and improvements will still diminish this large item of our army expenditure. In this connexion, ... I again invite attention to the advantages to be anticipated from the use of camels and dromedaries for military and other purposes, and for reasons set forth in my last annual report, recommend that an appropriation be made to introduce a small number of the several varieties of this animal, to test their adaptation to our country..."*

On 3 March 1855, Congress agreed and passed the Shield amendment to the appropriation bill, resolving: *"And be it further enacted, that the sum of \$30,000 be, and the same is hereby appropriated under the direction of the War Department in the purchase and importation of camels and dromedaries to be employed for military purposes."* Secretary Davis would finally get his camels.

Davis lost no time in getting the experiment underway. In May 1855, he appointed Wayne to head the expedition to acquire the camels. The Navy store ship *USS Supply*, was provided by the Navy to transport the camels to the United States. The *Supply* was under the command of Lt. David Dixon Porter, who, on being informed of the mission and its cargo, saw to it that she was outfitted with special hatches, stable areas, a "camel car," and hoists and slings to load and transport the animals in relative comfort and safety during their long voyage.

When Wayne inspected the *Supply*, he was both amazed and greatly impressed with Porter's meticulous and thorough preparations. It was decided that while Wayne went to London and Paris to visit the zoos and interview military men and scientists with first-hand knowledge and experience in camel handling, Porter would sail the *Supply* to the Mediterranean and deliver supplies to the U.S. naval squadron based there. On 24 July, Wayne joined Porter in Spezzia (La Spezia), Italy, and from there they sailed to the Levant, arriving at Goletta (La Goulette) in the Gulf of Tunis on 4 August.

In Goletta, the expedition purchased their first three camels, two of which they later discovered were infected with the "itch," a form of mange. Arriving in Tunis, they were joined by Mr. Gwynne Harris Heap, a brother-in-law of Porter's, whose father had been U.S. Consul at Tunis. Heap was familiar with eastern



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languages and customs and his extensive knowledge of camels proved an invaluable asset to the expedition. During the next five months the expedition sailed across the Mediterranean, stopping at Malta, Greece, Turkey, and Egypt. Wayne, Porter, and Heap also made a separate voyage on their own to the Crimea to speak with British officers about their use of camels during the Crimean War. A similar side trip was made to Cairo while the *Supply* was docked at Alexandria.

After numerous difficulties involving a lack of suitable animals and obtaining export permits, the expedition finally acquired through purchase and as gifts a sufficient number of camels. In all, they obtained thirty-three animals: nineteen females and fourteen males. The thirty-three specimens included two Bactrian (two-humped), nineteen dromedaries (one-humped), nineteen Arabian, one Tunis burden, one Arabian calf, and one Tuili or booghdee camels. The Arabian dromedaries are renowned for their swiftness and the Bactrians for their strength and burden carrying abilities. Thanks to Heap's knowledge of camels and his negotiating skills, the cost averaged around \$250 per animal, and most were in good condition. The expedition also hired five natives—Arabs and Turks—to help care for the animals during the voyage and act as drovers when they reached America. On 15 February 1856, with the animals safely loaded aboard, the expedition began its voyage home.

The expedition, slowed by storms and heavy gales, lasted nearly three months. It was Porter's foresight and diligence in caring for the animals that enabled them to survive the horrendous weather conditions. The *Supply* finally unloaded its cargo on 14 May at Indianola, Texas. During the voyage, one male camel had died, but six calves were born, of which two had survived the trip. The expedition therefore landed with a total of thirty-four camels, all of whom were in better health than when they left their native soil.

On 4 June, after allowing the camels some needed rest and a chance to acclimatize themselves, Wayne marched the herd 120 miles to San Antonio, arriving on 18 June. Wayne planned to establish a ranch and provide facilities for breeding the camels, but Secretary Davis had other ideas, stating, "*the establishment of a breeding farm did not enter into the plans of the department. The object at present is to ascertain whether the animal is adapted to military service, and can be economically and usefully employed therein.*" Despite his objections, Davis did see the advantages in sending Porter on a second trip to secure more camels. There was over half of the appropriation money remaining and the *Supply* was still on loan from the Navy. On Davis' instructions, Porter once again left for Egypt. On 26-27 August, Wayne moved the herd some sixty miles northwest to Camp Verde, a more suitable location for his caravansary. He constructed a camel corral (khan) exactly like those found in Egypt and Turkey. Camp Verde would be the "corps" home for many years.

To satisfy Davis' concerns about the military usefulness of the camels, Wayne devised a small field test. He sent three wagons, each with a six-mule team, and six camels to San Antonio for a supply of oats. The mule drawn wagons, each carrying 1,800 pounds of oats, took nearly five days to make the return trip to camp. The six camels carried 3,648 pounds of oats and made the trip in two days, clearly demonstrating both their carrying ability and their speed. Several other tests served to confirm the transporting abilities of the camels and their superiority over horses and mules. Davis was much pleased with the results and stated in his annual report for 1857, "*These tests fully realize the anticipation entertained of their usefulness in the transportation of military supplies.... Thus far the result is as favorable as the most sanguine could have hoped.*"

Over the next several months, Wayne worked with the civilian drovers and soldiers to accustom them to the camels and vice versa. They learned how to care for and feed the animals, manage the cumbersome camel saddles, properly pack the animals and, most importantly, how to deal with the camel's mannerisms and temperament. By nature, the camel is a docile animal, but can demonstrate a violent, aggressive temper when abused or mistreated, literally kicking, biting or stomping an antagonist to death. Camels, like cows, chew a type of cud and when annoyed would often spit a large, gelatinous, foul smelling mass of cud at its detractor. The most difficult aspect for the men to get used to was the camel's somewhat pungent smell. Although camels really do not smell any worse than horses, mules or unwashed men, their smell was different and had a tendency to frighten horses unfamiliar with the odor.

On 30 January 1857, Porter returned to the U.S. with an additional forty-one camels. Since by this time, five of the original heard had died from disease, the new arrivals brought the total number of camels to seventy. The animals were landed at Indianola on 10 February and then moved to Camp Verde.

In March 1857, James Buchanan became president and several changes were made which directly affected the camel experiment. John B. Floyd replaced Davis as Secretary of War and Maj. Wayne was transferred back to the Quartermaster Department in Washington, DC, thus removing in one blow two of the camel experiment's main supporters. Nevertheless, Secretary Floyd decided to continue his predecessor's experiment.

In response to a petition made by some 60,000 citizens for a permanent roadway which would help link the eastern territories with those of the far west, Congress authorized a contract to survey and build a

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wagon road along the thirty-fifth parallel from Fort Defiance, New Mexico Territory, to the Colorado River on the California/Arizona border. The contract was won by Mr. Edward Fitzgerald Beale, a former Superintendent of Indian Affairs for California and Nevada who held the rank of brigadier general in the California militia. Beale was a good choice for the survey, having traveled parts of this region during the Mexican War and while surveying a route for a transcontinental railway.

It was only after Beale accepted the contract that he learned of the Secretary of War's special conditions. Floyd ordered Beale to take twenty-five of the camels with him on the surveying expedition. Beale protested vehemently at being encumbered with the camels, but Floyd was adamant. Since Wayne had left Camp Verde, the camels had been unused. The government had gone to some time and expense to test the camels in just this kind of situation and Floyd was determined to see if they would justify the money being spent on them. Although strongly opposed to the idea, Beale finally consented.

On 25 June 1857, the surveying expedition departed for Fort Defiance. The party consisted of twenty-five camels, two drovers, forty-four soldiers, twelve wagons, and some ninety-five dogs, horses and mules. At first, the performance of the camels convinced Beale that his original protests were well founded, as the animals moved slower than the horses and mules and were usually hours late reaching camp. On the second week of the journey, however, Beale changed his tune and noted that the camels were "walking up better." He later attributed the camel's slow start to their months of idleness and ease at Camp Verde. It was not long after that the camel's settled to their task and began outdistancing both horses and mules, packing a 700 pound load at a steady speed and traversing ground that caused the other animals to balk. By the time the expedition arrive at Fort Defiance in early August, Beale was convinced of the camel's abilities. On 24 July he wrote to Floyd, *"It gives me great pleasure to report the entire success of the expedition with the camels so far as I have tried it. Laboring under all the disadvantageswe have arrived here without an accident and although we have used the camels every day with heavy packs, have fewer sore backs and disabled ones by far than would have been the case travelling with pack mules. On starting I packed nearly seven hundred pounds on each camel, which I fear was too heavy a burden for the commencement of so long a journey; they, however, packed it daily until that weight was reduced by our diurnal use of it as forage for our mules."*

At the end of August, the expedition left the fort on their survey. Beale was concerned about the dangers inherent in such a journey over such treacherous terrain, but these concerns proved unfounded in regard to the camels. *"Sometimes we forget they are with us. Certainly there never was anything so patient or enduring and so little troublesome as this noble animal. They pack their heavy load of corn, of which they never taste a grain; put up with any food offered them without complaint, and are always up with the wagons, and, withal, so perfectly docile and quiet that they are the admiration of the whole camp.(A)t this time there is not a man in camp who is not delighted with them. They are better today than when we left Camp Verde with them; especially since our men have learned, by experience, the best mode of packing them."*

The camels ate little of the forage, content instead to eat the scrub and prickly plants found along the trail. They could travel thirty to forty miles a day, go for eight to ten days without water and seemed not the slightest bit bothered by the oppressive climate. At one point, the expedition became lost and was mistakenly led into an impassable canyon. The ensuing lack of grass and water for over thirty-six hours made the mules frantic. A small scouting party mounted on camels was sent out to find a trail. They found a river some twenty miles distant and led the expedition to it, literally saving the lives of both men and beasts. From then on, the camels were used to find all watering holes.

The expedition reached the Colorado River on 17 October, the last obstacle in their journey. While preparing to cross the river, Beale wrote to Floyd on the 18 October, *"An important part of all of our operations has been acted by the camels. Without the aid of this noble and useful brute, many hardships which we have been spared would have fallen to our lot; and our admiration for them has increased day by day, as some new hardship, endured patiently, more fully developed their entire adaptation and usefulness in the exploration of the wilderness. At times I have thought it impossible they could stand the test to which they have been put, but they seem to have risen equal to every trial and to have come off of every exploration with as much strength as before starting.... I have subjected them to trials which no other animal could possibly have endured; and yet I have arrived here not only without the loss of a camel, but they are admitted by those who saw them in Texas to be in as good a condition as when we left San Antonio.... I believe at this time I may speak for every man in our party, when I say that there is not one of them who would not prefer the most indifferent of our camels to four of our best mules."*

On 19 October, as the expedition began to cross the Colorado, Beale was concerned about the camels getting across as he had been told they couldn't swim. He was pleasantly surprised when the largest camel was led to the river, plunged right in fully loaded and swam across with no difficulty. The

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remaining camels also crossed without incident, but two horses and ten mules drowned in the attempt. Their surveying mission completed, Beale led the expedition to Fort Tejon, about 100 miles north of Los Angeles, to rest and re-provision. The expedition had lasted nearly four months and covered over twelve hundred miles.

Floyd was extremely pleased with the results. He ordered Beale to bring the camels back to Camp Verde, but Beale demurred, giving the excuse that if the troops in California became involved in the "Mormon War," the camels would prove invaluable carrying supplies. Instead, Beale moved the camels to the ranch of his business partner, Samuel A. Bishop, in the lower San Joaquin Valley. Bishop used the camels in his personal business, hauling freight to his ranch and the new town arising near Fort Tejon. During one such venture, Bishop and his men were threatened with attack by a large band of Mohave Indians. Bishop mounted his men on the camels and charged, routing the Indians. It was the only combat action using the camels and it was performed not by the U.S. Army, but by civilians.

In April 1858, Beale was ordered to survey a second route along the thirty-fifth parallel from Fort Smith, Arkansas, to the Colorado River for use as a wagon road and stage line. He was given the use of another twenty-five camels from Camp Verde for this expedition. It took Beale nearly a year to complete this mission and his report to Floyd again extolled the exemplary performance of the camels.

In his annual report to Congress in December 1858, Floyd enthusiastically stated, "*The entire adaptation of camels to military operations on the plains may now be taken as demonstrated.*" He further declared that the camel had proven its "*great usefulness and superiority over the horse for all movements upon the plains or deserts*" and recommended that Congress "authorize the purchase of 1,000 camels." Congress, however, was not convinced and authorized no further funding. Undeterred, Floyd pleaded his case again in his annual report in 1859, "*The experiments thus far made – and they are pretty full – demonstrate that camels constitute a most useful and economic means of transportation for men and supplies through the great desert and barren portions of our interior... An abundant supply of these animals would enable our Army to give greater and prompter protection to our frontiers and to all our interoceanic routes than three times their cost expended in another way. As a measure of economy I can not too strongly recommend the purchase of a full supply to the consideration of Congress.*" Despite the abundant evidence and sound arguments Congress wouldn't budge. Floyd tried again in 1860, but by then the clouds of civil war had Congress' undivided attention and the idea of purchasing camels was far from their minds.

In November 1859, the Army took charge of the twenty-eight camels on Bishop's farm and moved them to Fort Tejon. Although the animals were in rather poor physical shape, there were now three more than Beale had originally left on the ranch, demonstrating Maj. Wayne's theory that the camels – if given the opportunity – could breed on their own. This herd remained at Fort Tejon until March 1860, when they were relocated to a rented grazing area some twelve miles from the fort. In September, several camels were sent to Los Angeles to take part in the Army's first official test of camels in California.

The test, under the command of the Assistant Quartermaster, Cpt. Winfield Scott Hancock, was to see if the camels could effectively be used as an express service. The camels were tested against the existing service, a two-mule buckboard, in carrying messages some three hundred miles from Camp Fitzgerald to Camp Mohave on the Colorado River. Two test runs were made and, in both, the camels died from exhaustion, leading the Army to realize what other tests had already shown, that camels were not bred for speed but for transport. Although the test proved that the "camel express" was significantly cheaper, it was no faster than the mule and buckboard service and was much harder on the camels. This was the only test they had ever failed.

A second Army experiment was run in early 1861 when four camels were assigned to accompany the Boundary Commission on their surveying expedition of the California-Nevada boundary. The expedition, hopelessly disorganized from the start, was a complete failure and nearly ended in disaster. The expedition got lost and wandered into the merciless Mojave Desert. After losing several mules and abandoning most of their equipment, it was the steadfast camels that saved the day and led the survivors to safety.

The advent of the Civil War effectively halted the camel experiment. Rebel troops occupied Camp Verde on 28 February 1861 and captured several of the remaining camels, using them to transport salt and carry mail around San Antonio. The camels suffered greatly at the hands of their captors, who had an intense dislike for the animals. They were badly mistreated, abused and a few of them were deliberately killed.

The herd near Fort Tejon, numbering thirty-one camels, was transferred to the Los Angeles Quartermaster Depot on 17 June 1861. During the next three years, the camels were kept well fed and continued to breed, frequently being transferred from post to post as no one knew what else to do with them. Several recommendations to use them for mail service were proposed, but never adopted. The expense of feeding and caring for the unused animals finally became too much and, on the recommendation of the Department of the Pacific, Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton ordered them to be sold at public auction.

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Apparently unaware of the numerous successful tests performed with the camels, Stanton stated, *"I cannot ascertain that these have ever been so employed as to be of any advantage to the Military Service, and I do not think that it will be practical to make them useful."*

On 26 February 1864, the thirty-seven camels from California were sold for \$1,945, or \$52.56 per camel. The surviving forty-four camels from Camp Verde were finally recovered at the end of the war. On 6 March 1866, they too were put on the auction block, bringing \$1,364, or \$31 per camel. The Army's Quartermaster-General, Mg. Montgomery Meigs, approved the sale, stating his hopes that civilian enterprises might more successfully develop use of the camel and expressing his sincere regrets that the experiment had ended in failure.

The camels ended up in circuses, giving rides to children, running in "camel races," living on private ranches, or working as pack animals for miners and prospectors. They became a familiar sight in California, the Southwest, Northwest, and even as far away as British Columbia, their strange appearance often drawing crowds of curious people. In 1885, as a young boy of five living at Fort Seldon, New Mexico, Gen. Douglas MacArthur recalled seeing a camel: *"One day a curious and frightening animal with a blobbish head, long and curving neck, and shambling legs, moseyed around the garrison.... the animal was one of the old army camels."*

Eventually, when the curiosity wore off or their new owners simply did not want or need them anymore, many of the camels were turned loose in the wild to fend for themselves. They were seen for many years afterward, wandering the deserts and plains of the Southwest. The last of the original Army camels, Topsy, was reported to have died in April 1934, at Griffith Park, Los Angeles, at the age of eighty, but accounts of camel sightings continued for decades. Although never officially designated, "U.S. Army Camel Corps," this is how the Army's camel experiment has been remembered. Ignored and abandoned, it was an ignominious and unfortunate end for these noble "ships of the desert."

Quartzite, Arizona, has a memorial dedicated to the camel experiment and one of the camel drivers. Hi Jolly wasn't his name. He was born as Philip Tedro in Smyrna around 1828, to a Greek mother and a Syrian father who was a Christian Arab. As a young adult, Jolly converted to Islam. After going to Mecca to perform the hajj (pilgrimage), he called himself Hadji Ali.

An Ottoman Turkish citizen of Greater Syria, Hadji Ali worked as a camel breeder and trainer. He served with the French Army in Algiers before signing on as a camel driver for the US Army in 1856.

Ali was one of several men hired by the United States Army to introduce camels as beasts of burden to transport cargo across the "Great American Desert." Eight of the men – including Ali – were of Greek origin. They arrived at the Port of Indianola in Calhoun County, Texas on the *USS Supply*. Ali was the lead camel driver during the US Army's experiment in using camels in the dry deserts of the Southwest. After successfully traveling round trip from Texas to California, the experiment failed, partly due to the problem that the Army's burros, horses, and mules feared the large animals, often panicking, and the tensions of the American Civil War led to Congress not approving more funds for the Corps. In 1864, the camels were finally auctioned off in Benicia, California, and Camp Verde, Texas. Ali was discharged from the Quartermaster Department of the U.S. Army at Fort McDowell in 1870.

He next ran a freight service between the Colorado River and the mining establishments further east, using the few camels he had purchased. His business was unsuccessful, however, and he released his camels into the desert near Gila Bend. He became an American citizen in 1880, and he used his birth name of Philip Tedro (sometimes spelled Teadrow) when he married Gertrudis Serna in Tucson, Arizona. In 1885, Ali was again hired by the U.S. Army in Arizona, and worked with pack mules for Brig. Gen. George Crook during the Geronimo campaign.

In his final years, Ali moved to Quartzsite, Arizona, where he mined and occasionally scouted for the US government. He died in 1902 and was buried in the Quartzsite Cemetery. In his day, the town was called Tyson's Well. In 1934, the Arizona Department of Transportation erected a monument over Jolly's grave.

The Hi Jolly Cemetery is operated and maintained by the Town of Quartzsite for the purposes of providing a cemetery, historic site and park. The Hi Jolly monument is in the pioneer section of the cemetery where Quartzsite's pioneer families were and are laid to rest.



Upcoming Events

Will there be upcoming events in 2020? No one knows. There is much talk about when this pandemic will cease to be a threat and when life might return to some new version of normal, but as of now, there are no sure answers. While we have a compiled list of possible events for 2020, the current situation with the coronavirus pandemic has put all of life on hold. When we can have our next meeting and elections, plan our calendar or even know the status of events is unknown.

Please stay safe, stay in, follow proper medical advice, and we will get through this. We are all looking forward to the time when we will be back around our campfire again!

Recap

Okay, it's not exactly a recap, but it is a report on something one of our members was able to participate in.

In January, Ron and Vickie Wendel turned into snowbirds and traveled to South Carolina. While taking in quite a few sites and tours dripping with Civil War History, the highlight of South Carolina was Fort Sumter. The museum in Charleston is very well done and has artifacts to drool over. Mrs. William Tennent buried her silver set in the plantation garden to keep it safe from the Federal troops in 1865. Her house was looted and burned, but the silver was never found. When the war was over, Mrs. Tennent recovered her silver and kept it

as a memento and family treasure. A partial "coffee set" was also of great interest as it was donated to a Confederate raffle in efforts to raise money to build a gunboat to defend Charleston's harbor in 1862. The winner later gave the set as a wedding gift.

The museum inside Fort Sumter is equally well done with the centerpiece being the flag Major Robert Anderson took down when the fort was surrendered in 1861 and re-raised in 1865.

Despite the Fort and all its treasures steeped in history, one of the very special highlights was the flag raising. The first tour of the

morning gets to assist in raising the huge garrison flag over the Fort. Ron was able to be on the team that raised the flag!

The fort as seen from the south side of the island.



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.

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