



History of the Pine City Militia

and
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First Armory 1913 - 47

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June 1914



J. ADAM BEDE
Republican Candidate
FOR CONGRESS

New Tenth Congressional District.

Comprising the counties of Pine, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, Chisago, Isanti, Anoka and Wright, the Third, Fourth and Tenth Wards of the city of Minneapolis, and the country towns and villages of Hennepin county.

Headquarters,

Suite 321 25-27,

West Hotel.

Mr. Bede was one of the ten children born to his parents on a farm in Ohio. He left home at ten years of age and has hustled for himself and his fellowmen ever since.

He learned the printer's trade.

Worked his way through school.

Studied at Oberlin, Ohio, and Tabor College, Iowa.

Published Country newspapers.

Did repertorial work at Washington for several years.

Contributed to magazines.

Has spoken in every state in the Union at banquets, political gatherings, Chautauquas or in lecture courses.

Is liberal toward others.

Was six years in Congress. Always voted right.

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Pine City Militia and National Guard

Why a small town like Pine City, thousands of miles from the oceans and hundred miles from Great Lakes qualify for an armory?

As we look into the history of the Pine City Naval Militia more question can be asked. When the Pine City Militia Third Division was formed, 70 men registered and by 1917, only 39 men remained in the Division. Most remarkable that Third Division only lasted ~~two~~ ^{seven} years, the Pine City Naval Militia never reorganized after 1919.

For four years (1920-24) the armory was not used for any military or defense activities, until May 29 1924 when 62 men organized Battery E of 125 Field Artillery, the armory was the National Guards home for 53 years. Since the Pine City Naval Militia was so short-lived, and never reorganized, then how did Pine City get an armory?

Pine City had notable men who had political power at the national and state level. ① Men like Congressman J. Adam Bede, born in Lorain County Ohio in 1856. Studied law and learned printers trade. Worked as a writer for several newspapers in the West and south. Printed "Bede's Budget" in Pine City for several years. Strong Republican, supported Grover Cleveland for the United States president. Served as a Minnesota Congressman 1903-09. His humor and excellent speaker was in demand all over the United States. He was noted as one of the most distinguished residents in Pine City.

② Fred Hodge born in Frankestown N. Y. on August 18 1853. Came to Pine City in 1877. Was elected as Pine

Reference

- 1- History of Saint Croix Valley: Page 1257
2. History of Saint Croix Valley: Page 1264 + Vach Collection

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County auditor, later he became interested in Pine Land, and properties in Pine City and throughout the County. Republican. Served as member of State Senate 1894-98. Noted in Pine City community as an important part in modern progress of business interest and became owner of hundred acres of Pine Land and properties in Pine City.

③ Karl W. Knapp born in Osceola Wisconsin, on March 7 1885. Graduated from Iowa State University in 1906, receiving his dental degree, he came to Pine City, opened a dental office on July 24, 1906. Became interested in Republican politics.

④ Robert Wilcox, born in Sunrise Minnesota on April 2, 1871. Same year his parents and family moved to Pine City. Received his education in Pine City. In 1902, was elected Judge of Probate, held the position for many years. Wilcox was a Democrat. * (Was stated that Robert had a relative, who served in United States Army, under the supervision of Colonel Sibley), which aroused Robert interest in Military Service.

Bede, Hodge, Knapp and Wilcox worked hard to get an armory in Pine City. Qualification for an armory, required a Naval Militia Division, a site for the building and \$1000. in order to get the \$15,000 appropriated by the State, without delay ⑤ a Pine City Naval Militia Third Division was organized, ⑥ before the bill was passed. Division had 70 men mustered in by Capt. Guy A. Eaton of Duluth.

References:

3 - History of the Saint Croix Valley: Page 1265

4 - History of the Saint Croix Valley: Page 1271

5 - Pine County Pioneer: January 31, 1913

6 - Pine County Pioneer: March 14, 1913

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Election of officers was held same evening (Jan 24, 1913) Robert Wilcox was elected Lieutenant, Dr. K. W. Knapp, Lieutenant and Fred Japperson, Ensign. The Third Division was the largest ever formed in the State (at that time).

* Stehle Hall was rented for \$20.00 a month, where the Third Division met every Friday nite. Unlike the United State Navy, where daily drills and training was required, (7) the Naval Militia drilled once a week and trained for two weeks on U. S. S. Gopher on the Great Lakes every summer 1913-14-15 and 1916, but were subject to call into the service by the Navy whenever needed.

(8) March 1913, Senate passed a bill appropriated \$15,000 when cities furnished a site and \$1,000 for building a Militia Armories. (9) Pine City Militia Third Division was organized, knowing that bill was on the Senate floor to be voted on. Pine City men lost no time working to fulfill the requirements needed to get armory.

(10) When Representative Larson of Sandstone had already prepared a bill to present to the House, to get the Naval Militia included in the law, whereby cities furnish \$1000. and a site were to receive \$10,000. from the State for building fund. But Speaker Rines advised Representative Larson not to present the bill, but to draw up

References:

- 7- Harold Kich - History of Pine City Militia
 - 8- Pine Co. Pioneer - March 14 1913
 - 9- Pine Co. Pioneer: Repts to January 31-1913
 - 10- Pine Co. Pioneer: March 7 1913
- X Vach Collection

an amendment to the Senate Bill and have attorney General look it over, so that it would be drawn up right, it would go through without any further delays. The New Bill passed by the Senate and House made the appropriated from any money in the treasury, otherwise not appropriated and not from a special fund as the old bill read. [Do not understand the later part of bill JAV.]

(11) On May 2, 1913, citizens of Pine City, taken steps toward the building of an armory, a home for the Third Division. At this meeting, Mr. & Mrs. Fred Hodge donated three lots, east side of the Railroad tracks, west bank of Cross Lake. Following day, with a Third Division organized and a site for an armory, the committee, lost no time in taking the last step needed for Pine City to get the armory, raising \$1000. The committee visited the Pine City merchants and citizens, by end of the day they had \$1000. needed.

(12) Third Division received first uniforms on April 12, 1913. Each man received two uniforms, one white and one blue with hats to match. (13) If shoes were issued was not mentioned in the distribution.

(14) 35 members of Pine City Naval Militia taken their first (short) lake trip. The 2 day trip was merely to adjust the men to ocean trip. In August, some year the entire Third Division with other Militia Division from Duluth, aboard the Gopher and sailed the Great Lakes. Many.

References:

11. Pine County Pioneer: May 2 1913

12. Pine County Pioneer: April 18, 1913

13. Walter B. Blanchard Personal Comments 3/30/93 4/16/93

14. Pine County Pioneer: June 27, 1913

other squadrons rendezvous at Thunder Bay, then to Milwaukee for 6 days, 2 days in Green Bay. Ships in the squadron were DuBuque, Don Juan, Yanita, Exves, Gopher and Dorothea. After 15 days trip the Divisions returned to Duluth. No report if the Militia Divisions had participated in any practice or Manuevers.

(15) Delegation, Judge Robert Wilcox, Dr Karl Knapp, J. Adam Bede and Emil Larson met with State Armory Board at Governor's office on October 1, 1913, where \$15,000 cash was awarded for Pine City Naval Militia Armory. In return Lt. Robert Wilcox handed the Board \$1,000 check and deed for the three lots donated by Mr and Mrs Fred Hodge.

Architects fees and other items of expenses had to be covered by the \$1000. voted by the village Council, so that the entire fund of \$16,000 would be expended on the building.

General Contract was given to Emil Larson, local Pine City contractor and steam heating system to Black or Black and Company of Duluth. (16) Hand-fired Boiler and coal was used for fuel. Architect, Mr Kelly of Duluth had determined the exact location of the armory building.

Some difficulty had been experienced in disposing of 4% State Certificates voted for armory purpose, delayed in building the armory. However arrangements were made with proper authorities for the State School fund to buy \$10,000 certificates and Pine City got \$15,000 of available cash.

(17) Building of Armory began on November 15, 1913.

References:

15 Pine County Pioneer: October 3, 1913

16 Walter Blanchard Personal Comments. 3/30/93 4/16/93

17. Vach Collection See 1913 files.

- (18) In 1914, only 15 members of Third Division taken two week training on Great Lakes. They engaged in ~~real~~ (shark) battle.
- (19) Dedication of New Pine City Armory, new home for Minnesota Naval Militia Third Division was ^{well} attended. Governor A.O. Eberhart was one of the principal speakers. Many officers and their wives from Duluth and Minneapolis attended. (Names?) After the speeches, a dance and midnite supper was served on the balcony of the building.
- (20) All members of Third Division of Naval Militia were requested to be present on November 14, 1914 at the armory, to form an athletic Association.
- (21) Eight ships of Naval Militia ^{left} from Duluth to participate in the formalities official opening of Panama Canal on January 1, 1915. No report if the Third Division participated in the event
- (22) Plans were made at Lindstrom on April 1, 1915, for an armory similar to Pine City, if accepted that would be the 5th division Naval Militia. All these divisions would be under the supervision of the government authorities and would have to follow the New Policy of planning all navy cadets under United States Navy
- References:
18. Pine Poker: August 14, 1914
 19. Pine Poker: November 6, 1914
 20. Pine Poker: November 16, 1914
 21. Pine Poker: March 27, 1914
 22. Pine Poker: April 30, 1915.

discipline, which was ^{not} required before of the four divisions up to April 19, 1915, existed in Minnesota were, Duluth had two decks division and one engineering division, while Pine City had one deck. Other towns like White Bear, Bemidji and Crosby hoped to organize a division and build their armories. Up to 1915, Pine City was only small town, that had a division and an armory.

(23) The first Naval Militia trips on the Great Lake, the Militiamen taken, would be considered as cruises.

(24) First, second and fourth divisions of Duluth and Third Division from Pine City, numbered 175 men, left Duluth aboard the Gopher on Aug 5, 1915 for 16 days. Squadron cruise on Great Lake. Gopher pick up the Isla De Luzon carrying Illinois Reserves. The two ships arrived in Buffalo on August 9th, two days later the two ships met naval reserve fleet, composed Don Juan de Austria from Detroit, yantic from Hancock Michigan, Dorothea from Cleveland Exxes, from Toledo Ohio and Hawk from Buffalo.

Approximately 1,400 men were on the nine ships Isla De Luzon was their flag ship of the fleet. All ships were engaged in manuevers, target practice and gun drills. Real practice were given for first time in sixteen days cruise.

(25) Annual division inspection of Naval Militia were conducted in Pine City armory.

References:

- 23. Pine Poker: June 1915
- 24. Pine Poker: July 15. 1915
- 25. Pine Poker: May 29. 1915

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(26) Whether the pay for Naval Militiamen would have been the same as for the Minnesota Guard men. Appears as they were since both units were on stand-by and not in regular United States service daily routine. Both units would meet once a week and needed two weeks training in summer. (27) According to Guardmen Earl Foster, many years in service, that pay could have been the same for Militiamen and National Guardmen. when he started in National Guard (1937) his pay was 50 cents a day. Daily pay for Minnesota National Guard in 1916, as following:

Brigadier General	\$16.67	Sec. Lt.	4.72
Colonel	\$11.11	Private	50 cents
Major	\$8.33	Private Hospital Corp.	35 cents
First Lt.	\$5.56	Master Electrician	\$2.50
First Class private in engineer or signal corp.			.80 cents
Sargeant of engineer or signal or hospital corp.			\$1.20
Battalion Sargeant of Field Artillery or Chief trumpeter			\$1.33
First Class Sargeant of Hospital Corp.			\$2.17
Privates in Hospital Corp.			.80
Sergeant in Infantry			\$1.00
Quarter Sargeant, first class Sargent, Sargeant Majors and first Class Musician			\$1.50
First Class Sargeant of hospital Corp or field musician			\$1.67
Master electrician, Quartermaster of Coast artillery, master signal electrician or Chief Musician			\$2.50

References:

- 26. Pine County Pioneer July 7, 1916
- 27. Earl Foster personal comm. (April 28 1993)

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The estimation list of salaries ^{may} not been exact pay for the Naval Militiamen, but does gives approximately what State of Minnesota pay their military men.

(28) By July 1916, the Minnesota Naval Militia had new divisions which mobilize at Pine City armory. Bemidji division 36 militamen, Crosby 31, Lendstrom 30, Pine City 21 and Duluth 96.

Special train with 11 Coaches carried the Militiamen and their equipment to Philadelphia, where the men boarded the U.S.S. Rhode Island and engaged manuevered with Atlantic Battleship fleet. Men of Militia performed duties of regular Navy men, no target practice. Men had shore leaves, visited various sites, included a torpedo factory. Naval inspectors accompany militiamen on the cruise. Militiamen left Pine City on Thursday evening 5 o'clock arrived at Philadelphia on Saturday morning 10 A.M.

(29) In 1916, two cruises were taken, the latter cruise were all division assembled in Duluth. Part of unit sailed the Great Lakes for Atlantic trip, the remaining militiamen boarded ship in Duluth, remained in Duluth harbor for few days, until conclusion of the National rowing regatta, soon as possible after the rowing regatta, the ship left on its cruise, where met by several other training ships from other ports. Series of drills and ship manuevers, training, drills and manuevers became more demanding with each training period since 1914. More men, ships and wider training lake and ocean areas.

References:

28 Pine County Pioneer: July 14, 1916. Duluth News Tribune No date

29 Pine County Pioneer: Aug 5 1916

(30) Describing the "war scare" in Pine Poker. "Each succeeding "war scare" finds the Naval Militia boys here and elsewhere in the northern part of the state, prepared for whatever comes, but not peeking into any dark holes for bug-a-boos". (Comments A.O.)

(31) March 16, 1917, Capt Guy Eaton assured the Naval Militiamen of all division will be called and U.S.S. Topeka will replace Zopher.

(32) Call for Volunteers, enlistment would be for period of three years, but those belonging to the Naval Militia may receive an honorable discharge at end of their enlistment in the State organization. They will be entitled to pay each drill attended in sum of one-fourth of the pay of regular seaman of the same rank. Seamen will receive approximately \$1.60 each drill attend and petty officers more in accordance with rank.

Each man would receive 2 suit of blue with caps and leggings. 3 suits work whites and one dress white, white hats and 2 sea bags. At end of the enlistment this clothing their own property.

(33) Pine City by January 1, 1917 had 3 officers and 42 naval militiamen in their division.

(34) "War scare", became a reality, when Lt. Robert Wilcox received a call at 9: P.M. on April 6, 1917, his order to be in References:

30. Pine Poker: March 8 1917

31 Pine County Pioneer: March 16-1917. Duluth News Tribune ^{no date}

32 Pine Poker: March 16-1917

33 Pine County Pioneer February 8, 1917

34 Pine Poker: April 12-1917

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Duluth with the Third Division following day. Some of militiamen were out of town, second call from Capt. Eaton, granted a few more hours, final departure was postponed to Sunday 2 A.M.

News spread rapidly through the small town, plans were made for a program. Old Glory was seen everywhere from flagstaff to baby carriages.

Everyone gathered at the Armory to see the Militia boys off. Father Leo opened the program with a prayer. Speeches followed, of course J. Adam Bede stirred the morning audience with his rousing address and cheered "our boys".

The militiamen departure moved many hearts with a teary farewell, as they watched the train out of sight, quietly one by one departed to their homes. The men who left that morning were as follows:

Officers

38 Robert Wilson First Lieutenant

39 Ottocar Solotka Lt. Junior Grade

1 R. J. Hawley

2 Phill Maisonneuve

3 William Kobel

4 Fred Brandes

5 Joseph Kunesch

6 Fred Johnson

7 John Kilgore

8 Ben Neville

9 John Gray

10 Leslie Fitzgerald

11 Richard Gray

12 Joseph Fitzgerald

13 Clark Pennington

14 William Collins

15 Oscar Duddley

16 Al Oman

17 Joseph Neubauer

18 George Biederman

19 Joseph Babcock

20 William Mavis

21 Al Carlson

22 Harry Ellison

23 Anton Oliverious

24 Frank Fremel

25 M. J. Booth

26 Clarence Gottery

x William Kobel still living.

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| 27 Denny Dasey | 32 Dwight Greenley |
| 28 Frank Boston | 33 Earl Gray |
| 29 Charles Sherwood | 34 George Stekl |
| 30 George Robinson | X 36 Dewey Wilcox |
| 31 Emery Blanchard | 37 Robert Clark |

R. J. Hawley given work at home and George Stekle and George Biederman joined the division at Philadelphia.
 (35) Dewey Wilcox remained home on account injured.

(36) Very little was written of the Melitiamen war activities with exception of Robert Clark assigned to hospital Corps and Al Oman to plumber's mate, Fred (Fritz) Johnson to Machinist's mate and Oscar Dudley an electrician.

Three of men did not pass their physical examination, were sent home. George Biederman, John Gray and Tony Oliverious. There were married men in the division, rumors that they may be sent home.

(37) Home Guards were organized almost in every ^{small} town, Pine City was no exception. During the war, the armory was used for the Home Guard for meetings and drills.

(38) Whenever there was German Communities, a fear over came the Americans (same as in World War II, the American Japanese were feared.) National Guards were sent out to protect grain elevators, bridges, certain industries, especially
 References:

35 - See Harold Kick article.

36 Pine Poker April 2, 1917

37 Pine Poker April 26, 1917 + Sandstone Courier.

38 Askov American: April 5, 1917 (Letter Pine Poker, April 12, 1918)

X Shooting accident - Harold Kick article in book.

in small towns. Such fear was in Pine County in Pine County when feared bridge, may be dynamited, a Company of 16 guardmen and two officers equipped, arrived in Sandstone, Minnesota to guard the railroad bridge over Kettle River, great precaution were taken by our government to keep all modes of transportation in running order, which was very important, when American entangle in the European Conflict, (38) A letter printed in the Pine County Pioneer give us a glimpse what the German people under taking during the War Crisis.

Many misunderstanding and fear arose during the World War II between the Americans and German descendant.

Letter from Lt Welcox was printed in Pine Pokes May 17, 1917. In August of same year, the ^{Pine City} Militiamen were on honor roll.

(39) In December 1917, Wm Harries was on the Casualty list (40), latter it was stated to be incorrect.

(41) Pine City honored a year anniversary of Naval Militia Third Division Departure. Little is to be found if the Third Division if the Third Division participated in combat with the enemy.

(42) Celebration on July 4, 1919, home coming for the Pine Co. soldiers, sailors, and Marines at Pine City, with parade, dinners, Community singing, games and races. Military Ball in evening and fireworks. Large Crowd attended. Bands from other towns participated. Naval Militia Third Division marched in parade with other branches of U.S services.

References:

39 Pine County Pioneer December 28, 1917

40 Pokes or Pioneer March 14 - 1918

41 Pine Pokes. April 1918

42 Pine Pokes July. 1919.

If home ^{guard} Continued in 1920-21-22-23-24 was not mention.

43 In his speeches at the Pine City Development Ass'n meetings Lt Robert Wilcox expressed that he ^{would} like to reorganize the Naval Militia in Pine City and stated there were nine interested member.

He schedule a meeting on Saturday February 7, 1920. 7.P.M at the armory to reorganize the Naval Militia, but There was no report on the outcome of that meeting. Pine City Naval Militia was never reorganized.

(44) May 29, 1924. Sixty-two recruits enrolled in organization of E. Battery of the 125th Field Artillery of Minnesota National Guard, mustered in at Pine City armory. Drill night was set for every Friday nite 8:P.M. Uniforms were to arrive before the unit leaves to Camp Custer Mich. Horses and guns were to arrive in Pine City after the battery returns from Camp.

(45) Battery E of 125th Field Artillery was part of a unit at Camp Custer with another regiment from Minneapolis. Reville at 5:40 A.M. with assembly at 6:A.M. Calisthenics 7:30 to 8 A.M. Drill 8:15 to 11:15 A.M. and 1:15 to 3:15 P.M. The men had the balance of the day to themselves, exception of those that were on guard duty and K.P. There was horse + drivers training. E Battery was Complimented on their skills as drivers handled their horses excellently. Sixty-three and 3 officers, if this number was for E Battery only?

(46) Walter Blanchard spend 17 years in E. Battery of the 125th

References:

43. Pine Co. Pioneer, Jan 26, 1920 Pine Pokes Jan. 15, 1920 + Feb. 5, 1920

44 Pine Pokes, June 5, 1924.

45 Battle Creek Mich Special to Pine Pokes. July 7, 1924.

46 Walter Blanchard Personal Comments 3/30/93 4/16/93

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Field Artillery in Minnesota National Guard, as Signal and field Sargeant. Spend 6 months in Japan. Training once a week at Pine City armory and spend 10 days or 2 weeks every summer at various camps Ripley, Mc Coy and (Sparta?). Horse-drawn Cannons and equipment were used in first years, later trucks were purchased and a garage built back of the armory. The 8 horses were boarded at Pine County Fair grounds. Each man was responsible in caring and training his horse.

Whenever going to camp in earlier years, all equipment were loaded on flat cars and coaches were reserved for the Guard men.

His father, Albert Blanchard was caretaker of Armory during absent of the Naval Militia Third Division. Hand-fired boilers and coal for fuel.

Halter, as a child lived near the armory, he can recall a life saving boat about 30 or 40 ft long, on Cross Lake. Rowed by 4 men, that Pine City Naval Militia used in practicing rowing practice.

Halter's brother Emery, served in Pine City Naval Militia also later in branch of U.S. service.

As young man, during high school days, they played basketball games at armory, because it was the largest and best floor around. Most of neighboring towns had a small area and some town had no place to play basketball. Most of all, the armory had showers, where none of the towns had that luxury. So Pine City armory was chosen for most of the activities.

~~References:~~

47. Viola Baum recalls the dances held in the armory

References:

49. Viola Baum personal Comments 4/16/93

Always a good band. One note, a few young men feeling happy, would scale the pillars ^{on} to balcony. The armory was used for other activities.

48 Shirley Johnson remembers the New Year dances. As young girl roll-skating at armory. Many Halloween parties for the children ^{were} ~~was~~ held there.

49 Clarence Espeseth, ^{paid the district} purchasing as school property. Used before the Pine Technical College was built ~~in~~ 1965-66-67. ^{shop} was used as classrooms, for drafting, automotive, Machine ^{also} even Elementary Classes were held. (More information) Clarence Espeseth was the superintendent (those years).

50 In my research the activities that were held at armory. Dances. Graduation exercises. Basketball game. Practice games. Poultry Shows. Carnival Show (1 year)

51 Chuckle. Happen in the early 1930°. A young lady felt it was not lady-like to attend the Armory dance, but her woman curiosity got the best of her. One evening she ^{two friends} decided to peek through the windows, watch the behavior of these "sinner dancing". Unknown to her, as she step up to the window to have a good peek, the coal chute was open, nicely she slid into the ^{cool} bin. Panic, clothes, hands & face filled with blacken coal dust, she dare not go upstairs, and face all those dances. "Those Sinners" With the help her friends (in crisis) she manage to get out the coal bin through the coal ^{drains} and ~~listen to~~ ^{hear} the sweet music from her mother,

References.

- 48. Shirley Johnson personal comments. May 3. 1993
- 49. Clarence Espeseth personal comments. May 3 1993
- 50. In my research. Vach Collection
- 51. D. E. personal comment

Minnesota Naval Militia

Harold Kick

A unit of United States Navy located in Pine City Minnesota very unlikely most people would think. The Third Division of the Minnesota Naval Militia was not quite the United States Navy, but it could be called into service by the Navy in time of war. The Division and an armory to house it was located in Pine City.

On the evening of January 21, 1913, seventy young men from the Pine City Area were mustered into Naval Militia by Captain Guy Eaton from Duluth. The officers elected for the new division were Commanding officer Lieutenant Robert Wilcox, Lieutenant (JG) Dr. K. W. Knapp and Ensign Fred Jepson. Uniforms were issued on April 18th and plans for an armory were in progress.

The Pine City Militia trained for two weeks of each of the summers of 1913-14-15 and 16. They cruised the Great Lakes in U.S.S. Gopher. Several months before United States declared war in WWI, the unit was ordered to be on alert. The several months of preparation was suspense was broken at 10:30 AM on April 6, 1917, when the order to "Mobilize the Naval Militia" was given. Pine City's Militia of 30 were to board the train that day and proceed to Duluth, and then on to Philadelphia Naval Yard. They were to serve on USS Massachusetts.

A monument is located on the lawn of the City Hall in Pine City with the names of the officers and men of Third Division who served in WWI. The marker notes that this Militia unit the first to be called into active service in WWI.

A shooting accident happened the very first day of the mobilization. During the time of alert and preparation, an

armed guard was kept to guard the armory. While the men were checking their new rifles, one of the rifles fired, the bullet passed through Dewey Wilcox's right ankle and then through the ball of his left foot and into the floor. Apparently the man on guard duty forgot to unload his rifle and the rifle discharged when he worked the action. The bullet hole can still be seen in the Armory floor. After some weeks of recuperating Dewey rejoined his unit in Philadelphia. Dewey jokingly claimed to be the first casualty of WWI.

The Third Division was not kept together as a unit. The men were assigned to other duties with the Navy. After the war the Division was dissolved and never reactivated. Naval Militia units only reorganized in Duluth, St Paul and Minneapolis.

The act to establish Naval Militia unit was authorized by the Congress in 1899. Naval Militia units were military organizations equivalent to the National Guards. A Naval Division had about the same number of men as a Company of land forces. Minnesota's first Naval Militia was organized in 1903 at Duluth. This unit trained on Great Lakes in the USS Gopher.

How did Pine City, a small town thousands of miles from the seas and a hundred miles from the Great Lakes, qualify for a Naval Division? In 1913, the Minnesota Legislature authorized cities in Minnesota to share with the state in building armories in their cities. Congressman J. Adam Bede of Pine City and Judge Robert Wilcox a former Naval officer, worked hard to get an armory and a Naval unit located here. A check for \$1,000. from voluntary subscriptions and a deed for three lots donated by Mr & Mrs Fred Hodge was enough to assure an armory to be built in Pine City. The building was built in the fall of 1913 at a cost \$15,000.

The armories served the communities as a place for the Militia to train, but also a Community Center. Many meetings, funerals and other gatherings were held at the Armory. Pine City High School played its basketball games in the building until the High School Auditorium was built in 1937.

In 1924, Battery E. 125th Field Artillery of the Minnesota National Guards was activated and took over the Armory as its training facility. They trained at the Armory until February 1941, when they were called into active service in WW. II.

The Minnesota State Guards were organized to replace the activated National Guard and trained in the Armory until 1947, when the present National Guards was organized.

After the new Armory was built (1997) on old Highway 61 south of Pine City, and the local school took over the old armory and used it for school purposes for several years. The building is now under control of the City. The Minnesota Naval Militia Armory is now a historical point of interest, and thus closes another interesting story of military history of Pine City.



Ann Vach

My special thanks:

Clarence & Kay Espeseth.

Harold Kick

Walter Blanchard

Sue Sharp.

Viola Baum.

Harold Bensen.

Earl Foster.

Shirley Johnson

Other Resources:

Pine Poker

Pine Co. Pioneer

Sandstone Courier

History of St Croix Valley.

Duluth New Tribune

Askov American.

Jack Collection.