



## 2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

# “ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 307

May 2023

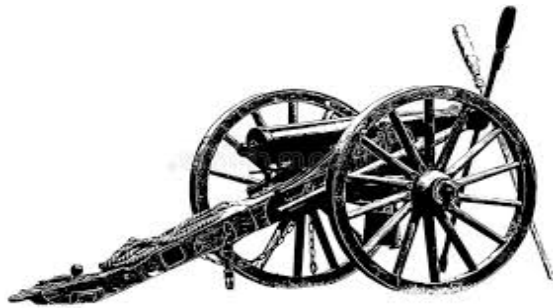
### On This Date-165 Years Ago

#### May 1863

It was a pretty quiet month for the Battery in May of 1863. Lt. Woodbury requested and received a leave of absence for 20 days on May 2. He made excellent time going home as the *Anoka Star Newspaper* reported him already home in the edition printed on the 9th of May. Bear in mind the *Star* was a weekly paper.

Private James Boardman had been listed as killed at the Battle of Stones River in January, so it would have been rather surprising when he walked into the Battery's camp on May 8th. Boardman explained that he had not been killed as reported, but instead had been captured. He was paroled and sent to Benton Barracks, Missouri, before he was allowed to return to the Battery.

Other comings and goings included two men sent to the Convalescent Camp on the 17th, Alonzo Spaulding sent to the hospital and David Jarvis went on detached duty on the 22nd. John Coleman, a recruit, reported for duty on the 24th.



### Next Meeting

**June 3, 11:00 am**

Elks Club, 306 W 4th Street, Red Wing,  
Contact Ken Cunningham with questions or agenda items.  
651-388-2945.



### Upcoming Events

**May 9 Old Court House Museum, 315 West Madison Street, Durand, WI.**

**Arrive by 7:30** to set up five learning stations and rotate students through them, about 18-20 in each group. Following the school groups, we will remain at our stations for members of the Historical Society and the public to visit. **Bring a bag lunch.**

**May 18 Avail Academy School. Edina 4015 Inglewood Ave S, Edina, MN**

This is the school we know as Calvin Christian School. All that has changed is their name. **Arrive at 9:00** to set up, students arrive at 9:50. We will set up 5 stations and rotate students through. **Bring a bag lunch.**

**May 29 Memorial Day, Red Wing, MN**

Arrive at Bay Point Park by 7:30 to set up. There will be a reading by one of our Battery members for the Memorial Day service and honor volleys from our gun.

### Fun Civil War Facts of Minnesota

Minnesota, barely three years old at the time of the Civil War, was the first State to respond to President Abraham Lincoln's request for volunteer regiments.

During the four years of the Civil War, Minnesota sent 25,000 men into battle against the Confederate Army. **This represented about half of the state's eligible male population.**

More than 100 black men from Minnesota enlisted in the Union Army even though the state's total black population was just 259 (including men, women and children).

The First Minnesota regiment played an important role in winning the Battle of Gettysburg by making a heroic charge against Confederate soldiers on the evening of July 2, 1863. Some historians believe their actions turned the tide of this battle, and the war. The First Minnesota charged the Confederates in spite of five to one odds.

# Battery Profile

## William Waltz

William was one of the men caught up in the wave of patriotism that swept the North at the fall of Fort Sumter. He enlisted on April 29, 1861, and was assigned to Company C of the First Minnesota Infantry. That unit was the first tendered to President Lincoln and was renowned as such.

William was a lumber man living in Taylor's Falls, Minnesota, when he enlisted at the age of 25. William had blue eyes, brown hair, and a fair complexion. His birth place was Centre, Pennsylvania.

After much worry that it would take too long to get east and they might "miss" the war, the First Infantry was sent to Washington. It was the only Minnesota unit to be assigned to the Army of the Potomac, General Irvin McDowell in command. This assignment put the First Minnesota, and William, as participants in the first battle of the Civil War on July 21, 1861, at Manassas Junction, Virginia. The battle was known as Bull Run in the north and the First Minnesota saw their first fighting there. What William's experience was is unclear as his casualty sheet only says "wounded" on July 21st and that he was sent to the hospital at Georgetown. The muster sheet adds that William was "wounded while returning from Bull Run." The battle was a Union disaster and their retreat to Washington was called a "rout", so it is possible William was wounded during the chaos of a panicked retreat. Whatever the wound, it kept him in the hospital until October 13, 1861, when he was given a disability discharge. The reason given for the discharge was "spinal tenderness and chronic inflammation of the kidneys." William had served just six months before he was out of the army and on his way back to Minnesota.

The draft rendezvous during the summer of 1864 went through Minnesota and many men joined for a variety of reasons. William decided to enlist again in August and was assigned to the Second Battery. For his agreement to serve one year, he was given a bounty of \$100, a third of which he was paid immediately. William was mustered in at Fort Snelling on September 2, 1864, and was soon on his way south once more. The last year of the war was spent mostly in garrison duty and scouting details for the Battery, so William did not see any more fighting such as he had at Bull Run. When the war was over, William was mustered out with the rest of the Battery at Fort Snelling. He went back to Taylor's Falls and his lumbering.

In February of 1874, the following article appeared in the *Taylor's Falls Journal*.

*On Friday evening about 10 o'clock our community met a terrible shock by the arrival of the corpse of our late fellow-citizen, William Waltz, Esq., who was killed that day by a rifle shot, at his lumbering camp, some thirty miles from here on Godfrey's creek, Polk county, Wisconsin. The shooting took place at one o'clock p.m. and was perpetrated by a Dane named Chris Frederickson Larson, in the employ of Mr. Waltz and his partner, Mr. Eben Winslow. He was engaged as a "swamping" hand, with his wife, who was cook at the time for the camp, had been working there for about two weeks.*

*It appears from Larson's statement that he had reason to suspect Waltz with attempting to take improper liberties with his wife, and on the occasion of shooting him was engaged in remonstrating in regard thereto--telling Waltz that such conduct must be stopped, or at least settled, else he would shoot him. As no other person was present at the time, it is not known what other words passed between them, except the Dane says Waltz replied that he "dared not shoot," although his accuser had a loaded Spencer carbine in his hands at the time, and the victim was unarmed. He did shoot, and at very short range put a ball into Waltz's breast just below the bone, the charge going through the body and coming out near the spine below the shoulder blade. Of course almost instant death was the result.*

*The man confessed the perpetration of the act at once, and made no attempt to escape. He is now in charge of the authorities of Polk county, having voluntarily given himself up.*

*At the time of writing the body of Mr. Waltz is at St. Croix Falls, an inquest has been held upon it by Esq. Emery, acting Coroner, and a verdict rendered in accordance with the above facts.*

*Mr. Waltz was a native of Centre county, Pennsylvania, and had resided here and in this vicinity for some fifteen years or more. He was never married, and had no relative, that we can learn of, in this part of the country. He was, perhaps, forty years of age. He always bore a good character for honesty, integrity and industry; was intelligent, and a genial man in his manners, -- respected and generally esteemed among his numerous acquaintances.*

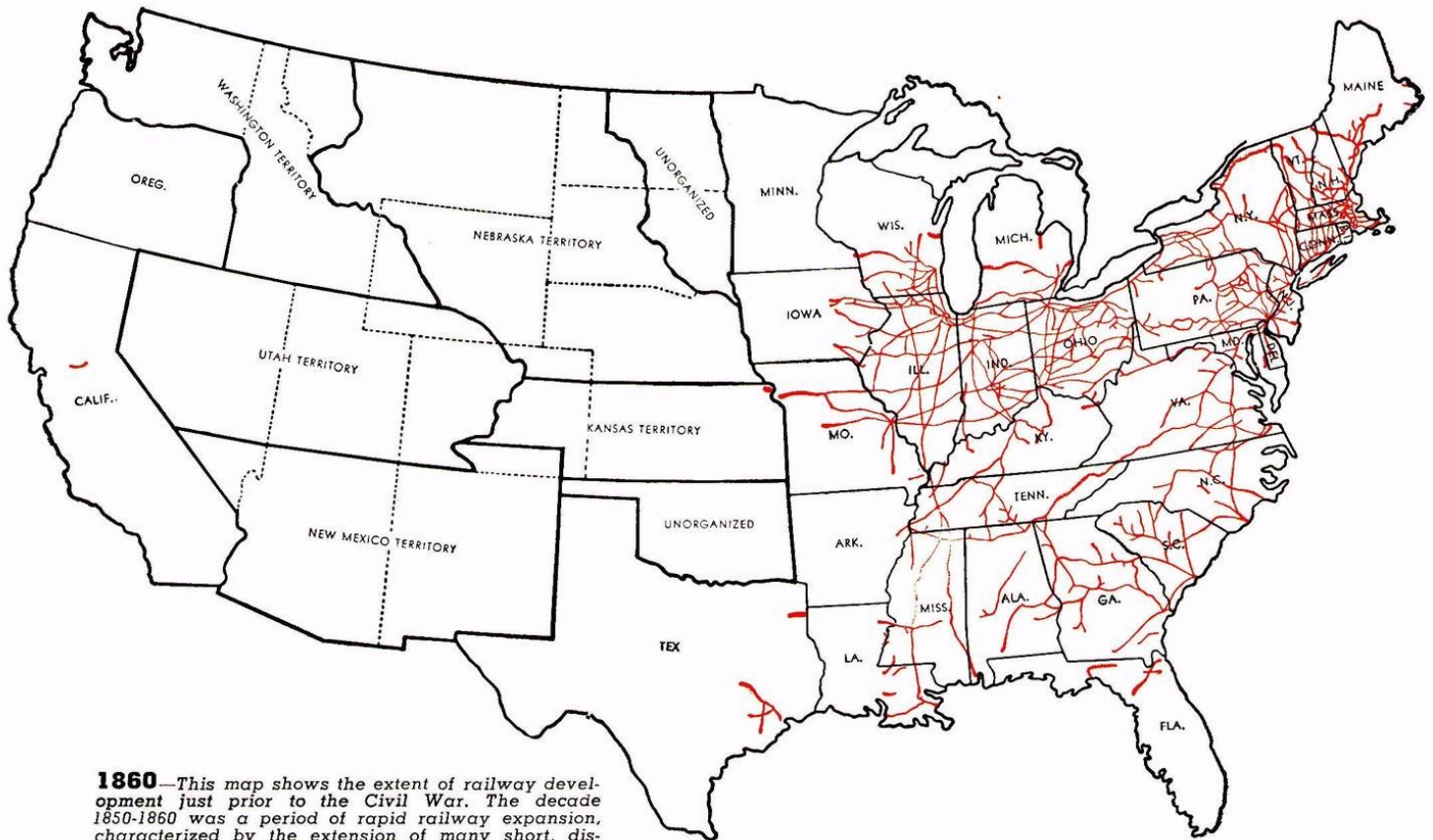
William was buried in the Kahbakong Cemetery just outside the city of Taylor's Falls, Minnesota, with a military marker noting his service with the famous First Minnesota Infantry.



# How the Railroad Won the War

Excerpted from an article by the Smithsonian American Art Museum

Railroads were effective, reliable, and faster modes of transportation, edging out competitors such as the steamship. They traveled faster and farther, and carried almost fifty times more freight than steamships could. They were more dependable than any previous mode of transportation, and not impacted by the weather. The Union Army's capitalization and strategic use of the railroad played a direct role in helping the North win the war.



**1860**—This map shows the extent of railway development just prior to the Civil War. The decade 1850-1860 was a period of rapid railway expansion, characterized by the extension of many short, disjointed lines into important rail routes. This decade marked the beginning of railway development in the region west of the Mississippi River. By 1860, the "Iron Horse" had penetrated westward to the Missouri River and was beginning to make itself felt in Iowa, Arkansas, Texas, and California.

Every major Civil War battle east of the Mississippi River took place within twenty miles of a rail line. Railroads provided fresh supplies of arms, men, equipment, horses, and medical supplies on a direct route to where armies were camped. The railroad was also put to use for medical evacuations, transporting wounded soldiers to better medical care.

Consequently, armies were not dependent on the bounty, or lack thereof, of the land which they occupied. Railroads were visible symbols of industry and modernity during the Civil War. They were agents of progress, promoters of civilization, and enhancers of democracy which could bind the North and the South together as one nation.

They were also the lifeline of the army. A general's success or failure depended on fresh supplies and soldiers delivered directly to the battlefield. Consequently, Union strategists deliberately targeted rail junctions as campaign objectives in places like Chattanooga, Tennessee; Atlanta, Georgia; and Corinth, Mississippi. This was especially true of Atlanta, a city which served as the Confederacy's rail hub and manufacturing center. Railroads became a set of guidelines between which campaigns were waged, battles were fought, and men and materials were moved. A commander's understanding of the rail network became key to managing operations and informing tactical decisions.

Arguably, no Civil War commander used the rail network to their advantage quite like Union General William Tecumseh Sherman.

Sherman wrote, "Four such groups of trains daily made one hundred and sixty cars, of ten tons each, carrying sixteen hundred tons, which exceeded the absolute necessity of the army, and allowed for the accidents that were common and inevitable. But, as I have recorded, that single stem of railroad, found

*hundred and seventy-three miles long, supplies an army of one hundred thousand men and thirty-five thousand animals for the period of one hundred and ninety-six days, viz., from May 1 to November 12, 1864. To have delivered regularly that amount of food and forage by ordinary wagons would have required thirty-six thousand eight hundred wagons of six mules each, allowing each wagon to have hauled two tons twenty miles each day, a simple impossibility in roads such as then existed in that region of country. Therefore, I reiterate that the Atlanta campaign was an impossibility without these railroads; and only then, because we had the men and means to maintain and defend them, in addition to what were necessary to overcome the enemy.”*



Following the Battle of Atlanta, as Sherman's army moved east to begin the Savannah Campaign (commonly referred to as the March to the Sea), his railroad men destroyed all of the rail lines that led back to Chattanooga, Tennessee, so as to deny a vital supply line to the Confederates. This railway destruction tactic was referred to as Sherman's neckties. The rails were heated and then bent into a loop around the trunks of trees, in the shape of a necktie, so that they could not be easily or quickly repaired. This was such an important tactic that Sherman made it a point to oversee it himself writing,

*“The whole horizon was lurid with the bonfires of rail-ties, and groups of men all night were carrying the heated rails to the nearest trees, and bending them around the*

*trunks. Colonel Poe had provided tools for ripping up the rails and twisting them when hot; but the best and easiest way is the one I have described, of heating the middle of the iron rails on bonfires made of cross-ties, and then winding them around a telegraph-pole or the trunk of some convenient sapling. I attached much importance to this destruction of the railroad, gave it my own personal attention, and made reiterated orders to others on the subject.”*

Destroying the Confederacy's railroads took away another advantage the South had over the North – land mass. By shrinking the vast space the Confederate Army could operate within, the Union was able to contain the Confederate army to a much smaller, and much more vulnerable, piece of land. This cost the South its use of interior lines, crippling the ease with which they had been able to move troops from point to point by railroad and attain victories. Northern versus Southern Railroads

The South's reliance on a primarily agrarian economy, coupled with a modest manufacturing base, meant that there was limited demand for rail service in the Confederacy. Less capital had been invested and as a result the rail network in the South was in poor condition, having been manufactured during the early years of railroad development when significant improvements had not yet been made.

Since manufacturing was more dominant in the North, the Union had access to a disproportionate amount of foundries compared to the South. The rails of the day were made from relatively soft iron which often broke or would wear away after continued use. Northern foundries began to experiment with stronger and more durable iron products such as steel. But the southern foundries had difficulty purchasing the necessary supplies for diligent upkeep of their rail lines, and as a result, the infrastructure of southern rail lines gradually crumbled. It has been estimated that during the Civil War, southern foundries could only manufacture 16,000 tons of railroad iron per year, yet 50,000 tons was required to adequately repair their deteriorating rail lines.



To contrast that number, Pennsylvania foundries alone produced almost 270,000 tons of iron in 1860. Consequently even before war broke out, the South purchased most of their iron from Northern foundries. After the war began, the South outsourced, purchasing iron from Europe. However, the Union navy did their best to prevent this. Southern rail lines also suffered from disconnect due to change in gauge, something that had happened as the rail networks evolved over time. North Carolina and Virginia shared the same type of gauge, standard gauge, yet the rest of the Confederate rail system operated on broad gauge. This disconnect kept much of the South isolated. Freight would have to be offloaded to another mode of transport, usually a wagon train, and then re-loaded onto another locomotive. Standardizing the gauge throughout the system during the war was not an option for the South, which lacked the time, money, and supplies to do this successfully. Once the North had captured a Southern rail line, it was effectively cut off from the rest of the network and rendered useless.

# Recap

**April 15** 34th Division Artillery  
Flag Uncasing Ceremony.

1<sup>st</sup> Lt. John Cain and Sgt. Daryl Duden, wearing their Civil War artillery uniforms, travelled to the General Vessey Readiness Center in Arden Hills MN to attend this historic uncasing ceremony. The Readiness Center is a huge building and the parking lot was full. The hundreds of soldiers of the 34<sup>th</sup> Division in attendance were all wearing their Operational Camouflage Pattern (OCP) uniform. At 1:00pm, LTC Ryan P. Kelly conducted a Minnesota Field Artillery history presentation in the auditorium. The hour and fifteen minute presentation covered the period of time from the Civil War



to the Korean War. When he provided information on the history of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battery Minnesota Light Artillery, he acknowledged our attendance and indicated he “better get this one right.” In discussing our unit history, LTC Kelly included pictures of Capt. William Augustus Hotchkiss and 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Albert Woodbury. At the end of this presentation, we were invited to view the historical pictures, uniforms and equipment that were on display in the lobby. At 2:30pm, soldiers and civilians began entering the room where the 3:00pm Activation Ceremony would be held. The sequence of events was as follows: Arrival of the Official Party, Playing of the National Anthem. Invocation, Activation Ceremony, Remarks by Major General Charles Kemper, Remarks by Colonel Eric Wieland, Benediction, Official Party Departure, Refreshments. To begin his remarks, Major General Charles Kemper, commander of the “Red Bulls”, thanked all the former members of the 34<sup>th</sup> Division and members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battery Minnesota Light Artillery for attending this historic ceremony.

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

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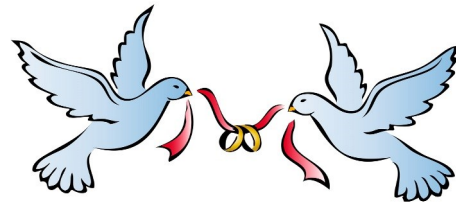
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*Please join us for the wedding of  
**Rebecca Jean Buxton***

*and*

***Cameron Addison Larson***

*Sunday, June 11, 2023*

*At 3 o'clock*

*Barn at Trinity Peak*

*Oconomowoc, WI*

*For more information, please visit:*

*[theknot.com/rebeccaandcameronlarson](http://theknot.com/rebeccaandcameronlarson)*

*Please RSVP to Cameron's email  
at [larsoncamerou6@gmail.com](mailto:larsoncamerou6@gmail.com) by May  
22, 2023. Include guest names and  
how many will be attending.*