

2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

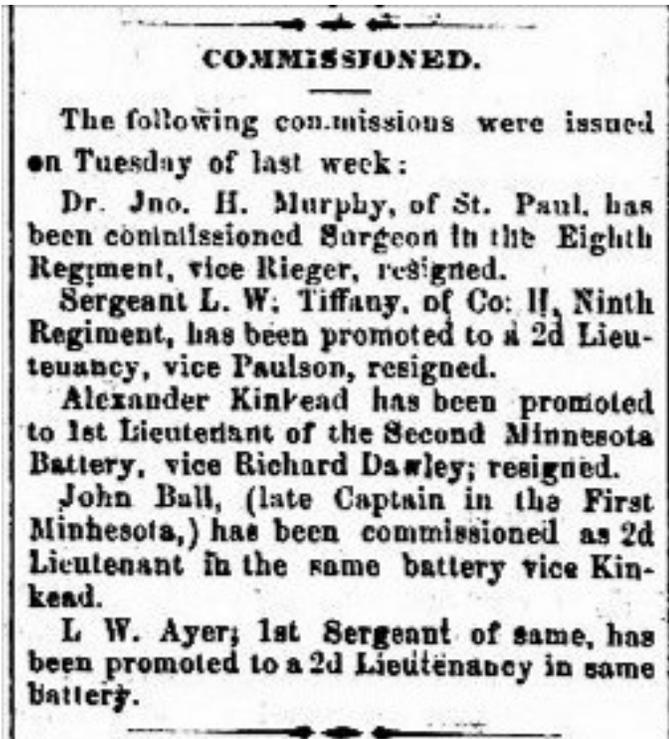
“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 278

June 2020

On This Date-155 Years Ago)

From the *St. Cloud Democrat*, June 2 1864



Our interest in this article begins with the Alexander Kinkead paragraph. The article is correct in that Richard Dawley did resign, Kinkead and Lyman Ayer were promoted. However, the next paragraph noting that John Bull (Ball?) from the 1st Minnesota had moved to the Battery as a 2nd Lieutenant is questionable. There is no record to indicate anyone by the name of Bull or Ball served in the Battery at any time. The closest reference comes from a Battery man's story when he joined the John Ball GAR Post #45 in Winona.

There is a John BALL who served in the 1st Minnesota Infantry who was from Winona and was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in the 11th Minnesota Infantry, but nothing indicates he ever served in the Battery.

Events NOT Upcoming

Three more of our events have canceled. The Living History Fair in Rochester, the Prospect House in Battle Lake, and Pipestone have all made the difficult decision to cancel their events because of the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic. Prospect House and Rochester are actively planning for 2021 and the Pipestone committee is discussing whether to hold their event in 2021 and do two years in a row or just wait until 2022.

We have not yet had communication from the next events on our calendar, so the status of these events is still unknown.

Stay safe, stay hopeful that we will be around the campfire together again soon.



A.A Arnold House Event Goes Virtual

After the cancelation, the coordinators of this event asked for a video or photos of our participation in past years. Miss Mandy put together a slide show for them and it was sent off for inclusion in their Virtual Founders Day. No date has been announced for this virtual event, but keep an eye on their Facebook page for more info. Should any information about the virtual event come out, it will be shared as quickly as possible with all members.

Next Meeting

Maybe late June? 11:00am

The status of our meetings is still unknown due to restrictions on gatherings at Minnesota restaurants. Watch your email for any updates that may come up before the next newsletter.

Contact Ken Cunningham with questions or agenda items. 651-388-2945.



Battery Profile

Richard Montgomery Johnson

Despite the fact of his birth on the Fourth of July in the state of Virginia, Richard's patriotism ran toward the Union. He was mustered into the Second Battery on September 4, 1864, at Rochester, Minnesota. He was 33 years old, had black eyes, dark hair, a dark complexion, and stood 5' 8-3/4" tall. He was given \$33.33 of his promised \$100 bounty for his one year enlistment.

Richard's enlistment was credited to Elba, Winona County, for the draft and it is believed he was living in Winona County in 1864. Many of these men went to Rochester to enlist, Richard being one of them.

It was just over a month after enlisting that Richard was left sick at the hospital at Louisville, Kentucky, on October 14, 1864. He wrote a letter describing the treatment and his opinion of it.

Sir, you wanted to no how i Was treated when in Field Hospital Will you Please Tell me Where that Hospital is I was in a hospital when on the road to Chatanooga but where i cant Tell you for i was so sick i did not now where nor made no inquire all i wanted was to die i was treated like a dog more then a Soldier The Doctor came to the Foot of where i laide and said what are you doing here who are you and Where are you from and where are you going and i toled him he walked out in The morning he came round again he looked at me as he past by said Nothing i was there 2 days i was rundown With canit Dirarier that i could not walk a lone so one of my comrads came back for me and i went with him 2 cups of coffee and 2 small pices of Braid was all i had in that time yours

Richard m Johnson

Richard's writing skills were somewhat lacking as the letter is typed as close as possible to what he wrote.

He stayed with the Battery and was a member of the Battery's Bible Class. In June of 1865, the Second Minnesota was celebrating the end of the war and was firing off their guns. Richard was serving on the front of the gun and somehow claimed an injury. He lost the hearing in his right ear and the concussion of the gun caused a "jarring pain" in his left side. Richard later filed for a disability pension because of these injuries.

The Battery was mustered out of the service at Fort Snelling in August of 1865. Richard went back to his wife and in 1867, they moved to Iowa where they settled near the town of Tabor in Fremont County. Richard's wife was Susanah Sigler and they had been married on March 20, 1857, in Ohio.

Richard was a farmer. He and Susanah raised six children before her death on November 8, 1893.

Richard received a pension for him military service and in 1909 when he was applying for admission to the Iowa State Soldiers' Home, the amount was \$20 a month. He was admitted to the home on July 20, 1909.

Richard may have been a bit forgetful by this time as he asked his daughter to send his pension papers to him. He must have thought he had forgotten them.

His daughter wrote him a letter on the 21st telling Richard where he could find his papers. *"you will find your Pension papers that you send away ever 3 months pined to the pocket of your good coat in side pocket hope you will find them all right hope you will get well rite soon and let me hear once a wek. goodby from your daughter Mrs Lissie German"*

Perhaps the lack of punctuation was hereditary.

Whether Richard found the papers in his pocket is unknown as he died just five days after entering the Home.

Arrangements were made to take his body back to Tabor to be buried with "old soldier comrades" as his pall bearers.

After all his final expenses were paid--and a conflict about the cost of the tombstone and who should pay for it resolved--Richard left an inheritance of about \$7 to each of his children.



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*This is the third in a "series" of men named Johnson to appear in the Action Front. Just for fun, the next issues will also feature men with the surname of Johnson as proof of the immigration patterns that still echo through Minnesota today. Need more proof?! Look up Johnson in your local phone book!*

# The 20th Maine's Quarantine Experience with Smallpox

From the website: <https://www.civilwarmed.org/quarantine>, posted April 17th, 2020

Few diseases caused as much fear and trepidation as smallpox did during the Civil War era. The dreaded illness wreaked havoc during outbreaks throughout American history. Unlike other illnesses during the Civil War, smallpox was something that doctors could attempt to manage through vaccination, which had been done in the US since the late 18th century. However, a botched attempt at vaccinating a regiment against smallpox led to one of the most famous quarantine incidents of the Civil War.

In the spring of 1863, members of the 20th Maine Volunteer Infantry were vaccinated

against smallpox while serving with the Army of the Potomac near Fredericksburg, Virginia. Something went terribly wrong, and dozens of soldiers in the unit came down with a virulent form of the deadly disease.

Surgeon Nahum P. Monroe grew deeply frightened at the prospect of the disease spreading into the Army of the Potomac on the eve of the Chancellorsville campaign. Monroe sought to have the regiment confined to its camp and sought assistance from the adjutant general of the army in helping to implement a quarantine. "As this reg't is under marching orders... they are liable to communicate the disease others," Monroe wrote, "I wish it distinctly understood that it is entirely against my idea of safety to our men as well as others."

The surgeon continued: "For if they should mingle with & spread the disease through the army; with the warm weather coming on, there is no telling when, or where it would end. And somebody would be responsible. I therefore feel it my duty, as surgeon of the reg't to report, officially, to Head Quarters, in time to avert the calamity of having the Small Pox



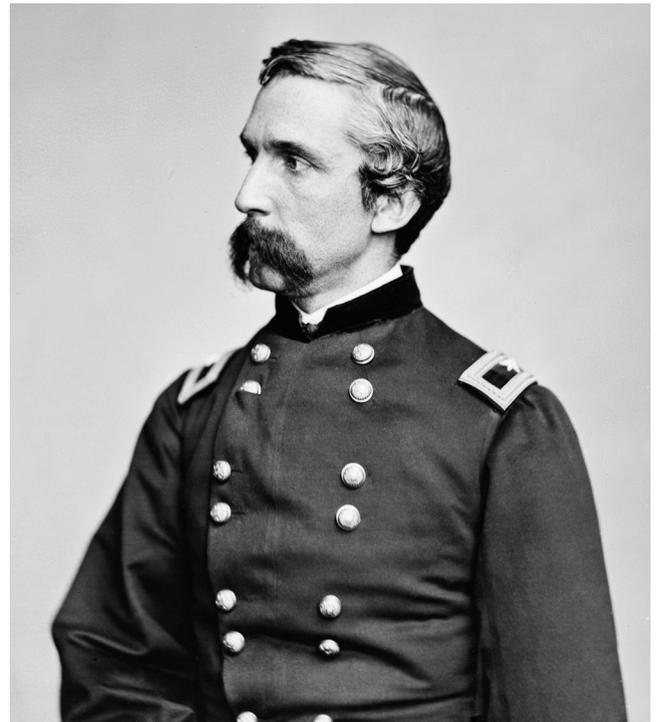
Regimental Surgeon of the 20th Maine, Nahum P. Monroe

spread through our splendid Army of the Potomac, thereby giving aid and comfort to the enemy."

The regiment was indeed separated from the rest of the Army of the Potomac and placed at a discrete location known as "Quarantine Hill." Signs were posted around the camp warning of disease and danger. As a result of the outbreak, the 20th Maine missed major action at the Battle of Chancellorsville.

An angry regimental commander, one Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain allegedly tracked down the army's chief of staff, General Daniel Butterfield, and screamed: "If we couldn't do anything else we would give the rebels the smallpox!" But Chamberlain's pleas were to no avail.

The regiment left quarantine and returned to service with the Army of the Potomac in May 1863 and served with great distinction at the Battle of Gettysburg.



Commanding officer of the 20th Maine, Joshua Chamberlain

# Last Person to Receive a Civil War Pension Dies

Written by Blake Stilwell, [blake.stilwell@military.com](mailto:blake.stilwell@military.com).

The Department of Veterans Affairs' motto is "to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan."

The meaning of those words was perhaps never more apparent than in the case of Irene Triplett, who died Tuesday from surgical complications following a fall at a North Carolina nursing home, according to *The Wall Street Journal*. She was the last person to receive a pension from a veteran's Civil War service.

Her father, Mose Triplett, fought on both sides of the Civil War, first as a rebel and later as a Yankee. Mose realized he was on the losing side after falling ill before the Battle of Gettysburg. Almost 92% of his unit, the 26th North Carolina Infantry, was wiped out in the fighting.

The decision to switch to the Union Army did more than save his life; it earned him a VA pension, one that has paid out every month since the end of the war in 1865.

Decades after Mose left the Army, he married Elida Hall -- his second wife. A few years later, they had a baby. Hall was only 34 years old when she gave birth to Irene in 1930. Mose was 83.

When Mose died in 1938 at the age of 92, his pension was extended first to his wife, then to Irene. Every month since, the VA has paid Irene Triplett \$73.13. By the time of her death, the family had been collecting the pension for 155 years.

While the pension may have helped them financially, the lives of mother and daughter were anything but easy. The two suffered from mental disabilities and were in and out of poor houses and nursing homes.

Irene may also have been the last surviving child of a Civil War veteran. In 2017, 97-year-old Fred Upham died. Upham, whose father fought in the First Battle of Bull Run, was featured in a 2014 *National Geographic* story about his father's service.



Civil War veteran Moses Triplett, second from right, with his first wife, Mary, sitting to his left. After Mary's death in the 1920s, Triplett married Elida Hall, 50 years his junior. (Courtesy Dorothy Killian/AARP)

***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 Cities Metro Area Contact**

Ron & Vickie Wendel  
12419 Redwood Street NW  
Coon Rapids, MN 55448                      Phone: (763) 754-2476

**E-mail: [momwendel@hotmail.com](mailto:momwendel@hotmail.com)**

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



Irene Triplett, courtesy of Facebook

***Editorial comment: Since pension files are not open for research until the pension is "inactive," it explains why finding some of our original Battery members' pension records has been so hard!!***