

Axel Hayford Reed

Born

March 13, 1835, Hartford, Maine

Entered Service

August 16, 1861

Glencoe, McLeod County, Minnesota

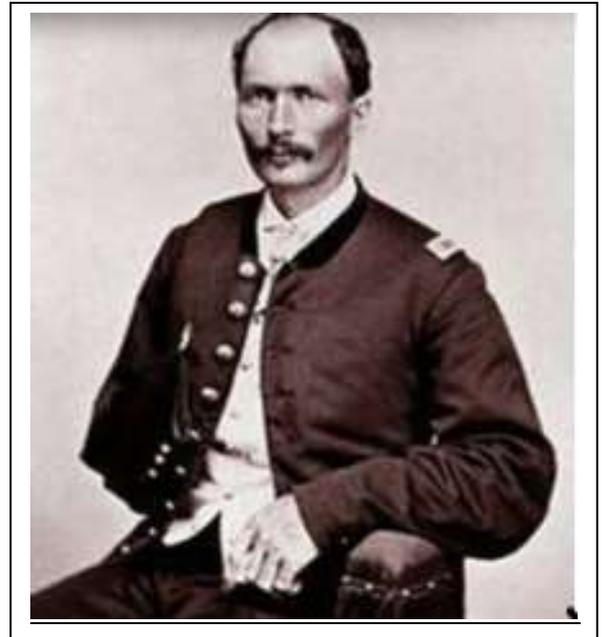
Company K

Minnesota 2nd Infantry Regiment

Civil War

Died

January 21, 1917, Glencoe, McLeod County, Minnesota



Early Years:

Axel Hayford Reed was the son of Sampson Reed and Huldah Bisbee, born March 13, 1835 at Hartford, Maine. He was the youngest of seven siblings, three brothers and three sisters. His mother passed away when he was only seven. An unappreciated step-mother came into the family three years later causing a scattering of all of the children from the home except young Axel. Due to his age, he was made to endure the monotony of farm life until he turned 19. During those years he accompanied his father on cattle drives to Brighton, Mass, continually imploring his father to *"let him go for himself"*.

Finally at age 19, his father gave his consent and five dollars saying *"I predict you will always be poor"*. From the maps he studied while in school he thought the west was the best place for a permanent home, so in April, 1854, he left the Maine homestead (original settled by his grandfather in 1795). He arrived in Minnesota in November, 1855, where there wasn't a single acquaintance to welcome him. The first winter he worked in the woods for \$20 per month, and in the spring of 1856 he got a job working in a new town, Glencoe, making 200,000 brick. He farmed and trapped, invested all his earnings in the plant, and preempted 160 acres of land which made him a permanent settler until the start of the Civil War.

The War Years

Reed enlisted August 6, 1861, at the rank of Sergeant in Company K, Minnesota 2nd Infantry Regiment. He was promoted to Full 2nd Lieutenant on August 17, 1864, and Full 1st Lieutenant on February 18th, 1965.

During his service, Reed participated in nearly every siege and skirmish that his regiment engaged including Sherman's march to the sea, marching nearly every step of the way as he crossed Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Virginia, North and South Carolina, counting allies by the thousand.

Reed's Medal of Honor was presented for heroism for two separate events, on September 19, 1863, at Chickamauga, GA, and November 15, 1863, at Missionary Ridge, TN.

While encamped at Winchester, Tennessee in July, 1863, Sergeant Reed violated military discipline by indiscreetly criticizing the food. He was arrested, stripped of his weapons, sent to the rear of his company where he continued to accompany his regiment across the Cumberland Mountains.

He was still a prisoner when on September 19, 1863, the regiment engaged Bragg's Confederate forces at Chickamauga, GA. Once the placement of the enemy was identified, the regiment dropped their knapsacks and left them under guard with the prisoners, including Reed, while they marched off to meet the enemy.

As the cannons began to boom, Reed begged his guard to let him help his fellow soldiers. It was his strong belief that the government had fed and trained him for just this occasion. He demonstrated both perseverance and redemption for voluntarily grabbing a rifle and going to the front of enemy lines. He found comrades pinned down, where he fought with them for two solid days. When the regiment lieutenant was wounded and only one commissioned officer remained, Reed believed it was his duty to take command of the regiment. He was one of nine soldiers awarded the Medal of Honor at Chickamauga, GA.

After this skirmish, General Thomas issued a special order releasing Reed from arrest and restoring him to full duty, in recognition of his true devotion to service and recognition of his bravery.

At the front line of the battle at Missionary Ridge, on November 25th, 1863, Sergeant Reed was amongst the first to cross into enemy territory to capture their cannons. The cannons were then turned on the fleeing enemy, but they were out of ammunition. He found two rebel soldiers trying to hitch horses to a caisson in a get-away attempt and demanded their surrender, to acquire the ammunition in the caisson. They refused, and Reed aimed his gun at one of them and fired. As he was reloading, he was hit with a minnie-ball which shattered his arm between the shoulder and elbow. He fell to the ground and laid there until the firing ceased. Another wounded soldier helped him put on a tourniquet to stop the bleeding. He walked to the foot of the ridge, and was taken to a hospital in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Some reports indicate that he lost that arm. He declined discharge and continued in active duty until the end of the war.

Here is the communication provided by Gr-Gr-Grandson, Sam Reed, in regard to Reed's military record:

Letters in Regards Axel H. Reed Military Service and Award of Medal of Honors

Brig. Gen. J. M. Brannan, commanding 3rd division 14th A. C., requests that Sergeant A. H. Reed, Co. K, 2nd Minnesota Volunteers, be released from arrest and charges preferred against him be withdrawn.

*E. D. Townsend
Adjutant General*

Headquarters 14th Army Corps, Department of the Cumberland, Chattanooga, Sept. 28, 1863. In consideration of the gallant conduct of Sergt. A. H. Reed, Co. K, 2nd Minnesota Volunteers, during the engagement of the 19th and 20th of September, and the recommendation of Brig. Gen. Brannan, commanding 3rd division, the charges and specifications preferred against him for publishing an anonymous communication in the Nashville Union, are directed to be withdrawn. Sergt. Reed, Co. K, 2nd Minnesota Volunteers, will be released from arrest and returned to duty.

*By command of Maj. Gen. Thomas
A.A.G. and Chief of Staff*

*Headquarters 2nd regiment Minnesota Volunteers, Chattanooga, Tenn., Dec. 10, 1863. Captain J. R. Beatty, A.A.A.G.
2nd Brig., 3rd Div. 14th A. C.*

The purpose of placing on record the names of officers and men of my regiment, who by gallant and meritorious conduct under fire during the assault on Mission Ridge on the 25th, ultimo, have entitled themselves to special mention. I respectfully submit the following report as supplementary to the General Report already on file in your office. 1st Sergeant A. H. Reed commanded his company (K) during the engagement, behaving with marked coolness and courage. He was severely wounded near the close of the fight on the Ridge.

*I am, Captain, very respectfully, your most obedient servant.
J. W. Bishop
Lt. Col. Com.
2nd Minn. Vols.*

Subject Medal of Honor. WAR DEPARTMENT, Washington, D. C., March 22, 1898. File No. R.&P. 450203.

*Mr. Axel H. Reed
No. 238 North Capitol Street
Washington, D. C.*

Sir: You are hereby notified that by direction of the President, and under the provisions of the act of Congress, approved March 3, 1863, providing for the presentation of medals of honor to such officers, non-commissioned officers and privates as have most distinguished themselves in action, a CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR has this day been presented to you for MOST DISTINGUISHED GALLANTRY IN ACTION, the following being a statement of the particular service, viz: At Chickamauga, Ga., September 19, 1863, this officer, then a sergeant in Company K, 2nd Minnesota Volunteers, was in arrest for a breach of discipline. When the action opened he left his place in rear voluntarily and went unarmed to the line of battle, secured a musket and equipment of a wounded soldier participated in the two days' battle, and in recognition of his distinguished gallantry was released from arrest and restored to duty by the special order of General Thomas. On November 25th he was wounded at Mission Ridge and as a result suffered amputation of an arm. After recovery from this wound he declined a discharge for disability which was offered him, and served during the remainder of the war, participating in the Savannah and Carolina campaigns.

This Medal will be forwarded to you by registered mail, as soon as it shall have been engraved.

*Respectfully,
R. A. Alger
Sec. of War.*

His commendation reads:

“The President of the United States of America, in the name of Congress, takes pleasure in presenting the Medal of Honor to Sergeant Axel Hayford Reed, United States Army, for extraordinary heroism on 19 September 1863, while serving with Company K, 2d Minnesota Infantry. While in arrest at Chickamauga, Georgia, Sergeant Reed left his place in the rear and voluntarily went to the line of battle, secured a rifle, and fought gallantly during the two-day battle; was released from arrest in recognition of his bravery. At Missionary Ridge, Tennessee, on 15 November 1863, he commanded his company and gallantly led it, being among the first to enter the enemy's works; was severely wounded, losing an arm, but declined a discharge and remained in active service to the end of the war.

General Orders: Date of Issue: April 2, 1898

Action Date: September 19 & November 15, 1863”

He mustered out at Fort Snelling, July 18, 1865.

Post War Years

After the war Reed returned to Glencoe with an Army comrade.

On April 15, 1869, Reed married Hannah Antoinette Morrison of Bradford, New Hampshire. She had moved to Minnesota with her parents, and studied at schools in St. Cloud and St. Paul. They had four

children: Cora Lydia (b. 1872), Nelly Antoinette (b. 1873, d. 1875 scarlet fever), Axel Hayford Jr. (1876) and Frank Elisha (1880, graduate of the U of MN Law School 1904).

Reed bought a mercantile and traded grain and general merchandise for more than thirty years. He also contributed to buying land and helping to build the first railroad coming into McLeod County in 1873. He built two grain elevators, and established the First National Bank of Glencoe in 1881 (was President for ten years). He was the publisher of the *Glencoe Enterprise* (1878-1889). He was actively connected with the political affairs of McLeod County as a member of the board of county commissioners (1876-1878), sergeant at arms of the state legislature (1868-1869) and a representative from the 6th district (1870). However, he was mostly interested in farming and agriculture, being one of the first members of the Minnesota Horticulture Society. He had one of the largest apple orchards in McLeod County and was one of the largest producers of wheat. In 1915, Reed published his *Genealogical Record of the Reads, Reeds, the Bisbees, the Bradfords of the United States of America*.

Reed passed away on January 21, 1917, and is buried in Mount Auburn Cemetery (MH 3-158) Glencoe, MN.

Axel Hayford Reed was a member of the following military organizations: Army of the Cumberland, Grand Army of the Republic, Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States, Medal of Honor Legion, Union Veterans Legion, and Union Veterans Legion. He was elected a life member of the Minnesota Historical Society and the Mayflower Society, as an eighth descendent of William Bradford (1590-1657), a founder and governor of Plymouth Colony. He was a passenger on the Mayflower, and signed the Mayflower Compact upon arriving in Massachusetts in 1620.

Compiled by Jane Homme

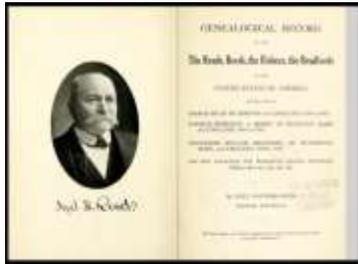
St. Croix River Valley Chapter DAR



Photos of grave marker courtesy of Don Morle, who researches and photographs Medal of Honor Recipient gravesites.

SOURCES

Reed, Axel Hayford; *Genealogical Record of the Reads, Reeds, the Bisbees, the Bradfords of the United States of America in the line of Esdras Read of Boston and England, 1635-1915. Thomas Besbedge or Bisbee of Scituate, Mass., and England, 1634 to 1915. Governor William Bradford of Plymouth, Mass., and England, 1620 to 1915. And their connections, with biographical sketches, illustrations, military services, etc*, Published 1915.



Historical Marker Project: http://www.historicalmarkerproject.com/markers/HMQB4_2nd-minnesota_Chickamauga-GA.html

Home of Heroes Medal of Honor winners: <http://homeofheroes.com/moh/states/mn.html>,
http://www.homeofheroes.com/moh/citations_1862_cwg/reed_axel.html

Minnesota Legislators Past and Present: <https://www.leg.state.mn.us/legdb/fulldetail?id=14470>

Mayflower Society: <http://www.americanancestors.org/databases/mayflower-descendant-the/image/?volumelid=12168&pageName=253&rid=137494249>

Reed, Sam (gr-gr-grandson of Axel Hayford Reed, member of Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War: <http://suvchw.org/past/axelhreed.htm>

<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=8657925>

<http://valor.militarytimes.com/recipient.php?recipientid=228>

United States Federal census records and Minnesota State census records