

# **History of the Battery F, 1<sup>st</sup> Artillery Regiment, National Guard of California 1881-1893**

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BATTERY F

Battery F, First Artillery Regiment, Fourth Brigade

Reference: Adjutant General's Files

Location: Woodland, Yolo County

Organized March 5, 1881

Reconstituted July 1, 1893\*

Commanding Officers

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Commission</u>
Charles M. Casler, Captain	Mar. 5, 1881	April 6, 1881
George W. Myrick, First Lieut.	Mar. 5, 1881	April 6, 1881
William Spencer, Captain	Mar. 31, 1883	May 2, 1883
George W. Myrick, First Lieut. (Re-elected Mar. 31, 1883)	_____	_____
Charles M. Casler, Captain (Resigned Mar. 15, 1885)	April 25, 1885	May 18, 1885
Thomas G. Hughes, First Lieut.	April 4, 1885	April 22, 1885
William H. Curson, Captain	April 24, 1886	June 17, 1886
Thomas G. Hughes, First Lieut. (Re-elected April 9, 1887)	_____	_____
William H. Curson, Captain (Re-elected April 28, 1888)	_____	_____
John G. Lee, First Lieut.	April 28, 1888	May 16, 1888
William H. Curson, Captain (Re-elected April 26, 1890)	_____	_____
Robert E. Hopkins, First Lieut.	April 26, 1890	June 25, 1890
William H. Curson, Captain (Re-elected April 30, 1892)	_____	_____
Robert Warren, First Lieut.	April 30, 1892	June 7, 1892

Activities:

The citizens and residents of Woodland were eager to have an independent military organization in their city and had filed an application with the Adjutant General, Samuel W. Backus, in January of 1881. Consequently when a vacancy in the regiment occurred by the disbandment of Battery D of Placerville, the application was approved and a company organized and mustered into the State service on March fifth of that year. The new unit

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

BATTERY F (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

had a membership of seventy-one recruits and was designated Battery F, First Artillery Regiment. An election of officers was held at the organization meeting with Charles M. Casler elected Captain and George W. Myrick, First Lieutenant. Captain Casler was a prominent and highly respected citizen owning and operating a Drug Store in Woodland.

The company's first step after organization was to secure an armory. The location decided upon was the second floor of the Washington Hall Block Building. To repair and remodel the site into suitable quarters cost Battery F \$752.85. Seventy regulation uniforms, helmets and other equipment was purchased at a total cost of \$2,390. This amount was taken care of by the individual members of the Battery. On May second a Bond of \$2,000 was given to secure the value of the arms and accoutrements. Seventy stand of arms consisted of Springfield rifles and bayonets. The newly organized Battery suffered a severe loss financially when their armory was destroyed by fire October 15, 1882. By the time the fire was discovered early in the morning the flames had gained such headway that it was an impossibility to gain an entrance into the building. Due to lack of space the non-commissioned officers had been using a small room on the first floor to store their arms and equipment. After the roof had fallen, the brick walls were still standing and it was noticed that the officers equipment wasn't burned. The firemen played two streams of water on this corner permitting three of the men of Battery F to enter the room and rescue the rifles, uniforms and drums. However, these articles were somewhat damaged by the fire and water. The Howitzer had been saved earlier in the morning as it had also been stored on the street floor. Fortunately the loss sustained was not as great as it might have been, owing to the fact that many of the men had their uniforms and arms in their homes. The estimated total loss to the company was \$1,600 due to absence of insurance. The following list covers the articles destroyed:

- 44 Springfield rifles, caliber 45
- 56 bayonets
- 80 scabbards
- 39 cartridge boxes and plates
- 39 cartridge boxes, belts and plates
- 80 waist belts and plates
- 42 gun slings
- 4 arm chests
- 7 uniform coats
- 7 uniform pants

## BATTERY F (Continued)

### Activities: (Continued)

After Captain William Spencer's term had expired April 1885, Charles M. Casler was again elected commanding officer of the Battery. When Mr. Casler assumed the Captaincy he discovered a shortage in the company funds and a meeting of the Finance Committee was immediately called. On July twenty-second, the former Captain was given an opportunity to explain and account for the shortages amounting to \$523.00 at a fair and impartial hearing. Failing to give a satisfactory explanation of the delinquencies, a demand was served on his two bondsmen for payment of the amount. After much discussion by correspondence and wire with the Adjutant General's Office, a compromise was reached and a settlement was affected out of court for \$468.50. Despite the Bondsmen's desire, the military authorities did not subject the former Captain, William Spencer, to criminal prosecution.

The Battery's annual inspection and muster occurred in the latter part of June or early in July each year. Relative to an inquiry from Brigadier-General R. H. Orton, Adjutant General, as to the reason for the small attendance of Battery F at the annual muster, Captain Curson replied that it was due to the fact that the majority of members were working in the harvest fields and at too great distances to return and attend the meeting. However, during the balance of the year, attendance was up to the required standard.

Target practices throughout the years indicated that the highest percentages made by the corps was during the annual shoot in 1882, when Battery F scored 640 points out of a possible 1400, making a total of 46 per cent. Unfavorable conditions were often the cause for poor shooting, taking for example the practice of 1881. The only obtainable range was near town facing East, and during the forenoon a strong North wind blew across the line of fire, making it extremely difficult to register regular scores and in the afternoon the glare of the sun prevented good marksmanship.

Battery F, together with the other batteries of the First Artillery Regiment, held an encampment July 31 to August 7, 1881, at Camp Brown, Nevada County which was located two miles from Grass Valley on the Narrow-gauge Railroad. The camp was also an equal distance from Nevada City. The location of the camp site showed careful selection, being situated on hard, dry ground in the center of a fine grove of oak and pine trees. The streets were covered with sawdust, and due to a plentiful supply of water, were kept well sprinkled. Despite the dust encountered on the way to the drill ground a quarter mile distant, the site was a very suitable one. The camp covered four acres and was laid out in the form of a square, having the artillery camp on the West boundary; the company quarters on the North and East; the officers quarters

## BATTERY F (Continued)

### Activities: (Continued)

and headquarters along the West side; while the headquarters were in the extreme Southwestern corner. The parade ground was too small but served its purpose fairly well.

The regiment commanded by Colonel Creed Haymond, was composed of seven companies of infantry, one of cadets and one of artillery making a total of 279 men. Battery F of Woodland under the command of Captain C. M. Caster left that city early in the morning and reached Sacramento at 8:30 A.M. At 7:30 P.M., Battery F in company with the other Sacramento Batteries left by rail for the camp reaching their destination at nine-twenty that night. The units were enthusiastically received by the companies already in camp; Battery E of Comptonville commanded by J. R. Brown and Battery C, Nevada City under Captain J. A. Rapp. On the way the men were well behaved and their deportment with the one exception of some slight trouble in Battery A, reflected credit on the regiment. During delays at Auburn and Rocklin the band of the First Artillery Regiment rendered brief concerts. At other points along the route to camp, the troops were greeted with salutes, cheers and in addition, even bonfires were built in celebration.

Colonel Creed Haymond was determined to make this encampment a real school of instruction, and strict military discipline was to be enforced. The lack of proper discipline was overlooked in the camp of the former year, as the regiment at that time was not fully organized and the men were not familiar with the proper military routine. The first night the camp was a scene of much activity with the Guardsmen getting settled in their quarters. The program for the eight days was as follows:

Reveille was to be sounded at 5:30 A. M., and taps at 11:30 P. M., each day. Battalion drill, guard mount and dress parade were also routine activities held daily. On Sunday morning religious services were conducted by Reverend Robert Bentley the Chaplain. Again in the afternoon Reverend Bentley preached a sermon "The American Soldier" to a large attendance of the men. On Monday morning Colonel Haymond recruited officers and men from the ranks for a provost guard. The duties of this guard was to patrol the country within a radius of a few miles and in the adjoining towns. The guard enforced the rules rigidly and brought in 22 persons the first afternoon.

BATTERY F (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

In conjunction with the regular duties performed during the week the following activities were participated in:

- Monday .... Regiment visited Grass Valley,  
Tuesday ... Battery G drilled for the  
Veteran Trophy,  
Wednesday . Battery B drilled for the  
Houghton Trophy,  
Thursday .. A Brigade Review was tendered  
to his Excellency George C.  
Perkins, Governor and Commander-  
in-Chief of the National Guard  
" .. Five o'clock Brigade Dress  
Parade;  
Friday .... Routine and exhibition by  
Battery B, also a regimental  
shoot, five men from each  
Battery taking part.  
Saturday .. A sham battle was held, a  
spectacular event which  
terminated the activities of  
the Encampment.

Weekly and monthly meetings for drill and business were held during the year, the members showing a great interest in their organization. The Battery engaged in a skirmish drill on Washington's Birthday following the organization of their unit. Battery F paraded during the year on the days set aside by law and also paraded for target practices. It was customary for the battery to parade outside its own city several times during the year, and the unit always appeared with full ranks on any special occasion when the First Artillery Regiment was designated to participate in any event of importance. Battery F came to Sacramento and proceeded to San Francisco to take part in the ceremonies in connection with the laying of the corner stone for the Garfield Memorial, August 23, 1884. The Third Infantry Regiment's armory in that city was turned over to the First Artillery Regiment for their accommodation during their stay. The following day Battery F returned to Woodland. In 1891 the unit came to Sacramento and acted under escort duty during President Benjamin J. Harrison's visit to that city.\*

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\*For further particulars concerning President Benjamin J. Harrison's visit to Sacramento refer to History of Battery G, First Artillery Regiment, Fourth Brigade.

BATTERY F (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

July Fourth of the same year the battery went to Colusa for Independence exercises, and again on Admission Day of that year they paraded at Marysville during the patriotic exercises. In 1892 Battery F attended the 24th Anniversary of Memorial Day in Sacramento. The Grand Army Veterans were in charge of the ceremonies, being ably assisted by the militia, citizens and civic authorities. The parade was along the usual lines, the Grand Army Post gathering on Tenth Street at two o'clock and by 2:30 P. M., the procession started led by a platoon of police. The First Artillery band and then the First Artillery Regiment went next in formation, followed by the Grand Army Veterans marching to the accompaniment of the drum and fife music. After the impressive ceremonies at the Grand Army of the Republic plot, the exercises were concluded with a general decorating of the graves of the dead veterans.\*

The chief activity that the battery engaged in before being transferred to the Second Regiment was their attendance at the encampment at Camp Columbus from August sixth to August fourteenth. The battery materially increased their knowledge of military science and tactics during the eight days in camp.\*\* During the remainder of the period before Battery F was transferred to the Second Infantry Regiment, only routine company business was transacted.

The Board of Location and Organization approved the application of the commanding officers of the First Artillery Regiment to be transferred to the infantry, taking effect July 1, 1893. Therefore, Battery F was redesignated as Company F, Second Infantry Regiment, Fourth Brigade.

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\*Sacramento Union, May 31, 1892, page 3, column 1.

\*\*For additional information concerning the activities of Battery F at Camp Columbus 1892, refer to History of Battery G, First Artillery Regiment, Fourth Brigade.