

2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 309

July 2023

On This Date-160 Years Ago

Frank Flint, a private with the Battery, wrote this letter in July of 1863, describing where the Battery was and what they were doing. Jennie was his neighbor girl (and later, wife.)

Winchester, Tenn. July 29, 1863

Dear Jennie,

I suppose that you have heard all about our advance from Murfreesboro so I will say nothing about it only that we had a hard time as it rained all the time and there was no chance for rest as we expected every hour that the next we would be in a big battle. Our horses were not allowed to be unharnessed at all and they had very little to eat. As I was not prepared for wet weather, I suffered more than most of the boys. I was wet to the skin for ten days but enjoyed first rate health. We had two men hurt. One had his thigh broken by falling from a mule and another had his ankle broken by the gun carriage running over it. Our Inft. was skirmishing all the way but we did not have a chance to use our guns. There were several killed in our brigade.

This is a fine place and we are expecting to stay here for some time. Rosecran's head-quarters are here. About a thousand horses and mules came in yesterday. They were taken by Stanley way down in Alabama. Lots of n---rs came in with them. There are lots of pretty girls here but there are all strong Secesh so of course they don't do us any good. There are two female colleges here, that is the reason there are so many girls.

What has become of Al Depue? I haven't heard from him for a year or more. The last that I heard he was hiding to get rid of being drafted. He pretended to want to enlist when I did but I guess he didn't want to very bad.

*Frank
2nd Minn. Baty.
2nd Brigade
1st Div.
20th Army Corps*

Upcoming Events

July 8 Family Fun Day Red Wing, MN

We are the program at the Goodhue County History Center (1166 Oak Street) from noon – 3:00pm. Volunteers are needed, arrive at **10:30 for set up**. We have been asked to provide 2 or 3 learning stations in addition to firing demonstrations on our M1861 10 Pdr Parrott Rifle.

July 29 Whitewater River Fest , Elba, MN

The organizers of this event have not yet confirmed our participation, so at this time, we are not sure if we will be attending or not. Please verify with John Cain or Daryl Duden before making your plans to attend this event.

If it comes off, we will fire a three-round salute in honor or memory of Veterans. The Battery purchased a paver for the memorial to honor Civil War Veterans of the 2nd Minnesota Battery from Winona County in 2021. The site is Veteran's Memorial Park on Main Street (HI 74). **Set up at 10:00am** for the 11:00am ceremony.



Next Meeting

Either July 29 or August 12*, 11:00 am
Elks Club, 306 W 4th Street, Red Wing,
Contact Ken Cunningham with questions or
agenda items. 651-388-2945.

***The date will be determined on the participation or not at the Elba event. See Upcoming Events for more details.**



Battery Profile

John S. White

When a man was enlisting, he was asked various questions to provide information on his identity. On February 20, 1862, when John was enlisting, he was asked his occupation. His answer was, "most anything." His other answers were a little less vague. He had been born in Courtland, New York, he was 29 years old, and was living in Winona when he enlisted. He had blue eyes, light hair, light complexion, and stood 5' 8" tall. John was married, his wife was Laura Wheeler and they had been married in New York on April 7, 1857.

The 1860 census showed John owning property in the city of Winona and employed as a deputy sheriff. Laura was with him, but they had no children at the time.

John was a steady soldier in the Battery, his name never appeared on the sick roll and he was not detailed away from the Battery for any reason. He reenlisted when his first three years were up and was given a bounty of \$400, a third of which he was paid immediately.

On April 22, 1864, John was promoted to corporal while the Battery was home on their veteran's furlough. In August, he was noted as "absent with leave to report to Col. Mussey Prisoner Exchange Board, Nashville, Tenn." No further explanation of what John was doing was given.

New Years Day of 1865 brought John a new rank, that of sergeant. It was the rank he held when the Battery was discharged from the service at Fort Snelling on August 16, 1865.

John went home to Laura and in 1867, they had a daughter.

Little more is known until John applied for a pension in 1896. He and Laura were living in Shoshone, Idaho. John told the Pension Department that he had suffered a foot injury while at Fort Snelling before the Battery ever went south in 1862. He said he had dislocated his big toe on his right foot and that he had broken a rib after the war. He claimed no disability because of these injuries, but he reported them anyhow. He was basing his pension claim on old age. Three years later, John filed another statement with the Pension Department. In it, he described a hernia he received when a load of hay fell on him. He was taking the load across the Oregon Short Line Railroad track near his home. He was alone when the "reach pole" broke and the wagon "upset". John said he was caught between the ground and the hay rack. A doctor attended him and he had "internal injuries" according to John. He pointed out that at the time of the accident, he "was not under the influence of any intoxication liquor or any injurious drug, but was sober and in perfect senses." Two witnesses backed up John's statement.

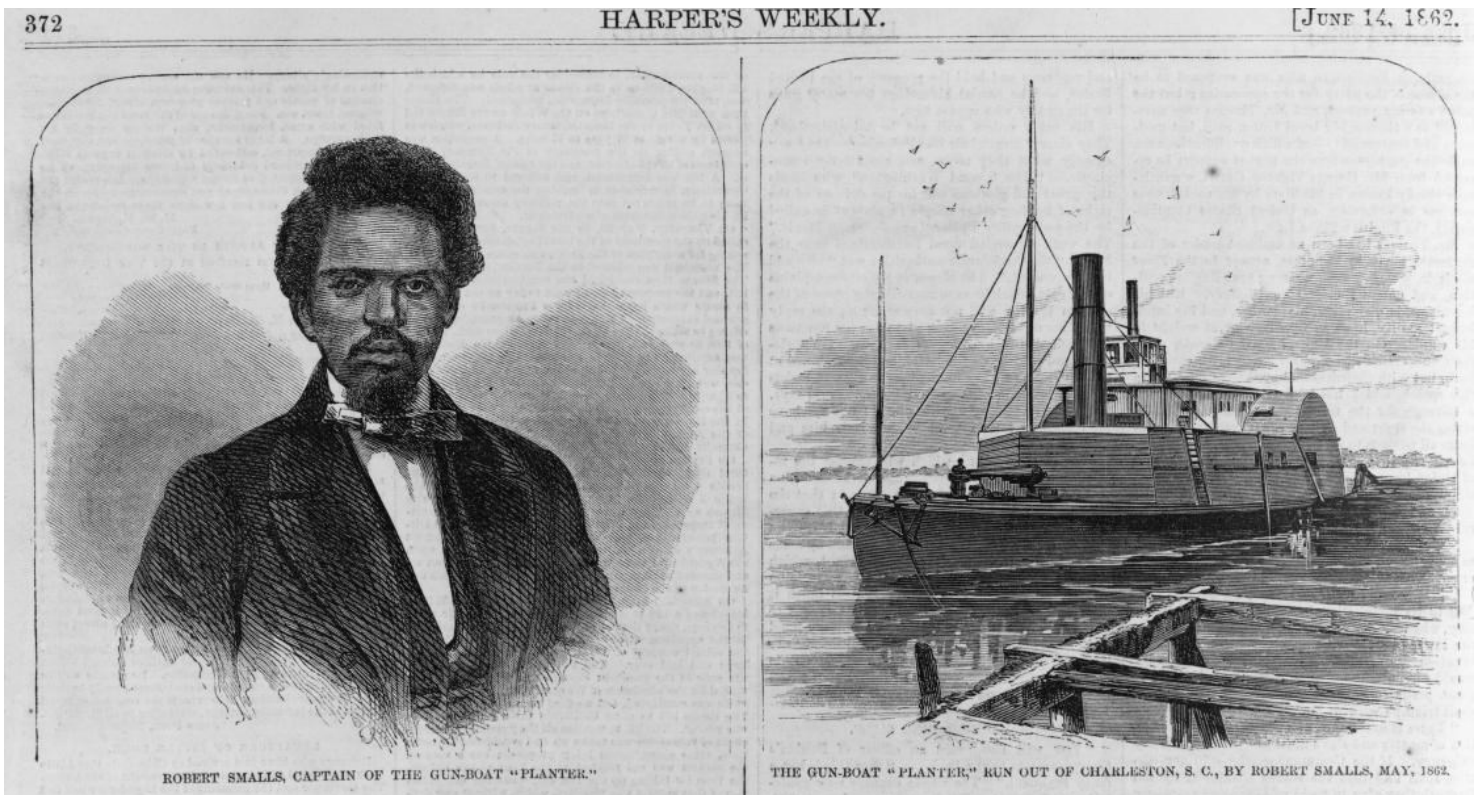
John was at the home of his daughter on February 21, 1906, when he passed away. The funeral was held from the house where he died and he was laid to rest in the Morris Hill Cemetery in Boise.

While records have not been found to verify John's membership, his gravestone notes that he was a member of the U.S. Grant Post #8 of the GAR.



An Escape with a Bonus

From the Daily Dose of History Facebook page



In the spring of 1862, 23-year-old Robert Smalls was working as a pilot in Charleston harbor aboard a Confederate steamer called "The Planter." The ship's three officers were white. The other seven crewmen, including Smalls, were slaves.

Despite Confederate orders requiring officers to always remain aboard their vessels, the officers on the Planter often went ashore at night to spend the night with their families, leaving only the enslaved crew on the ship. Whether they did so because they trusted Smalls, or doubted his courage and ability, either way, they made a big mistake. Smalls recognized the opportunity their negligence presented, and he resolved to act on it.

First he had to convince the other crew members. Escaping out of the heavily guarded harbor would be risky and dangerous. But Smalls' charisma, confidence, and the prospect of liberty overcame whatever fears or doubts they may have had. Smalls set his plan in motion.

Next he had to convince his wife Hannah. What will happen if we are caught? she asked him. "I shall be shot," Smalls replied, adding that Hannah and the children would possibly be punished and separated. Without hesitation Hannah answered, "I will go. For where you die, I will die."

In the predawn hours of May 13, Smalls hoisted the Confederate and South Carolina flags and the Planter got underway, with Smalls standing on the deck, impersonating the captain by wearing his hat. He steamed the vessel past sentries who had no reason to doubt the ship was acting under orders. Had the ruse been detected, the steamer would have been easily blown out of the water.

Smalls guided the ship to a wharf where Hannah was hiding and waiting, along with their four-year-old daughter and infant son, together with six other enslaved family members of the crew. Once the women and children were on board and safely below deck, Smalls turned the ship toward the mouth of the harbor, which was guarded by Fort Sumter.

As the Planter approached the fort, Smalls pulled the chord on the ship's whistle, giving two long blows followed by a short one—the signal to pass. While everyone else was below deck on their knees praying, Smalls boldly steered the ship past the fort's guns. "Blow the damned Yankees to hell!" a Confederate sentry shouted as he steamed by.

Once past the fort, Smalls turned his ship toward the *Onward*, the closest of the Federal blockade ships. As they drew near, the crew ran down the rebel flags and hoisted a white bedsheet. Suspicious, an officer aboard the *Onward* shouted out, "Stop, or I will blow you out of the water!" Smalls slowly drew alongside the federal ship and yelled out to it, "Good morning, sir! I have brought you some of the old United States guns taken from Fort Sumter!"

Recap

June 17 A.A. Arnold House, Galesville, WI

The event on the lawn of this pretty house is always nice time. The gun firings were well attended as were the stations provide. The ladies strung quilts on ropes and over the tents and flys to snag attention and it did work. The organizers of the event advertised in the local quilt shops and at least three groups of ladies said they came



specifically to see the quilts—but they took in everything else as well! The weather was not humid or deathly hot, so a grand time was had by all! It did seem to several Battery members that the number of visitors was down this year, but those who came were quality visitors. They had lots of good questions and were very interested. The event organizers were very pleased—so pleased they made the check out a little bigger than was expected! We appreciate their generosity and hospitality.

June 24 Altura, MN

Members of the 2nd Minnesota Battery participated in the ribbon cutting dedication ceremony for the Veteran's Memorial Park in Altura, MN. Although it was a windy morning and there was rain in the forecast, a fair estimate is about half of the 493 residents of Altura attended the ceremony. The memorial park is a gift from Ashley Furniture, the Wanek Foundation, American Legion Post 90 of Lewiston, VFW Post 5609 of St. Charles and local fund raisers.

The 2,100 square foot park has a 200 foot walk, including a 12 foot wall listing local veteran's names from all of our Nation's conflicts and is symbolically guarded by two bronze soldiers, one a man, one a woman. Fifteen flags fly at the site and fifty-five granite plaques are built into the experience. Lamps atop tall standards illuminate the site at dusk.

The program featured a welcome from Mayor John Mask, a presentation of colors and flag raising by the Lewiston American Legion, the National Anthem sung by the Kalmes family and some "significant" speechifying by local and state politicians. When the ribbon was finally cut, the Battery fired a three round salute and TAPS was



played by a member of the Lewiston American Legion. Battery members who travelled to Altura to participate in the ceremony were Bruce Arnoldy, Neil Bruce, John Cain, Daryl Duden, Michael Ritchie, Linnea Schmit and Thomas Schmit. The Battery received a \$250 honorarium for our participation in the event.

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:

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>

