

# **History of the 1<sup>st</sup> Squadron of Cavalry, National Guard of California 1905-1908, 1911-1917**

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FIRST SQUADRON OF CAVALRY

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First Squadron of Cavalry

Reference Adjutant General's Files

Location Sacramento, Sacramento County

Organized August 15, 1905

Mustered out July 31, 1908\*

Reorganized and mustered in May 1, 1911\*\*

Mustered into Federal Service June 26, 1916\*\*\*

Mustered out of Federal Service Nov. 17, 1916\*\*\*\*

Resumption of Service in the National Guard 1916\*\*\*\*\*

Mustered into Federal Service August 22, 1917\*\*\*\*\*

Commanding Officers

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Commission</u>
S. W. Kay, Major	Aug. 15, 1905	Aug. 15, 1905
J. F. Sherburn, First Lieut.-Adj.	June 17, 1903*****	Oct. 5, 1905
David F. Fox, Veterinarian*****	Aug. 25, 1905	Sept. 13, 1905

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\*General and Special Orders and Circulars 1908, General Order No. 15, par. 1.

\*\*First Squadron of Cavalry reorganized and mustered in May 1, 1911.  
General and Special Orders and Circulars 1911, Special Order No. 5, page 3.

\*\*\*First Squadron of Cavalry mustered into Federal Service for duty on the Mexican Border, June 26, 1916.  
Adjutant General Report 1914-1920, page 16.

\*\*\*\*Adjutant General Report 1914-1920, page 16.

\*General and Special Orders and Bulletins 1916, General Order No. 34, page 150.

\*\*\*\*\*Headquarters First Squadron Cavalry mustered into Federal Service for duty during the World War August 22, 1917. Muster Roll, Head-quarters, First Squadron Cavalry August, 1917. Adjutant General Files (First Squadron of Cavalry served as the 145th Machine Gun Battalion, 40th Division during the World War.)

\*\*\*\*\*Lieutenant Sherburn retained his rank date as of June 17, 1903, when on Staff of Second Infantry Regiment.

\*\*\*\*\*Veterinarian appointed by the Governor. Rank and pay varied with duration of service.

FIRST SQUADRON OF CAVALRY (Continued)Commanding Officers (Continued)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Commission</u>
S. W. Kay, Major (re-elected July 21, 1906)	_____	_____
H. H. Sydenham, First Lieut.-Adj.	Feb. 20, 1907	April 16, 1907
S. W. Kay, Major (re-elected May 29, 1911)	_____	_____
H. H. Sydenham, First Lieut.-Adj. (promoted Capt. Troop B, Jan. 17, 1913)	May 26, 1911	May 26, 1911
T. M. Lovette, First Lieut.-Adj. (resigned April 9, 1914)	May 28, 1913	July 3, 1913
D. E. Barney, First Lieut.- Adj.	April 10, 1914	May 11, 1914
J. B. Nichols, Veterinarian	Sept. 19, 1913	Nov. 28, 1913
S. W. Kay, Major (re-elected Mar. 7, 1916) (resigned Aug. 26, 1916)	_____	_____
A. B. Dockery, Major	Sept. 11, 1916	Sept. 11, 1916
D. E. Barney, First Lieut.-Adj. (took Federal oath, Sept. 28, 1916)	_____	_____

Activities:

In accordance with the provisions of Sections 1927, and 1933, State Political Code, Troop A Cavalry, Second Brigade stationed in San Francisco; Troop B, Third Brigade stationed in Sacramento; Troop C, First Brigade stationed in Salinas, and Troop D, First Brigade stationed in Los Angeles were on August 15, 1905, organized as a squadron of cavalry to be known and designated as the First Squadron of Cavalry, National Guard of California. Under the authority of Section 1957, Political Code of California a commission as Major, First Squadron of Cavalry was issued to Samuel W. Kay of Sacramento. All communications, returns, and other papers heretofore forwarded by the commanding officers of Troops A, B, C, and D, through brigade headquarters, were hereafter to be forwarded direct to Major Kay, at such address as he might designate.

The First Squadron of Cavalry was in the service of the State, from 1905 to 1908 when it was discontinued. The squadron was reorganized in 1911, and served until it entered the World War in 1917. The table on the following page indicates the various changes in the organization:

COMPANIES COMPOSING THE FIRST SQUADRON OF CAVALRY

1905-1908

A	B	C	D
Troop A San Francisco (First California Guard) <u>1905</u>	Troop B Sacramento (Sacramento Light Artillery) <u>1905</u>	Troop C Salinas (Troop C, Second Brigade) <u>1905</u>	Troop D Los Angeles (Troop D, First Brigade) <u>1905</u>

COMPANIES COMPOSING THE FIRST SQUADRON OF CAVALRY

1911-1917

A	B	C	D	
Troop A Bakersfield (Troop A, First Brigade) <u>1911</u>	Troop B Sacramento (Sacramento Light Artillery) 1911  Troop B Sacramento <u>1913</u>	Troop C Salinas (Troop C, First Brigade) <u>1911</u>	Troop D Los Angeles (Troop D, First Brigade) <u>1911</u>	Machine Gun Troop <u>1917</u>

I The year dates in the table indicate the year the troops were attached to the First Squadron of Cavalry.

II Detachment of Hospital Corps and detachment of Sanitary Corps were provisional organizations, made up of enlisted men detailed thereto from other companies.

FIRST SQUADRON OF CAVALRY (Continued)

## Activities: (Continued)

In any military operation, reconnaissance plays a most important part. It is of vital importance that a commander possess information concerning the enemy. If he does not possess this information he gropes in the dark and the efficient use of his command is an impossibility.

There are various effective ways of gaining the necessary information in the theater of operations; but for the intimate reconnaissance that is necessary when two opposing forces approach each other, the final dependence must be on the mounted man. Therefore, it was necessary for the High Command to concentrate on the training of patrols and scouts; and it was only by constant study and persistent practice with concrete problems during peace time that this could be accomplished.

The principles of the subject must be thoroughly learned, and these principles must be demonstrated in an applicatory way so that every man of the cavalry would be able to perform intelligently, any duty that might reasonably be expected of him. In order to maintain the necessary high standard of military efficiency, the First Squadron of Cavalry attended a number of encampments.

In compliance with General Order No. 13, Adjutant General's Office, dated May 11, 1907, the First Squadron of Cavalry, consisting of three troops, B, C and D attended the encampment at Santa Cruz, June 16 to 25, 1907.

It was the intention of Major Kay, Squadron Commander, to unite the three troops at Pajaro, and from that point to march overland to Santa Cruz, but owing to the exceedingly inadequate service rendered by the Southern Pacific Railway Company in the transportation of the horses, the animals did not arrive at Pajaro for several hours after the men, although in each instance they had been loaded ten or fifteen hours prior to the entrainment of the troops.

Owing to the deplorable service on the part of the railroad, the plan of marching the Squadron overland from Pajaro to Santa Cruz was abandoned much to the regret of all; as much benefit was expected to be derived by the troops from the practice march.

Troop B arrived in Pajaro at 6:30 P. M., June sixteenth, where they went into camp to await the arrival of their horses. The horses arrived about 5:00 A. M., June seventeenth, and having been in the cars for thirty hours or more, were in no condition for the road. Consequently the troop remained in camp until 2:30 P. M. that day, at which time they took the trail for Santa Cruz where they arrived at 8:30 P. M.

Troop C reached Watsonville at 2:00 P. M., where it went into camp at Cassin's Park; left Watsonville at 7:30 A. M. next day, June seventeenth; arrived at Santa Cruz 11:30 A. M. with men and horses

FIRST SQUADRON OF CAVALRY (Continued)

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Activities: (Continued)

in fine condition. Had been on the road 8 hours and 30 minutes, and covered a distance of 40 miles.

Troop D arrived at Pajaro about 10:00 A. M. the sixteenth, and upon learning from the Southern Pacific agent that the horses would not arrive until the next day, Troop D proceeded by rail to Santa Cruz.

During the encampment the period between 8:00 and 10:00 A. M. allotted to troop drill was devoted to mounted drill in close and extended order, and mounted exercises at the discretion of troop commanders. This having been the first time the troops were thrown into squadron formation, little could be expected the first two or three days, but toward the last the manner in which the troops went through the movements of the squadron was all that could be expected.

From 1908 to 1911, due to the disbandment of the First Squadron of Cavalry, the cavalry troops of the State attended all encampments as separate units. Following the reorganization of the First Squadron of Cavalry in 1911, the troops attended the war maneuvers in the vicinity of Salinas, August 11 to 21, 1912, in conjunction with the United States Army forces.

The California Cavalry did not participate in the war maneuvers in squadron formation. Troops A and B were attached to the "Blue Army" under command of Colonel Cornelius Gardner, 16th United States Infantry. While Troops C and D were attached to the "Red Army" under command of Brigadier-General Robert Wankowski, Commander of the First Brigade, National Guard of California. During the war maneuvers the cavalry was used both as independent and as advanced cavalry; proved most efficient in scouting and in keeping the brigade commanders in touch with the situation in front. Not a single cavalryman was detached from the organizations for orderly or any other duty, thus keeping the cavalry united and at full working strength at all times.

The First Squadron of Cavalry was called out for active emergency duty shortly after its organization, when on April 18, 1906, a severe earthquake and fire laid more than half of the city of San Francisco in ruins. On Sunday April 22, 1906, the First Squadron of Cavalry under command of Major Samuel Kay received orders to take charge of the Fourth National Guard District lying west of Valencia Street, from 20th to 30th Streets and between 30th and V Avenue on the south and Golden Gate Park on the north.

The squadron proceeded to Valencia Street between 23rd and 24th Streets and established camp on a vacant lot. Owing to the large district to

FIRST SQUADRON OF CAVALRY (Continued)

## Activities: (Continued)

be patrolled and to the small number of troops available it was necessary to send one full troop at a time to be on duty four hours with eight hours off. Troop B commanded by Captain C. J. Boden relieved Troop C at 12 M. Troop A commanded by Captain R. C. Greeninger relieved Troop B at 4:00 P. M. This routine was carried on during their stay in this district. The First Squadron of Cavalry patrolled various districts in San Francisco until May 19, 1906, when they were relieved from duty.

On January 8, 1907, Troop A having fallen below the standard of efficiency required by the War Department, was mustered out of service, leaving the First Squadron of Cavalry a three-troop organization.

On July 31, 1908, General Order No. 15 was issued which stated that the First Squadron of Cavalry as organized by Paragraph 4, General Order No. 13, Adjutant General's Office, August 15, 1905, would be discontinued. Troops B, C and D would hereafter be designated as Troops B, C and D Cavalry, respectively, and be considered as separate organizations attached to General Headquarters, and must report to the Adjutant General.

On May 1, 1911, the First Squadron of Cavalry was reorganized and mustered into State Service under command of Major Samuel Kay.

During the month of March, 1912, Major Samuel Kay inspected the troops of the First Squadron of Cavalry and made the following report to the Adjutant General:

"The officers of the four troops generally are efficient and show marked enthusiasm in the success of the organization. The non-commissioned officers are well instructed and perform their duties in a creditable manner. The personnel of the organizations seems to be good."

After careful investigation of conditions, the following recommendations were submitted by the Militia Bureau: Civilians entering the service as officers without examination as to their qualifications or ability to handle troops should be required to appear before an examining board six months after having been commissioned in order to ascertain whether they are applying themselves and acquiring a sufficient knowledge of drill and tactics to fill the office to which they have been commissioned. It is recommended that the latest edition of the Cavalry Drill Regulations be issued to the organizations, those in use in many instances being obsolete editions.

FIRST SQUADRON OF CAVALRY (Continued)

## Activities: (Continued)

Complaint was made, and apparently, justly so, by many officers against being required to furnish bonds at their own expense. While this was the law as interpreted by the Attorney General it was suggested that at the next session of the Legislature the law be amended so as to permit the premium on these bonds to be entered as a legitimate debit by the organizations, against the funds furnished them by the State. It was customary for business houses to pay the premium on bonds of their employees as a protection or insurance to their business, and it was expected that the State should bear the expense of the officer's bonds; especially as the officers receive no compensation for their services except when acting under orders.

A difference between the Property Returns of the troops and the property charged against them by the State was also noted. These differences were of small account but troop commanders should be directed to rectify them immediately. Officers and enlisted men adopted the progressive course as outlined by the Inspector-Instructor, Lieutenant A. B. Dockery, United States Army.

Many necessary and fundamental instructions were issued. The care of Arms, Horses, and Equipment had been neglected, or entirely overlooked in the past, although the troopers had shown a desire to profit by the presence of a Regular Army Instructor and to follow his suggestions. Attention was invited to the 1911 report of the Chief, Division of Militia Affairs, pages 22 and 23. That report referred to conditions as they existed in California and state:

"Without horses, the cavalry is not only not fully armed, but is deprived of all its purely cavalry functions and becomes, in fact, nothing but infantry. The cost of mounting the entire four troops would be considerable and not advisable even though cost was of no consideration. Each troop should be supplied with at least twenty good mounts."

Many States made provision for the mounting of their cavalry by supplying a limited number of horses as suggested. Every officer who had given the subject consideration joined in the request that effort be made at the next session of the Legislature to provide these horses, and for their care and maintenance. This would place the California National Guard Cavalry on an equal basis with that of other States and would tend to make the cavalry what it should be; a trained, mounted, force. If at some future time the United States Government should appropriate sufficient funds for the partial mounting of the National Guard Cavalry, these horses, if purchased with the same care exercised in the Regular Army, could be taken over by the Government and allowance made to the State for same.



FIRST SQUADRON OF CAVALRY (Continued) ✓

## Activities: (Continued)

California had always been generous to its citizen soldiers, and the partial mounting of its cavalry would be but doing as other States had done.

The extent to which the lack of horses affected the Organized Militia of the various States was seen by the broad plan for organization as set forth in Circular No. 19, Division of Militia Affairs, series of 1914, calling for 27 regiments of Organized Militia cavalry. In 1915, there was in existence the equivalent of 8-1/2 regiments. It was believed that the additional regiments needed would be organized, were it not for the attending expense falling upon the State or the individual cavalryman in connection with the maintenance of mounts. The Federal appropriations for the 1915 fiscal year carried an item of \$200,000 for the maintenance of horses of the Organized Militia Field Artillery. It was recommended that the next annual appropriation bill carry a similar item for the benefit of the Organized Militia cavalry.

Another handicap to the California Cavalry was the fact that the new Cavalry Service Regulations were still in the experimental stage. The old Cavalry Drill Regulations had remained the authorized drill book for the Militia. The latter was not up to date, and was therefore unsatisfactory. On the other hand, there were obvious objections to adopting any experimental drill regulations as in their present state they were unsuitable for the Organized Militia. It was hoped that the situation, in which the Regular Cavalry uses one set of drill regulations and the Organized Militia another, would soon be terminated.

On June 26, 1916, the First Squadron of Cavalry was mustered into Federal Service at Sacramento for duty on the Mexican Border. On June twenty-eighth, the squadron entrained for Nogales, Arizona, arriving there July second. The squadron performed guard and patrol duty along the border until October twenty-sixth, when they entrained for Los Angeles. Arriving in Los Angeles, the squadron encamped at Exposition Park where they remained until mustered out of Federal Service, November 17, 1916.

The long hoped for desire of Major Samuel Kay, Commander of the First Squadron of Cavalry, to have Government owned horses was at last gratified when, under Section 90 of an act of Congress, approved June 3, 1916, there was a provision for the purchase or issue of not to exceed 32 horses for the use of each troop of cavalry in the Organized Militia in the United States. Provisions were also made for the issue of forage and bedding, for shoeing and veterinary supplies, and for the employment and pay of not to exceed 5 enlisted men for caretakers and stablemen. It was anticipated that the measures, provided adequate funds were available,

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FIRST SQUADRON OF CAVALRY (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

would result in increased efficiency in the existing Cavalry organizations, and as a stimulus for the organization of new units.

The new Cavalry regulations were expected to be published before the commencement of the next outdoor instructional season, and inasmuch as they embraced not only drill regulations but formed a complete manual of cavalry, they should prove of great value to the National Guard.

On July 16, 1917, Captain Henry H. Sydenham of Troop B, First Squadron of Cavalry mustered into the State Service, a military organization in Fresno, known as the Machine Gun Troop, First Squadron of Cavalry. The following month August 5, 1917, the First Squadron of Cavalry was called into Federal Service for duty during the World War. The squadron did not engage in active service as a cavalry unit as it formed a major part of the 145th Machine Gun Battalion.\* For further information concerning the regimental activities of the First Squadron of Cavalry, refer to the History of the 145th Machine Gun Battalion, 40th Division.

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\*Adjutant General Report 1914-1920, pages 21 and 22.