

## 2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

# “ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 305

March 2023

### On This Date-160 Years Ago

#### Remarks for the Month of March, 1863

(Numbers indicate the day of the month)

- 1 The six men - C. Denlinger, W. Kinkead, H. A. Siamonds, F. Averill, J. M. Lane & F. S. Flint captured by rebels on Feb 6th were Erroneously taken from the aggregate of Enlisted Men -- are this day reported as "Absent, captured by Rebels, Feb 6"
- 3 Giles C. Wiltse joined Co. for duty  
Privates Silas B. Anway & Anson B. Douglas joined bat. for duty -- Transferred from 101st Ohio Inftry. by Special order of Jeff C. Davis - No. 34 Feb. 28 '63
- 6 Edwin A. Whitefield returned from Hosp to duty
- 9 Arty marched to from 12 miles --- Sergt. Tristram Tidd & private Henry S. Hill discharged
- 10 Marched from camp a Marseilles to Triune 13 miles
- 13 Marched 7 miles toward Eagleville
- 14 " 8 " toward Marseilles
- 15 " 12 " to camp near Murfreesboro
- 18 Marched 4 miles out on Salem pike -- camp near Salem
- 19 Rec'd notice of discharge of Jas. Hunter Feb 15 1863 at Perryville, Kentucky, for Disability
- 21 Rec'd official notice of Discharge of Perry Fisher Feby 19 1863 at St. Louis, Mo. for disability
- 22 Marched to Murfreesboro
- 24 Capt. Hotchkiss returned from Minn.
- 25 Received notice of discharge of Alfred Townson & Hilarius Schmidt
- 26 Corp'l Jos. C. Varney, Privt's John L. Kimball & M. V. Fossum sent to Hosp. No. 2 Murfreesboro.
- 29 Received Notice of Discharge of Charles Ford at Louisville, Ky, Mch 7 -- for Disability
- 30 Privates C. F. Harder Co. A. John King Co A., T Rebadue, Co. B., M. Stump Co F., Chas Morehouse Co G., J. Rohrer Co H. L. H. Fahnestock C. I transferred from 101st Ohio Vols. by Special Orders No. 41 - Brig. Genl. Jeff C. Davis - to date from March 1st 1863 -- joined for duty Mch 31 1863
- 31 Corpl Joy promoted to Sergt. Private Daniel Frye promoted to Corporal --  
Co Orders No. 17.

### Upcoming Events

#### March 25, Red Wing, MN Annual Meeting

We will be holding our elections at this meeting, so **it is imperative that we have a quorum of voting members**. To be a voting member, your dues must be paid for 2023.

This year, both the corporate officers and military officers are elected. Corporate officers include President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Historian. Military officers include Lieutenant, Sergeant, Quartermaster Sergeant, and two corporals.

ANYONE who is interested in running for any of these office may contact Daryl, Ken, John or Vickie with questions or to submit your candidacy to Daryl. **The organization needs your participation!!**



### Paid Your Dues Yet?

Battery 2023 dues are due now! There is a membership form on the last page of this newsletter. Please do fill out the form completely if any of your information has changed since last year. Fill it out if you can't remember what email or phone number you put down last year. Fill it out you can't remember if something changed since last year. **Just fill out the form!** We want to have an accurate and up to date list of all phone numbers, addresses and emails. Thank you!

#### Next Meeting

**March 25, 11:00 am**

Elks Club, 306 W 4th Street, Red Wing,

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



# The Frankford Arsenal Stadia

by SGT Duden

What is the distance to the target? This is a question that must be answered every time an artillery battery is called into action.

The 1864 *Field Artillery Tactics Manual* on page 41 in PRACTICAL HINTS ON POINTING states: *As it is impossible to point a piece correctly without knowing the distance of the object, artillerymen should be frequently practiced in estimating distances by the eye alone, and verifying the estimate afterwards, either by pacing the distance, or by actual measurement with a tape-line or chain, until they acquire the habit of estimating them correctly.*

Since there were devices available to assist in determining the range to a target, why this 1864 manual would state “by eyes alone” is confusing.

In *The Artillerist Manual* published in 1860, on pages 251-252 under PRACTICE OF FIRE, John Gibbon describes such a device.

*Stadia – A very simple aid in estimating distances, consists of a small stick, held vertically in the hand at arm’s length, and bringing the top of a man’s head in line with the top of the stick, noting where a line from the eye of the observer to the feet of the man cuts the stick, or stadia, as it is called in France.*

*A more accurate stadia is constructed by making use of a metal plate, having a slit in it in the form of an isosceles triangle, the base of which, held at a certain distance from the edge, subtends a man, (5 ft. 8 in.) say at the distance of 100 yards. A slider, A B, Fig. 160, moves along the triangle, being always parallel to the base, A B, and the length of it comprised between the two sides of the triangle, represents the height of men at different distances, which are marked in yards on the side of the triangle, above or below, according as the object looked at is a foot or horseman. In order to keep the stadia always at the same distance from the eye, a string is attached to the slider, the opposite end having a knot tied in it, which is held between the teeth while using the instrument, which is held in the right hand, the slider being moved with the left-hand finger. The string should always be kept stretched when the instrument is used, and the line A B in a vertical position. It may be graduated, either experimentally, by noting the positions in which the slider A B represents the apparent height of a man, at different known distances; or it may be graduated by mathematical calculation.*

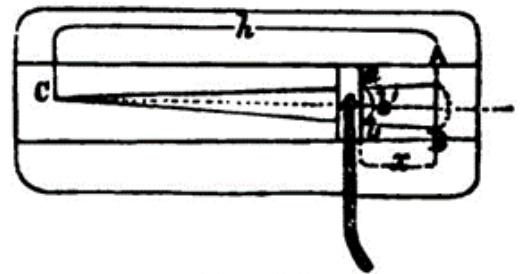


Fig. 160.

Pictured on the right is the Frankford Arsenal Brass Stadia. Made between 1854 and 1865; issued to sharpshooters and artillerymen for range finding of infantry and cavalry targets. It has a brass chain and bar for hanging from an upper button hole for ready use, and a twine cord with knots attached on either end. One knot is connected to the stadia, while the other was placed between the teeth while sighting.

The stadia is calibrated to the height of a man on one side and to the height of a man mounted on a horse on the other side. This allowed the user to determine the range to an infantry or cavalry target up to 1,000 yards.

To initially calibrate the stadia, have someone stand 100 yards away. With the stadia held parallel to the ground in your right hand and the slider set at 100 yards, place the cord between your teeth. Extend the arm outward at eye level keeping the cord tight while looking through the rectangular aperture. When the head of the individual is at the “TOP” of the aperture and the feet are at the “BOTTOM”, mark the end of the cord in your mouth to determine where the knot should be placed. With this knot in place, and the cord fully stretched, the distance from your eye to the stadia will remain constant.

In twelve years of production it is unclear how many stadia were actually produced in Philadelphia by the Frankford Arsenal. In some infantry units, stadia were given as prizes to the best marksmen in the unit. Brass stadia were given to the best marksman in a Company and silver stadia were given to the Regimental Champion.



# Battery Profile

## Jonathan Taylor

Jonathan wrote a one page story of his life in 1883, simply titling it, "Autobiography of Jonathan Taylor." He begins the story with his birth in Heath, Franklin County, Massachusetts on August 19, 1835. When he was four, his parents moved to New York, then to Illinois in the spring of 1853. Jonathan left for Minnesota in 1855 and stayed in Morrison County for year and a half before he went with a "cart" to Selkirk's Settlement--today known as Winnipeg. In the fall of 1856, Jonathan went on what he called "a buffalo hunt" which took the hunting party near Devil's Lake (in modern North Dakota). Jonathan said they were hunting for six weeks and probably killed some 1,500 buffalo. He did not say how many people went on this hunt, but that they did have to be careful with their horses and post sentinels to "prevent being surprised by Sioux Indians."

In January of 1857, Jonathan and one companion left Selkirk's Settlement and headed south to Morrison County by dog sled, a trip that lasted 12 days. Jonathan must have had some sand in his shoes as by the fall of 1858, he went to his parents' home in Illinois where he stayed until the spring of 1860 when he went back to Morrison County.

Jonathan was mustered into the Second Minnesota Battery on the same day it was formally accepted in the service of the United States, March 21, 1862. He carefully detailed all the places the Battery moved in his autobiography, but provided few other details about his time in the army.

The descriptive role gave Jonathan as 5' 10" tall, with hazel eyes, dark hair, and a sandy complexion. His occupation was that of farmer.

It was after Jonathan received news of his brother's death at the battle of Gettysburg that Jonathan wrote a letter home to his mother explaining how he felt about the war and his role in it. He wrote the letter from Winchester, Tennessee, on July 23, 1863.

*Dear Mother,*

*I received yours of the 17th yesterday. I am very sorry to hear of Isaac's death, though he could not have fallen in a nobler cause, the cause of freedom and free institution, not only for the blacks but for the whites also--not only for the present, but for future generations.*

*The great struggle which is now being carried on between the powers of freedom and oppression is to affect not only our own country, but the whole world. Ours is the cause of Truth and Justice, and I firmly believe it will triumph, that we shall finally come off victorious, though called to make great sacrifices.*

*It is hard to lose dear friends, but we alone are not afflicted. The sacrifice we are called to make is a terrible one, but I hope our beloved country will come out of the terrible struggle through which she is passing thoroughly cleansed from her sins, especially that of human bondage.*

*May God grant that peace may soon dawn upon us, and the noise of battle be heard no more in the land.*

*Your affectionate son,*

*Jonathan Taylor*

Jonathan's brother had served in the First Minnesota Infantry.

It was only about three weeks later that Jonathan was sent to the hospital for chronic diarrhea and lung problems. He was left behind by the Battery, then transferred to the hospital at Winchester, Tennessee. The final transfer for Jonathan was to the Invalid Corps where he served out his time. He was discharged on March 15, 1865, and went back to Morrison County.

On October 18, 1866, Jonathan married Mrs. Marion Helen Hamilton at Little Falls, Minnesota. She was a widow with two children. Jonathan and Marion never had any children together.

About 1879, Jonathan applied for a pension for disabilities he incurred during his time in the army. He cited the problems he was having with his lungs and throat, blaming it on the "unusual exposure during and after the battle of Stone River." He included a non-service related injury as well. He said he got a hernia in 1870 or 1871 when he was lifting a log with a "cant dog" tool and the log fell on him. The pension was granted. At this time, Jonathan was living Beltrami County, Minnesota, as he was employed as the Overseer of the Indian Reservation there.

About 1891, Jonathan and Marion moved to Fall Brook, California. Marion's daughter was living there, so they were not far from her. Marion died in April of 1898.

On February 1, 1902, Jonathan married Margaret Day. She was 23 years younger than Jonathan. The marriage was doomed not to be a long one. Jonathan died on November 10, 1903.

Jonathan had planned for Margaret and wrote out his will to leave everything he owned to her. He still owned property in Little Falls, Minnesota, as well as their property in California. Probate records show Jonathan owned four lots in the City of Little Falls, and three quarter sections of land in the townships surrounding the city. He also held 1/8 interest in the Little Falls Cemetery Association, though cemetery records do not show that Jonathan or any of his family were ever buried in this cemetery. There were some expenses to be paid from the cash in Jonathan's estate, back taxes, some printing bills, and legal fees associated with the probate filing, so Margaret received only \$208.48 from the property Jonathan left in Minnesota. Her California inheritance from Jonathan was valued at \$1,500. Margaret filed for a widow's pension, but it is not known if she received it.

Where Jonathan was buried remains a mystery. No cemetery records in the Fall Brook area lists either Jonathan or Marion. Another reference suggests they may have been taken to the Sierra Madre area to be buried. The only cemetery there old enough for them to be in has suffered great damage through neglect and vandalism, so stone readings are not accurate and the records have long since disappeared. It is believed this may be Jonathan's final resting place, but it may never be known for sure.

Daryl Duden indicated he was contacted by LTC Ryan P. Kelly of the Minnesota Army National Guard. The National Guard is reactivating the 34th Division Artillery. The uncasing will be on April 15th, 2023, at the General Vessey Readiness Center. There will be a presentation on Minnesota Artillery followed by the uncasing ceremony in the auditorium. For those Battery members attending, military members are invited to attend in uniform, civilians are casual. The flyer below provides additional details.



**Save-the-Date**

April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 3pm

(1pm-2pm MN FA history presentation in the auditorium)

**Address**

General Vessey Readiness Center  
4800 Hamline Avenue  
Arden Hills, MN

**Uniform**

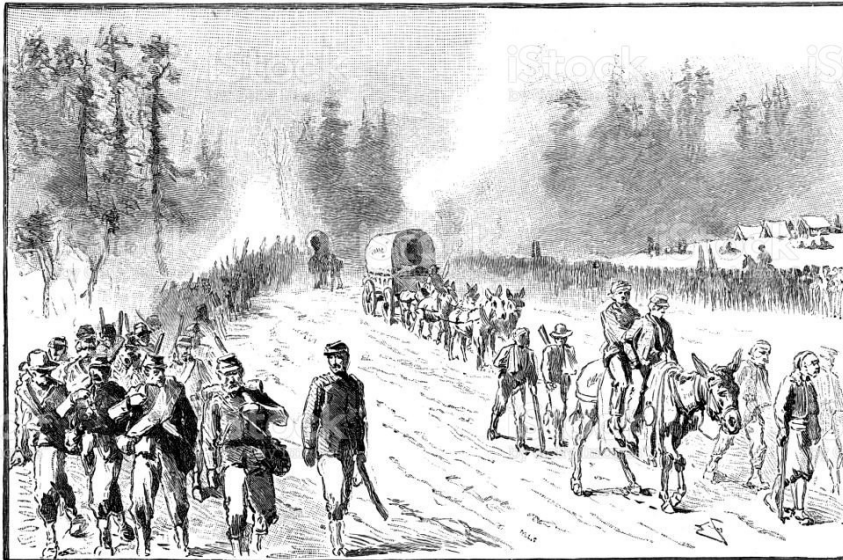
Military: Duty Uniform (OCP)

Civilian: Casual

# A Tragic Artillery Accident

The article reprinted at right was posted on Facebook by a trusted Battery friend. It is from an unknown newspaper in the late winter of 1864.

It's a pretty gruesome article about one of the lesser considered risks of traveling with artillery! Maybe it would be an argument for shocks and springs in a caisson...



THE MARCH TO SPOTSYLVANIA.

**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  
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### Treasurer

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### Twin Cites Metro Area Contact

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

## FROM HUSTSVILLE,

### Terrible Accident in Coggswell's Battery.

[From our Special Correspondent.]

HUSTSVILLE, April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1864.

This afternoon about half past one a terrible accident occurred in Coggswell's battery. The battery, under command of Lieut. Eddy, had been drilling, and was returning to camp. As the battery passed the depot and crossed the track of the Memphis and Charleston railroad, the caisson of the rear section for some reason fell behind. The battery was moving on a walk, but the horses of the rear caisson were put in a trot to make up the lost distance. Proceeding at this pace as the wheels of the caisson struck the rail, a percussion shell was thrown by the jolt against the cover of the chest and exploded, and instantaneously the cartridges and loose powder were fired and the caisson blown to atoms, killing the six men seated on it and wounding two of the postillions. The destruction was as fearful as it was instantaneous. All of the men killed except one were terribly mutilated. Two had their heads severed from their bodies. The legs of four were cut off. Two were cut in the middle. One was thrown, horribly mangled, into the top of a tree sixty feet in height and fifty yards distant, and as it fell the entrails caught upon limbs and remained until removed, hanging in the air. Of one body when I saw it only the head, a part of the body, a portion of an arm, and a footless leg remained. There were in the chests some 150 pounds of loose powder, and the destruction of the caisson was complete. Nothing remained of it that could be again used. One horse in the wheel team was killed, his rider escaping with his life. No other horse was killed. The windows of the depot and Venable House were driven in by the concussion, and a refugee severely wounded by a splinter.

The death of the unfortunate soldiers must have been instantaneous. Those faces which were blackened with powder presented the appearance and features of life, eyes wide open, and lips partly closed.

The Battery was recruited by Capt. William Coggswell in 1861—at LaSalle county, and was intended to be attached to the proposed Cushman's Brigade.

Captain Coggswell was absent, and the battery has been under the command of Lieut. Henry E. Eddy. The section to which the caisson belonged was under the command of Lieut. William R. Eeling. It was a battery of James' Rifles, and the shell which the caisson contained were James' projectile.

The following were the casualties:

**Killed.**—Private David Roach, Ottawa.  
Private William Humphrey, Ottawa.  
Private John Olson, Freedom.  
Private George Mattoon, Ottawa.  
Private Jacob Eglehardt, Ottawa.  
Private Horace Allen, Paw Paw.  
**Wounded.**—George Barnes, Morris.  
William Ryan, Ottawa, citizen.

The two wounded are severely but not considered to be dangerously injured.

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

**2023 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

Please do fill out the form completely and return it with your dues as email addresses and cell numbers change. We need an accurate contact list in case of last minute event changes or emergencies.

Thank you!