

5th Wisconsin Battery of Light Artillery  
Captain Oscar F. Pinney

This battery went with the Army of General Pope. They were at the Battle of Stone River, and participated in the siege of Corinth, Mississippi in the spring of 1862 and the Battle of Corinth where the Rebels tried to take back Corinth, in October of 1862. Many letters were published in the paper from this battery, usually signed B.J.B. which, in looking through the regimental listings, the transcriber feels to have been Byron J. Bullard. Some of these letters are transcribed below. Several other letters reproduced are from William H. Ball.

<http://www.civilwarhome.com/stones.htm>

<http://www.nps.gov/archive/vick/camptrail/sites/Mississippi-sites/Corinth,siegeMS.htm>

**Monroe Sentinel, August 28, 1861**

O.F. Pinney of this place who was in the U.S. Army for five years, and who was in the Florida and Mexican War, has been commissioned by the government of this state captain of artillery to raise a company of 150 men for three years or the war.

**Monroe Sentinel, September 11, 1861**

Captain Pinney's Company has already sworn into service 107 members and a considerable more have expressed their intention to join. O.F. Pinney has been elected captain, Washington Hill as 1<sup>st</sup> lieutenant, Charles Humphrey as 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant and Almond Smith as 3<sup>rd</sup> lieutenant.

**Monroe Sentinel, October 31, 1861**

William Resa has joined Pinney's Company in the capacity of cook to the officers.

**Monroe Sentinel, November 13, 1861**

We publish below a letter received from a member of Pinney's Company of artillery who enlisted from this county and calls the attention of the proper authorities to it. The county board now in session will undoubtedly make some provisions for the families of volunteers from this county and if the law passed last spring providing additional pay does not cover the cases of all volunteers from this state it will undoubtedly be attended to at the next session of the state legislature.

Camp Utley, Racine, Nov. 7, 1861  
Editor of the Sentinel:

The following is a copy of a letter received by J.A. Allen, Esq., Justice of the Peace at Palmyra, Jefferson Co., Wisconsin which he received from the Secretary of State on applying for the \$5 due to my family.

Dear Sir:

I return the enclosed application for the reason that volunteers in artillery companies are not entitled under the law to the extra pay.

H.P. Harvey, Secretary of State

My family is suffering for the necessities of life; my child is sick and I have nothing to help them with. I do not care a damn how they use me but when my family is suffering and myself placed in a position where I can give them no aid it works hard upon me. My wife moved from Green County to Palmyra to live with her father for the duration. Her father is very poor and cannot keep her unless he is paid for it. If there is anything raised in Green County for the aid of volunteers a little help to my family would be gratefully received.

Yours,

S. Mountford

We think there is some mistake about the facts in this case. Section One of the law makes provisions for the extra pay for the families of volunteers.

**Monroe Sentinel, February 26, 1862**

Captain Pinney from Camp Utley is in town.

**Monroe Sentinel, April 2, 1862**

Letter from Pinney's Battery:

(Captain Oscar Pinney from Monroe, 5<sup>th</sup> Battery of Artillery, Green County boys; the writer signs his initials only: B.J.B.—in looking through the roster, the transcriber feels this individual is Byron J. Bullard)

New Madrid, March 28

At 4:00 pm the boat rounded to St. Louis and we were soon drawn up in line on the levee and our arrival drew together a large crowd of spectators who glanced at us with admiration but no cheers were given. At 6:00 we took up our line of march to Camp Benton situated about five miles from the city, preceded by our band. Our march through the city was quite an ovation. The people flocked to their doors and windows and Union flags were displayed freely. On our way, we passed the fortifications erected by Fremont to guard the approach of the city; some ugly guns were mounted on them.

A little after dark we arrived at Camp Benton, a tired set of boys. We were soon shown to our quarters and after eating a little boiled beef and dry crackers we were soon asleep on the rough boards with only a single blanket over us.

We got up in the morning on Monday, 17<sup>th</sup> inst., somewhat refreshed but still tired and regaled ourselves with a good breakfast and a view of Camp Benton. We saw the 14<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Regiment there. In the afternoon, we received our marching orders for New Madrid, 275 miles down the river. Again we had to pick up and the next morning at 9:00 the three Wisconsin batteries were ready for marching. We were soon in line and a fine regimental band escorted us out of camp. We arrived at the levee in good order and were soon on board the boat *John H. Dickey*.

We expected to leave immediately but were detained on account of some repairs being done to the boat until the next day. The boat the *City of Memphis* lay just above us, having on board some of the heroes of Fort Donelson, our sick and wounded, and a few of those who fell fighting for their country on that bloody battlefield. It was a sad sight to see them borne away in ambulances; some to hospitals and others to honored graves.

On the morning of the 19<sup>th</sup> the boat got up steam and at 11:00 moved away from the levee with four batteries of artillery on board and aided by a rapid current and a good head of steam the great city of St. Louis was soon receding from our view. We passed Sulphur Springs at 2:00 where soldiers were still guarding a railroad bridge and they waved their hats to us as we passed. At 4:00 we passed St. Genievieve and at 6:00 the town of Chester, situated on the bluffs of the Illinois shore, just below the old town of Kaskaskia. We passed Cape Girardeau at 11:00. We landed at Commerce where we met the steamboat *Gladiator* loaded with guns and prisoners taken at Ft. Donelson bound for St. Louis.

We arrived at Cairo at 5:00 on March 20. We remained there about two hours learning that it was unsafe to proceed further down the river. We crossed to Bird's Point where we disembarked and took the cars for Sykestown, 24 miles distant. Sgt. O'Brien and others were left to attend to our baggage and away we went.

Our route for some distance lay through a low, wet tract of country where pickets were stationed along the route, about the first intimation we had that we were in enemy territory. We passed Charleston, Missouri at 12:00 and arrived at the terminus of the Alton and Fulton Railroad at 2:00 pm where we tumbled out of the cars in a hurry, unslung knapsacks, piled them up and then formed in line and started for New Madrid some 32 miles distant on foot, feeling a little ticklish at not having any arms with us. We started off on a pretty brisk walk, notwithstanding we were cautioned against it by Captain Pinney, he having been there before.

Two companies of cavalry were stationed at Sykestown and pickets were stationed all along the road and there seemed to be no end to the train of government wagons drawn by mules; there was a string of them between Sykestown and New Madrid.

Evening closed upon us and we had not yet arrived in camp. Rains set in and the roads became muddy and the most of us had not got within two miles of General Pope's headquarters but we deemed it prudent to go no further. The four companies were strung

along a road for a distance of about five miles; some by the road side, others in old buildings, tired and hungry and foot sore. Captain Pinney walked along all the way, his horse having been left by accident at Bird's point and the other officers gave up their horses to those who were too fatigued to walk.

We had earlier heard heavy cannonading down the river about 3:00 and supposed it to be at Island #10.

Friday morning the 21<sup>st</sup> we got up feeling pretty sore and we satisfied our hunger the best we could and then formed in line and started on. We soon arrived at General Pope's headquarters. We halted there one hour just long enough to go to the fort at New Madrid about five miles distant on the Mississippi River. On our way we passed over the recent battleground much evidence of which still remained. We are now occupied barracks previously used by our troops. The probability is that we shall be turned into heavy artillery so as to man the heavy guns in the forts along the river.

Very Truly Yours,  
B.J.B.

**Monroe Sentinel, May 21, 1862**

Letter from Pinney's Battery  
May 13, 1862  
In Camp Near Hamburg

On Wednesday morning last we were encamped seven miles out from Hamburg. During the day we moved on three miles further. On Tuesday the reserve artillery and five regiments of infantry went three miles beyond, crossing two swamps and taking post upon rising ground. We advanced third in position but were suddenly ordered back to the camp we had just left. It seems that General Pope had been informed that the Rebels would attack him in force during the next day. He therefore ordered all but six regiments to fall back to take a better position while the latter were to act as a decoy and lead the enemy into the ambushade thus prepared for them.

About noon on Friday the cannonading commenced on our front. We were ordered to be in readiness to take part. After waiting impatiently for two hours, the command to advance came. As we pressed on the firing ceased. The enemy had advanced in large force from 15 to 20,000 strong and had out flanked our advance, which, after a show of resistance, fell back behind the troops forming the ambushade. Here it was that Pope had expected the real conflict to take place. But they were too cautious. Had they attempted to take that position they would have been annihilated. We had more than 25 pieces bearing on the only road by which the could have advanced.

Four of our guns under the command of Lts. Hill and Gardner were ordered to the extreme front to defend a bridge over which the Rebels must move in order to attack us. We posted two of the guns on each side of the road within five rods of the bridge in such

a position as to sweep it. Though so close, our guns were hidden so that the first intimation of our presence would have been the opening of a tremendous cross fire. We were supported by a regiment of infantry which lay concealed in the underbrush and trees surrounding the guns.

We waited for them all that evening. We laid by our guns during the night and Saturday found us ready for action, Sunday passed and we were still at our post. How we wished for a brush with the Rebels. We would have given our best dinner for a chance to sweep that bridge while crowded with Secesh. But they did not come. Hence, late Sunday evening we went back to camp.

As we passed out on Friday we met the retreating regiments. First came the cavalry which charged upon and took the Rebel battery but were obliged to abandon it because they were not supported and were out flanked. They were covered with dust and sweat, many had lost their hats and several, their horses. Two were supporting a wounded comrade. As we passed him, I heard him say to the men near him: "Go back, boys, rally, boys, rally". Poor fellow, his wound had made him deranged. Soon an ambulance passed with another soldier wounded in the head.

Next came the 8<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin. How mad they were!! "Don't run like the Iowa boys! If we had you fellows along we surely would have cleared them out!" We passed several other regiments, hot, dusty and tired, next came the ambulances, cavalry, artillery, all falling back.

Pope's orders were not to fire except to protect his men; hence the right wing and center only were engaged.

We have plenty to eat and are well and hearty. Our clothes are not too warm as the nights are still quite cool. I don't think there will be a fight here for some time to come.

Will H. Ball

Halleck's Army

Camp between Pittsburg and Corinth

May 3, 1862

(Transcriber's Note: This letter is from Asa C. Price, 18<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Company B—they have left the area of Shiloh and are approaching Corinth)

Being authorized from our commander to report for the Wisconsin press and believing it to be the best medium of transmitting intelligence of the 18<sup>th</sup> Regiment Wisconsin Volunteers, I proceed to lay before the citizens of Green County through your paper the condition and whereabouts of that portion comprising Captain Jackson's command.

Having marched and participated and suffered in the arrangement of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> April (transcriber's note—the Battle of Shiloh or Pittsburg Landing) of which you are doubtless well advised, we were in a semi-disorganized condition for the want of experienced

officers. The timely arrival of Captain Jackson who had been confined by illness in Milwaukee happily effected a change for the better and that experienced officer being superior in command was soon acting in the capacity of colonel of the 18<sup>th</sup>.

2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. S.B. Boynton of Monroe conducted himself throughout the terrible ordeal of the great battle like a gallant soldier and who won a beautiful trophy by his individual prowess and is now acting quartermaster of the regiment.

May 6, 1862—Our army has advanced another five miles. We are now in close proximity to the enemy and tomorrow may bring on an engagement. Our line of battle presents a front of six or seven miles. The proportions of the army are magnificent. We have over 2,500 pieces of artillery all of the most approved description. Heavy siege guns are being constantly sent forward although the roads are in a most impassable condition and the enemy works must be indeed formidable to be able to withstand our cannonade. Ere this reaches you in all probability the conflict will have commenced and possibly terminated. The army feels a great triumph awaits its actions. The men are enthusiastic and eager to determine the contest by one decisive battle.

We need more comfortable quarters than it has been possible to obtain under the present circumstances; our march here to for being through an unbroken forest of heavy oak timber and the recent and prolonged rains have saturated the ground so as to make it unhealthy to rest upon.

Let me say a more praiseworthy officer than Captain Jackson cannot be found in the service. Always attentive and careful of the health of the command, he has won the love and respect of all. The same may be said of Orderly James Walkey, now 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant, whose energetic character and soldier like qualities are sure to lead to his advancement.

May 7—Our division has received orders to march this morning at 9:00 and activity in camp is a sure prelude to a forward movement. Officers and men are speculating on the possibility of Beauregard (transcriber's note—Confederate general, commander of Corinth) fighting us. My individual opinion is that we will fight to the death. If this be true the result of the battle will bring desolation and mourning to many loving, anxious hearts. I cannot write more at present but hope in a few days to give you the details of a glorious victory.

A.C. Price

(Transcriber's note—A battle did not follow—General Beauregard fooled the Yankees who were besieging Corinth and snuck out so when the Yankees arrived they found the Rebels gone. Later in October of 1862 the Confederate forces came back and the result was the Battle of Corinth.)

### **Monroe Sentinel, June 18, 1862**

Letter from W.H.B. (probably W.H.Ball), Camp Near Boonville, Mississippi June 7, Pinney's Battery

Like a clap of thunder from a clear sky, the news of the evacuation of Corinth fell upon us. Only the previous day the enemy had resisted our advance so determinedly and well that we were led to believe that all the available troops in the southwest had been concentrated at Corinth; and they lay behind the entrenchments which rumor said were impregnable, they would fight desperately for their lives. We believed that General Halleck had a full and accurate knowledge of the strength of the Rebel Army and that he expected a fierce opposition.

For six long weeks he had been gathering a force of 200,000 men, an army of all the choice troops in the war. He had marched us slowly and cautiously from the Tennessee River to within three miles of the entrenchments of the foe, driving in their pickets step by step, carefully guarding against a surprise. The evidence that we expected an attack was overwhelming.

All this precious time was spent and these grand preparations made for what? To meet an enemy who had been leisurely retreating by rail for the last four weeks. When the army advanced lo! The bird had flown, the nest still warm but entirely empty—not even an egg shell left.

Jack Sutherland has been with us several days; his presence does us much good, nearly as a furlough to Monroe and has a less depleting effect on the treasury. He can tell you all about us.

We are now camped about 21 miles from Corinth. We cannot account for the slow movement of the army.

### **Monroe Sentinel, June 23, 1862**

Letter from Pinney's Battery, 5<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Artillery  
Camp near Jacinto, Mississippi, July 5

We remained at Camp Clear Water ten days. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> we marched to Jacinto and camped two miles east of that place. Our road lay along the summit of high winding ridges where steep sides were covered with heavy growth pine, chestnut and oak. But little rain had fallen, hence the crops are poor. As we ascended the hill before entering Jacinto our eyes were greeted by the sight of the Union flag "Old Glory" which had been spread to the breeze where but a short time before the Rebel flag flew, after a march of fifteen miles on the Memphis Road. The evening of the following day found our tents pitched at Ripley. This place is 27 miles west of Rienzi and east of Holly Springs.

On the 30<sup>th</sup>, our whole division was mustered for inspection and then sent west to Holly Springs. Long after dark we camped in a clearing. Hastily preparing and distributing cups of coffee we lay down, tired and sleepy. We were aroused at daylight and started back to Ripley from where we had just come. Halting long enough to get dinner we traveled along east to Rienzi. Again our march continued until long after dark. We went supper-less to bed—partly because water was hard to come by and partly because we

needed rest more than food. On the next day we traveled 21 miles and went to Rienzi and camped on the very place from which we had moved a few days previous.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> we came to within two miles of Jacinto, turned directly south on the road towards Fulton and camped one half miles from the route upon which we had been traveling.

Same Camp, July 13

Yesterday we were startled by the sad announcement from the company hospital near by of the death of our comrade John Ross. He had been unwell for several weeks but it was not considered dangerous until the day before he died. We feel his loss the more keenly as he is the first one taken from our battery since it was formed. He was a good and true and faithful soldier.

Dressing his remains in a uniform we placed him in a coffin. In the evening, followed by the company, we bore him to the grave. This is on a grass covered, gently sloping knoll overlooking the clearing in which we are camped. After the funeral services were performed by the attending chaplain, the coffin was lowered into the grave and the earth thrown over it. Are not those who die of disease in the Army entitled to as much praise as those who die in battle?

Wm. H. Ball

### **Monroe Sentinel, July 2, 1862**

Pinney's Battery, 5<sup>th</sup> Battery Wisconsin Artillery  
Camp Clear Springs, Mississippi June 17, 1862

The 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of this month witnessed a severe conflict between Union forces under the command of Brigadier General Davis—part of which we are—and recession dust posted along the road for a distance of twenty miles. It was commenced at early dawn by the advance of our cooks armed with kitchen furniture. At sunrise it again became more general. Some of our infantry, cavalry, and artillery were outflanked and surrounded by a dense cloud of the enemy. All day the strife continued. Late in the afternoon there was a mutual cessation of hostilities and each side slept on its arms. At dawn the struggle began again. The enemy brought out all their reserves and fought with the energy of despair and at the close of the day we had taken the position, driven them in confusion before us. They were unable to withstand our bayonet charge and fled like sheep before our steady advance. Deserters reported that General Beauregard was there in person and said he would water his horse in the Tennessee River or in hell. The enemy were badly cut up and we took many prisoners.

To drop a simile these were weary days. Our division on the morning of the 11<sup>th</sup> made a retrograde movement and passed through the village of Rienzi and Danville, crossing the headwaters of the Wolfe River and encamped near by.

On the following day we resumed our march and in the afternoon reached our present encampment. Both days were very warm. There has been but little rain for some days so the much traveled road was covered with dust. Scarcely a breath or air was stirring. At every well our boys dismounted and almost fought for the large drinks of pure water.

Our present camp is not far from the Wolfe River and about one mile distant from the main road. We are close by a pure spring, the best water we have found since we left Wisconsin.

For nearly a week we were camped in the woods some twenty miles south of Corinth. We lay on a broad bank of a heavily timbered ridge which ran east and west. The trees were principally oak, and shaded the ground so completely as to keep it entirely free of underbrush. We raked up all the dead leaves and burned them for both our safety and comfort.

You must not blame the boys too harshly for playing cards to while away the time. When Uncle Sam has no work for us we cannot sleep all the time and cannot go far from camp. We have nothing to read except now and then a stray novel of the Dick Turpin order and once in a while a newspaper containing news which is over a week old. If our friends in Green County want to do something for us, send us some magazines of the day such as the Atlantic, Blackwater, or Harpers, also two or three good weeklies.

W. H. Ball

On Tuesday evening last week, (first initial illegible) J. Sutherland and T.W. Hall returned directly from our army south of Corinth bringing with them William McCracken, Joseph Hall, Thomas W. Jones and ----- Elliott, sick soldiers, members of Battery 5, Wisconsin Artillery. (Pinney's Battery) The sick of the company are under the care of the brigade surgeon at Farmington. Mr. Sutherland was at Corinth on the same day of its occupation by Pope's division and was out to the very front of the army within three miles of Boonesville and started for home on the 5<sup>th</sup>. The general opinion among the officers and men of the army in regard to the evacuation of Corinth was that Halleck was outgeneraled in permitting Beauregard to get away with his whole army and all the material. The fortified position of the enemy was outflanked by Pope's division for some time before the evacuation took place.

### **Monroe Sentinel, July 30, 1862**

A tribute of respect was paid by members of Pinney's Battery, 5<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Battery of Artillery at a camp near Jacinto, Mississippi on July 15, 1862:  
Died, on July 12, 1862 after a short but severe illness, John Ross, 24 years of age, a private in Battery #5, Wisconsin Volunteers. The deceased was a citizen of Mt. Pleasant,

Green County. In the death of our comrade, we recognize the loss of a warm friend and true soldier—one of our best. We tender to the family and friends of the deceased our heart felt sympathy.

Elijah Booth, Jr.

C.A. Smith

Daniel Titus

Byron J. Bullard

William S. Davenport

D.W. Pratt

### **Monroe Sentinel, September 3, 1862**

On Saturday evening the sad intelligence was received that Almon Smith, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt., Pinney's Battery, was dead—another martyr to freedom. His father and mother are residents of this town and he leaves in this village a young wife and infant child. The following letter was received by his wife:

Juka, Mississippi

August 23, 1862

Mrs. A. Smith

Dear Mrs. Smith:

I deeply regret that it becomes my painful duty to break to you the intelligence of the sudden death of your husband. He died this morning at 9:00 am of fever and inflammation of the brain. He was sick only about two weeks but no considered dangerous until within the past two or three days. Some four or five days ago he was removed from the camp close by to a private boarding house kept by one Mrs. Johnson, an excellent lady and furnished with a pleasant room and the best of care. Charles Warren attended to him at first but when the battery moved to Eastport, eight miles from this place, he was recalled and myself detailed in his stead.

On Thursday it became my painful duty to watch over him during his last hours of illness. When I arrived at the boarding house I found him insensible. I immediately obtained the best medical people but it seemed to be of no avail; all efforts failed to rouse him from the paralytic sleep into which he had fallen; medicine was given but it produced no effect with the exception of it added to his sufferings which were painful in the extreme. It was a sad sight to see him enduring so much anguish and unable to speak a single word.

I cannot speak highly enough of Mrs. Johnson who was untiring in her efforts to save him, bending over him with as much care as if he was a relative and I noticed the large tear drops trickling down her cheeks more than once which is something more than any of us could expect among strangers.

I thus have particularized in giving you the facts of the case hoping that it may be some consolation to you to know that he was well cared for during his sickness. He will likely be buried this evening.

Very Truly Yours,

B.J. Bullard

**Monroe Sentinel, October 29, 1862**

Pinney's Battery

Camp Near Perryville, Oct. 10, 1862

Transcriber's note: This would be the battle of Corinth

After a long and hard chase after the enemy which had proved nearly fruitless, we had at last come up with him and gave him a specimen of Wisconsin pluck and courage. On Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> inst., we were ordered to the front and one section of the command under Lt. Hill was sent forward to skirmish and drive in the Rebel pickets which was done most efficiently making the Rebels think that they should find quarters further back.

In the afternoon, on Wednesday, we were detached from Mitchell's Division and sent up to General McCook who was on the left, hard pressed, and whose line had been broken. We arrived just in time to prevent a complete rout of the entire left and most probably Bull Run disgrace.

Before we could get into the battery, we received several heavy volumes of musketry and in a few minutes we were firing very rapidly and disastrous shots upon the Rebels. We were engaged with the celebrated Washington Battery. It was a most fierce and terrible artillery duel. For two hours and forty minutes the fire was terrific and uninterrupted; the bullets, shot and shell whistled around our ears. I can think of nothing with which to compare it but a terrific hail storm. Several shots burst under the wheels of our guns and among the horses but did little damage. John F. Smith was killed, shot in the neck and William Sparks was wounded in the thigh. Also one horse was killed and two others wounded.

The infantry then made a charge upon us but were driven back every time with terrific loss. Our guns were double shot with canister and they fell before it as grass beneath a scythe. They were every time compelled to break and run before they had hardly reached the middle ground between us. They were literally mowed down by this terrible fire of canister—nothing could stand it.

The Rebels had a good site on us but a little too high; much of their fire passed just over our heads. Officers and men behaved admirably and were as cool and self possessed as if on dress parade. I saw no one exhibit any sign of fear.

It is the opinion of the general here that we were in the hardest fought battle of the war and the only wonder is that we were not cut to pieces. To say that it was our battery that saved the day; that but for the Rebels must have broken through and come up in our rear.

The 22<sup>nd</sup> Indiana, our support, had all their officers above the rank of captain killed in the early part of the engagement and having no leader, broke and ran thus leaving us without any support.

D.