

# **History of the Company G (Shields Guard), 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment, National Guard of California 1880-1907**

This history was completed in 1940 by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in conjunction with the California National Guard and the California State Library.

Digitized by the History Office, Camp San Luis Obispo, 6 January 2015

COMPANY G (Continued)

Company G, First Infantry Regiment, Second Brigade (formerly Shields Guard)

Reference: Adjutant General's Files  
Location: San Francisco, San Francisco County

Organized January 3, 1862

Reconstituted March 22, 1882 \*

Reconstituted December 9, 1895 \*\*

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

Mustered out of Federal Service September 21, 1899 \*\*\*\*

Reorganized as Company G, First Infantry Regiment Nov. 29, 1899 '

Detached and Redesignated April 19, 1901 ''

Redesignated April 19, 1901 '''

Mustered out May 10, 1907 ''''

Henry W. Adams, First Lieut.

(Reelected Feb. 22, 1886)

(Resigned Dec. 20, 1886)

-oOo-

\* Company G, formerly Company B, Third Infantry Regiment, was attached to the First Infantry Regiment and redesignated as Company G, Second Brigade.

Adjutant General Report 1881-1882, General Order No. 6, Page 93.

\*\* Company G reorganized and designated as Company G, Fourth Battalion December 7, 1895. Two days later, December 9, Company G, Fourth Battalion, became Company G, First Infantry Regiment, Second Brigade.

Adjutant General Report 1895-1896, General Orders No. 17 and No. 18, pages 86, 88.

\*\*\* Company G, as part of the 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 G, as part of the First Infantry Regiment, re-entered the National Guard, November 29, 1899.

Adjutant General Report 1899-1900, page 79.

'' Company G was detached from First Infantry Regiment and redesignated Battery B, First Battalion of Artillery, April 19, 1901.

Adjutant General Report 1901-1902, General Order No. 5, page 66.

''' Company G, formerly Company M, First Infantry Regiment, organized December 9, 1895, was redesignated as Company G, First Infantry Regiment, April 19, 1901.

Adjutant General Report 1901-1902, General Order No. 5, page 66.

'''' Company G was mustered out in accordance with General Orders No. 9 and No. 10, disbanding the First Infantry Regiment.

General and Special Orders and Circulars - 1907.

W. L. Wall, Captain July 10, 1900

Richard Callopy, First Lieut. July 10, 1900

(Resigned June 5, 1901)

F. W. Newbert, First Lieut. July 8, 1901

COMPANY G (Continued)

Commanding Officers (Continued)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Commission</u>
Charles P. LeBreton, Captain (Resigned Aug. 9, 1883)	May 11, 1882	May 22, 1882
Francis J. Krempel, First Lieut. (Resigned Nov. 12, 1883)	May 11, 1882	May 22, 1882
Charles L. Tilden, Captain	Sept. 17, 1883	Sept. 29, 1883
Henry W. Adams, First Lieut.	Jan. 28, 1884	Feb. 14, 1884
Charles L. Tilden, Captain (Reelected Oct. 5, 1885)		
Henry W. Adams, First Lieut. (Reelected Feb. 22, 1886) (Resigned Dec. 20, 1886)		
Charles L. Tilden, Captain (Reelected Sept. 26, 1887)		
William Sumner, First Lieut.	Mar. 14, 1887	April 6, 1887
Charles L. Tilden, Captain (Reelected Oct. 28, 1889)		
Charles E. Thompson, First Lieut.	Mar. 25, 1889	May 30, 1889
Charles L. Tilden, Captain (Reelected Sept. 28, 1891)		
Charles E. Thompson, First Lieut. (Reelected Sept. 28, 1891)		
Charles L. Tilden, Captain (Reelected Sept. 25, 1893)		
Charles E. Thompson, First Lieut. (Reelected May 8, 1893)		
Edgar C. Sutcliffe, Captain	June 4, 1894	
Thomas W. Sparrowe, First Lieut.	April 8, 1895	May 31, 1895
Edgar C. Sutcliffe, Captain (Reelected June 8, 1896)		
Thomas W. Sparrowe, First Lieut. (Reelected Nov. 1, 1897)		
Edgar G. Sutcliffe, Captain (Reelected Feb. 28, 1900)		
William N. Swasey, First Lieut.	Feb. 28, 1900	April 16, 1900
William N. Swasey, Captain	Oct. 22, 1900	Dec. 22, 1900
Walter S. Gratton, First Lieut.	Oct. 22, 1900	Dec. 22, 1900
W. L. Wall, Captain	July 10, 1900	May 29, 1901
Richard Callopy, First Lieut. (Resigned June 5, 1901)	July 10, 1900	May 29, 1901
F. W. Newbert, First Lieut.	July 8, 1901	Aug. 21, 1901

COMPANY G (Continued)

Commanding Officers (Continued)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Commission</u>
W. L. Wall, Captain (Reelected Jan. 30, 1903)		
Louis Graham, First Lieut.	Aug. 28, 1903	Dec. 2, 1903
W. L., Wall, Captain (Reelected Mar. 24, 1905)		
Charles Suydan, First Lieut.	Feb. 9, 1906	April 5, 1906

Activities:

Under the reorganization plan of 1881-1882 the Third Infantry Battalion was disbanded and Company B, formerly Shields Guard, Third Infantry Battalion was attached to the First Infantry Regiment, and redesignated as Company G of the same, March 22, 1882. \* By the authority of the Board of Location and Organization of the Second Brigade, a General Order was issued August 10, 1885, which stated that Company G, First Infantry be transferred to the Fifth Infantry and redesignated Company C. However, on September 20, 1885, General Order No. 29 was issued which rescinded the former order, and the unit retained its previous position, that of Company G. \*\*

The unit was the "baby" of the regiment which came into existence in March 1882, and under the administrative ability of Captain Charles Le Breton and Charles L. Tilden the unit became the peer of its progenitor, Company G. These two units were known as the "Nationals" and G is on record as the successor of the Shields Guard of the Third Infantry Regiment and Battalion, organized in January 1862. Out of the overflow of Company C, which voluntarily adopted the Weakling, the now sturdy company received its start. In 1887 the "Nationals" records show a total membership of 1070 men since organization. \*\*\*

After the unit took up its duties with the First Infantry they paraded with the National Guard of California on July 4, 1883, in commemoration of the 127th Anniversary of American Independence. Approximately one year later, on October 17, 1884, a report of Major John T. Cutting, acting Inspector, Second Brigade, showed that the company, as a newly organized unit, was very efficient. However, the Inspector stated that the uniforms were practically worn out and blankets and overcoats were needed.

-oOo-

\* Adjutant General Report 1881-1882, General Order No. 6, page 93.

\*\* Adjutant General Report 1885-1886, General Orders No. 22, No. 29, pages 73, 79.

\*\*\* San Francisco Call, April 14, 1887, page 3, column 3.

COMPANY G (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

During the year 1884 Company G encamped at Santa Rosa for eight days. In the following year they participated in the Camp of Instruction of the entire National Guard, held at Santa Cruz from August 15 to 23. The camp was designated Camp Stoneman, in honor of George Stoneman, Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the National Guard. During this encampment, the unit took part in drills, brigade dress parades, guard mountings, sentry duty and battalion skirmish. They also engaged in a sham battle during this encampment, which was performed in a most creditable manner. It appeared to be a real battle and was viewed by thousands of spectators from the surrounding hills that overlooked the scene. \*

The purpose of target practice was to properly instruct and train the men of the National Guard of California to handle a gun properly, know its capacity and shoot it with some degree of accuracy. This required practice, also plenty of ammunition of which the members could not afford to purchase from their own funds. Therefore, on March 12, 1885, the State Legislature passed a law to appropriate \$7,000 every biennium for the promotion of target practice. However, no money was set apart until 1887 when the State Legislature appropriated \$3,500 to be used for target practice during the thirty-ninth and fortieth fiscal years, although this amount was just half of that allowed by law. The Adjutant General spent a portion of this sum for a State decoration which was awarded to those members who reached a certain percentage in target practice. Ammunition was also purchased and targets were built, developing a great interest among the members of the different units in rifle shooting. Some of the men who had scarcely handled a gun became excellent riflemen; also many of them received medals which were awarded for attaining a certain percentage in rifle practice. \*\*

On September 27, 1887, the unit participated in the annual shoot of the National Guard which took place at Shell Mount Park Rifle Range, in the Bay region. Each unit, using Springfield rifles, shot ten rounds of ammunition at the 200 yard target. It was a pleasant day for the rifle shooting and no comment on the affair was necessary as the scores spoke for themselves. Following are the companies that took part in the shoot: Company G and C of the Nationals, First Infantry Regiment; Company C, Second Infantry Regiment; and Companies B and D of the First Infantry Regiment. Attending the match were distinguished military men who were as follows: Colonel H. Bendel, Inspector General of Rifle Practice, Major Kellogg also Inspector General of Rifle Practice of the Second Brigade and Lieutenant-Colonel Orten; Captain Tilden of Company G and Captain Klein of Company C,

-oOo-

2 \* Adjutant General Report 1885-1886, page 123.

3 \*\* Adjutant General Report 1887-1888, page 14.

COMPANY G (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

both of the Nationals, which were strongly represented. They did remarkable shooting and made a very creditable showing before the targets. The shooting did not close before late in the evening. The incessant popping of the rifles kept up all through the day and reminded one of a sham battle on a small scale. \*

Company G also participated with the First Infantry in the Maze Trophy Shoot, the Infantry Regiment winning by approximately 400 points. This rifle match took place at Shell Mound Park Rifle Range, in the Bay Region, December 5, 1892. The trophy was presented to the regiment for reaching the highest degree of marksmanship in rifle shooting. The companies which scored the highest individually were Company C, First Infantry, Company B of the Third Infantry, and Company G of the First Infantry, scoring the third highest record. \*\*

On the evening of February 10, 1891, the First Infantry Regiment paraded for the distribution of service medals and also for the badges earned for marksmanship during the year 1890. Colonel John H. Dickinson spoke the words of presentation. The Mechanics Pavilion was crowded by 9:30 P. M., then the National Guard paraded a little more than 500 members, including a full regimental band of thirty pieces, also drummers and buglers. The line formed in the Regimental Armory at the appointed hour and the regiment entered the Pavilion at the Polk Street entrance in columns of fours. The Austen movement was executed for the march in review in honor of Brigadier General John T. Cutting, Second Brigade, who was attended by his staff. Colonel W. McDonald of the Second Artillery and the other field and staff officers of the same, were present. The eight companies had been divided into platoons of sixteen files front with guides, and the quick and steady step, the fastest observed by any battalion in the brigade, taken with the numerical showing, made the review a scene not to be forgotten. Breaking into columns of fours and without leaving the floor, Colonel Dickinson put his men through three or four movements of the battalion, simple, because of the floor room, ample as it had been on some occasions of the same character, did not permit any complicated maneuvers. After these exercises the battalion was marched off

-oOo-

\* San Francisco Call, September 26, 1887, page 2, column 1

\*\* San Francisco Examiner, December 5, 1892, page 8, column 3.

COMPANY G (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

and out of the way under the galleries. The regimental line extended all along the southern side of the Pavilion and covered the western end and about one-third of the northern side with the companies in double ranks. The manual in the dress parade was well executed and the ceremony was as successful as the review and the short drill. Major George R. Burdick, Second Brigade, commanded the parade, and after the dismissal of the same the companies were brought to attention and the names of the men who were entitled to medals or badges were read off. Those called stepped out to the front and in their respective classes formed into lines. As each name was called a hearty cheer was given and gun butts pounded on the floor. None received more hearty and general applause than Drum Major Mayberry.

The first called out were the thirty-five service medal men. The medals were first of their kind to be issued by the State. As a veteran among veterans the first badge was awarded as a special compliment to Corporal L. R. Townsend of Company B. In addition his friends presented him with a magnificent floral wreath. The medals which were given to the First Infantry as the pioneer organization of the State Guard, were of bronze and quite ornate, hanging by a blue ribbon from a bronze bar for ten years service, and a gold bar for twenty years service or over. Corporal Townsend, as noted, had several thirty-six years. Colonel Dickinson spoke a few words as he distributed the State testimonials and particularly referred to the long and extraordinary service of Veteran Townsend. He then proceeded to give out the decorations for shooting, which were similar to those issued in 1887. As the members stepped forward and received their badges the parade line melted away, and when the last man received his badge, the floor was given over to dancing which continued until midnight. \*

\* San Francisco Call, February 10, 1891, page 1, column 7.

\* For additional information concerning the funeral ceremony of King Kalakaua, refer to History of Company C, First Infantry Regiment, Second Brigade.  
For additional information concerning the funeral services of Senator George Hearst, refer to History of Company C, First Infantry Regiment, Second Brigade.  
For additional information concerning the funeral ceremony of the Honorable John F. Swift, refer to History of Company C, First Infantry Regiment, Second Brigade.

COMPANY G (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

The activities of the unit for the next three years consisted of encampments, parades, drills and target practice. The company was also an escort to the funerals of the following dignitaries: King Kalakaua of Hawaii, January 22, 1891; Senator George Hearst on March 15 of this same year; and United States Minister to Japan, John F. Swift in San Francisco, May 11, also of this same year. \*

Approximately two years later it was decided to erect a new armory on Ellis Street, near Van Ness Avenue, to be occupied by Companies G and C, better known as the "Nationals" of the First Infantry Regiment, Second Brigade. These two units participated in the laying of the cornerstone of the enormous building on February 23, 1893. At one o'clock in the afternoon the two companies met at the old armory on Post Street, under command of Captains Tilden and Woodruff, and marched to the spot where the new building was to be erected. Nearly 200 veterans who were members of the organization turned out as an escort in civilian dress. The first Infantry band furnished the music. The organization made a grand display as they marched in columns of fours down Post Street to Kearney, then up Market to Golden Gate Avenue to the place where the new armory was to be erected. The American Flag was unfurled over many house tops and in doorways; crowds of small boys tripped along after the troops, while others lined themselves up on brick foundations and walls where they could see and shout as the parade passed by. A large crowd assembled around the sand heaps from which were to rise Norman towers, turrets and renascent archways of the new armory.

Men who had played their part in the history of the city and who had stood shoulder to shoulder in their day as comrades in arms, uncovered their gray heads in company with the younger men in uniform as the Reverend John Gray invoked a divine blessing upon the ceremony. Captain Charles Le Breton, one of the veterans, officiated as master of ceremonies, and delivered speeches which were models of brevity as he introduced the actors

-000-

\* For additional information concerning the funeral ceremony of King Kalakaua, refer to History of Company C, First Infantry Regiment, Second Brigade.

For additional information concerning the funeral services of Senator George Hearst, refer to History of Company C, First Infantry Regiment, Second Brigade.

For additional information concerning the funeral ceremony of the Honorable John F. Swift, refer to History of Company C, First Infantry Regiment, Second Brigade.



COMPANY G (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

in the scene. The first man introduced after the Clergyman was the venerable Colonel J. B. Moore, who had come all the way from Ruby Valley, Nevada, to contribute his fund of reminiscences. He was the first commander of the Nationals and told a story of the early organization of the same. The young men in brass-trimmed helmets, leaned on their rifles and listened intently to the annals from his lips. There was loud cheering when the veteran commander finished. The next speaker was Captain Charles L. Tilden, the senior officer of the Nationals, who delivered a brief address in behalf of the active members. After paying a high compliment to Captain Le Breton, and invoking the cooperation of all the veteran members in the work of building their new home, the chairman of the committee of arrangements stated that the honor of laying the cornerstone had been assigned to Captain Le Breton of Company G. Captain Tilden then drew from his pocket a silver trowel, presented to him by ex-Lieutenant Snook, and after placing a box containing relics and momentous copies of the "Call" and other daily papers within its receptacle, spread mortar scientifically over the surface and then the large stone was slowly lowered by the derrick and Captain Le Breton put the stone in place. The parting words spoken by the Captain were "I declare the cornerstone of the New Armory properly layed". Colonel William P. Sullivan, Jr., commanding the First Infantry Regiment, and his staff, in full uniform, were present as guests of the "Nationals" and occupied seats on the platform. The cost of this new building was estimated at \$50,000. \*

The unit was inspected by Lieutenant Colonel A. D. Cutler, the Division Inspector, on April 15, 1893, and Company G held the largest numerical strength of the National Guard of California, that of ninety-two men. They also had the highest record in attendance, which was 100 per cent. \*\*

On July 3, 1894, Company G was called with the National Guard of California to active service in Sacramento, to help in controlling a Railroad Strike which affected about three-fourths of the nation. The unit set camp at the State Capitol grounds. Business was practically at a standstill as nothing was being shipped in or out of the State as the trains were not running. On July 11, 1894, the guard proceeded to the city front to aid in the landing of the United States troops who arrived on that morning, but no Railroad Strike of 1894. Adjutant General's Office.

-oOo-

\*\* For additional activities of the First Infantry Regiment in the San Francisco Call, February 23, 1893, page 3, column 3  
First Infantry Regiment, Second Brigade.

\*\* Adjutant General Report 1893-1894, page 93.

\*\*\* Adjutant General Report 1901-1902, General Order No. 5, page 66.

COMPANY G (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

resistance by the strikers to their landing was encountered. On the twelfth of this same month the First Infantry moved camp to 9th and D Streets and maintained a guard from what was known as the Roundhouse at the Railroad Yards, and extended this protection out as far as 12th street. Finally the strike subsided and after twenty-three days of active service the troops were dismissed and returned to their homes in San Francisco. \*

From 1895 to 1898 the activities of Company G pertained for the most part to weekly drills, annual target practices, encampments, and parades. Special emphasis was given to celebrations honoring Washington's Birthday, July Fourth, Memorial and Admission Days.

With the outbreak of the Spanish American War each State was called upon for enlisted men. Company G, with the First Infantry Regiment, was mustered into the Regular Army at San Francisco on May 6, 1898, under the President's call for Volunteers. The unit sailed from San Francisco on May 25 and arrived at Cavite, Island of Luzon, June 30. The corps took part in the battle of Malate Trenches and the capture of Manila on August 13, and also engaged in the campaign of the Philippine Insurrection from February 5 to March 21, 1899. On July 27 of the same year the unit embarked from the Philippines to return home to the United States. The company reached San Francisco on August 23, disembarked and encamped at the Presidio August 25, and was mustered out of the United States service September 21, 1899. \*\*

On returning to the United States, Company G, as a unit of the First Infantry, resumed their duties with the National Guard. They participated in the annual and special parades, drills, target practice, and encampments; and two years later, on April 19, 1901, in accordance with General Order No. 5, and upon the recommendation of the Board of Location and Organization, Company G, First Infantry, was transferred and redesignated as Battery B, First Battalion of Artillery. In the same General Order, Company M, First Infantry Regiment was redesignated as Company G to fill the vacancy caused by the transfer of the former Company G. \*\*\*

-oOo-

\* For further details refer to the National Guard and the Railroad Strike of 1894. Adjutant General's Office.

\*\* For additional activities of the First Infantry Regiment in the Spanish-American War, refer to the History of Company G, First Infantry Regiment, Second Brigade.

\*\*\* Adjutant General Report 1901-1902, General Order No. 5, page 66.

COMPANY G (Continued)

COMPANY G (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

Act: The activities of the unit from 1901 to 1906 were few except for encampments with the First Infantry at Napa. on August 2 to 8, 1902, and again on August 12, 1904. Then in 1906, 300,000 people were rendered homeless by the terrible earthquake and subsequent fire which devastated about four square miles of territory (or approximately 600 blocks) in San Francisco on April 18, 1906. Buildings collapsed and flames broke out in many places and the broken gas mains added terror to the appalling scene. One large three story framed structure, which was made on filled ground, on line of the old willow creek, sank below the street level to a depth of two stories and the third story was pitched into the street. Many of the inmates were buried in the ruins. A large water main burst in front of the ruined building and the water flooded and buried stories. Two-thirds of the buildings of the city were converted into heaps of charred timbers and streamers of bent and twisted steel. Many of the thoroughfares of the city were covered with brick, steel beams and other building construction materials. The after effects of the earthquake and fire was the direct cause of Company G, First Infantry Regiment, with the National Guard, being called into active service from April 18 to May 31, 1906. In the emergency that fell upon San Francisco the National Guard was immediately indispensable. They were at once soldiers, firemen, nurses and purveyors of food to the hungry. They gave the starving of their rations and shared the water from their canteens; they were also of great assistance to the Regular troops in standing guard over public buildings, banks, stores and other property. Company G also took part in the dynamiting of some buildings in order to head off the fire in certain sections of the city. And on May 31, 1906, the troops were dismissed from duty. The members of the Guard will be long and gratefully remembered by the people of San Francisco and the State, as they performed their duties with zeal. Whenever ordered to a duty they obeyed at any personal sacrifice. \*

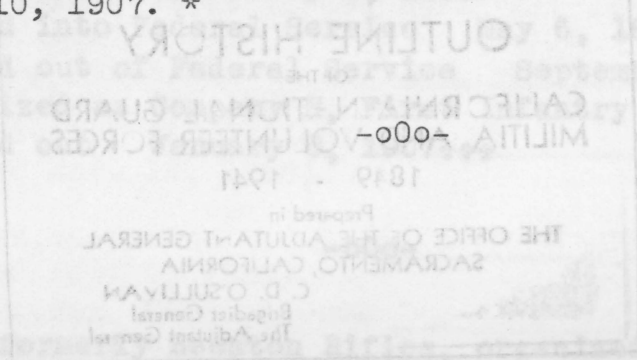
-oOo-

\* Adjutant General Report 1906, pages 51-57.

COMPANY G (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

About a year after the Earthquake in San Francisco, a higher standard of efficiency was demanded of the National Guard of California, as in 1907 the Federal Government was increasing the yearly appropriations for that organization and they wished to cut down expenses. However, some of the units were unable to meet the stringent requirements imposed by the Government, and many of the companies were mustered out. According to General Orders No. 9 and 10, Company G, including the entire First Infantry Regiment was disbanded from the State Service for the same inefficiency on May 10, 1907. \*



\* Company G was mustered out in accordance with General Orders No. 9 and 10, disbanding the First Infantry Regiment. General and Special Orders and Circulars - 1907. 88, Gen. Orders No. 17, 18.