



2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 291

August 2021

On This Date-160 Years Ago

August 1861

This was a time of preparation for both armies as each realized that this was not going to be a quick or easy victory. War was upon them, and they had better get down to the business of deciding how to win it.

On August 2, the Federal Congress passed the nation's first income tax law. It was 3% on incomes over \$800 annually to take effect on January 1, 1863.

The next day, another first was accomplished when a balloon ascension was made from the deck of a Union ship at Hampton Roads for observation purposes.

The Battle at Wilson's Creek was fought on August 10th. It was a Confederate victory, the second major victory, and Southern spirits were running high.

The Union navy fared better in their late month attack on the Confederate forces guarding Hatteras Islet on North Carolina's outer banks. The bombardment began on the 27th and the fort surrendered on the 28th. It was the first successful invasion of Southern soil by Federal troops. The Northern press blew the importance of the capture out of proportion, but it was, at least, something for the North to feel good about.

Gen. John C. Fremont declared slaves in Missouri “free” on August 30th, starting a political headache for Lincoln.

Upcoming Events

July 31, Veterans Salute, Elba, Minnesota

Our gun will provide the three volley salute to veterans during the annual program in a nice park in Elba. The event will begin promptly at 10:30, so those attending, plan to arrive by 9:30 to unload the gun and be ready to fire. If you are planning to attend and were not at the meeting on July 24, contact Daryl Duden ASAP.

The plan is to take both our parrott and the howitzer, but only if we have two gun crews attending. **PLEASE respond to Daryl if you are attending this event.**

Aug 28-29, Morristown, MN, Ahlman's Shooters Roundup

This is a wild event held on the backlot of Ahlman's GunShop featuring firearms of all kinds. We will be firing our gun during four demos throughout the day. Remember, the shave ice guy is usually there!

July 27, August 2 and 10, September 10, 23 and 24, October 7, 8, 21 and 22, November 4 Goodhue County Historical Society River Boat Visits

This is a unique opportunity to share the history we all carry around in our heads! The riverboat cruises will be stopping in Red Wing and one shore excursion will take travelers to the Goodhue County Historical Society where we are looking for Battery members to take turns interpreting Civil War history in the military room at the museum.

Members should **contact Ken Cunningham** to discuss details and dates. Interpreters will be in period dress and can talk about anything Civil War that you know—especially your role in the Second Minnesota. The times are expected to be noon to around 5:00, but these times are still a bit fuzzy.

There are possibilities for future events with Goodhue Historical Society, so let's make the most of this opportunity!

Next Meeting

August 21, 2021 11:00am

The meeting will be held INSIDE at Marie's Underground Grill in Red Wing.

Contact Ken Cunningham with questions or agenda items.



Battery Profile

William Costello

William was 28 years old, working as a teamster in Faribault, Minnesota, when he decided to enlist in the Second Battery on February 14, 1862. The Battery was still forming and William was one of the early recruits. His descriptive role entry showed him to be 5' 8" tall, with hazel eyes, dark hair and dark complexion. William was Irish, having been born in Derry, Ireland, and he was married.

The military life didn't seem to bother William as no records tell of his spending time in the hospital during the war and his later pension claim was due simply to "old age" rather than illness or injury from military service. His job with the Battery was that of blacksmith, though he was detailed to "daily duty" on December 1, 1862. In March of 1864, William agreed to reenlist for another three years. He earned a veteran's furlough and went home. He was late reporting in, the morning report showed him absent without leave on June 23. William returned to the Battery and reported for duty on July 2nd.

William was promoted to corporal on October 12, 1864, the rank he held until his discharge in August of 1865. When he went home at the end of the war, William had money in his pockets. He was due \$400 in bounty money and had only been paid \$110 of it. He received not only his back pay—the Battery had not been paid for quite some time before they mustered out—but an additional \$290 in bounty money. William also decided to keep his knapsack, haversack and canteen.

William and his wife had three sons and a daughter. In the 1870s, William moved to Bismarck, North Dakota, where he stayed nearly 20 years before moving west again to Great Falls, Montana.

In Great Falls, William worked for the Boston and Montana silver and copper mining/smelting operations. At his death in 1898, it was said he was one of the oldest employees of the company. William died on April 8, 1898, and was laid to rest in the veteran's section of the Old Highland Cemetery in Great Falls.



Bonus Bio!

Tobias Claussen

Tobias was a 33 year old farmer born in Norway when he left his Minnesota home in Spring Grove to enlist in the Second Minnesota Battery. It was the draft rendezvous of 1864 and Tobias enlisted on September 2 at Rochester. After enlisting, the men were taken to Fort Snelling and more complete physicals were given. Tobias passed. The descriptive roll said he was 5' 5-1/2" tall, with blue eyes, sandy hair and a sandy complexion. For his agreement to serve one year, Tobias was paid \$33.33, one third of his promised bounty.

The Battery was doing garrison duty in Tennessee when Tobias and other recruits joined them. There Tobias would stay until the war was over and the Battery went back to Fort Snelling to be discharged. He left the army honorably discharged on August 16, 1865.

It is the last known of Tobias. No other records have ever been found to tell of his life after the war.

Genealogy Finds!

Below is a letter written by James Miskimen to his wife from the camp of the 191st Ohio Infantry, Company D. James was the son of Susannah, daughter of James (Big Jim) Miskimen. Little Jim as he was known, was the illegitimate son of Susannah, but he was raised as a son by Susannah and her husband, Charles Forney. Big Jim was the brother of John Miskimen who was the father of Benjamin Miskimen, who was the 3 greats uncle of Second Battery member Becky Loader.

Little Jim married Ellen Marlatt and wrote letters home to her while he was serving in the Civil War. These letters have been shared with Becky and she has shared them with the Battery. What a treasure!

Letter from James Miskimen to his wife, Ellen; dated April 10, 1865
(All spelling, punctuation, and capitalization retained from original)
page 1

Winchester Virginia
April the 10th 1865

Dear Wife I seat myself to let you know again how I am getting along. I am well at present and have bin well since I wrote last. I hope you are all enjoying the same blessing. I received your welcome letter on the 2nd inst (sic) dated the 23rd of March. You dont know how much good it done me to here from you and to here that you are all well. I thought the time long to here from you. I wrote you 5 letters before I received any from you. Well Ellen we was awoke last night by the sound of cannon at Winchester which caused us all to say more good news. The news was that General Lee and his men had surrendered

Well Ellen the news about the close of the ware is very good. We think the rebellion is about gon up. It is the opinion of every one of us that we will get to go home long before the year is out. I hope it may be so. We have moved twist since I wrote last. We moved from the Braddock well to 2 mi west of Berryville. We moved next day through Winchester and 2 miles back towards Charlstown. Stayed there 3 days then moved ½ mile towards C.T. where we are at this time. The health of our company still improves. Severel of the boys has returned from the hospital. The last we heard of L. Scot he was about well. Henderson and Hootman was sick yet.

Third page

Well Ellen I have never had a chance to express my mony yet. I think very hard of our officers for not giving me a pass out. If you need any mony let me know and I will send you some. I wish it was all home safe. I received a newspaper yesterday from Levi Magness whitch was very exceptable all though we get Baltimore papers here evry day. I want you to write and let me know how you are getting along. Tell me all about the children and who you have living with you. I would like to know how the fead held out for I have been uneasy about that as the spring is very late. Nothing more at present but remain your friend until death.

James Miskimen to Ellen Miskimen, his wife

Direct to Winchester, Virginia. Co. D, 191 Regt. O.V.I.

*Since I closed my letter we heard the salute of 200 rounds of cannon at Winchester which confurmed the news of last night. The rumer is this after noon that we are to be sent to Cumberland Maryland to do yard doty. Nothing more at present. So good by Ellen.
(his initials)*

Envelope: U.S. Christian Commission
Soldier's Letter

Mrs. Ellen Miskimen, Linton Mills, Coshocton, Ohio



Recap

July 17-18 Olmstead County Living History Fair & Reenactment, Rochester, MN

It seemed everyone was excited to be “wearing the wool” again at a weekend event! We had nearly 30 members in camp both days! Several comments were made that the Second Minnesota was the largest unit in attendance. Even the weather was great—not humid, no rain, no raging wind and not even in the 90s for temperature!

We had both the parrott and the howitzer on the field providing 2/3 of the Union guns for the battles. We had enough soldiers to loan one to Battery I and on Saturday, Bart played with the Confederate infantry. He picked the wrong day to play with them (they lost), but he died a glorious death complete with dramatic death spasms in both legs!

The ladies for once at this event, had no “stations” to staff and were able to remain in the Battery’s camp to talk to people and prepare the noon meals. They were quite happy to with the arrangement!

The delight everyone took in this event may have been enhanced by the fact that it was the first event in two years, but was a great event! Attendance was low, but expected from what we heard from the OCHC staff.

Huzzah for being together!!



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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