

20

Capt Oscar F. Pinney

Whom this Grand Army Post was named after, was born Oct. 31st 1819, at Waterbury, Vt. The early part of his life was passed in Burlington, Vt. — at an early age he entered the Regular Army, and served his term: taking part in the Florida War. In 1849 he went to California, returning home in 1852, when he married and removed to Monroe, Wis. At the breaking out of the rebellion in 1861, he was residing on his farm near Monroe, and at the second call for troops, came to the front and, being highly recommended, received a Commission from Gov. Randall of Wis. Aug 23rd 1861, as Captain of Artillery. He organized his company in Sept. 1861, known as Pinney's 5th Wisconsin Battery L. A. — He having been a soldier in the U. S. service raised him up to a higher standard of soldierly bearing, and for a Captain possessed all the attributes of a brave man. — Men left their farms, workshops, offices and Homes Boys yet in their teens, fired by patriotic impulse, left the finishing of their education and some the development of their future occupations to enlist under the gallant

"THROUGH STONES RIVER"

Experiences of Green County WI, 5th Battery

Independent Light Artillery

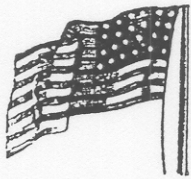
The Pinney Letters

Researched and Recorded

by

Nathan Roth

1972 - 1995



Adjutant General's Office,

Madison, Sept. 2^d, 1861.

To, Wm. C. & J. Pinney.

Sir

You having been Commissioned to raise a company of Artillery, this is to authorize you whenever you have enlisted forty men to put them in to quarters at the Expense of the State, at a rate not to exceed thirty Cents per day. You are further authorized, and requested to have your men mustered in to the State Service, by causing them to take the Oath as prescribed by Chapter Four, and Section Seven of the Laws of the Extra Session of 1861, any ^{other} Person authorized by Law to administer Oaths, can administer ^{the} Oath in this case.

Wm. L. H. Clegg
Adj. Genl.

Head Qrs Dept of the Miss.
Camp on Cornith Road
May 17. 1862

Special Field Order
No 64

x x x x x x x x

III. . . . In an engagement with the enemy the musicians will be detailed to carry the wounded from the field. and for that purpose will be subject to the orders of the officers of the medical Corps. They will be designated by some badge to be selected by the Genl of the Army Corps to which they belong and so long as they are able to perform this duty, no soldier will be permitted to leave his ranks on the plea of carrying off the wounded.

IV. . . . During a battle guards will be placed in the rear of each division. with orders to arrest all Skulkers. and to shoot down all who may desert the ranks from cowardice.

Let this order be rigorously enforced.

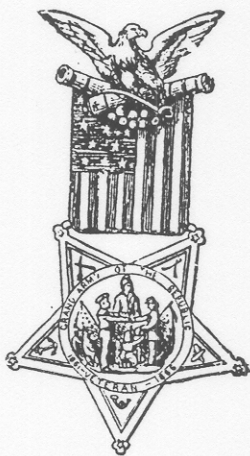
By order of
Major Genl Halleck
G. B. Keller

A. A. G.

Official Copy
J. Debatoyde
A. A. G.

feel we weave a record of him we thought
so well of in the days of warfare. — Our
worthy townsman Mr. J. B. Treat has pre-
sented a volume to this Post for such records
which is beautifully bound, costing some
\$70.00 — Hoping to hear from you soon I am
Yours Most Truly & Sincerely
Chas^r C. Cunningham.

5th Vis. Battery L. A.



G. F. Pinney Post, No. 102,

MONROE, WISCONSIN

Regular Meetings 1st and 3d Saturdays
of each month.

January 21st 1891
My dear Mrs Pinney:-

Pardon me for addressing you thus; - but as a boy of 19 I first-learned to regard your husband, and my Capt. with the warmest of feelings that a soldiers heart is susceptible to, when in battle, in camp, or on the march. I have been elected to the honored position in our Post as Historian, and I am the one to transcribe to the record an account, or Biography of him relating to his Military history, for which I send you a blank to fill out as soon as possible to assist me. I walked out this morning to his grave to learn the date of his birth, but it only gave the year &c. For a moment I was carried back to Stone River. I wish you would give me a little of his earlier history that the blank does not allude to. His service in the Mexican War; under whom &c.; and anything to

ordered to fall back from the overwhelming charge upon the Right Wing. before this order was given he had said to his men "Boys, Cheer." When he gave his command to "limber up" he was dismounted and fell wounded amid the battles roar and some of his fallen men and the hurried extrication of his dead and wounded horses from the Guns and Caissons. An attempt was made to carry him off the field but he requested earnestly to leave him and help save the Battery from capture, showing his unselfish devotion to his Command, seeing the advancing rebel line coming closer he was soon captured a wounded prisoner near one of his brass guns which was left on the field, the horses all being killed.

After the battle which lasted three days many of his company started out to find him which was in a rebel mansion used as a hospital and although suffering from his wound (leg) he showed much courage and said "To take care of ourselves, he would not be with us any more." Capt. Pinnney

"Right Wing" Army of the Cumberland Dec.
26th 1862 he moved forward to Holersville
Tenn. where he became engaged after which
he kept on moving with the Army until
the 29th when he advanced in line of
battle during the day while which
thus he could not entirely conceal
from some of his men the inner thoughts
of his war-torn heart on the night of the
30th the General was in a cedar thicket
near the enemy's lines. - his orders were
that the caissons should be down
by the guns the horses were not to
be unhitched - no fires were allowed to
be made and all was to be in readiness
at a moment's warning - A great battle
was pending. On the morning of the 31st
found him ready for action and his
Command to follow him in the jaws of
death: he had given orders for his
Lieutenants "to look well to their Sections;
that it would be a day when men's souls
would be tried." We were placed in
positions in a field on the front line
quite early in the morning and became
heavily engaged, doing his part to hold

the enemy with the First Section (10 Pdr Parrott Guns) On the afternoon of the 8th he was ordered in position when the battle was raging fearfully, and a most terrific Artillery duel took place his Guns became so hot that he ordered to "cease firing" The action lasted after dark, he having taken a prominent part: when he ordered the Guns "limbered up" awaiting orders to retire, as the Infantry support had fallen back: - when suddenly in the darkness a party of horsemen rode up from the woods in his rear and fired a few shots then galloped off towards the rebel lines Capt. Pinney was standing near the 3rd Gun, and in a loud commanding tone gave the order "Unlimber and give them Canister by G-d" his command echoed over the Battle field of Perryville, and wounded men still on the field in his front heard it with trepidation. Capt. Pinney won for himself at Perryville and on the campaign highest praise and renown. After the battle the pursuit was still continued, he followed to Crab Orchard, Ky. thence returning to Nashville arriving Nov. 16th 1862.

become efficient Artillerists. On March 15
1862 he was ordered to St. Louis Mo. and
the 19th embarked on steamer, sailing down
the Mississippi River landing at Bird's
Point, thence took care for Sycamore Mo.
thence marched to New Madrid Mo. where
he reported to Gen. Pope. In the early part
of April he received his guns, horses and
equipments and loaded them on steamer
Denmark, being ordered to Hamburg, on
the Tennessee River, from thence moved south
towards Corinth, Miss. - May 19th 1862 occupied
a position near Farmington. - After the
evacuation of Corinth moved June 23rd
to Jacinto Miss. - on the 29th marched to
Repley, returning to Jacinto July 4th 1862
Aug. 14th he proceeded to Iuka, Miss.
remaining until 21st - thence to Eastport
and crossed the Tennessee River - Marched to
Florence Ala. arriving the 24th thence to
Columbia, Franklin and Murfreesboro Tenn.
enroute for Nashville to join the forces of
Gen. Bell in pursuit of Bragg's Army in
Kentucky. Reached Nashville Tenn. Sept.
8th then marched to Louisville Ky. where he
arrived the 26th On Oct. 1st marched again.

Ft. Thompson.
April 5, 1862.

Dear Eliza,

I received your letter yesterday, it is the only one. I am pleased to hear you are all well. I am well but a good many of the officers and men are complaining. Last night the Confederates a gun boat, ran the blockade above us. They came under the guns of the enemy, 60 guns fired at him but not one hit. Today our batteries have been firing quite fast across the river. It is said that I have not got my guns yet that I shall be left in command of the fort here after the army moves. Some one has got to be left and I expect they will leave me but do not know for certain.

There are no guns that I can get, only those heavy 32 (pdr.?) but at all events the time has arrived for something decisive. It is hard to tell what the result will be. Both armies are large but our (?) are better. Since the guns got here everything looks (?) Here the trees are in blossom. I would like to know how you get along

Apr. 3, 1862.

I have waited until now, hoping to get news from you but failed this mail. It comes regularly and our men all get letters from Monroe. If you are sick get someone to write for you. I am well but there are lots of our men complaining. We buried 2 men yesterday but not from our company.

Island No 10 is not taken yet but I can hear a cannon every half minute and that shakes the ground where we are. My quarters is within 10 ft. of the bank of the river. The hardest thing is to come off in the course of three days, as there is every thing going on that indicates it.

We shoot at the rebels every day
of the river. They set one on fire -
a splendid house. The river is so
narrow that our sentinels and
theirs were talking and swearing
at each other. One man was killed
on our side and never hurt with
a ball. We could find no mark on
him.

It is not likely this army will stay
here much longer. Now if you get
this I would like an answer.
It seems as tho some of my letters
would get to Monroe. This is the
4th I have written since we came

to Ft. Thompson, New Madrid, Mo.
Pinnac's Battery, No 5 Wis. Art.

Fort Thompson
March 28, 1862.

Dear Eliza:

As I have a little time to write I will improve it, The men are all out below us on the river digging trenches and throwing up earth works. The enemy is one mile from us a planting a battery opposite where we built one yesterday and while I am writing the guns have opened on the enemy. There has got to be a desperate fight before the place is taken.

If you take the Chi. Tribune that paper has a correspondent here with us - You will be sure to get the news. The company is in as good health as could be expected.

I do not know how long we shall stay here. I have not heard from you since I left home. do not know why. The mails

here are quite regular now. Some of our men brot us bouquets from the gardens here yesterday. The weather is very pleasant here now.

TRANSCRIBERS EXPLANATION

Civil War costume. The baby for whom he suggested the name Nebuchadnezzar was named Oscar. I do not know that he ever saw him, for he died in infancy.

My grandfather came from Burlington, Vt. or near there - perhaps Winski Falls.

My grandmother was Eliza Meakin, also a Vermonter. They were married in 1853, I believe, when my grandmother was 17.

I think she told me once that my grandfather was seventeen years older than she. My grandmother was born Oct 19, 1836 and died June 17, 1919.

My grandfather had also another brother named Orlo who came west to Wisconsin.

Virginia W. Kyes.

3594 - 4th Ave

San Diego, Calif.

May 10, 1956.

To the Wisconsin State Historical Society:

I copied these letters in 1921 when I was working on a Civil War project. In reading them today, I am very sure that the modern spelling tho, thru, enuf, etc. are my own and not my grandfather's. I was copying for content only.

I may explain that of the people mentioned Philo was Philo Pinney, his brother. Dora was his eldest daughter, Maria his second daughter. Dora was my mother and I have heard her tell many times of remembering her visit to her father's camp before he left Wisconsin when she was six years old. Her vivid memory was of eating there from camp dishes and drinking from a tin cup. The doll which he mentions sending her is in the possession of my sister, Mrs. J. P. Gray, in its original

Bragg's Big Mistake

Colonel Hazen saw to his friend Garesche's burial. Rosecrans talked to his men, who were kept awake by the raid. They should persevere, food was scarce and ammunition for one day would be resupplied by tomorrow's trains. 2 January, had Beattys and the guns of the third Wisconsin Artillery on a hill west of the river, under cover, facing an open field. Breckenridge was staggered by Bragg's order to attack such a strong position. He protested only to feel Bragg's anger. Brigadier General Roger Hanson would like to have killed Bragg. This did not happen and Bragg's orders carried. Hanson became the 4th General, C.S.A., to be fatally wounded at Stone's River. Hazen and Cruft of the Round Forest, Negley's Division, are now east of the river. Crittendon's Artillery, Mendenhall, assembled 58 guns inside the crook of the river, west of it, and on a hill. The battle ensued with the Union troops being beaten back by Breckenridges solid ranks. The exultant Rebel troops, smelling victory fell into the trap, Maidenhall's cannon fired 100 rounds per minute, "Hells door was opened with the Devil himself there to greet them". Great swaths were cut in the Confederate ranks. Six color bearers of the 18th Tennessee Infantry fell there. The tide of battle now turned in favor of the Union. The Confederate battery was captured and the Rebels completely routed. C.S.A. Breckenridge, with tears in his eyes, was like a raging wounded lion. It was 4:45 2 January, 1863. The Federals, too, had enough. The sleet and rain stopped at dusk and the armies tried for another cold rest. The Confederate's charge had cost them 1800 casualties in 20 to 40 minutes, under the Union artillery and infantry.

3 January, 1863, Rosecrans is reinforced and stronger than ever, and was ready to do more battle. Bragg at first thought he would fight another day but after having some common sense talked into by his Generals, he prudently decided to withdraw. The Battle of Stones River was over. Rosecrans finally realized he had a victory. - **BUT WHAT PRICE VICTORY!**

The battle was over but not its effects. On the field and in makeshift hospitals men were dying by the dozens. Some wounded would live, they were carried in from where they fell. The dead must be buried. Bodies and parts of bodies were gathered. Identification was a problem, especially for the Union burial crews. Out of necessity, poor Confederates stripped dead of their clothing. When the clothing was removed from the soldiers so was their identification. Some Southern boys paid a heavy price for their new found dress. Some would be mistakenly shot in battle by their comrades because they were wearing the blue. The impact of all this would go on for days, weeks and years as messages and personal effects reached families back home. The wounded animals that had no choice in being in war, must be attended to, horses and mules, badly hurt were shot in an act of mercy, many an officer had tears in their eyes as they bade farewell to a faithful steed. Riderless animals, running loose had to be caught and some with minor wounds would live. The dead animals would be piled, burned, or buried.

Perryville

7 October 1862 - Bardstown, Kentucky the battery took part in a skirmish with a very lively exchange.

10 October, Captain Pinney writes home after fighting in the Battle of Perryville (Chaplin Hills). This is another battle that kind of "happened". Both Union General Don Carlos Buell and C.S.A. Braxton Bragg were commanding thirsty armies and they clashed over pools of water. Commander Post is ill so Gooding takes over the command in McCooks Corps where our Battery is.

On 8 October, the bloody affair begins. The 5th Battery is in a position at the extreme front without adequate infantry support. One account says they charged their guns to the muzzles with grape and canister delivering fire into the faces of C.S.A. General Liddel's men, some of the cannons were so hot the captain had to order "Cease Fire". They stuck it out when others had retreated and then slowly withdrew stopping occasionally to get up and fire a few "reminders" towards the enemy. His letter to Eliza says "My battery saved McCooks Division from being destroyed". General McCook personally thanked the 5th Battery for their magnificent job. He made Pinney Chief of Artillery above the objections of lesser officers as they disliked losing good officers to their command. McCooks Corps took a terrible beating as Buell didn't engage two thirds of his army to help him. Buell was so far from the front he didn't know what had happened until the battle was over. McCook started with around 13,000 men losing 672 killed, 2,202 wounded, 425 missing totalling 3,299 or twenty-five percent of its force. The battery seriously wounded C.S.A. General Wood with a shell fragment on the head. William Rufus Terrill, Brigadier General, one of the finest U.S. Artilleryman, was killed in the afternoon in the battle, Pinney reports one man killed, one wounded (Smith) and the loss of three horses. Pinney writes "it is an awful sight to go around and see the legs and arms and the men with no heads on them." He got his guns out safely and says he has as good a battery as there is in the service. The men must mind and by making them lie down during the fight certainly saved lives. After the battle the horrible job of gathering the wounded and burying the dead before the hogs and buzzards ate the bodies. The next day after the battle squire Bottoms, a gentleman farmer, found 400 dead confederates in his field. He got what help he could to identify as many as possible and dug a large pit for a common grave. This writer visited the site 21 March 1995 and wondered at the difficulty of maneuvering over such rolling terrain. Sometimes when I think of ranks of men marching toward each other shooting as they go I can't help but compare the lemming, to the sea, in mass suicide. Perryville had no great victor. Both sides were terrible mauled with total losses on both sides totally 7000 casualties. However, the Union came out ahead as Bragg was forced to give up thoughts of gaining Kentucky and certainly, Ohio. Bragg was counting on Kentucky citizens to volunteer to augment his forces. This did not transpire. Because he did not forcefully pursue Bragg, Buell was relieved of his command and General Rosecrans will now command the army of the Cumberland.

The Horses - Soldiers in Camp

The horses required constant care, much forage and grain when available, and frequent watering. After a dusty or muddy march the teams were curried and rubbed down. The Farrier trimmed hoofs, checked stone bruises, sore dew claws and saw that feet were properly shod. A horse with a bellyache got a shot of Epsom salts, guaranteed to kill or cure! Hot weather harness gall was soothed with salve. Harness was oiled and broken straps replaced, wagons and cannons were jacked up, wheels removed and axles greased. The wheelwright-blacksmith replaced broken spokes and felloes and painted them properly. The cannon required their rifling cleaned of carbon and lead from some types of shot.

Once in awhile the artillery boys had to deal with a "Hammerhead". These ornery animals were sneaky and could deliver a nasty kick or bite when least expected. This became a duel of wits and if a mule was involved the men often lost, Oh! for the interesting life of a teamster.

The artilleryman in normal camp life had more duties than the infantryman. Horses and mules with big appetites made lots of work. When feed was scarce fodder was foraged from fields, under the oaths of the land owners. Legitimate government feed purchases were made whenever possible, horsepower kept the 5th Battery moving.

a farming. I guess it is hard enough. Tell
me if they got the seed wheat, or enough
to sow. Tell Dora to be a good girl and
she shall have the cornstalk fiddle and
if I stay here all summer Maria may
come down and see me for there are lots
of houses to live in at the fort. It will
take only 2 days and nights to travel.
When we came here there was not
a family in the village. Now there are
10 or 12 and they look as tho they had
not a friend in the world and some
of them ought not to have one. Answer
this as soon as you get it and tell
me the news and what you hear if
at all from Burlington.

Truly yours

O. F. Pinney.

Fort Thompson,
New Madrid, Mo.
April 7, 1862.

Dear Eliza:

I thought I would drop a few lines to you as the fight is over and I am not dead nor hurt yet. It commenced Sunday morning about 10 o'clock, right close to where we were quartered, their batteries and ours only about a mile apart, we had 2 gunboats and six guns heavy on our side with sharpshooters. It lasted that day until pitch dark, the next morning commenced again. We opened on them and silenced their Batteries all along the line, about 9 o'clock, they went over the river and spiked their guns what were not spiked by them, then came down some transports thru a canal that had been dug by the troops unaware to them and today the surrender of Island 10 with 100 cannon and 5000 prisoners. On our side we did not lose a man. At New Madrid I came very near losing my horse but did not. He stood more than 20 shots, when I suppose he would be safe, shell after shell

the river is so high that we cannot operate down the Mass. The whole country is overflowed. It has rained here almost incessantly for a week and is raining now. We lay 4 days in the mud awaiting a boat and the consequence is that a great many men are sick in the company and some I shall have to leave. We get no letters yet altho there is a boat that has got letters on it in the fleet. But we have not got up with it yet. We have 20000 troops with us. I want you to hold on about a week after you get this before you write. You will probably hear from some of the others where we are or where to direct to.

Love to you all. No more this time - Truly yours, D. F. Penney.

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steamer to see the prisoners. There are
6 steamers fetching them up to our
camp and of all the sickly, God-forsaken
people I ever saw, they look like them.
They will all be sent north very soon
perhaps to Wisconsin. We have
10 acres of them just thickly covered.
Write me and let me know how
you are. No more this time
Yours truly

O. H. Pruney

The paymaster has come. He will
pay off two months. I do not know
how I can get the money home
unless I find some one I can trust.
There's no express here. Things
may alter shortly.

On Board Steamer ~~Jenny~~
Up the River Tennessee
April 19, 1862.

Dear Eliza.

As I have a few minutes to
spare I thought I would write a few
lines. All of our old Pope's Division
is on our road to ~~reinforce~~ ^{reinforce} Halleck,
preparatory to the attack on Corinth.

exploded close to him. Some of our men
were all buried up in the trenches at
different times but no one hurt. While
waiting news comes that there are
6000 instead of 5000 and more are
coming in. We caught the floating

Battery last night. It had seven
heavy guns on board. I took a good
artillery sword which I will give to
you if you want it and a good
many other things that I shall fetch
home if possible, or send if I have
a chance and the best of it was
there was no one killed or hurt on
our side and the firing was just as
fast as it could be and so close
that you could see and talk with
the Secesh. It is hard to tell what
orders will be now as there is a very
large force waiting orders since the
fight here in the town.

April 8.

I have just been down to the lowest
point occupied on the river, in a

In Camp on the Courth Road.
9 miles from Courth.
May 3, 1862.

Dear Eliza:

I received a letter dated Apr 19 that makes 2 I have had. I have not written for 10 days on account of having so much to do and on account of the mail being detained so that no news would get out as there is no one allowed to come into the lines until after the fight. We are 150 000 strong and if they fight at all there will be a big one. I have my battery complete - 6 guns. I occupy when in line with baggage teams a half a mile and am detached as the reserve in Popes Div. so the fight will probably commence tomorrow and we move tomorrow to the front of the lines.

I was over to the battle ground at Pittsburg Landing. There the stench was horrible, the dead soldiers - 80 of their heads were sticking out of the ground and others legs and arms. So shallow were they buried. I have had a ^{DIARRHEA} Diarrhea the last ten days quite bad. The Tennessee water does not agree with me but I have been