

2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 332

August 2025

On This Date-160 Years Ago

Keeping records was not something the men of the original Battery were good at as the war was winding down. No morning reports were written, nor was the Battery’s muster roll kept up. They spent the last days of their service in Philadelphia, Tennessee, about 75 miles from Chattanooga.

According to the St. Cloud newspaper, the *Democrat*, the men of the Battery left Philadelphia on July 13th to return to Minnesota and Fort Snelling. They arrived during the very last days of the month. The *Democrat* published a report on August 3, 1865, stating:

SECOND BATTERY

The Second Minnesota Battery, Capt. W. A. Hotchkiss, numbering 149 men and five officers, arrived in St. Paul on Friday afternoon. They were welcomed by State, city and military officers and by the people and were conducted to the to the capitol for a good supper, provided by the ladies.

When the boys returned to Fort Snelling to be mustered out, those in charge had a bit of explaining to do. According to the *St. Paul Press*, the Fort did not have enough cash on hand to pay off the men. Without their final pay settlement, the men could not be discharged, so a two week furlough was granted to the Battery members to allow time for the money to arrive. The men were required to return to the Fort to be given their back pay, any bounties they were owed and be formally discharged.

The *St. Paul Press* continued the story on August 17, 1865.

The Second Battery -- The Second Battery, Capt. Hotchkiss, was mustered out yesterday, nearly 150 men retiring to civil life. They will not be paid off until to-day. It will require nearly \$30,000 to pay them off as most of them have a year's pay due them and even more.

Any man who did not return from the furlough was considered a deserter and his pay was forfeit. There were a few men who did not return and it caused them a great deal of trouble later in life when they went to apply for pensions.

Upcoming Events

August 2 Whitewater Riverfest, Elba, MN

We will fire a three-round salute in honor and memory of veterans at the Veterans Memorial in Elba. 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 9:30 am** to be ready for the ceremony.

Aug 23-24 Morristown MN – Ahlman’s Annual Shooters Roundup.

Our Battery firing demonstrations have historically been voted one of the most popular venues of the weekend. The event is **open from 9:00am – 5:00pm**. We will camp inside Fort Ahlman and provide cannon firing demonstrations at 10:00am 12:00pm 2:00pm 4:00pm both days. Breakfast and lunch will be provided both days to all members attending **IF YOU RSVP TO Daryl that you are coming!** Breakfasts and lunches will be made in camp; Saturday night we will be eating at a local restaurant.



Next Meeting

August 9, 11:00, Goodhue County Historical Society 1166 Oak Street, Red Wing

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



Battery Profiles

William S. Hale

William joined the Second Minnesota Battery on February 20, 1862, one of the early recruits to the unit. He was probably recruited by a neighbor and friend, Richard Dawley. Dawley served as a lieutenant in the Battery and lived in St. Charles, the closest community to William's home of Saratoga Township.

William was 27 years old, stood 5' 6-3/4" tall, had blue eyes, light hair and a light complexion. He was born in Massachusetts, but had moved to Vermont before arriving in Minnesota in 1856 to take up his trade as a house painter in Saratoga Township, Winona County. He married Mary E. Leach on Christmas Day in 1860.

William was a private with the Battery throughout his service. When members of the Battery began a "Bible Class," William joined. His name stayed on the membership role until his discharge.

While on a march from Perryville, Kentucky, toward Nashville, Tennessee, William had an accident that would haunt him for the rest of his life. William described what happened.

I contracted the said injury while the Battery was suddenly moving and I had to get a bucket from under the footboard of the caisson. My knee was caught between the stock and wheel. I then was treated by Doctor Russel our Battery Surgeon....He is the only Physician who treated me during the remainder of the service. This accident happened on or about the 4th or 5th day of November 1862. At or near Bowling Green, Kentucky. I never liked to go to the Hospital although the Doctor wanted to send me there because my leg was in a very bad condition and I was afraid they would amputate the same in the Hospital. I went into the ambulance immediately after this occurred and we marched two days I being transported in Ambulance wagon to Camp at Ealyefields junction north of Nashville Tenn where we remained several weeks in Camp. During all that time I was treated by said Doctor Russel he giving me liniments and dressing my wound every day. From there we moved a few miles south of Nashville and there also laid in Camp several weeks. When we left there I was able to go on light duty at my own request but I had to use a cane. I did Camp chores with cook till the time of the Stone river fight where I acted as No. 6 behind the Limberchest. After this fight which lasted about three days, I was relieved from duty and only did light duty as occasion required until we all about 23 in number were discharged at Chattanooga Tenn on the 28th day of March 1865.

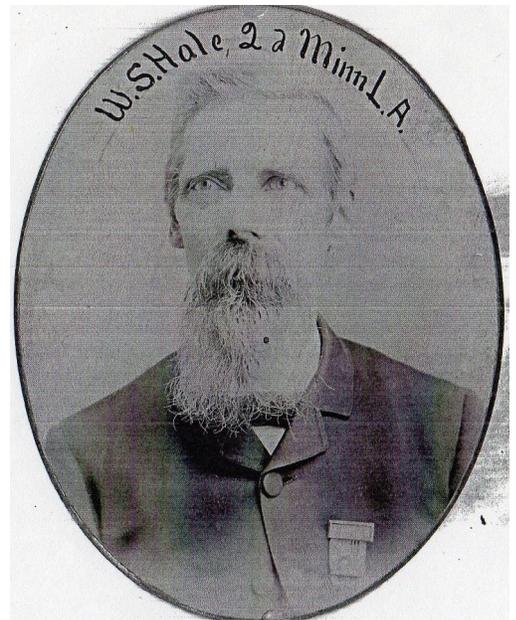
William had chosen not to reenlist and so went home at the end of his three years of service. His discharge came just six days after his wife's death. William returned to Saratoga and on June 25, 1866, he married Julia E. Leach. Together, they had three children, but only the two boys lived to adulthood. William was a charter member of the John Ball Post #45 of the G.A.R. in Winona when it was established in September of 1883. He remained a member of the G.A.R. for the rest of his life.



William was forced to stop painting houses after the war as his knee injury made it impossible

for him to stand on a ladder, so he took jobs as a watchman and a janitor. He had not wanted to apply for a pension "as long as I could get along without the same but now where the injury seems to increase from year to year I must try to get the legal support due me by the Government." The pension was granted and William received a 50% disability pension beginning in 1882.

In about 1899, William and Julia left Minnesota and moved to Vallejo, Solano County, California. His health was getting worse and it was believed that a change in climate might help him recover. He was soon classified as an invalid and needed almost constant assistance. For the last four years of his life, William lived at the home of his son in Vallejo, California. William died there on May 21, 1909, at the age of 74 and was laid to rest in the Masonic Cemetery. Julia and two sons survived William.



Mon Dieu! The real story behind Napoleon's famous pose

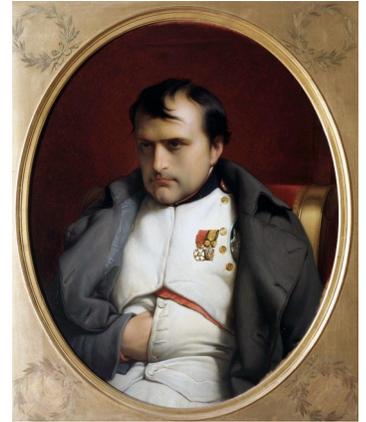
From the website authored by J. Mark Powell

When you hear the name Napoleon Bonaparte, what comes to mind? French guy. Funny hat. Josephine. Short. Hand-in-coat.

Napoleon is one of the most iconic figures in the world, right up there with Ronald McDonald and that annoying 1970s Smile face. He was a personality so large, he's known by one name, like Cher and Madonna (proof you've really hit the big time).

Yet despite his continued superstar status almost 200 years after his death, nearly everything we associate with him is wrong.

Ok, he did wear the funny hat. (It sold for \$2.4 million at auction last November.) But he wasn't French; he was Corsican and named Napoleone di Buonaparte at birth; he changed it in his 20s to sound French. Yes, Josephine was his great love; but when he died he was married to Marie Louise of Austria, Duchess of Parma. And no, he wasn't short; he stood just shy of 5'7", average height for the time. (There are two reasons for this. The French measurement system used in those days was smaller than the British system; hence the discrepancy. Plus, Napoleon was always surrounded by his Imperial Guard, who were gigantic, making him look like a shrimp.)



Then there was the famous pose. Ask any school child to imitate Napoleon, and the kid will stand tall and thrust a hand into his shirt. It's cemented to his identity as strongly as Marilyn Monroe's skirt blown upward by the subway grate draft, or Washington standing in the boat as it crossed the Delaware River.

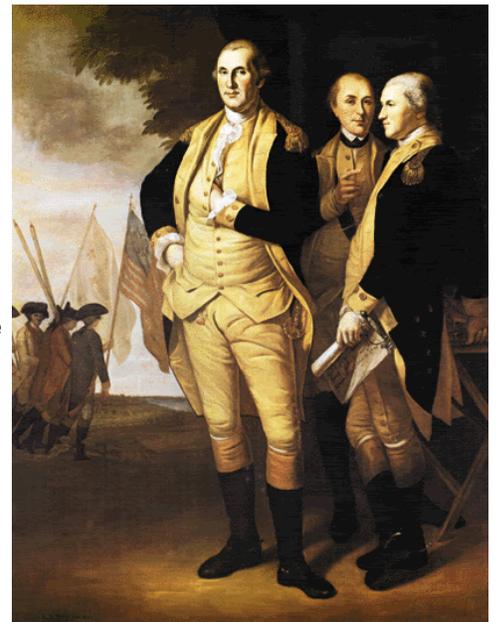
A flood of reasons has been offered over the years to explain it. He had stomach or breast cancer; he was hiding a deformed hand; he was scratching an itch; he was winding his watch; he knew the heartbreak of psoriasis. One theory even claimed he wore a ring given to him by a secret lover, which he hid to keep Josephine from getting jealous. All very interesting ... and all untrue.

Ready for the shocker? The French Emperor didn't go around with his hand in his coat in real life. Honest!

That's right; the pose we associate exclusively with Napoleon was commonly used in portraits of the famous and powerful long before he was even born. In fact, hand-in-coat (or vest or waistcoat) appeared in English and Colonial American works in the 1700s so much, some artists were accused of not knowing how to paint hands. It

was used so often, it became a cliché, and fell out of style well before the end of the 18th Century.

What made the look popular? Believe it or not, it was considered a sign of good breeding. In 1738, Francois Nivelon, the 18th Century's Emily Post for all things etiquette, wrote in *A Book of Genteel Behavior* that the hand-inside-coat pose signified "manly boldness tempered with modesty." It expressed a firm leader who was also calm, cool and collected. So, how did the pose come to be associated with Napoleon?

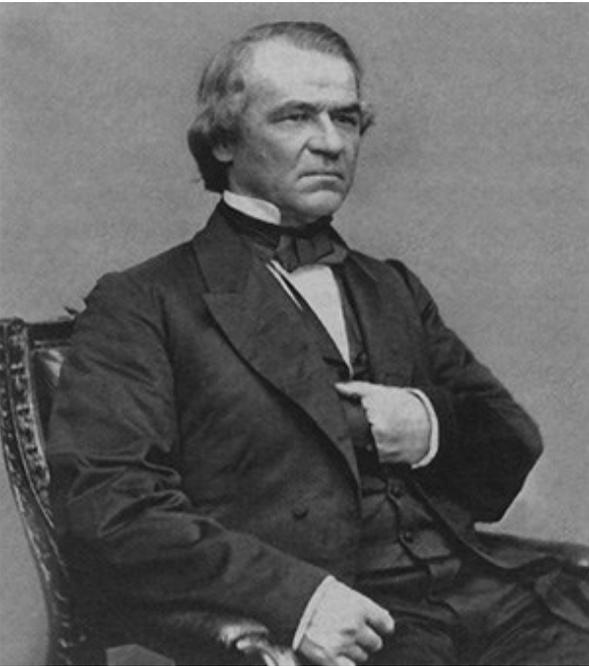


Blame it on an artist named Jacques-Louis David (portrait at left). A Scottish nobleman commissioned him to paint a portrait of the French leader. David greatly admired Napoleon and had previously painted him from life. By the time the commission came in 1812, Napoleon's popularity was declining. So David decided to give him a boost by using the dormant hand-in-coat pose in "Napoleon in His

Study” (the famous painting at the top of the page). You got it right, he revived a passe English artistic technique to generate positive PR for France’s Emperor.

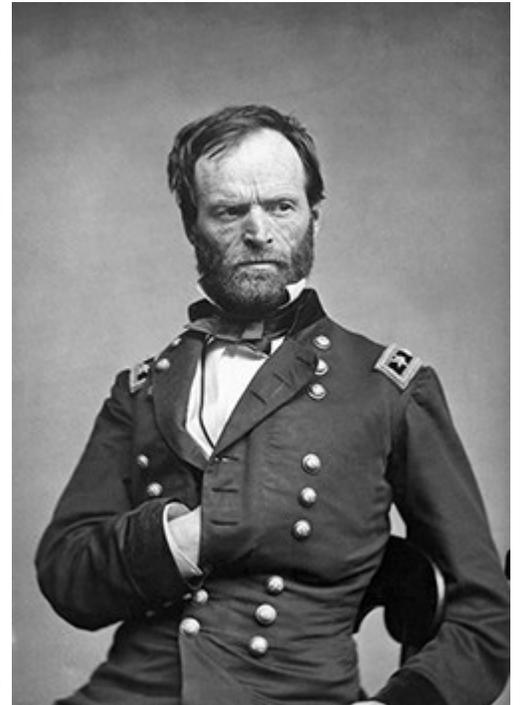
Napoleon didn’t sit for the portrait, so David painted him from memory. Critics didn’t care for the final product, but the subject sure did. Napoleon told the artist after seeing the portrait, “You have understood me, my dear David.”

And Napoleon understood the importance of the revitalized pose, too. He used it when he sat for many following portraits, and so later artists kept painting him with his hand in his coat.



Which breathed new life into the practice just as photographic portraiture was coming into its own. Of the countless presidents, poets, inventors and Civil War generals who sat before Mathew (he only used one “t” in his name) Brady’s camera, a good many of them used the Napoleonic posture.

The practice continued well into the 20th Century, with one of the most vile dictators of all time, Josef Stalin, even using it. (Although in his case, nobody ever accused him of “manly boldness tempered with modesty.” Bloodthirsty maniacal paranoia, yes; modesty, never.) It seems the Monster of the Soviet Union was the last prominent person to practice it.



Yet somehow over the decades, the oils that predated Napoleon and the photos that followed were all forgotten. Hand-in-coat came to mean one man, and one man only: Napoleon Bonaparte. And today, it is almost impossible to imagine him any other way.

Don’t bother trying to understand why. Some answers in life are never known. Just shrug your shoulders and accept it the way the French do. “C’est la vie.”



Catching fire when the gun goes off is not always easy, but this shot snapped from a cell phone was timed perfectly!! This was at the Prospect House in Battle Lake on July 26.

Recap

July 12 Castle Rock Museum

We set up the gun in the street next to this unique museum and the ladies set up their quilt display in the lower courtyard. The day was more



than warm, and while the wind helped with the temperature, it did nothing

to help the smoke filled air. Much of Minnesota and Wisconsin were under a blanket of thick Canadian wildfire smoke. The smoke and heat probably accounted for the lower than expected attendance, but we talked to some very interested people and had a good time.

The local officials did not give permission to fire the cannon, but during each drill, when the training primer was pulled, the crew on the gun all yelled, "BOOM!" The antics of the gun crew delighted the crowd and the video from Miss Linnea was posted online. It has a LOT of views! Michael had his small arms station inside the museum where he talked with visitors.

Micheala played period games with everyone and the ladies displayed their quilts, sharing with visitors about quilts being weapons of war—the war fought by women on the home front to keep their soldiers warm, healthy and remind of home.



July 26 Battle Lake, MN, Prospect House

The day started off with a "boom" that had nothing to do with the cannon! Thunderstorms rocked the skies right up until the opening. The day got hot as the clouds left and the humidity was pretty horrible, but the welcome

from the staff onsite was amazing. They even had a lunch and ice cold bottled water prepared for us!

The gun was well crewed and fired three times throughout the day. It fell to Sargeant Duden to run out onto

the road below the hill to stop traffic each time the gun was fired. The ladies talked about quilts again at this event and shared lots of stories with visitors.

It was a delight to be back at this historic house museum after not having been there for a number of years!



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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