

# **History of the Battery C (formerly Nevada Light Guard), 1<sup>st</sup> Artillery Regiment, National Guard of California 1880-1893**

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BATTERY C

Battery C, First Artillery Regiment, Fourth Brigade (formerly  
Nevada Light Guard)

Reference: Adjutant General's Files  
Location: Nevada City, Nevada County  
Organized April 18, 1863  
Reorganized March 19, 1880\*  
Reconstituted July 1, 1893\*\*

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Commission</u>
John A. Rapp, Captain (Re-elected Nov. 29, 1879)	Nov. 11, 1873	Jan. 10, 1874***
George A. Gray, First Lieut. (Re-elected Nov. 29, 1879)	Nov. 29, 1879	Dec. 5, 1879***
John A. Rapp, Captain (Re-elected Nov. 29, 1881)	_____	_____
George A. Gray, First Lieut. (Re-elected Nov. 29, 1881)	_____	_____
John A. Rapp, Captain (Re-elected Nov. 29, 1883)	_____	_____
George A. Nihell, First Lieut.	Dec. 18, 1883	Feb. 5, 1884
George A. Nihell, Captain	Nov. 30, 1887	Jan. 4, 1888
Preston F. Simmonds, First Lieut.	Nov. 30, 1887	Jan. 4, 1888
George A. Nihell, Captain (Re-elected Jan. 16, 1892)	_____	_____
Preston F. Simmonds, First Lieut. (Re-elected Jan. 16, 1892)	_____	_____

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\*Battery C, formerly Nevada Light Guard redesignated Battery C, First Artillery Regiment, March 19, 1880.  
Adjutant General Report 1880, Special Order No. 19, page 76.

\*\*Battery C, First Artillery Regiment redesignated Company C, Second Infantry Regiment, Fourth Brigade, July 1, 1893.  
Adjutant General Report 1893-1894, General Order No. 7, page 97.

\*\*\*Captain John A. Rapp retained his former rank and commission as of November 11, 1873, and January 10, 1874, when he commanded Nevada Light Guard. First Lieutenant George A. Gray retained his former rank and commission as of November 29, 1879, and December 5, 1879, when he commanded Nevada Light Guard.

## BATTERY C (Continued)

### Activities:

Orders were issued in March 1880 to form an Artillery Regiment which would be composed of infantry and unattached companies. This reorganization would place the regiment in a better position to secure assistance and support from the State. Two of the companies already had Gatling guns and the other companies were to be supplied immediately. Under this new ruling the Nevada Light Guard known as Company C of the First Infantry Battalion became Battery C of the First Artillery.

The annual encampments of the National Guard are of primary importance in the thorough training for military duty. Battery C, as a unit of the First Artillery Regiment went into camp at Alameda in September of 1880. On the morning of September fourth the unit arrived from Nevada City on the Overland Express, and were received with cheers and a welcoming tune from the First Artillery band which preceded Battery A to meet the out of town corps. The line of march was then taken up from the depot to the Pavilion where the two companies stacked arms and relieved themselves of their equipage, after which a breakfast was served at the International Hotel. Late in the afternoon Battery C with the other Batteries of the regiment left for Camp Backus on the Steamer Apache. The regular routine of camp life prevailed with company and battalion drills, guard mountings and dress parades at regular intervals. The encampment proved an excellent school and was considered a great success.

When the troops returned to Sacramento they were met at the landing by the Sacramento Hussars, commanded by Captain Frank Ruhstaller and the Sacramento Zouaves by Captain Sims Emery. The regiment marched to J Street between Third and Fourth, where arms were stacked and the command dismissed for breakfast. At noon the regiment again assembled and escorted by the Hussars and Zouaves paraded down J Street. Brigadier-General Sheehan commanding the Fourth Brigade informally received the regiment as it passed Seventh and K Streets, and commented on the improvement in drill and general demeanor of the soldiers and officers since leaving for the camp. At the depot cheer after cheer was given Battery C who left for Nevada City on the train.

One of the outstanding events during the encampment was a visit by his Excellency Rutherford B. Hayes, President of the United States accompanied by General W. T. Sherman commanding the United States Army, the notables were received by the citizens of Oakland. On September ninth a large procession was held in honor of the distinguished visitors in which the regiment appeared with full ranks. The press commented favorably on the appearance of the military. In 1881 the Camp of Instruction was held at Ismert's Grove near Nevada City, and the one of 1882 was set up at Laurel Grove near San Rafael. Each succeeding year these encampments were

service to the National Guard of the State.

BATTERY C (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

held and showed marked improvement in the respective commands and management of the camp.

For the first time in the history of the State the 1885 Legislature made an appropriation for a divisional or general Encampment of the National Guard, in a large part due to the active interest manifested by Governor George Stoneman. The resultant encampment was held at Camp Stoneman, Santa Cruz, the first of the entire National Guard ever held in the State and was attended by his Excellency who officially received the troops.

Due to the lack of funds Battery C did not attend the encampment of 1888 at Camp Bartlett, Healdsburg, but they participated in a 150 mile march from Nevada City to Lake Tahoe and return which took some fifteen days time. The expense was met by the members individually in addition to the time allotted by them in the State service. John J. O'Connell, Captain of the First United State's Infantry reported unfavorably of the men marching in the First Artillery corps at Camp Murray, Santa Cruz in 1891, stating the material of which the regiment was composed was not of the best, and that the ranks in many companies consisted of puny, narrow chested boys, totally deficient in robust manhood and erect military bearing. However, in guard duty, skirmish drill, and military courtesy, the batteries showed a marked improvement. Sentinels performed their tasks cheerfully and with a great degree of accuracy. Captain O'Connell applauded the regiment on their excellent behavior and the general obedience to orders despite the great facilities for their infringement. The officers and men performed their duty with promptitude and to the best of their ability and they showed a degree of self-respect worthy of high praise.

The last annual encampment attended by Battery C was at Camp Columbus, Santa Cruz. The camp was so named to commemorate the fourth centennial of the discovery of our country. The First Artillery Regiment to which Battery C was attached together with the Fifth and Sixth Brigades, constituted the First Provisional Brigade under the command of Brigadier-General W. T. Sheehan. The First Artillery Regiment's subsistence cost a man a day 55 3/4 cents which was an extremely low figure. Some of the companies rations amounted to 90 cents a day and were not any better prepared or served than the Artillery meals.

A military committee was appointed May 1887 by Brigadier-General John T. Carey, commanding the Fourth Brigade to investigate the finances of the Battery. Upon receiving the report from the committee Brigadier-General Carey forwarded the report to Adjutant General George B. Cosby stating, "while he (Captain Rapp) has in all other respects been an efficient officer, I feel it my

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BATTERY C (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

duty to forward the report with the indorsement to General Headquarters and if approved by Adjutant General B. Cosby, I deem it my duty to order Court Martial." Thus, after many years of service, thirteen as Captain, John A. Rapp was dismissed from the militia for "misappropriation of funds," November 5, 1887.

The Legislature of 1885 and 1886 appropriated \$56,000 for the purchase of new uniforms for the National Guard. Battery C in 1888 received as their quota fifty-seven complete uniforms. That the new uniforms were greatly needed was evident for Major Frank D. Ryan, Inspector, states in the report of July 1887, that uniforms then in use had seen service for fifteen years and had turned brown with age, also that the cloth was so worn that it was an impossibility to repair them. In the same year the corps received ten new rifles, their allotment of arms received by the State from a requisition on the Federal Government. The Battery already had in their possession sixty Springfield rifles and one three inch Parrot gun. The Fourth Brigade received 8,000 rounds of ammunition as their share of ammunition to be held for emergency purposes only. Battery C belonging to this regiment also benefited from this supply.

Target practice as a compulsory measure was held annually and was a method of insuring efficiency among the members of the National Guard by teaching them the use of the arms. The interest of Battery C in target practice had always been of the keenest nature and the members had formed a Rifle Association which had the tendency to increase their shooting ability. Nevada City being an inland town, facilities for pleasure were scarce, and rifle practice was the only amusement for many of the members. Percentages for some of the years shooting matches by the Battery are listed below:

1880----	794 points out of a possible 2,025 or 39.20%
1881----	698 points out of a possible 1,725 or 40.46%
1882----	911 points out of a possible 1,675 or 54.33%
1883--	1,420 points out of a possible 3,350 or 42.38%
1885----	522 points out of a possible 1,850 or 28.21%
1890--	1,517 points out of a possible 3,500 or 43.3 %

Battery C was one of the companies that acted as an escort to Governor Bartlett during the inauguration ceremonies January 6, 1887. The Battery paraded and joined the citizens in appropriate obsequies in 1881 when President James A. Garfield was assassinated. The unit's armory was draped in mourning for thirty days and the officers were required to wear the badge of mourning on the left arm and on their swords. Again in 1883 the Battery's colors were draped in mourning for General George S. Evans a former Adjutant General of the State, who had been a gallant soldier serving his country faithfully and well, and had given valuable service to the National Guard of the State.

BATTERY C (Continued)

Ex-President General U. S. Grant a former member of the California National Guard died in July 1886. His passing was deeply regretted by the Nation as a whole and he was given the proper military honors. Another gallant soldier and distinguished citizen, Major General George B. McClellan, was similarly honored at his passing in November of that year. Battery C also paraded on the days required by law namely February twenty-second, (Washington's Birthday) Memorial Day, May thirtieth, Independence Day (July Fourth).

That Battery C was an efficient organization is indicated from the last annual inspection and muster in March 1893. Before the corps was transferred Major W. W. Douglas and Captain Eagan W. Sheehan inspecting and mustering officers, reported the Battery's discipline good, military appearance very good, arms and property good, present forty-six, absent eleven, making a percentage present of .807. Battery C was transferred to the Second Infantry Regiment and designated as Company C, Second Infantry, Fourth Brigade, by general Order No. 7, effective July 1, 1893.