



2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 286

March 2021

On This Date-160 Years Ago

March 4, 1861 -- Lincoln's Inauguration

(from Wikipedia)

Abraham Lincoln's inaugural address was delivered by the new President on Monday, March 4, 1861, after being sworn in as the sixteenth President of the United States. The speech was primarily addressed to the people of the South, and was intended to succinctly state Lincoln's intended policies and desires toward that section where seven states had seceded from the Union and formed the Confederate States of America.

Indeed, the new flag of the Confederacy—the Stars and Bars—had been adopted and raised over Montgomery, Alabama, on the same day.

Written in a spirit of reconciliation toward the rebellious states, Lincoln's inaugural address touched on several topics: first, his pledge to *“hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the government”*—including Fort Sumter, which was still in Federal hands; second, his argument that the Union was indissolvable, and thus secession was impossible; and third, a promise that while he would never be the first to attack, any use of arms against the United States would be regarded as rebellion, and be met with force.

Lincoln denounced secession as anarchy, and explained that majority rule had to be balanced by constitutional restraints in the American system of republicanism: *“A majority held in restraint by constitutional checks and limitations, and always changing easily with deliberate changes of popular opinions and sentiments, is the only true sovereign of a free people.”*

Desperately wishing to avoid a war, Lincoln closed the address with this impassioned plea: *“We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.”*

Upcoming Events

We don't have many upcoming events for sure, but we can all be on the lookout to see what might be planned for 2021. The virus situation continues to change and there is no way to know what the future holds for events. Bring any information you find to a meeting or forward it to one of the Battery officers.

May 2, 2021 Rochester, MN

One possible event is the Gamehaven Scout Camp on May 2nd, 2021. This event will be held at out the Gamehaven Scout Reservation located on 5015 Simpson Rd. SE, Rochester, MN.

Depending upon what state Covid regulations are at the time, the entirety of the re-enactment program may have to be outside. Their plan for this camporee would be similar to what we did last time: The program would be all day Saturday. The 2nd MN Battery would present 6 stations dealing with various aspects of Civil War life where groups of scouts cycle through every 30 minutes in the morning and afternoon. The Gamehaven Camping Committee would staff an additional 4 stations to covers requirements in the American Heritage merit badge. Each station would be presented 10 times, which would keep group size as small as possible.

Have YOU mailed in your dues yet???

Next Meeting

March 27, 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

John Henry Dederick

John was born January 2, 1832, in Prussia, the son of a “hunter to the King.” Hunting for the King had been a way of life for the Dedericks for generations until the German Revolution of 1849 broke the traditional restrictions nobility had on the forests. With that loss, hunters could no longer make a living and the Dederick family migrated in search of new opportunities. The family came to the United States in 1852 when John was 20 years old. John’s father took a job in a furniture store, but he did not stay at that job. He moved the family west, passing by wagon train through St. Louis, Missouri. From there, two of John’s brothers went south to settle in Tennessee and Georgia. The rest of the family went north to Wright County, Minnesota, where they settled on the Buffalo River.

When John enlisted in the Second Battery on January 23, 1862, he noted his occupation as farming. He had just turned 29 years old, had blue eyes, dark hair, and a light complexion. He was 5’ 6 1/2” tall. He was not married.

It was during John’s time in the army that the spelling of his name changed. Prior to the service, it was spelled Dederick--with two e’s. In the army, the second “e” was dropped, making the name Dedrick. John probably did not accept that spelling as his own. When he filed for a pension in the late 1880s, he signed his name Dederick.

John’s service with the Battery was as a private and he was with the unit when it went into battle at Perryville, Kentucky. It was there while John was serving on his gun that he suffered an injury that would haunt him for the rest of his life. The battle was raging and John, from descriptions in later reports, was probably serving on the front of one of the Battery’s guns. The fighting was heavy and John was standing between two guns about ten feet apart when both fired at the same time in a section fire. The blast deafened John in both ears completely for several weeks and only partial hearing ever returned. Battery comrades Orestes Dudley and John Craven were serving on those two guns and described John’s loss of hearing and how it only slowly--but not completely--came back.

Stories in the Dederick family say at some time during the Civil War, John met up with his two brothers who had gone south when the family split in St. Louis, Missouri. Both were serving in the Confederate Army and it was during a lull in the fighting that the three brothers were able to meet under a flag of truce. It was said the family stayed in contact with these brothers after the war and remained on friendly terms until death.

The initial enlistment papers John signed were for three years and when that time was up, John decided he had had enough of army life. Instead of going home on the veteran’s furlough given to those who reenlisted, John was detailed to serve with the Second Illinois, Battery I. This put John into heavy fighting as Union General William Sherman marched and fought his army to Atlanta in the summer of 1864. During this time, John said he developed rheumatism. It was another reminder of his time in the army that would never leave him.

After John was discharged, he returned to Minnesota and took a homestead near Melrose. On February 13, 1866, he married Gertrude Hellman. They settled on their farm to raise crops and children. They eventually had seven children. Gertrude died on November 7, 1885, probably resulting from childbirth. The baby died a short time later and both were buried in the St. Mary’s Cemetery in Melrose.

John stayed on the farm a few more years, then moved into the town of Melrose where he was listed as a “landlord” and part-time gardener. He was active in the G.A.R. chapter and was well known in the community.

On February 12, 1901, John died from pneumonia. He was laid to rest beside Gertrude in St. Mary’s Cemetery. The spelling of his name on the grave marker is “Dederick,” John’s way of spelling it, not the army way.

John’s great-grandson, Matt Dedrick, contacted the reenacting Battery and provided many family details and stories about John. One story was that John had taken a ring from the finger of a dead Confederate officer somewhere in the battles before Atlanta. John kept the ring and it was passed down in the family to Matt. He shared the story and a photo of the ring, a ring with an elaborate letter “D,” perhaps the reason the ring was so enticing to John.



Soldier, Spy and—Laundress?!

From the National Archives Office of Strategy and Communications by staff writer Rob Crotty.

The Civil War was a spy's dream come true. With a porous border between the Union and the Confederacy, and little way to distinguish between friend and foe, spies were everywhere. Both sides used ciphers. Both tapped telegraph wires. Stories of aristocratic schmoozing abound so much that James Bond would be jealous of all the cocktail cloak and dagger that occurred in the Civil War. But for all the espionage that happened in Richmond, the Union quickly learned that one of the best places to hide their spies wasn't in a veil of aristocracy, but beneath the Confederate's own prejudices. Thinking African Americans uneducated and illiterate, Confederate officers would speak of military maneuvers in front of their slaves and servants without a second thought.

Nowhere is this more clear than in the case of a man named Dabney and his wife. The two had crossed over into Union lines in 1863, and Dabney took up work as a cook and body servant at General Joseph Hooker's Falmouth encampment along the Rappahannock River. Dabney's intimate knowledge of the terrain across the river made him an intelligence asset, and soon he was leading troops into battle as a scout—in one instance he allegedly led Union troops directly against his old master.

It wasn't until his wife crossed back across the river and took up the job of a laundress that Dabney started reporting accurate and timely information to Hooker about Confederate movements, though. None of the officers knew how their cook obtained critical information about rebel movements without ever leaving camp.

Eventually Dabney agreed to tell one of the officers just how he gathered his intelligence. He took the officer to a spot along the river that overlooked Fredericksburg and told the man to look at the clothesline at the back of a house on the outskirts of the town.

"Well, that clothesline tells me in a half an hour just what goes on at Lee's headquarters," Dabney explained. "You see my wife over there? She washes for the officers, cooks, and waits around, and as soon as she hears about any movement or anything going on she comes down and moves the clothes on that line so I can understand in a minute. That there gray shirt is Longstreet; and when she takes it off it means he's gone down about Richmond. That white shirt means [A. P.] Hill; and when she moves it up to the west end of the line, Hill's corps has moved up stream. That red one is Stonewall Jackson. He's down on the right now, and if he moves, she'll move that red shirt."

The Confederate's dirty laundry provided the Union with a great source of intelligence. While Lee emerged victorious at the subsequent Battle of Chancellorsville, Hooker had some of the best intelligence in preparing for the campaign, thanks in part to spies like Dabney and his wife.

Vivandieres

From the Guildler Lehrman Institute for American History

Vivandieres, sometimes known as cantinieres, were women who followed the army to provide support for the troops. Ideally, a vivandiere would have been a young woman—the daughter of an officer or wife of a non-commissioned officer—who wore a uniform and braved battles to provide care for wounded soldiers on the battlefield. The history of vivandieres can be traced to the French Zouave regiments in the Crimean War. By 1859, many local militia regiments in the United States had adopted the name "Zouave," wore colorful uniforms, and adopted the practice of having a "daughter of the regiment" in their ranks. At the outbreak of the American Civil War, these regiments—in both the North and the South—answered the call for troops. Vivandieres saw most of their service during the early years of the war. By September 1864, General Ulysses S. Grant ordered that all women be removed from military camps in his theater.

Vivandieres did not fight in battles but were often armed, earned honors, and were sometimes captured by the enemy. Their most important contribution was the essential medical care they provided as field nurses. As battles raged, vivandieres made their way through the wounded offering immediate medical care. Calculating the exact number of women who served as vivandieres is nearly impossible. Neither North nor South recognized the service of vivandieres and they are rarely mentioned in official records. Their courage and brave deeds are recorded in personal accounts and post-war regimental histories.

Identified Vivandieres

Sarah Taylor – 1st Tennessee (US) – prisoner of war
Marie Tepe – Collis' Zouaves – awarded the Kearny Cross
Eliza Wilson – 5th Wisconsin
Ella Gibson – 49th Ohio
Lucy Ann Cox – 13th Virginia
Kady Brownell – 1st and 5th Rhode Island (Pictured at right)
Bridget Divers – 1st Michigan Cavalry
Annie Etheridge – 3rd and 5th Michigan – awarded the Kearny Cross



A Letter from Battery Member Alexander Kinkead

Camp near Corinth, Mississippi, May 29th, 1862

Dear Brother Will:

I embrace the first opportunity since my arrival within the lines of the main army to write to you. I am writing this letter inside our breastworks, surrounded by all the stern realities of actual war.

We left St Louis nearly two weeks ago, and were taken down the Mississippi and up the Ohio to the Tennessee River, up the Tennessee to Pittsburg Landing, where we disembarked and marched twenty miles to our present position, near Corinth and in front of the enemy's lines. General Halleck has an immense army here and the country is literally covered with men and parks of artillery. The lines extend over about fifteen miles. General Halleck is advancing gradually day by day, and is now within shelling distance of Corinth. Our Battery is on the left bend, in General Pope's Division. The Fourth and Fifth Regiments were engaged today. The enemy came out to drive our men back from some breastworks and rifle pits thrown up the night before. The Fourth did not do much, but some Missouri regiments in connection with the Fifth Minnesota repulsed the enemy, driving them back and capturing fifteen 6 pound field pieces. Lieutenant David Oakes (5th Minnesota Regiment, Company F), whom you knew well, was killed at the first fire from the enemy. A shell struck him on the head, taking away his skull on the front part. The killed and wounded I have not been able to learn. Captain Orlando Eddy, also of the 5th Minnesota, was wounded, I cannot say how badly. There is artillery enough here, it seems to me, to blow the South to atoms. You cannot imagine the actual scene of a battlefield. Since I've come nothing more than heavy skirmishing has occurred; and the thunder of eight or ten batteries and five or six regiments of Infantry is perfectly terrific. What then must it be when this whole army shall open fire?

The secesh farms and plantations are suffering, I can tell you! Our entrenchments are on a splendid plantation, and Halleck has it all cut up with rifle pits. The owner has fled leaving about fifty negroes, and his cotton we use for beds. His fine orchard of peaches and apples – peaches on the trees as large as black walnuts – was cut down yesterday to allow of some siege guns being planted. The plantations around are all vacated and cut up alike, but the orchards on many have not been disturbed. At another point along the line was a pretty good house and out buildings. General Halleck was to plant a battery. He brought six 30 pound Parrott guns, in a twinkling the whole was demolished, and in a short time the ground cleared away. As I write (8 o'clock PM) the enemy have opened their batteries.

I am happy to say that the army is in fine spirits. The men say that if General Halleck will give the order they will take Corinth in four hours. Twenty thousand men went out day before yesterday and after a sharp action, took possession of a railroad running, I believe, to Memphis. So continual has been the skirmishing along the line yesterday and today that the ambulances pass us every half hour with the wounded. The belief here is that a heavy fight will take place tomorrow or next day.

The country where we now are is not unlike the Grove Lake and Chippewa country – rolling and wooded except where the farms and plantations are. It reminds me of the Alexandria country – those small prairies, but the timber is only in small groves or narrow belts. As one progresses he passes over open spaces where plantations are, and timber elsewhere. The country is rather high and not marshy. The water is fair, and running brooks and springs plenty. I am quite well. The days are hot and the nights chilly.

The army has great confidence in General Halleck, and well they may. Beauregard cannot drive us back, nor 500,000 men drive us from our position. The country for miles back of us, is all cut up with entrenchments and breastworks. A good many deserters from the enemy have come in, and report them short of provisions. Seventy men came over in a body day before yesterday. One of them said he had tried to escape seven times before, and had been caught, and tied up, and choked until nearly dead. Others were citizens and left to prevent being impressed. Prisoners are captured every day.

6 PM – We have just dismantled three of the enemy's large siege guns. It was done by a Wisconsin Battery of 30 pound Parrott guns. We could see it very distinctly from where we are with glasses – distance about one mile. The shots were said to be splendid – I mean the guns well aimed. The same battery also silenced two batteries of field artillery. Halleck is going to throw forward more troops tonight, among them the Fourth Minnesota. There will be sharp work in the morning. I don't know how it is, but I have not felt afraid as yet. The shells fly over us sometimes and burst beyond, and sometimes fall short. None of our company has been hurt.

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: 2mnbattery@gmail.com

Battery Website:
<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!