

# **History of the Company A (former Germania Rifles), 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Coast Artillery, National Guard of California 1901-1907**

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COMPANY A

Company A, First Battalion Coast Artillery, Second Brigade (formerly Germanian Rifles)

Reference: Adjutant General's Files

Location: San Francisco, San Francisco County

Organized May 28, 1868

Reorganized June 1, 1881\*

Reconstituted Dec. 9, 1895\*\*

Mustered into Federal Service May 6, 1898\*\*\*

Mustered out of Federal Service Sept. 21, 1899\*\*\*\*

Reorganized as Company F, First Infantry Regiment Nov. 29, 1899+

Reconstituted April 19, 1901++

Consolidated and redesignated May 11, 1907+++

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\*Company D, Second Infantry Regiment, formerly Germanian Rifles, designated Battery D, Second Artillery Regiment. Adjutant General Report 1881-1882, General Order No. 11, page 81.

\*\*Company F formed from the consolidation of Batteries D and F, Second Artillery Regiment. On December 7, 1895 Companies D and F consolidated to form Company F, Sixth Battalion. Two days later December 9, Company F, Sixth Battalion redesignated Company F, First Infantry. Adjutant General Report 1895-1896, General Orders No. 17, 18, pages 87, 88.

\*\*\*Company F as part of First Infantry Regiment was mustered into Federal Service May 6, 1898.  
Adjutant General Report 1899-1900, page 4.

\*\*\*\*Adjutant General Report 1899-1900, General Order No. 11, page 68.

+Company F re-entered the National Guard as Company F, First Infantry Regiment, November 29, 1899.  
Adjutant General Report 1899-1900, page 79.

++Company F, First Infantry Regiment redesignated Company A, First Battalion Coast Artillery, April 19, 1901.  
Adjutant General Report 1901-1902, page 68.

+++Company A and Company D, First Battalion Coast Artillery consolidated and redesignated Company K, Fifth Infantry Regiment, May 11, 1907.  
General And Special Orders and Circulars 1907, General Order No. 10.

COMPANY A (Continued)

<u>Commanding Officers</u>		
<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Commission</u>
Firmin A. Nippert, Captain (Re-elected March 10, 1902) (Retired July 21, 1903)	Feb. 28, 1900*	Apr. 19, 1901
William A. Varney, First lieut. (Re-elected March 10, 1902)	Feb. 28, 1900*	Apr. 19, 1901
William A. Varney, Captain (Resigned Dec. 30, 1903)	Aug. 31, 1903	Sept. 28, 1903
John A. Miller, Captain (Retired Sept. 11, 1906)	Jan. 25, 1904	Mar. 21, 1904
John A. Eason, First Lieut. (Re-elected Nov. 27, 1905)	Aug. 31, 1903	Nov. 14, 1903
Mark A. McCann, Captain	Mar. 19, 1906	Sept. 12, 1906

**Activities:**

The history of Company A, First Battalion Coast Artillery from the date of its organization in 1901, goes back 33 years to the organization of the Germania Rifles on May 28, 1868. In June 1881 the company was reorganized as Battery D, Second Artillery Regiment. In 1895 Battery D consolidated with Battery F, Second Artillery Regiment, formerly of the Second Infantry Regiment organized March 18, 1878 and was redesignated Company F, First Infantry Regiment. Company A, First Battalion Coast Artillery came into existence when Company F, First Infantry Regiment was redesignated Company A, First Battalion Coast Artillery.

Although artillery in designation Company A drilled as infantry most of the time. Several times during their existence Company A as a whole or in part had instructions and practice at some of the batteries of the United States Coast Defense forts. The men also received instructions from United States Artillery Officers on drill nights.

At the annual inspection and muster of 1902, Company A ranked fifteenth in relative merit in the National Guard of California and was third best in the battalion with a percentage at inspection of eighty-two. In 1904 the unit slipped to thirty-fourth place in the National Guard and last in the battalion with a percentage of seventy-four.

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\*Captain Firmin A. Nippert and Lieutenant William A. Varney retained their rank dates as of February 28, 1900, when they commanded Company F, First Infantry Regiment.

COMPANY A (Continued)

**Activities:**

In 1904 their relative rank in the National Guard of California rose to twentieth, but was still last in the battalion with a percentage of seventy. In 1907 when the last inspection of Company A as a unit of the 1st Battalion Coast Artillery was held, the unit was thirty-ninth in the standings of the National Guard and still had the lowest percentage in the battalion\*

At target practice Company A ranked third in the battalion during 1902 and 1904. This rating was based on the comparative number of men in each company who received medals as either Sharpshooter, Distinguished Marksman or Marksman. In 1908 Company C of the Battalion was the only unit having any medal men in target practice\*\*

Company A attended the battalion encampment at Stockton from June 14 to 21, 1902. The camp was designated Camp Bangham in honor of Assistant Adjutant General N. S. Bangham, National Guard of California. The following year from July 4 to 12, 1903, Company A as part of the First Battalion Coast Artillery again went into camp at Stockton.

In 1904 Company A attended their first joint Army-National Guard encampment at Atascadero, San Luis Obispo county. This encampment was a departure from the former National Guard encampments in that the Federal Government had succeeded in gaining more power and control over the Militia of the States. The strict discipline and strenuous life of the regulars proved too difficult for the National Guardsmen as a whole to live up to during this encampment\*\*\*

The service rendered by Company A of the First Battalion Coast Artillery during the Earthquake and Fire of 1906 in San Francisco was credited to the unit by the Federal Government in lieu of the

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\*General and Special Orders and Circulars 1903, 1905-1907.

\*\*General and Special Orders and Circulars 1903, 1905-1907.

\*\*\*For further information regarding Coast Artillery encampments of 1901, 1902, 1903 and 1904 refer to First Battalion Coast Artillery, National Guard of California, Adjutant General's Office.

## Activities: (continued)

required summer camp. One of the requirements of the War Department at Washington was that militia companies should go into camp once a year for instruction and drill in order to be given credit by the Federal Authorities.\*

The only active service that Company A was called upon to perform was during the Earthquake and Fire in San Francisco, and to the units credit it went into service in San Francisco without any official call, their sense of duty prompting their action. The heroic work of this company and the battalion to which it belonged is a story all by itself\*\*

Company A as part of the First Battalion Coast Artillery participated in many parades during the six years the battalion was in existence. Besides the parades of July fourth and May thirtieth, there were several held on special occasions. During the visit of the President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt, in May 1903, Company A took part in two mammoth parades. One was held on the eleventh of May when the Chief Executive arrived in San Francisco, and the other on the twelfth when a grand military parade was held in honor of the soldier-president.

Another special occasion was when Governor-General James F. Smith, Governor of the Philippines visited San Francisco, his home town on April fourteen 1906. Then there were two parades by the Battalion that were in honor of, and the last tribute to two deceased generals of the National Guard of California. Both funerals were in 1902. The first was that of Adjutant General William Henry Seaman, who died in Washington D. D. on January 3, 1902, and was buried with military honors on January 12, 1902, in San Francisco. The second was at the funeral of former Major-General W. H. L. Barnes, National Guard of California, retired, held on July 24, 1902, in San Francisco.\*\*\*

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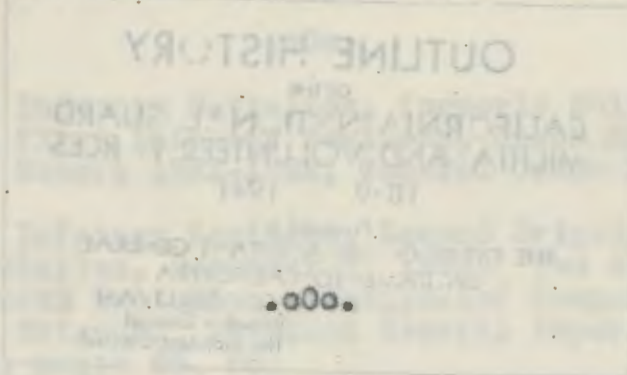
\*For further details refer to the California National Guard and the Earthquake and Fire of 1906, Adjutant General's Office.

\*\*For further details refer to History of First Battalion, Coast Artillery, Adjutant General's Office.

\*\*\*For further information refer to the History of the First Battalion, Coast Artillery, Adjutant General's Office.

Activities: (continued)

After the enactment of the Dick Militia Law in 1903, a study was made by the National Guard of California as how best to meet the requirements of that law with as few changes as possible. One decision was to discontinue the First Battalion Coast Artillery, and the transfer of the units to the Fifth Infantry Regiment. An act of Congress approved January 21, 1903, required that infantry regiments contain twelve companies. The fifth had only eight in May 1907, and to meet the requirement Company A was ordered consolidated with Company D, and redesignated Company K, Fifth Infantry Regiment, May 11, 1907.\* For further information refer to Company K, Fifth Infantry Regiment, Second Brigade.



\*General and Special Orders and Circulars 1907, General Order No. 10.