

## 2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

# “ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 284

January 2021

### On This Date-160 Years Ago

After South Carolina seceded in December, things began to happen in rapid secession. On January 3, Delaware’s leaders voted not to secede. On the 9th, Mississippi voted to secede with Florida following in secession on the 10th. Alabama was next on the 11th, then Georgia on the 19th. Louisiana seceded on the 26th. The Union locked in another “northern” state when Kansas was admitted as the 34th state.

Even though Mississippi voted to seceded on the 10th, it was not until the 21st that her leading senator resigned from the U.S. Senate. He was Jefferson Davis and his role in the upcoming months would continue to grow.

Another character was entering the stage, too. He was Major Robert Anderson and he was the man in charge at Fort Sumter, the Federal fort in Charleston’s harbor. With the declaration of independence by South Carolina, his command was quite literally in enemy territory—if Washington recognized the new sovereign nation, which they did not. Anderson sent a message to his commanders in Washington in January, informing them of his situation and the outlook he was facing. Being in a fort in the middle of a hostile harbor was not an good place to expect any help or supplies. Supplies were his biggest concern. He had to feed his men, the food was limited and expecting food from anywhere in Charleston was a fool’s hope.

In Minnesota, January of 1861 was quiet. The secession fervor was not as intense in Minnesota as in the east and south. The state was looking forward to the upcoming session of the legislature and watching what would happen next on the national scene.

Lincoln was working on his cabinet, but bear in mind, inauguration was still three months away.

### Upcoming Events

While we really don’t have any upcoming events, we are on the lookout to see what might be planned for 2021. No one really knows at this point where we will be with the virus situation and if there will be events this year or not.

Be on the watch for events that are still being planned and might be something we would be interested in putting on our calendar. Bring any information you find to the meeting or forward it to one of the Battery officers.



### Next Meeting

**January 30, 2021 11:00am**

The meeting will be held at Red Wing Area Seniors facility located at 240 Harrison Street, STE 2, in Red Wing and will follow CDC guidance for masks and social distancing. Contact Ken Cunningham with questions or agenda items.



# Battery Profile

## Stephen Toreson

Stephen was born on a farm in Tinglestad, Norway, on August 16, 1830, and came to Muskego, Wisconsin with his family in 1854. He was 24. He worked on a farm there for a couple of years before he traveled with a group of men to Minnesota. As soon as Stephen arrived, he filed a claim for land, 180 acres in Eureka Township, Dakota County.

The land was raw, so Stephen lived with another family according to the 1857 census while he worked to improve his claim. He had good reason to work hard at building a house, clearing land and establishing his farm—he wanted to marry and needed a home for his new bride. Stephen had met Ingeborg Anderson when they were living in Wisconsin, but she did not come to Minnesota until later in 1857. They married in February of 1858 and settled down to farm and raise a family.

Both had family living nearby in Eureka. Stephen's father and brother had the next farms over from Stephen's land and Ingeborg's family was about a mile away. Their first son was born in November of 1858, followed by a daughter born in January of 1860. Another son and daughter were born in 1861 and 1863.

The battles with Confederates may have been far away from their farm, but the Civil War was intruding on the family farm life Stephen and Ingeborg were working at building. Two of Stephen's brothers were drafted, a third one enlisted, and the farm economy of the area was suffering. Stephen decided to enlist to serve one year in the army. He received a bounty of \$100 for his agreement to serve, \$33.33 at his enlistment and the balance in two later payments.



This is where the misspelling of Stephen's last name went down in official records. Military records spell Stephen's surname "Toreson." Family records show an "h" to make his name Thoreson. Stephen's brother, Ole said Stephen dropped the "h" while in the army. Ole mentioned the spelling in the pension deposition he gave for Ingeborg, he did not provide a reason for the change. However, known records where Stephen was required to sign his name show only his mark, "X." Family stories indicate Stephen had very little education and was likely illiterate his entire life. With Stephen's inability to read, probably aided by his Norwegian accent, he likely never knew his name was misspelled by the army.

Stephen reported to Fort Snelling on August 26, 1864, leaving behind his pregnant wife and four small children. He was assigned to the Second Minnesota Battery of Light Artillery and went South with a group of recruits. He reached the Battery in September while they were in garrison duty near Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Garrison duty remained the assignment for the Battery for the rest of the war, so Stephen was set to work

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repairing the fortifications instead of fighting Confederates. The Battery's captain, William Hotchkiss, was detached from the unit and ended up overseeing artillery at the Battle of Nashville. One gun section from the Second Minnesota Battery started for Nashville, but were turned back and did not participate in the fight.

Family stories tell of Stephen being captured, but military records do not provide any evidence that Stephen was ever held by the Confederacy. His name does not appear in the morning reports as ever being absent from the Battery. He never reported sick and he was never noted by name for any reason in any known official Battery report. His muster sheets indicate he was present throughout the year of service he provided to the Union Army.

At the end of the war, the Battery returned to Fort Snelling where the men received their final pay and settled their accounts with the Army before being discharged on August 16, 1865.

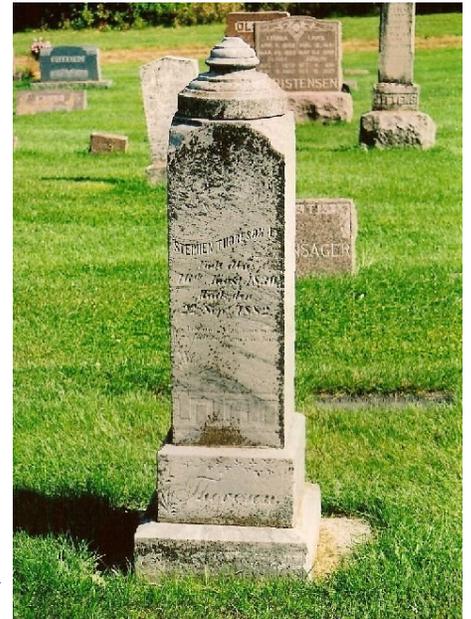
Stephen returned to his farm and family, a family that continued to grow to include eleven children. By 1880, stories of rich lands in the Red River Valley were circulating and several friends from the area had moved there for that better land. Their reports enticed Stephen to head north with his brother and stake a claim near Grafton, Dakota Territory. They built a cabin and began breaking the virgin prairie. Ingeborg and the younger children stayed on their original farm in Dakota County, Minnesota.

The hard labor of breaking new land was too much for 52 year old Stephen. He suffered from a kidney disorder he blamed on his service in the Civil War. After two years in the Red River Valley, he returned to Minnesota and died on, September 22, 1882. He is buried in Highview Cemetery in Dakota County, Minnesota.

When Ingeborg applied for a widow's pension, she said they had no mortgage on their 180 acres when Stephen died. He left her four horses, seven milk cows, two calves, three hogs, some wheat and oats enough to feed the horses and for seed, but no money. Ingeborg's son farmed the land and gave her a portion of the crops as payment. Only their last child, Alfred, born in 1875, was under 16 years of age when Stephen died, so Ingeborg included him in the pension application.

Stephen had his will made out before his death where he made known his wishes for his estate. His estate was left to Ingeborg with the provision that she remain single. He left each of his sons \$300 and each of his daughters \$100, to be paid at the time they came of age. Pension records indicate Ingeborg did give the children their inheritance as Stephen's will indicated, but only so long as she had enough money. Further testimony in the depositions tell the story of just barely having enough money to get by on.

The last dated pension record on file for Ingeborg was 1901. The spelling change from Toreson to Thoreson was a problem for the pension department. Family records and memories indicate Ingeborg did eventually receive a \$12 month pension as Stephen's widow.



*Note: Stephen's family contacted us and provided the photo of Stephen in uniform and the grave photos. They were also able to help with some of the details of Stephen's biography. It is always so much fun to find family from one of our boys! The photo at left is Chris Flaar, great-great grandson of Stephen.*

## Sad News...

We received news that one of our members, Karen Hansen, passed away in November. Karen had not been active with the Battery much in recent years, but she kept her membership and deep interest in reenacting. Karen was known for occasionally participating in “mischief” and she loved to laugh. Her sunny smile always brightened our camps. At right is a favorite memory of Karen submitted by the soldier peeking out of the tent with her!

The following is Karen’s obituary.

Karen Hansen (also known as Blue Grandma to her grandchildren), of Lake City, passed away November 4, 2020, at age 68 in Rochester at the Mayo Clinic. Karen Louise Peters was born May 14, 1952, in Spirit Lake, Iowa to Lloyd and Irene Peters. Karen graduated from Glencoe – Silver Lake High School in Glencoe, MN in 1970. She went on to attend Hutchinson Vo-Tech for a Secretarial/Clerical degree.

Karen worked in Hutchinson, Litchfield, Hector and Olivia Minnesota before moving to Lake City after marrying Duane Hansen in 1973. While in Lake City she worked as a teller for the Lake City Bank, worked several years at Ben Franklin, as well as Di-Acro, Flower Cottage, Wild Wings and Heat-N-Glo. She worked at Red Wing Wal-Mart for 16 years before retiring last June.



Karen enjoyed floral arranging, card making and flower gardening. She was especially interested in the American Civil War and participated as a reenactor for several years. She enjoyed doing Civil War research, as well as designing and sewing her Civil War period wardrobe. Another interest was Native American history. Karen’s greatest joy was spending time with her grandchildren. She was an active member of Bethany Lutheran Church.

Karen is survived by her Mother, Irene Peters of Marshalltown, Iowa; brother, Brian (Liz) Peters of LeGrand, Iowa; sons, Jim (Tera) Hansen of Lake City and Bob Hansen of Vancouver, Washington; grandsons, Christopher, Jacob, and Joseph; and the father of her children, Duane Hansen. She was preceded in death by her father Lloyd Peters.

A graveside service was held Wednesday, November 11, 2020 at 1pm at Lakewood Cemetery.



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## Those Dratted Pension Records....

While we love the pension records at the National Archives, not all of our Battery boys have them. At least not where we can readily find them! Of course there were some men who never applied, but the records for those who did are often rich with details about their lives. The frustrating part is when we have a pension index number, but no file. One of the reasons for a no-show file is that the claim was recently active, as in this example.

The last Civil War veteran to die was Albert Woolson (1850-1956).

The last Civil War bride to die was Maude Hopkins (1914-2008), who at 19 married William Cantrell, age 86.



The last person to receive a Civil War pension, \$73.13 a month, was Irene Triplet, who died this past June at 90 years old. Amazingly, her father fought in the Civil War. She would have qualified for a pension under her father’s service if she had a disability that would prevent her from earning a living on her own.

This is a family portrait of the Triplets. No wonder finding some of these pension files is tough—some files were still active in 2020!

# Recap

## November 11, Veterans Day, Winona, MN

On November 11, 2020, members of the 2nd Minnesota Battery were in Veteran's Park in Winona, MN to participate in their 11-11-11 Veterans Day Observance. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the observance was shortened and the attendance limited. Although there was no snow on the ground in Winona, because of wet grounds, we positioned our 10 Pdr. Parrott Rifle on the blacktop in the entrance of the parking lot. Among those in attendance were family members and friends of the local American Legion and VFW who were sponsoring the event, and a large group of students from Winona High School.



The program began with a flag raising ceremony followed by a brief invocation. There was no Main Address scheduled, but this time was filled with a mention of area WWII veterans and two patriotic poems. Then the Battery fired its three-round salute. The sound of the cannon firing bouncing across Lake Winona and off the cliffs was incredible. Taps was sounded followed by a brief benediction and the observance was over. We immediately loaded the gun back on the trailer and soon all departed.

Battery members participating in this event were Michael Ritchie, Bart Hoekstra, Bruce Arnoldy, Cameron Larson, James Livingstone, Ron Graves, Daryl Duden and John Cain. Battery member Brian Tomashek was also in attendance as a member of the event organizing staff.

Respectfully submitted,  
SGT Duden

***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>**



**Your Country Needs You!**  
**And so does the Battery!**

**2021 dues are DUE!!** To remain on the active member list, your dues are:

Civilian Member	\$12.00
Military Member	\$12.00
Associate Member	\$ 6.00
Junior Member (14-17)	\$ 6.00
Junior Member (under 14)	Free

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State and Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send this form and your check to:

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

**UPDATE YOUR MEMBERSHIP RECORDS!**

Cell phone numbers and email address change, so be sure we have  
your correct information to be included in all vital communications  
(especially emergency situations).

Thank you!