



## 2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

# “ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 338

April 2026

### **On This Date-165 Years Ago**

(From the American Battlefield Trust website)

In Charleston, the birthplace of secession, tempers are on edge. A delegation from the state goes to Washington, D.C., demanding the surrender of the Federal military installations in the new “independent republic of South Carolina.”

President James Buchanan refuses to comply. Charleston is the Confederacy’s most important port. The harbor is defended by three federal forts: Sumter; Castle Pinckney—one mile off the city’s Battery; and heavily armed Fort Moultrie—on Sullivan’s Island. Major Anderson’s command is based at Fort Moultrie, but with its guns pointed out to sea, it cannot defend a land attack. On December 26,

Charlestonians awake to discover that Anderson and his tiny garrison of 90 men have slipped away from Fort Moultrie to the more defensible Fort Sumter. For secessionists, Anderson’s move is, as one Charlestonian wrote to a friend, “like casting a spark into a magazine,”

Adding to Anderson’s concern is his dangerously dwindling store of supplies. On January 5, 1861, the *Star of the West* departs from New York with some 200 reinforcements and provisions for the Sumter garrison. As the ship approaches Charleston Harbor on January 9, cadets from the Citadel fire, forcing the crew to abandon its mission.

On March 1, Jefferson Davis orders Brig. Gen P.G.T. Beauregard to take command of the growing southern forces in Charleston. On April 4, Lincoln informs southern delegates that he intends to attempt to resupply Fort Sumter, as its garrison is now critically in need. To South Carolinians, any attempt to reinforce Sumter means war. “Now the issue of battle is to be forced upon us,” declared the *Charleston Mercury*. “We will meet the invader, and the God of Battles must decide the issue between the hostile hirelings of Abolition hate and Northern tyranny.”

On April 9, Davis and the Confederate cabinet decide to “strike a blow!” Davis orders Beauregard to take Fort Sumter. The next day, three of Beauregard’s aides sail to the fort and courteously demand the garrison’s surrender. Anderson is equally courteous, but refuses: “I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication demanding the evacuation of this fort, and to say, in reply thereto, that it is a demand with which I regret that my sense of honor, and of my obligations to my Government, prevent my compliance.” He also informs the delegation that the garrison’s supplies will only last until April 15.

April 12. At 4:30 a.m., a flaming mortar shot arcs into the air and explodes over Fort Sumter. On this signal,

Confederate guns from fortifications and floating batteries around Charleston Harbor roar to life. Outmanned, outgunned, undersupplied, and nearly surrounded by enemy batteries, Anderson waits until around 7:00 a.m. to respond. Captain Abner Doubleday volunteers to fire the first cannon at the Confederates, a 32-pound shot that bounces off the roof of the Iron Battery on Cummings Point.

For nearly 36 hours the two sides keep up this unequal contest. A shell strikes the flagpole of Fort Sumter, and the American colors fall to the earth, only to be hoisted back up the hastily repaired pole. Confederates fire hotshot from Fort Moultrie into Fort Sumter. Buildings begin to burn within the fort. With no more resources, Anderson surrenders Fort Sumter to Confederate forces.

April 13. At 2:30 p.m., Maj. Anderson and his men strike their colors and prepare to leave the fort. Sadly, the only casualties at Fort Sumter come during the 100-gun salute, when a round explodes prematurely, killing Pvt. Daniel Hough and mortally wounding another soldier. The attack is over, but the war had begun.

### **Election Results!**

Election results are in! The corporate officers were not due fore election this year, but due to the resignation of President Ken Cunningham, the office of president was vacant. James Livingstone was serving as vice president, but he agreed to run for the open president’s office. James was elected the organizational president for the Second Battery. This left the vice presidency open and Neil Bruce was elected to fill the remained of the term.

The military positions for 2026 are as follows: John Cain as lieutenant; Ron Graves as quartermaster sergeant; Daryl Duden as sergeant, and the two corporals are James Livingstone and Ron Wendel.

Congratulations and thanks to all for taking on the responsibilities of these leadership roles.

#### **Next Meeting**

**April 25, 11:00, Goodhue County Historical Society** 1166 Oak Street, Red Wing



Contact James Livingstone with questions or agenda items. 651-564-1616 or 113alco@gmail.com

# Battery Profiles

## Martin O. Fossom

Martin Fossom was born in Gjirrun, Norway, on March 23, 1844. Martin was about 12 years old when his family left Norway and moved to America. Before the family left Norway, a minister gave them a certificate written in the old style Norwegian script to provide proof of dates for births and marriage. The family lived near Wasoja until 1860 when they moved to a farm near Albert Lea in Freeborn County.

Martin was helping on the farm when he enlisted in the Second Battery in February of 1862. Martin had gray eyes, light hair and a light complexion. He was 5' 11" tall and single. His father said he was "a large man, would weight about 200 pounds".

The time Martin spent serving the Battery was as a private. He was a dutiful son, sending home about \$100 of his pay to the family while he was in the service. In March of 1863, he was sent to Hospital #2 in Murfreesboro where he would spend a great deal of time moving from one hospital to another. On September 11th of that year, he was transferred to the Invalid Corps, but was discharged for disability two days later. After his discharge, Martin headed home, but was forced to stay in Winona several weeks because he was too ill to travel. His father said Martin was suffering with some kind of boil or deep sore on the side of his neck and it nearly killed Martin before it broke open and drained. It was not the only illness troubling Martin and was not the cause of his discharge.

Once home, Martin was still sick and was not able to farm. He bought a pair of colts and gave them to his father, but Martin was too frail to do more than light work such as driving teams. He served as a constable for a time, worked with a threshing crew, and was the town supervisor. After a few years, Martin moved to a place near Rushford, Minnesota. There, he kept a saloon. Martin remained in Rushford until going home to his family a few weeks before his death. The intent was to visit, but after supper on July 15, 1885, Martin went to bed not feeling well. He complained of pains in his stomach and was suffering greatly. The doctor was called before

daylight the next morning and arrived at noon, but he could do nothing for Martin. Martin was 42 years old when he died that evening, July 16, 1885. He was buried in the Highland Prairie Cemetery in Fillmore County with a simple military marker.

Martin's father petitioned for the pension Martin would have been eligible for from his army service. The elder Mr. Fossom had lost his wife and had deeded the farm, which had a large mortgage on it, to his son Ole, provided Ole take care of his father in later years. Ole died before his father and Ole's wife was trying to honor the contract between her husband and father-in-law, but crop failures and other troubles were making it hard. The Pension examiner interviewed everyone involved and decided that though there was not a strong case for the father getting the pension as it could not be proved that Martin had died from a service related illness, he was deserving of the "small amount" Martin's pension would provide.



# **SERVICE OF THE PIECE**

Submitted by Daryl Duden

As Civil War reenactors and living historians, members of the 2nd Minnesota Battery are very careful to share accurate information in our efforts to educate. After spending the winter months studying various Manuals for Light Artillery, there are a couple of issues we should consider.

There are NO manuals that describe a Civil War era drill for rifled guns. In fact, in most manuals, any references to rifled guns are simply a footnote at the bottom of the page. Consider the following footnote from this late war manual, The 1864 FIELD ARTILLERY TACTICS.

\* The 10-pounder Parrott and 3-inch gun each carry 50 rounds per chest. The 20-pounder Parrott carries 25 rounds. The proper assortment of ammunition and method of packing for rifled guns, being still on experiment, they are as yet undetermined.

Amazingly, both the M1861 10-pounder Parrott Rifle (23 May 1861) and the M1861 3-inch Ordnance rifle (24 July 1861) had been in use for years by the time this manual was printed. With limited information, we can only guess what the initial assortment of ammunition for a 10-pounder Parrott might be. We do know that in a November 1863 memo, solid shot (bolts) were removed from the assortment and the chest now contained 25 common shells, 20 case shots and 5 canister rounds. There is no information on what changes in the service of the piece were required for a rifled gun. We can only share the information we do know.

I have yet to find a MANUAL FOR LIGHT ARTILLERY that even mentions the use of the worm. It was designed to hook and remove the projectile from a smoothbore cannon. Because rifled guns did not use fixed ammunition, it could not be used to extract a shell from a rifled gun, which certainly would have limited its use. What we have been told is, it was seldom used to clean debris from the bore.

During the Civil War the powder charge was in a woolen bag of wildbore or bombazette weave that could burn. Today the powder charge is contained in aluminum foil. Use of multiple layers of aluminum foil to create the powder bag almost mandates the use of the worm for every shot. Because there are no references in manuals regarding the use of the worm, some organizations give that responsibility to #1, others add it to the duties of #2. Regardless of who has the duties, we know that any buildup of aluminum foil at the back of the bore could create a misfire.

As I previously indicated, rifled guns did not use fixed ammunition. Instead they fired semi-fixed projectiles, meaning the projectile and the charge were loaded separately. #2 first inserts the charge, which #1 rams to fully seat. Then #2 inserts the projectile. Because most of these projectiles were fuzed, #1 took greater care in ramming them. If we were to accurately portray loading a M1861 Parrott Rifle, we would describe this sequence. What I learned in my research is this two-step process significantly slowed the rate of fire for rifled guns. In modern field tests, the average rate of fire for a full-crewed rifled gun was approximately 32 seconds per round, which means even if shooting canister, a rifled gun would have difficulty achieving a rate of fire equal to the infantry standard, 3 rounds per minute.

Another item to consider in discussing the potential difference in the drill is, smoothbore cannons did not fire shells with impact fuzes. The use of impact fuzes was a feature of rifled artillery. This is why during the loading process, some of the printed manuals have men RUNNING to deliver the round.

The 1851, 1861 and 1863 MANUAL FOR LIGHT ARTILLERY for the 12-pdr. Howitzer used for MOUNTAIN SERVICE, describes the loading process as follows: Nos. 2 and 5, in moving to and from the piece, go at a run and pass each other by the right. Hopefully for the safety of the crew, the duties of the men responsible for delivering the ammunition changed when serving on rifled guns.

SALVO  
FIGURES

# Dressing Billy Yank

From Civil War Monitor, Spring 2026  
Submitted by Becky Loader

"[U]NDER THE ENERGETIC and liberal administration of the War Department, the wants of the troops have been regularly supplied, their comfort, health, and efficiency have been amply and regularly provided for." So wrote Montgomery C. Meigs in his November 1865 report to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton detailing the enormous expenditures the government had made—and which he had overseen as the Union army's quartermaster general—in the previous four years. Among those many "wants" was clothing, from outfitting new recruits to supplying veterans in need of replacement items. By war's end, over \$292 million alone (more than \$5 billion today) had been spent clothing the approximately 2.1 million men who served in the Union army. Shown here are figures associated with the procurement of some of the more common uniform pieces donned by "Billy Yank."



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THE CIVIL WAR MONITOR  
SPRING 2026

SOURCE: UNITED STATES WAR DEPARTMENT, THE WAR OF THE REBELLION: A COMPILATION OF THE OFFICIAL RECORDS, 129 VOLS. (WASHINGTON, 1880–1901), SERIES III, VOL. 5.



**KEY**  
**TOTAL NUMBER OF ITEMS OBTAINED FOR ARMY USE\***  
 LOWEST  $\blacktriangleright$  HIGHEST PRICE PAID FOR ITEM DURING THE WAR

**A. FORAGE CAPS**  
 4,766,100  
 \$0.35  $\blacktriangleright$  \$1.04

**B. UNIFORM HATS**  
 2,347,524  
 \$1.62  $\blacktriangleright$  \$2.19

**C. SACK COATS**  
 6,025,169  
 \$2.10  $\blacktriangleright$  \$5.09 (LINED)  
 \$1.88  $\blacktriangleright$  \$4.38 (UNLINED)

**D. GREATCOATS**  
 3,827,050  
 \$6.50  $\blacktriangleright$  \$13.17 (INFANTRY)  
 \$7.74  $\blacktriangleright$  \$16.11 (CAVALRY)

**E. SHIRTS**  
 11,091,639  
 \$0.45  $\blacktriangleright$  \$3.01 (FLANNEL)  
 \$0.69  $\blacktriangleright$  \$2.34 (KNIT)

**F. TROUSERS**  
 7,756,795  
 \$2.05  $\blacktriangleright$  \$5.40 (INFANTRY)  
 \$3.32  $\blacktriangleright$  \$5.89 (CAVALRY)

**G. STOCKINGS**  
 20,319,896  
 \$0.23  $\blacktriangleright$  \$0.53

**H. BOOTEES AND BROGANS**  
 8,437,216  
 \$1.71  $\blacktriangleright$  \$3.24 (SEWED)  
 \$1.33  $\blacktriangleright$  \$2.45 (PEGGED)

**I. BLANKETS**  
 7,803,066  
 \$2.19  $\blacktriangleright$  \$7.75 (WOOLEN)  
 \$2  $\blacktriangleright$  \$5 (RUBBER)  
 \$1.99  $\blacktriangleright$  \$2.35 (PAINTED)

\*THE FIGURES HIGHLIGHTED HERE ARE FOR READY-MADE ARTICLES OF CLOTHING PURCHASED BY THE GOVERNMENT AT THE DEPOTS AT PHILADELPHIA, NEW YORK, AND CINCINNATI, OHIO, FROM MAY 1861-JUNE 1865. THEY ARE EXCLUSIVE OF ITEMS OF MILITARY CLOTHING MANUFACTURED FROM RAW MATERIALS PURCHASED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

HERITAGE AUCTIONS (HA.COM)

# Second Minnesota Battery 2026 Calendar

These events are approved by membership vote at the March meeting.

- May 7 Durand, WI Pepin County Historical Society Bob Zika  
315 W Madison St Durand WI (Confirmed)
- May 25 Red Wing, MN 2026 Memorial Day Observance John Cain  
Bay Point Park Red Wing MN
- Jul 4 Red Wing, MN Semiquincentennial (to be determined) John Cain  
Bay Point Park Red Wing MN
- Aug 1 Elba, MN Whitewater River Fest Krystal Marking 507-450-0206  
1200 S Main Street Elba MN 55910 10:30am
- Aug 15-16 Canton, SD Canton Civil War Days Dave Renli 605-351-4452  
North Bridge Street Canton SD 57013
- Aug 22-23 Morristown, MN 2026 Ahlman's Shooters Roundup Stacy Chmelik  
9525 230th St W Morristown MN 55052
- T.B.D. Alma, WI Castlerock Museum James Livingstone  
204 South Second Street Alma WI 54610 10:00am – 4:00pm
- Sep 26 Little Falls, MN Minnesota Military & Veterans Museum John Cain  
15000 Highway 115 Little Falls, MN 56345 10:00am – 4:00pm
- Nov 11 Winona, MN 2026 Veterans Day – Veterans Memorial Park Brian Tomashek  
Lake Park Drive Winona MN 55987
- Nov 24 Plymouth, MN Providence Academy Kristine McElroy  
15100 Schmidt Lake Road Plymouth MN 55446

***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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