



2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 315

February 2024

On This Date-160 Years Ago

Morning Reports January 1864

(Numbers indicate the day of the month)

The Battery was stationed in Chattanooga, TN, and conditions were not the best. None of the men were reported ill, but it was a rough month for the Battery horses.

- 1 Lieut Harder returned from leave of absence - Drew 30 Horses from Capt. Barrett Co. "J" 2 Ills Arty
- 3 One Horse Died in Camp
- 5 one Horse Died in Camp
- 6 one Horse died in Camp, Privates August Apple, Jesse Baker, Lorning Fletcher and Sam Wheeler details from 34 Ill. Vol. Inftry returned to their regt
- 7 Private Babcock, 34 Ill V. I. Returned to his Regt.
- 8 Private Peter Zimmer 34 Ill V. I. returned to his Regt. Tillotson returned to Company
- 9 One Horse died in camp
- 12 Two Horses died in Camp
- 13 Two Horses died
- 14 Two Horses died in Camp
- 15 Two Horses died in Camp
- 19 One Horse died and one taken up
- 20 John Craven returned from Hospital
- 23 Two Horses died in Camp
- 27 One Horse died in Camp
- 28 Right half of Batty started with the div. on an expedition toward the enemy's lines
- 29 Half Bty. returned from reconnaissance

Still Planning

A list of possible events were brought up at the January meeting (see the minutes for the list of what was discussed), but there is still time to consider other/more events for the 2024 season.

Continue to be on the watch for potential events the Battery might consider attending in 2024. Gather as much information as possible to bring or send to one of the officers for consideration at the February meeting.

The list will be further discussed in February and the final calendar of events for the 2024 reenacting season will be voted on at the March meeting.

2024 Dues are Due!

Please look for the membership form on the last page (page 5) of this newsletter. Our annual dues are due and must be paid before the March meeting if you want to be remain a voting member.

You may bring your dues and the accompanying form to a meeting or mail them to the treasurer—Daryl Duden. His address is included on the form.

Be sure to update any changes in mailing address, phone, or email!

Next Meeting

February 24, 2024 Elks Club, 306 W 4th Street, Red Wing,
Contact Ken Cunningham with questions or agenda items.
651-388-2945.



Battery Profiles

James M. Whitlock

James was not old enough to enlist in the Battery when it was forming, but by the time of the 1864 draft rendezvous, he was 19 years old and ready to enlist. He was mustered into the Battery on September 2, 1864. He left his farming job in New Hartford, Winona County, Minnesota, and traveled to Rochester to enlist. He was given a bounty of \$33.33 and promised another \$66.67 for his one year commitment. He was 5' 8" tall, had blue eyes, dark hair, and a sandy complexion. His birth place was Meggs County, Ohio.

The Battery was camped near Chattanooga, Tennessee, when James and the other recruits reached them. They were assigned garrison duty and sent on scouting missions, but saw no major fighting. James was detailed to as an orderly at the Post Headquarters with Colonel Carlin, and returned to the Battery on March 28, 1865.

Chronic diarrhea plagued James that winter and he blamed it on the times when the men were eating half cooked or uncooked rations and drinking "impure water." Sleeping on wet ground also brought on rheumatism according to James, and he said they did a lot of that in garrison at Chattanooga. He was never been sent to the hospital, but a surgeon from another unit "came every morning to see us while were at Chattanooga," though James did not know from what unit or the man's name. After they Battery left Chattanooga, Samuel Young, another man in the Second Battery, took charge of the sick.

At the end of the war, James went back to Fort Snelling with the Battery and was mustered out on August 16, 1865. He took his knapsack, haversack, and canteen with him when he left as was allowed by special order.

Not many records tell of James' life after he left the army. He continued to farm in New Hartford and married Marilla Fossett in Dakota, Minnesota. In June of 1893, he bought land in section 28 of Richmond Township at a cost of \$400. They had two children, Lola and Orin. Marilla died on December 31, 1893. James married a second time on December 30, 1896. She was Emma A. Brown and she was from the nearby community of Rushford.

In 1898, James applied for a pension. He said he was still suffering from the problems he first encountered during the war. The pension was granted.

James never left the New Hartford area of Winona County. On September 3, 1908, he died from "cancer of the rectum" and was buried in the Dakota Cemetery not far from where he spent most of life. His grave was marked with a simple stone noting only his name and dates.



Daniel Robinson

Daniel Robinson told the recruiting agent that he had no employment when he went to enlist. He was 18 years old, had black hair, blue eyes, dark complexion and was 5' 6" tall. It was August 31, 1864, when he appeared before the recruiting agent in St. Paul. Daniel was accepted into the service and received a bounty \$100 for agreeing to serve one year in the Union Army with the Second Minnesota Battery.

The enlistment papers Daniel signed are confusing. One side of the page lists his home town as Minneapolis. The other side says his home town is St. Paul. The one community the pages agree on is that his name should be credited to Goodhue County to fill their draft quota. Whether Daniel had a connection to any of these communities is unknown.

Daniel spent some time in the hospital during his service, but served his year and was discharged with the Battery at Fort Snelling on August 16, 1865.

It is believed he went to Brainerd and remained there until his death. Though evidence suggests he may be the Daniel Robinson buried in Evergreen Cemetery, there is room for doubt. Further research is ongoing.

Ammunition Storage in the Limber Chest

By John Cain

For those of you who know me, you may know that I enjoy dabbling in miniature projects for various reasons, key among them, keeping my brain working. I have recently completed models of a 6 lb. Bronze field piece and a 12 lb. Bronze Field Howitzer. As with models of this nature, they are hardly exact in their design and accuracy. Therefore I take it upon myself to change or alter what arrives in the box to something I consider more accurate. It was during this project while I was trying to reproduce a Pendulum Hausse that I began to focus on the ammunition carried in the chest and how I would produce it. Then how it was stored in the chest along with what kind of ammunition and where it was kept in the chest. Needless to say, production slowed waaaayyy down.

The next question was how ammunition was stored in the chest of “Babs,” the 10lb Parrott Rifle. Over the years this question was bantered about with no clear answer. Enter *The Ordnance Manual for the Use of the Officers of the United States Army, Chapter Eleventh: Equipment of Field-Batteries: Interior Arrangement of Ammunition – Chests for field Guns and Howitzers* pp 332. This chapter tells how every part of the chest is defined and where the different ammunition is placed.

This manual does NOT cover Babs, the 10lb Parrott, HOWEVER, there is something in common with the 6 lb. Bronze field piece. The manual states that on the floor of the chest there are wooden straps that are bored out to fit the fuse plug of the spherical case rounds. Where there are no straps, the solid shot is still placed nose down as well as the canister rounds. The arrangement of the ammunition is that the solid shot is in the left half of the chest under the tray and the spherical case is located in the divisions of the right half with the five canisters in the extreme right division. The point of this arrangement is that the all of the rounds are resting on the bottom of the chest with the powder charge fixed on top.

The same situation exists with the 10 lb. Parrott chest, that is, the rounds are placed nose down with the semi-fixed powder charges placed on top of each round and the tray is on the left half of the chest. We have not seen any information on placement of the ammunition in the chest for the 10 lb, but we have made a guess as to what went where. Keep in mind that there are four types of

ammunition, solid bolt, common shell, case shot and canister. My guess is that the non-fused rounds were in the left half under the tray and the fused rounds were in the right half. This arrangement would allow No.6 to prepare fused ammunition without moving the tray (time efficiency factor) and giving more work space for cutting and placing fuses or inserting bormann fuses in the round.

As to the overall placement of ammunition in both types of guns, the powder charges were on top of the rounds creating a dilemma for No.6 if not knowing the arrangement of the ammunition and certainly for No.s 5 and 7 if they were put in charge as a result of injury to No.6 beyond performance of his duties. We all know that the duties of No. 6 were to prepare the ammunition called for by the Gunner, Chief of Piece or even by the Lieutenant. What if the position had to be filled by No.s 5 or 7 and they were new recruits?

Again referencing the manual, this statement appears; “The kind of ammunition contained in the small divisions is marked on the inside of the cover, over each division.” This sounds like a common sense solution to a potential problem that may or may not have happened during the war. Maybe it’s time to upgrade our round identification on the inside of the chest cover.



scene so soon as the news reaches them.

The Ground-Hog Sign.

It is an old Dutch saying, tho' we do not know that it is to be found in the Dutch Almanacs, that the Ground-Hog comes from his winter retreat on the 1st day of February, and if he sees his shadow, he goes back and stays six weeks. Others say the 2d day of February is Ground-Hog day. If the latter be right, we are to have six weeks winter yet, for the 2d was a bright day, all the ground-hogs could have seen their shadows, and probably retired and pulled the holes in after them, for there was a respectable snow on the morning of the 3d, and the air was as keen as a razor.

Abingdon Virginian, VA, 6 February 1963

who honor the soldier give the Captain a hit.

GROUND-HOG DAY.—The second day of February, is what is known as Ground-Hog Day.—On this eventful day the ground-hog is said to come forth from his hole, and see how matters stand. If the day is cloudy, and he fails to see his shadow, he returns with the assurance that the cold blasts of winter are about over, and the approach of a delightful spring. But should it be clear, he returns for another dreamless snooze, and sixty days of cold weather. If his hogship came forth in this locality, at the right time of day, he saw his shadow, and we may therefore look for sixty days more of stern winter.

Altoona Tribune, PA, 4 February 1865

Civil War Soldiers Knew About Groundhogs Day!

GROUND-HOG DAY.—To-day is what is called "Ground-Hog Day," when according to an ancient saying, the ground-hog comes from his burrow to regulate the weather for the winter and spring season. If he sees his shadow he goes back and cold "snaps" are to last for six weeks; if he does not see it, no freezing can be allowed, and preparations made for gardening. We think it doubtful if he is enabled to catch a glimpse of his shadow to-day, and our country friends can make their arrangements accordingly.

Zanesville Daily Courier, OH, 2 Feb 1861

HOME GUARDS.—For the information of the curious in this community, we would state that the Chambersburg Home Guards went into winter quarters several months ago. We understand that a dress parade of the corps was ordered for the 2d of this month, when it was expected that the gallant fellows would be reviewed by the Chief Burgess, but it being "ground-hog day" some of the brave fellows "seeing their shadows in the sun," incontinently made for their holes and the parade didn't come off.

Valley Spirit Weekly, PA, 22 Feb 1865

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.

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Civil War Shell Found

Joliet, Ill. — Army Corps of Engineers officials were surprised to discover a Civil War-era piece of unexploded ordnance when they dewatered the Brandon Road Lock along the Des Plaines River in Joliet, Ill. The rusty shell appeared to be a round from a Parrott muzzle-loading, rifled artillery weapon.

A bomb-disposal team took the round to a local quarry.



(Army Corps of Engineers)



A Parrott artillery weapon.

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Brian Tomashek found this article in the *Big River Magazine* and submitted it for the newsletter. Articles are everywhere!

Your Country Needs You!
And so does the Battery!

2024 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: _____

Phone: _____

e-mail address: _____

Please send this form and your check to:

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

PLEASE fill out this form to be sure we have the most accurate contact info for members, especially if you have changed addresses, emails, phones, etc.