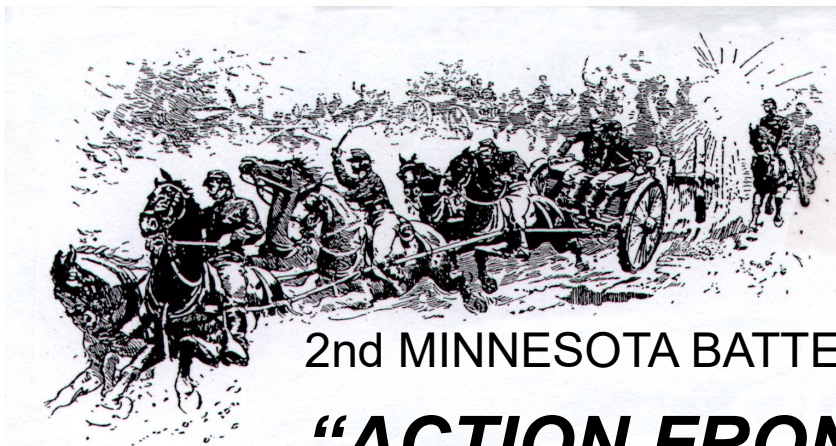




2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 342

August 2026

On This Date-165 Years Ago

From the Gaston County Public Library, Gastonia, NC

3 August—Off the coast of Virginia John LaMountain, a Union naval officer, ascends in a tethered balloon to look at Confederate controlled Hampton Roads. It is the first balloon ascent from a ship in naval history. The same "aeronaut" also makes the first night aerial reconnaissance; by counting tent lights he makes an estimate of enemy strength. This brings about the first "blackout", ordered by General Beauregard to keep the balloons from gathering information.

5 August—To encourage enlistments the pay of a private in the U. S. Army is raised from \$11.00 to \$13.00.

10 August— Union General Nathaniel Lyon is killed during the Battle of Wilson's Creek in Missouri, a Confederate victory.

20 August—General George McClellan assumes command of the Union Army of the Potomac.

23 August—James Stone enlists in the 1st Ohio Light Artillery. James is an escaped slave, but so light-skinned that he passes for white and so gets by the rule that African-Americans can not join the Army. He is believed to be the first African-American Civil War enlistee. James will die in 1862.

30 August—John C. Fremont, commander of the Union's Western Department, on his own initiative declares martial law in Missouri and frees slaves of Missouri Confederates. Lincoln who is trying to avoid alienating the border states, first asks him to modify the order, and then, when Fremont refuses, will revoke the proclamation altogether and remove Fremont from his command.

Next Meeting

**August 29, 11:00, Goodhue County
Historical Society** 1166 Oak Street, Red Wing

Contact Neil Bruce with questions or agenda items.
Phone: (651) 301-9232 Email: nfrkb@gmail.com



Upcoming Events

Aug 1 Elba, MN, Whitewater River Fest
1200 S Main Street, Elba MN

This is the usual gun salute to honor veterans. There are enough known volunteers that we have a crew, but more are always welcome. Plan to arrive in Elba at 9:45 to unload the gun and set up. Contact Daryl or John for more information.

Aug 15-16 Canton Civil War Days
North Bridge Street, Canton, SD

This is a reenactment, this year featuring the Battle of Shiloh. It is hosted by many of the same people who helped with the Pipestone event and those who attended in 2024 (this is an every-other-year event) had a great time.

Preregistration is required! <http://www.cantonicivilwardays.com/>

Battery members attending must each register on their own and Daryl will pay for all members who caravan with the gun. If you pay on your own, you will be reimbursed by the Battery at the event. If you plan to caravan with the gun, arrive at the gun shed no later than 10:00 am on August 14.

Many of those attending have motel rooms for sleeping, but **we will be eating lunches and Saturday night supper cooked in camp.**

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. We will camp inside Fort Ahlman and provide cannon firing demonstrations at 10:00am 12:00pm 2:00pm 4:00pm both days.

September 26—Museum Dedication, Camp Ripley

Since this is an active federal facility, they need to know who will be attending. **You MUST give your name to John Cain BY AUGUST 10!!**

There will be a full six gun battery at this dedication, all Minnesota units. The Second Battery ladies will setup the SAS display, quilt display and the apothecary, so lots of opportunities to be included in this special event. More info will be coming soon.

Battery Profile

Lars B. Foss

Lars Foss was born in Norway on February 2, 1843. He came to Minnesota and began farming in Houston County near Spring Grove. On September 3, 1864, he enlisted for one year with the Second Battery and received a \$100 bounty. He was 5' 7" tall, had blue eyes, light hair and a florid complexion.

Lars served in the Battery until the end of the war when he returned to Minnesota in August of 1865. He went back to Spring Grove and married Randi in 1870. Together, the couple would have eleven children, nine boys and two girls. In the 1885 census, the family was living in Hendrum Township, Norman County, Minnesota.

In 1890, Lars filed for a pension for his Army service. He told the Pension Department he had suffered from sunstroke at Chattanooga, Tennessee, in June of 1865, and again at Philadelphia, Tennessee, in July of that same year. The effects were causing him trouble and a "weakness in the head." The Pension Department didn't believe the problems were service related and denied Lars a pension.

Lars remained in Hendrum for the rest of his life.

On the 24th of October, 1911, Lars decided to make out his will. His wife, Randi, had died in April of 1892, and Lars wanted to be certain his affairs were handled as he desired. His will contained two provisions. The first provision stated that the Commandant of the Minnesota Soldiers Home was to be certain all debts Lars might owe at the time of his death should be paid in full, the funeral paid for, and all to be done as quickly after the death as possible. The second provision was that anything left in his estate was to go to the executor, Lars' son, Bernt L. Foss. The will was signed and filed in Norman County, Minnesota.

It was five years later on May 20, 1915, that Lars died. He was laid to rest in the Immanuel Cemetery two miles north of Hendrum. His tombstone inscription is written in Norwegian.

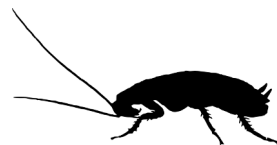


A Little Civil War Humor

(From an unidentified soldier's letter)



"You have no conception of what mosquitoes are down here. They are perfect devils, at first sight I thought they were birds....I'm also favored by a large company of cockroaches....They devour all the provisions I have. They eat my thread, clothes & paper & I think they even tried to devour my needles....I have become so used to them that I can go to sleep while they are performing pedestrian tours up my legs and over my body generally. I may name some of them for they are so familiar."



Battle of Shiloh, Apr 6 - 7, 1862

From the American Battlefield Trust

A little refresher on the battle being portrayed at Canton, SD

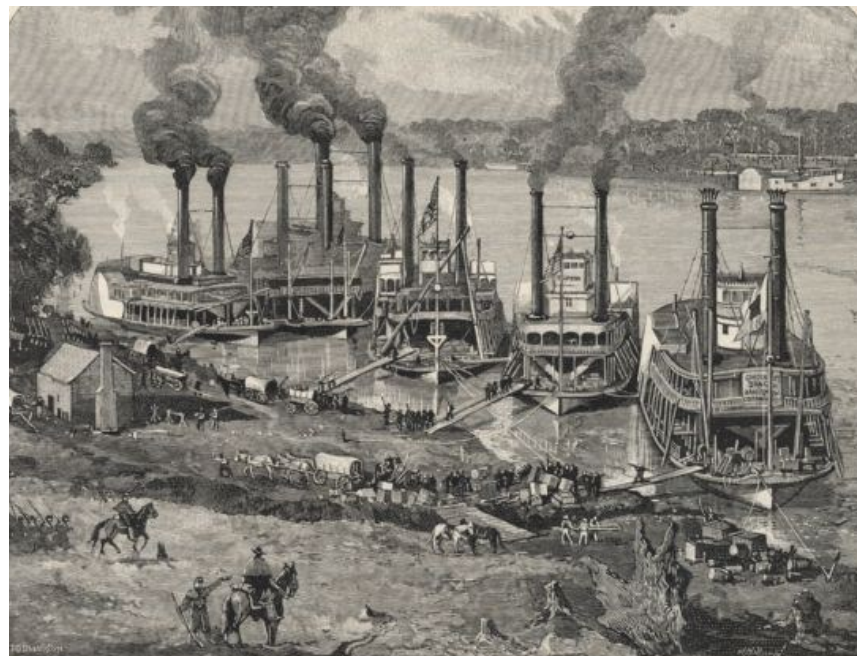
The Battle of Shiloh, also known as the Battle of Pittsburg Landing, allowed Union troops to penetrate the Confederate interior. The carnage was unprecedented, with the human toll being the greatest of any war on the American continent up to that date.

Union victory. The South's defeat at Shiloh ended the Confederacy's hopes of blocking the Union advance into Mississippi and doomed the Confederate military initiative in the West. With the loss of their commander, Gen. [Albert Sidney Johnston](#), in battle, Confederate morale plummeted.

After the Union victories at [Fort Henry](#) and [Fort Donelson](#) in February 1862, Confederate general Johnston withdrew from Kentucky and left much of the western and middle of Tennessee to the Federals. This permitted Maj. Gen. [Ulysses S. Grant](#) to push his troops toward Corinth, Mississippi, the strategic intersection of the Mobile and Ohio Railroad and the Memphis and Charleston Railroad and a vital troop and supply conduit for the South. Alerted to the Union army's position, Johnston intercepted the Federals 22 miles northeast of Corinth at Pittsburg Landing. The encounter proved devastating—not only for its tactical failure, but for the extreme number of casualties. After Shiloh, both sides realized the magnitude of the conflict, which would be longer and bloodier than they could have imagined.

To consolidate his forces and prepare for operations against Grant, Johnston marshals his forces at [Corinth](#). The Confederate retreat is welcomed by Grant, whose Army of the Tennessee needs time to prepare for its own offensive up the Tennessee River. Grant's army camps at Pittsburg Landing, where it spends time drilling recruits and awaiting Maj. Gen. [Don Carlos Buell](#)'s Army of Ohio. Grant is ordered not to engage the Confederates until he has been reinforced by Buell's army, which is marching overland from Nashville to meet him. Once combined, the two armies will advance south on Corinth.

Anticipating a Federal move against Corinth, Johnston and his 44,000-man Army of Mississippi plan to smash Grant's army at Pittsburg Landing before Buell can arrive with more Union troops. On April 3, Johnston places his troops in motion, but heavy rains delay his attack. By nightfall on April 5, his army is deployed for battle only four miles southwest of Pittsburg Landing, and pickets from both sides nervously exchange gunfire in the dense woods that evening.



PITTSBURG LANDING. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN A FEW DAYS AFTER THE BATTLE.

Of the six transports, the one farthest up stream, on the right, is the *Tycoon*, which was dispatched by the Cincinnati Branch of the Sanitary Commission with stores for the wounded. The next steamer is the *Tigress*, which was General Grant's headquarters boat during the Shiloh campaign. On the opposite side of the river is seen the gun-boat *Tyler*.



Shiloh Church as it looks in the National Battlefield Park.

April 6. At daybreak three corps of Confederate infantry storm out of the woods and sweep into the southernmost Federal camps, catching Grant's men unprepared. Intense fighting centers around Shiloh Church as the Confederates sweep the Union line from that area. Despite heavy fire on their position, Union troops counterattack but slowly lose ground and fall back northeast toward Pittsburg Landing. Throughout the morning, Confederate brigades force Grant's troops into defensive positions at Shiloh Church, the Peach Orchard, Water Oaks Pond, and a treacherous thicket of oaks posthumously named the Hornets' Nest by fortunate survivors. That afternoon, while leading an attack on the left end of the Union's Hornets' Nest line, Johnston is shot in the right knee. The bullet severs an artery and the

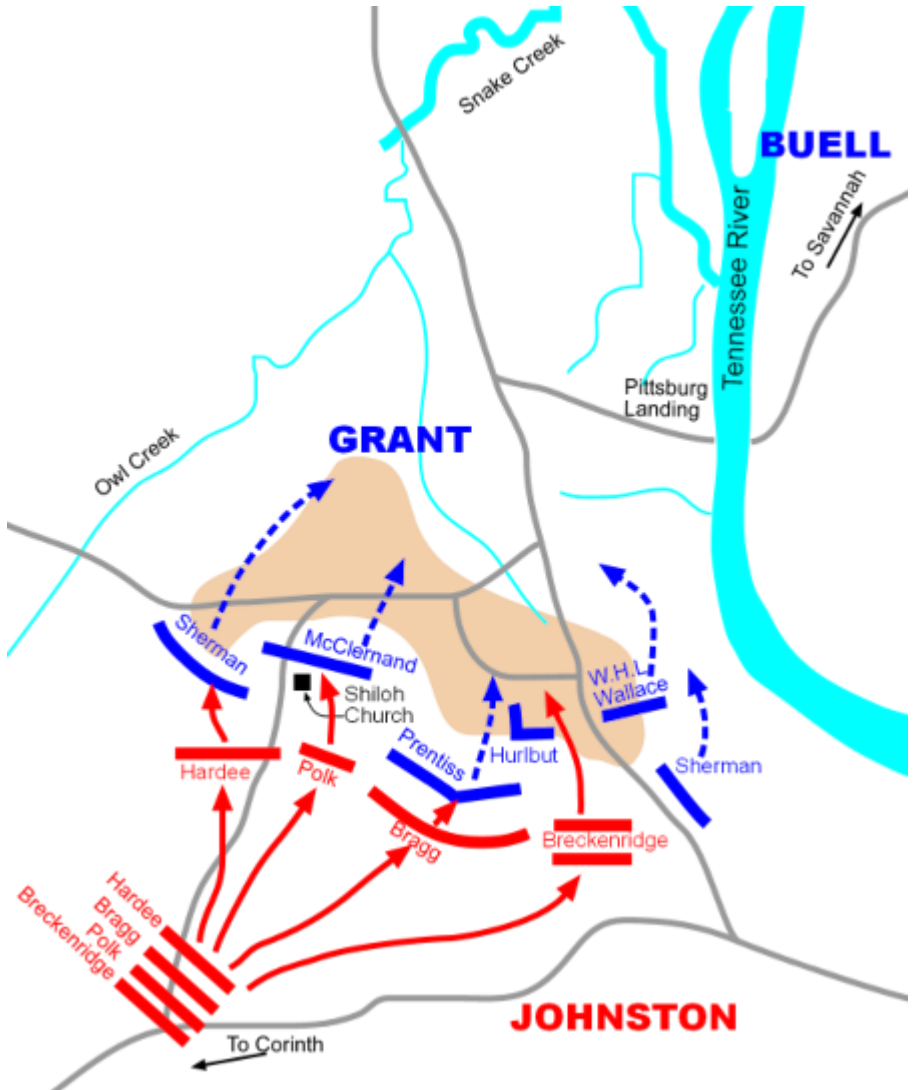
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commander bleeds to death. Gen. [Pierre G. T. Beauregard](#) is appointed the new Confederate commander. Believing his army victorious, Beauregard calls a halt to the attacks as darkness approaches. He is unaware that overnight Buell arrives with reinforcements for Grant. The Union army now has nearly 54,000 men near Pittsburgh Landing and outnumbers Beauregard's army of around 30,000.

April 7. Grant's army launches their attack at 6:00 a.m. Beauregard immediately orders a counterattack. The Confederates are ultimately compelled to fall back and regroup all along their line. Beauregard orders a second counterattack, which halts the Federals' advance but ultimately ends in a stalemate. The timberclads USS Tyler and USS Lexington provides naval artillery support to Grant's left flank from the Tennessee River. About 3:00 p.m., Beauregard realizes he is outnumbered and, having already suffered tremendous casualties, retreats toward Corinth.

On April 8, Grant dispatches Brig. Gen. [William T. Sherman](#) and Brig. Gen. Thomas J. Wood to ascertain the Confederates' position. At Fallen Timbers, six miles south of the battlefield, they encounter Rebel cavalry under Col. [Nathan Bedford Forrest](#). Forrest charges into the



Forrest charges into the Federals ahead of his own troops and is shot by Federal infantry at point-blank range. Although he will later require difficult surgery to remove the life-threatening bullet, Forrest's reckless aggression pays off. Federal forces flee in the direction of Pittsburgh Landing, allowing the Confederates to escape.

The loss of life on both sides at Shiloh—which, ironically, means place of peace in Hebrew—was staggering. But there were other sad consequences of the battle as well. Johnston's death was a damaging blow to Confederate morale, particularly for President [Jefferson Davis](#), who held Johnston high in personal and professional esteem. After the war, Davis wrote, "When Sidney Johnston fell, it was the turning point of our fate; for we had no other hand to take up his work in the West."

Grant, though victorious, was vilified in the press after being caught unprepared at Pittsburgh Landing on April 6. Critics called for him to be dismissed, but [Abraham Lincoln](#) defended his general, declaring "I can't spare this man, he fights." Corinth fell to the Union by the end of May, allowing Grant to focus on gaining control of the Mississippi River.

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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