



2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 322

September 2024

On This Date-160 (And 162) Years Ago

The ladies of Minnesota were being called upon to support the U.S. Sanitary Commission with their needles and gardens. The first article is from the *Mantorville Express*, September 9, 1864. They were to attend a “quilting” and bring whatever they could to support the soldiers.

Upcoming Events

November 11, Veterans Day, Winona, MN

There are no events in September or October, so the next event will be Veterans Day in Winona. More details will be coming the next weeks.

Smile!



We are requested to say that the Soldiers' Aid Society of Mantorville will have a “quilting” next Thursday afternoon. A general attendance is requested. Also that persons having pickles, dried fruit or other articles to be forwarded to the soldiers, can leave them with Mrs. Van Anden or Mrs. Dart, at any time.

In St. Paul, ladies of the Soldiers' Aid Society were meeting twice a week to make lint and bandages. The article is from the *St. Paul Daily* newspaper on September 24, 1862.

In consequence of the great demand for lint and bandages, the ladies of the Soldiers' Aid Society, at Minneapolis, have decided to meet twice a week as long as circumstances require it. Days for meeting: Tuesdays and Fridays, at two o'clock P. M.
By order of the Society.

Next Meeting

September 28, 11:00 am
Elks Club, 306 W 4th Street, Red Wing
Contact Ken Cunningham with questions or agenda items.
651-388-2945.



Battery Profiles

.Charles Martin

Of all the men who served in the Second Battery, Charles leaves one of the most tangled tales. Martin was a common surname in Minnesota in the 1860s, and Charles a popular first name. Sorting one from another should not be difficult if a middle initial is included, but in this case, multiple initials are found. It is unknown what initial actually might have belonged to Charles Martin of the Second Battery. The Adjutant General's records for Minnesota show three men by the name of Charles Martin, with varying middle initials, served during the Civil War. Determining one from another has proven quite problematic.

The Charles Martin who presented himself for enlistment in the Second Minnesota Battery on April 12, 1864, said he was 31 years old, born in Spain, and was a laborer. The descriptive rolls showed him as 5' 9" tall, with hazel eyes, brown hair and a light complexion. He did not sign his name to the enlistment forms, he made his mark as was witnessed by Captain Hotchkiss and the examining surgeon. The papers list Wanamingo, Goodhue County, Minnesota, as where Charles said was his home. It seems a bit unusual since Charles was in Chattanooga, Tennessee, when he enlisted with the Battery. Why was he in Tennessee enlisting?

The information is backed up by the official muster roll of the Battery, it stating that Charles enlisted in Tennessee, though it also says was officially mustered into the Battery in St. Paul, Minnesota. This may be a matter of record keeping as it is unlikely Charles enlisted in Tennessee, went to Minnesota to be mustered in, and then back to Tennessee to serve. If this was the case, perhaps the next record on Charles makes more sense as the list of deserters included his name on May 4, 1864, as having deserted in Chicago, Illinois. If he was really shuffled back and forth across country as the records seem to imply, Charles may have gotten tired of it and just gave up on the army while passing through Chicago. He would have had a little cash in his pocket as the papers indicate he was paid \$25 bounty money with a promise of \$75 more.

To add to the confusion, a company muster roll from Company H, 85th Indiana Infantry contains a Charles Martin in September and October of 1864, with the remark that he had been transferred from the Second Minnesota Battery by order of Jeff C. Davis to serve on temporary duty. The final entry on this record stated that he was "dropped from these rolls" with a further notation that he was "not on muster out rolls" of the 85th Indiana.

Neither did he appear on the muster out rolls of the Second Battery. His name remained on the deserter list.

Exactly what his story might be will probably never be known.

Two Members Featured in a Magazine!

John Cain and Daryl Duden were featured for their friendship and love of history in the *Today Magazine* in Red Wing. The pages have been scanned and are attached at the end of this newsletter.

Congratulations, John and Daryl! Nice job highlighting history and the importance of educating the public on its importance!



Blanket Boats

From: The Center for Civil War Photography, by Craig Heberton IV

The Union army came up with the idea of the "blanket boat" as an expeditious means of assembling craft to allow for the crossing of streams. Captain Andrew J. Russell photographed what he titled as: "Expedients for Crossing Streams - Blanket Boat on the Potomac" (detail from a salted print, courtesy of the J. Paul Getty Museum. Andrew J. Russell created a print captioned "Military construction in northern Virginia - five men in three blanket boats strapped together on the Potomac River," from Library of Congress.



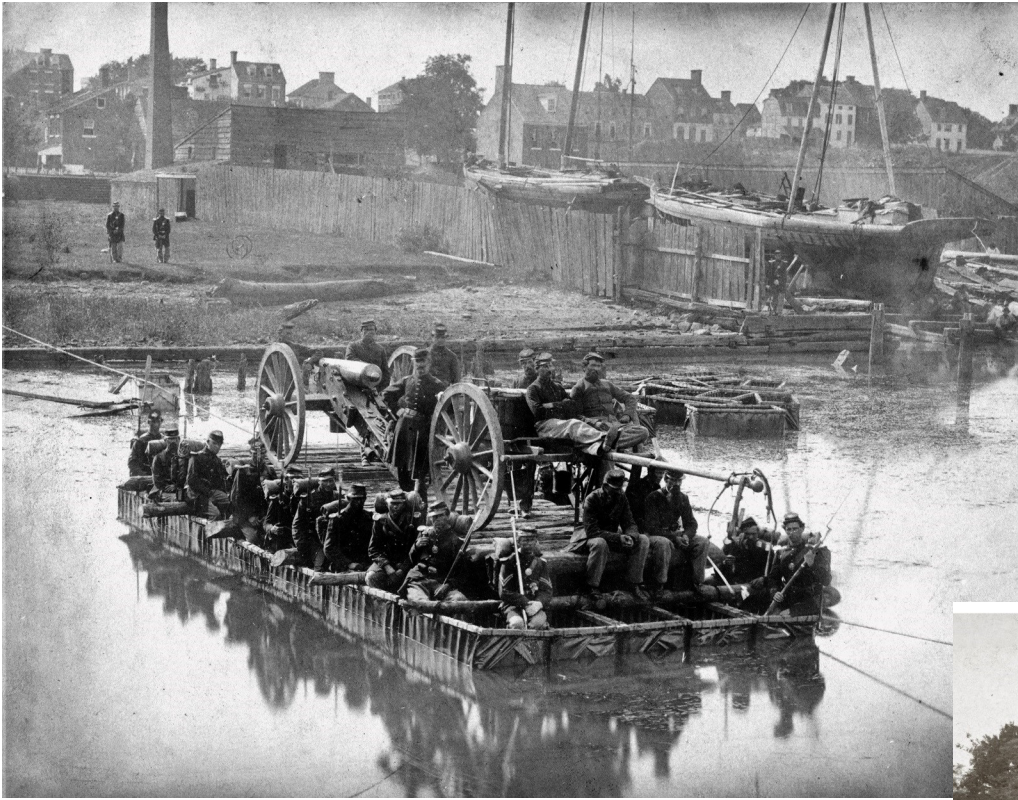
Another Russell image revealed how the frames of the boats were made. In "Blanket Boat Finished & Boat Frame Ready for Cover," Russell captured two men holding the opposite ends of a rectangular blanket boat, one with a cover (J. Paul Getty Museum). A test on the Potomac River of an assemblage of blanket boats for ferrying troops was recorded in a series of photographs by Russell, likely from a nearby-anchored vessel in Alexandria's harbor like the one seen in the first image's left side mid-ground where the man was then standing, below, including in Library of Congress.

The hoped-for utility of blanket boats was described by General Herman Haupt, head of the U.S. Military Rail Roads (USMRR):

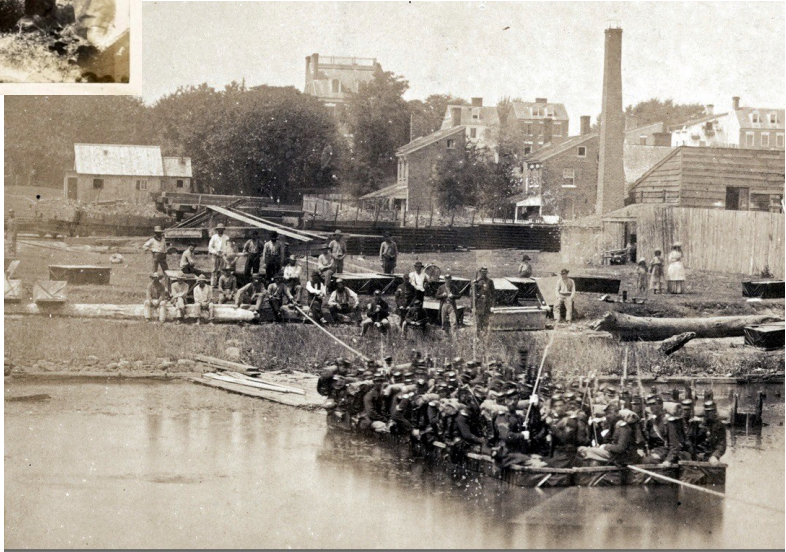
The hoped-for utility of blanket boats was described by General Herman Haupt, head of the U.S. Military Rail Roads (USMRR):

Ferry of Blanket Boats. — A ferry may be made of blanket boats in the following manner: Rafts are formed by lashing together a number of boats, and covering them with boards, or poles, if boards cannot be procured. Twenty-five boats would make a raft 14 feet wide and 20 feet long, with power of flotation at 6 inches immersion of over 8,000 lbs.; fifty men could easily be carried in one of these rafts, with guns and knapsacks. Two ropes are stretched across the river and the men on the rafts pull themselves over rapidly, hand over hand, one rope being used for the loaded rafts, and the other to return the empty ones. The rafts can follow each other in rapid succession, leaving intervals not exceeding the length of a raft. The whole number of rafts should be three times as many as would make a train reaching entirely across the stream, with the proper intervals. This will allow a reserve sufficient to insure a constant stream going and returning. If the stream should be 600 feet wide, the number of rafts would be forty-five; the number crossing at one time loaded would be fifteen. At a rate of movement of 2 miles per hour, the time required to cross would be about 4 minutes; and the number of men thrown across in one hour, would be about 10,000. The forty-five rafts would require 1,125 boats which could be made by a single regiment of instructed engineer troops in an hour, if materials had been previously prepared. One of these blanket boats would weigh less than fifty pounds; a man could carry one for a distance of several miles without inconvenience; and with the help of 1,000 feet of rope, a corps of ten thousand men could approach a stream at a point where the enemy did not anticipate any attempt at crossing, and, in two hours, could be landed on the opposite side, ready for an advance, leaving a body of engineer troops to prepare for the possible contingency of a retreat, by constructing pontoon or trestle bridges, if necessary. Even in retreat, the rafts would afford great facilities for crossing, if covered by good batteries on the shore; but without bridges, it would be difficult to save the artillery. Where surprises are to be attempted, such facilities for crossing large streams, without designating the point by previous preparations, would prove invaluable. They might prove very useful in cavalry expeditions, to operate against the communications of an enemy. If the material for the frames of the blanket boats should be transported in wagons, they would, in that case, be prepared in advance, of dry lumber, and the materials for one frame would weigh but fifteen pounds. An ordinary wagon would carry material enough for two hundred boats.-- H. Haupt, "Military Bridges: With Suggestions for New Expedients and Constructions for Crossing Streams and Chasms" (1864) at pp.102-

As Kemper Houston Galyean notes, the blankets referenced were then referred to as "Gum Blankets" -- what we today call rubberized fabric. Back then, a little company owned by Charles Goodyear produced water proof blankets for the Union soldiers.




Photographs of Blanket Boats in action in the collections of the Library of Congress and the J Paul Getty Museum.



Recap

August 17- 18, Canton South Dakota

Wow, do these people know how to treat reenactors! Water, ice and wood (good, dry, split wood!) were delivered to our campsite as well as hard working scouts picking up our garbage! The event is small, but well scripted for the field. Camps were along a creek and mostly in the shade for the infantry. Our camp had shade until about noon each day. The welcome packets included two \$5 coupons that were accepted by just about every merchant in town for buying anything. Most Battery members used theirs at the Sioux Valley Grill and enjoyed some excellent food! (Who would have expected mahi mahi in a little town in South Dakota?!) 



The gun crew was pleased to have Private Connor Watkins join them in battles both days. Mrs. Wendel proved that she has not lost her touch in baking and presented hungry soldiers with hot corn bread baked on the fire, followed by birthday cake in honor of Miss Mandy. Sunday morning, our boys marched with the Army at the nearby cemetery to honor the 87 Civil War soldiers buried there.

Members who attended praised the event and are planning to attend when it is held again in two years.



August 24-25 Morristown MN- Ahlman's Annual Shooters Roundup.

We had another great turnout of Battery members attending the event on August 24-25 in Morristown, MN. Our gun crew had scheduled firing demonstrations at 9:30am, 11:30am, 2:30pm and 4:00pm both days. It was nice to have Pvt Cameron Larson back in the ranks and Pvt Tristan Overby did an outstanding job serving #7 both days. Fire the cannon, get a shaved ice was once again the basic plan for the gun crew both days. Warm temperatures eventually cancelled the 4:00pm demonstration on Sunday and we were able to tear down our camp and head home a little early this year. Battery members attending the event were Bruce Arnoldy, Mardelle Arnoldy, Carmen Arnoldy, Steve Savre, Teresa Bergdale, Vince Bergdale, John Cain, Daryl Duden, Bart Hoekstra, Cameron Larson, James Livingstone, Jay Overby, Stacy Overby, Tristan Overby, Michael Ritchie, Becky Loader, Thomas Schmit and Linnea Schmit. Respectfully, 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:

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

Of course, there were some Battery members who were rather distracted with the puppies and horses...!





ON AN

EDUCATIONAL MISSION

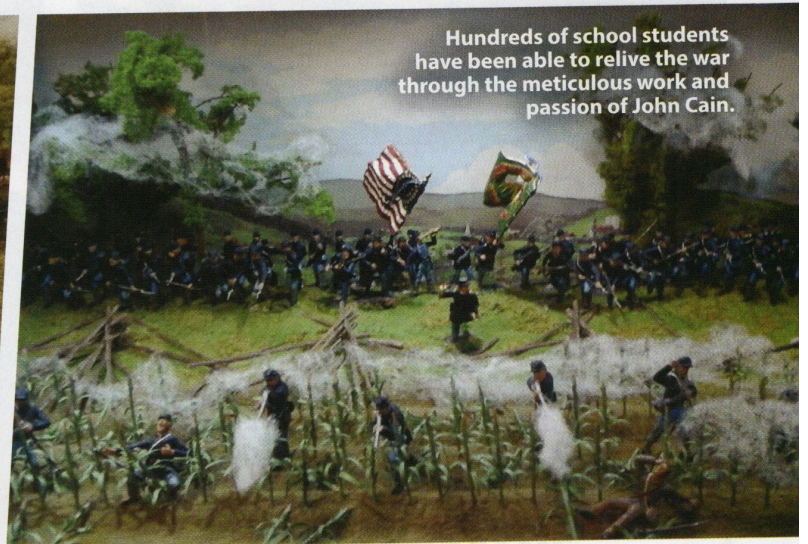
BY LEON HANSON

Even as young boys, John Cain and Daryl Duden used to play cowboys in the backyard. Like so many adolescents, re-enacting imaginary army battles became a pastime that occupied most of their days.

Of course, when life took over, their friendship remained, and they graduated from Red Wing High School.

After graduation, John joined the Army while Daryl joined the Marine Corps. "I spent 12 months and 27 days in Vietnam. After both of us served our country, we went about our lives," Daryl said.

Both back home and living once again in Red Wing, John had a brainstorming session and made his first call to his old friend, Daryl. "I have an idea to do something special to celebrate our country's



TWO MEN, FRIENDS FOR A LIFETIME, SHARE THE
SAME PASSION FOR RECREATING HISTORY

bicentennial,” John said.

“No question, John came up with something spectacular,” Daryl said. “We began planning a couple of months beforehand. The decision decided focused on getting a Civil War-era cannon. We had to get a couple of other people involved and ultimately shot the cannon to signal the beginning of the fireworks show that evening. It ended up being a huge success.”

That event was the impetus for the two men to embark on a hobby that has lasted nearly 50 years. The public responded well, and their next idea fell into place.

“We organized ourselves and began to focus on the Civil War. We chose that because it is historically closer. We began to build a from scratch organization,” John said.

It took a few years, but eventually, the popularity of their re-enacting began to grow. “Our first real experience took place at Shiloh, Tennessee. We used an artillery piece there. We have our own 10-pound Parrott Rifle Model 1861 with 57-inch wheels and a full-scale barrel that weighs 960 pounds. We have all the needed equipment to go along with the cannon to be able to fire. When we take the cannon on the road for events, everything can be carried on one trailer,” John said.

The group officially became the 2nd Minnesota Battery.

“In 1983, we found out there were other people around



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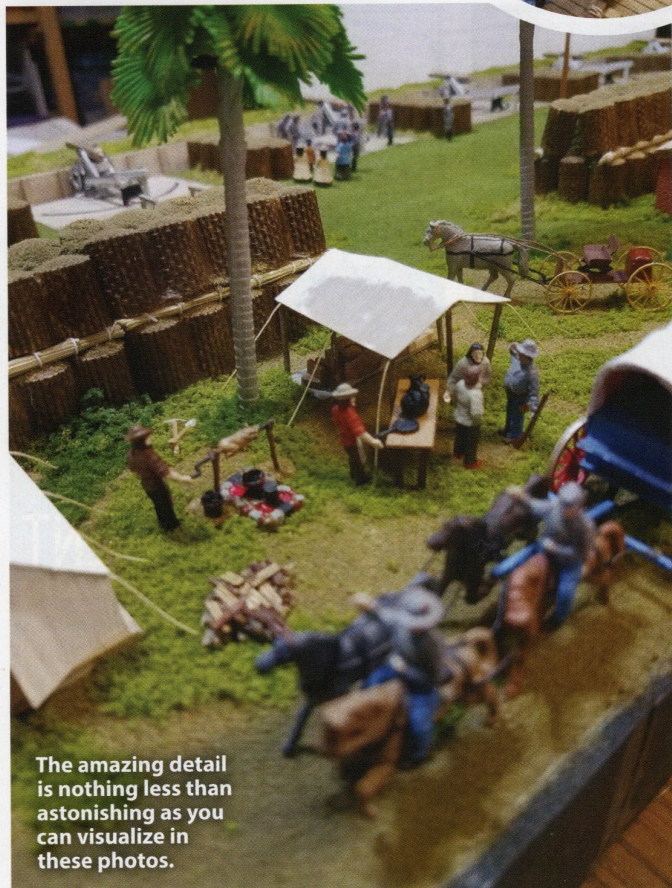
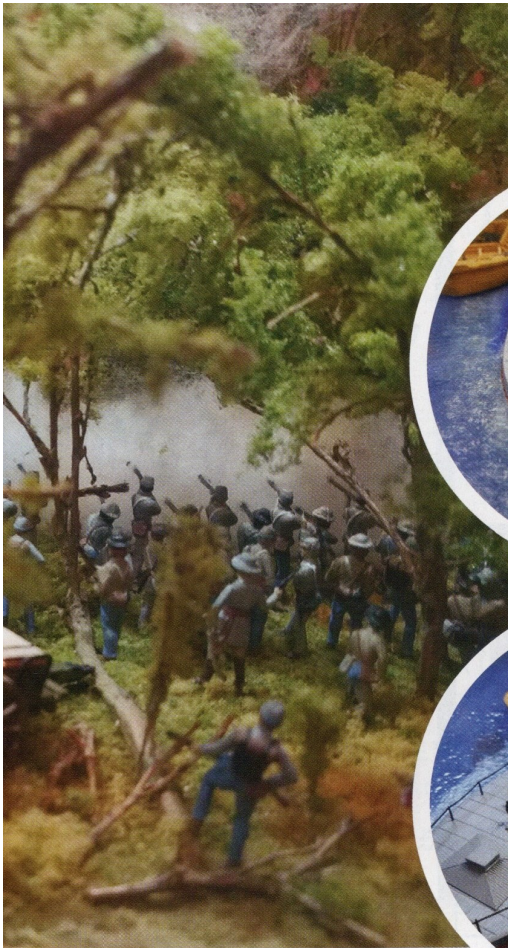
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The amazing detail is nothing less than astonishing as you can visualize in these photos.

the country who were recreating Civil War battles. Our first venture is when we traveled to one in Davenport, Iowa. From that point, we began traveling to other events. Back then, we were doing this with a one-half scale cannon.”

Their next step to take this more seriously was incorporating as a 501c3 nonprofit. “This allowed us to receive donations so we could afford to purchase a larger full-size cannon. Daryl explained their mission to receive the nonprofit status was to “educate people about the time frame of 1861-1865 when our nation was in a great Civil War.”

John and Daryl found schools were interested in what they were doing. “We went to Shiloh in 1987 and Gettysburg in 1988 during their 125th anniversary of those battles. I suppose about 1991 was when we were first asked if we’d be interested in sharing our knowledge with school-age children. Since then, we did over 100 school presentations all over our area, the Twin Cities and Wisconsin.”

It took a few years of fundraising before they could purchase their own full-scale cannon, which took place in 2002.

“The one we bought doesn’t have rifling in the barrel. Actors used the barrel of the gun in the movie, ‘Glory.’ The movie starts out with the cannon shooting right into the camera.

That is the tube we now own.”

In their 70s, John and Daryl and other members of the 2nd Minnesota still participate in many events annually. “We continue to do a lot of traveling to national events in addition to our educational visits closer to home.” From their inception, John and Daryl figure 143 people have been involved with the organization making 571 appearances around the country.

Each member of the 2nd Minnesota portrays the persona of an actual member from the Civil War era. “Members did a great deal of painstaking research on the people we are portraying. We create a story about each person’s life and make it as accurate as possible. We even research them back to their tombstones.”

Quite a few of the members of their group have a military background, and with that said, they don’t accept leaving soldiers in unidentified graves. “We found many individuals from the 2nd Minnesota Battery buried in unmarked sites.

“Through the VA, we were able to track down 27, and we took on the responsibility of placing tombstones in their final resting place,” Daryl said.

For all members of the Battery, one of the proudest moments also occurred through research and an actual visit to the Perryville battlefield. “While we were there, one of our younger members made the observation there wasn’t a


monument in place on the battlefield. It is also the location where the 2nd Minnesota had its first casualties. In November of 2016, we had a meeting and voted to spend \$10,000 to put up a monument. This would give us the chance to recognize, permanently, those individuals who risked their lives on the Perryville battlefield.”

The group went back for the 160th anniversary of the battle in 2022 to have the monument placed and dedicated. They envision this being a learning experience for future generations to visit and see where some young boys from Minnesota became casualties in battle.

These two friends from childhood are still living their dreams of playing war with the benefit of no one losing their life.

They take this on with one vision in sight: education.

“We’re not sure how much of Civil War history is still taught in schools today. If you’re interested, you can contact us.”

They have about 10 events scheduled this year and can be contacted at 2ndmnbattery.org. 

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