



2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 331

July 2025

On This Date-160 Years Ago

The war was really over and the Second Battery, like most units in the Union Army, was waiting to be mustered out. The Battery was still on garrison duty near Philadelphia, Tennessee, but they were expecting orders at any moment.

Perhaps because the impending end of the Battery's service seemed so close, records were kept even more poorly than ever before. The month of July had only two entries in the morning reports. On the 3rd, lieutenants Alexander Kinkead and Lyman Ayer reported back to the Battery for duty. Where they had been was not recorded. On the 22nd, notice was received that Edward Tillotston, a former private in the Battery, had been promoted to lieutenant in the 65th Colored Troops.

Exactly when orders came to send the Battery back to Minnesota is unknown, but the Battery must have left Tennessee by mid-July, traveling to Minnesota at least part of the way by riverboat.

July 7th was a notable day in American history that year as it was the day the Lincoln conspirators were hanged. Mrs. Mary Surratt was executed for her role in the conspiracy to kill the President. Everyone expected a last minute pardon for her, but it did not come and she was hanged with three men also convicted of plotting to kill Lincoln.

By the end of July, the U.S. Government had rented Ford's Theater for \$1,500 a month—it could no longer make a profit as a theatre. The shooting of the President within its walls had ruined that possibility. By 1866, the Government had bought the building and it was used for office space until a front section collapsed in 1893, killing 22 people. It was not until the war had been over 100 years that the building was restored and became a National Historic Site.

Upcoming Events

July 12 Castle Rock Museum 10:00-4:00
402 South Second Street, Alma, WI

We will be setting up stations at this armament museum and sharing with the public in “sessions” in addition to walk by visitors. This is a unique museum and has drawn visitors from around the world! BRING A BAG LUNCH! Arrive by 9:00 am to set up by 10! More info at their website: [Castlerock Museum](https://www.castlerockmuseum.org/)

July 26 Battle Lake, MN, Prospect House
403 Lake Ave N, Battle Lake, MN 56515

This event celebrates the Civil War history and collections of this historic house. It is a single day event and we are paid for it, so we need to have a good turn out. Besides that, it's a very nice event! It is also a chance to see some amazing artifacts in this special museum. BRING A BAG LUNCH! Arrive by 9:00 am to be set up by 10:00.

For more information, see their website at: [Prospect House & Civil War Museum – Museum in Battle Lake, Minnesota](https://www.prospecthouse.org/)

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.

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.

Heroes with Hooves

From the Stone River National Battlefield website

Three million horses and mules served during the Civil War. Approximately half lost their lives. Horses and mules were essential to both armies; moving artillery, cavalry, the wounded and supplies. Almost 32,000 horses and mules served in the Battle of Stones River, and nearly 3000 were killed, disabled or captured in just that single battle.

LIST OF QUARTERMASTERS' STORES, No. 27.

Transferred to W. A. Brown, Quartermaster, 1st Mississippi Battery, A. C. S., on the 15th day of May, 1863.

NUMBER OR QUANTITY	ARTICLES	COST WHEN NEW		CONDITION WHEN DELIVERED	REMARKS
		Dollars	Cents		
19,500	Wheaten Flour, five hundred lb.			Sound	
35,750	Oats, twenty five thousand, five hundred lb.			"	
37,500	Hay, twenty five thousand, five hundred lb.			"	
225	Green Sacks, twenty five			Good	

I certify that I have this day transferred to *W. A. Brown, A. C. S.*
 Quartermaster W. A. Brown, at *the places specified in the foregoing list.*
Quartermaster

The Quartermaster Department oversaw acquiring horses and mules, their food, and other equipment such as saddles, harness, and shoes. Feeding horses and mules presented a bigger logistical challenge than feeding men. The daily feed ration for Union cavalry horses was ten pounds of hay and fourteen pounds of grain. A soldier's daily ration weighed a little more than four pounds.

Horses and mules became targets on the battlefield, but like the men who fought in the Civil War, most died of overwork or disease. Horses and mules worked hard often without enough proper food.

Artillery could not function without horses. Most six-gun batteries had 120 horses to pull the heavy cannons, caissons, and limbers.

A cavalry regiment needed about 1200 horses. Confederate troopers supplied their own horses. Union cavalrymen got their mounts from the army.

Mules are a cross between a female horse and a male donkey. Hardy mules could persevere without food and water longer than horses. Mules usually pulled heavy supply wagons.

Many soldiers felt deep grief when their horses died and wrote touching accounts in their diaries.

"...my little bay horse had his hind leg nearly torn off by a piece of shell that seemed to burst six feet of my face. At the order to retire I remounted him and his last act of service was to carry me out of danger. ... As the faithful animal stood there bleeding and shivering in pain, and I powerless to help him in return ... I could not prevent the unmanly moisture in my eyes, and when we drove off and left him, I could not have felt it more keenly had I been leaving a wounded human friend."

William A. Brown, Confederate Mississippi Stanford Battery



The memorial in memory of the one and one half million horses and mules of the Union and Confederate armies who were killed, were wounded or died from disease.



Recap

June 21 A. A. Arnold House, Galesville WI

To describe the day as HOT is a disservice to the thermometer! We set up our stations and positioned the gun, but the weather was working hard against the event. The high humidity along with temps in the 90s was likely responsible for the lack of visitors. Threats of rain and rumbles of thunder in the distance didn't help. The quilts hung on lines by the Battery ladies were only up for a couple hours in the morning before the



rain threat forced them down. The only thing that saved us in the morning were the wind and clouds. When the wind died and the sun came out, organizers called the event since, as unfortunately the volunteers and reenactors outnumbered the visitors.

The low turnout did give the gun crew an opportunity to try a change in the worm and how it was implemented during drill. A couple of extra shots at the end of the event helped refine some new ideas.

The day did highlight to Battery members how important it is to keep an eye on each other (and visitors) during extreme weather. Miss Mandy had to put her medical emergency experience to use when a visitor fainted while at the ladies station. Mandy was able to help woman back to her feet, get her to shade and water, and the woman recovered. Heat can get to anyone!



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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