

History of the Company L (Light Guard), 1st Infantry Regiment, National Guard of California 1895-1907

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COMPANY L

Company L, First Infantry Regiment, Second Brigade (formerly Light Guard)

Reference: Adjutant General's Files

Location: San Francisco, San Francisco County

Organized November 12, 1858

Redesignated December 9, 1895*

Mustered into Federal Service May 6, 1898**

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

Reorganized as Company L, First Infantry Regiment Nov. 29, 1899†

Redesignated April 19, 1901††

Commanding Officers

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Commission</u>
John F. Eggert, Captain	Oct. 18, 1894†††	Jan. 22, 1896
Henry E. Curzons, First Lieut.	Oct. 18, 1894†††	Jan. 22, 1896
John F. Eggert, Captain (Re-elected Nov. 12, 1896)	_____	_____
Henry E. Curzons, First Lieut. (Re-elected Nov. 12, 1896)	_____	_____
John F. Eggert, Captain (Re-elected Feb. 28, 1900)	_____	_____
Henry E. Curzons, First Lieut. (Re-elected Feb. 28, 1900)	_____	_____

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*Company L, formerly Company F, First Infantry Regiment, organized as Light Guard of San Francisco, November 12, 1858, was redesignated Company L, First Infantry Regiment, Second Brigade, December 9, 1895. Adjutant General Report 1895-1896, General Orders No. 17, 18, pages 86, 88.

**Company L 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 L as part of the First Infantry Regiment, re-entered the National Guard November 29, 1899. Adjutant General Report 1899-1900, page 79.

††Company L was redesignated as Company F, First Infantry Regiment, Second Brigade, April 19, 1901. Adjutant General Report 1901-1902, General Order No. 5, page 66.

†††Captain John F. Eggert and First Lieutenant Henry E. Curzons retained their former ranking dates as of October 18, 1894, when they commanded Company F, First Infantry Regiment, Second Brigade.

Activities:

On December 7, 1895, there was a complete reorganization of the National Guard. Under the new reorganization plan, all companies of the Guard were formed into twelve battalions, each battalion to consist of four companies. Under this new arrangement Company F, First Infantry Regiment, which was the old Light Guard of San Francisco, was redesignated Company L, Fourth Battalion.* Two days later on December 9, 1895, General Order No. 18 was issued and the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Battalions were organized as the First Infantry Regiment, Second Brigade.**

Company L was composed of a fine group of men who were steady in their ranks and attentive in duty. Captain Eggert was also a fine officer and managed the unit in a splendid manner. From 1895 until the war with Spain three years later, the activities of the unit were few. They consisted primarily of encampments, drills and parades. The unit encamped at Ukiah for eight days in 1897, from August 21 to 29. The camp was located about a mile from town and the grounds afforded ample space for field maneuvers. Great interest was taken in silhouette target practice, and also in dress parades, drills and guard mounting.***

On May 4, 1898, the unit was mustered into the United States Service under the President's first call for volunteers, and served sixteen months in the Philippine Islands.**** During the entire campaign in the Philippines the company lost but one man, who died of pneumonia. The unit returned to San Francisco on August 23, 1899. When they disembarked in the evening, Company L, as a unit of the California Volunteers, was received by the citizens of the City, as the signal lights of victory flashed from tower and mast, and the glittering lights from every window bid the boys a welcome home. There were approximately fourteen thousand men, women and children participating in the parade, but they were as nothing compared to the throngs who looked on and cheered, and waited until midnight to see the California soldiers pass. The different organizations seemed to feel that their ingenuity was on trial and that there was nothing like repetition. The people waited patiently for the passing of civic splendors. Orders, societies, floats and school children paraded by, but the spectators wore the air of waiting until the Californians came along. Then that scene of a day before was lived again, and in the wild joy of welcome, all sadness was lost in that reunion for California and

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*Adjutant General Report 1895-1896, General Order No. 17, page 86.

**Adjutant General Report 1895-1896, General Order No. 18, page 88.

***Adjutant General Report 1896-1898, page 25, and 26.

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

COMPANY L (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

her soldier sons. The First Infantry Regiment, of which Company L was a unit, had laid forty lives upon the altar of its country, and the dead were honored in this tribute to the living by the black flag waving in the ranks. This flag was in mournful token of the ones left behind, and was gently taken for the shadow of the Red, White and Blue by those watching it pass. The tear was dropped in silence and the cheer was given to the air. Grief but covered her face and left the field to joy.

The troops who passed by in review were as follows: The first division, comprising the United States soldiers and sailors, marshalled by Captain Sedgwick Pratt of the Third United States Artillery. Behind the Third Artillery Band of twenty-five pieces, rode a detachment of Troop F, Sixth United States Cavalry. Then came Heavy Battery E and Light Battery C, all of the Third Artillery. Following the military in different divisions, came the organizations of the different societies and lodges.

About a month after the parade, on September 21, 1899, Company L was mustered out of the United States Service at the Presidio in San Francisco.* After returning to the United States the company again resumed their duties in the National Guard as a unit of the First Infantry Regiment. On November 13, 1900, they were inspected, and a report was made by James A. Margo, Major and Inspector of the Second Brigade. The inspection report indicated that the men in the unit were hardy and healthy, that the discipline, promptness and military appearance were all good; that the condition of clothing, arms and other equipment was good; and that the average attendance to June 30, 1900, was sixty-four members present over a period of one year.

During the months of October and November of 1900, the company took part in target practice. As there was a lack of sufficient funds to purchase Springfield Rifles for each member, a special set of rifles was kept separate from the general guns. These were used on occasions of target practice and were taken to the rifle range by certain members or by range committees. All members used these guns to make their scores. Therefore, when a man went to the targets to fire he was handed one of these rifles, all properly sighted, with the windage set, and was required only to aim and pull the trigger. This form was used

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

The San Francisco Examiner, August 27, 1899, page 2, columns 1, 2
page 3, column 1.

COMPANY L (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

at target practice until each company received enough guns of equal quality to equip each individual member. When this was accomplished the men were expected to use their own rifles and see that they were in proper condition for firing.

Under the provisions of paragraph eight of General Order No. 3, issued April 23, 1900, each organization that had rendered meritorious service in the United States Volunteers was permitted to have that service engraved upon silver rings and fastened to the pikes or lances of the colors, standards or guidons. The rings were to be one inch wide and placed one inch apart, commencing one inch from the spear head. Company L, as a unit of the First Infantry Regiment, carried on the pike of their National Colors, five rings inscribed as follows.*

"Spanish American War, 1898"

"Malate Trenches, July 31, and August 1, 1898"

"Manilla, August 13, 1898"

"Filipino Insurrection, February 5 to
March 21, 1898"

"Island of Negros, March 23 to July 4, 1899" *

During the period from 1900 to 1901, the unit took part in the annual parades held on Washington's Birthday, Fourth of July, Memorial Day and Admission Day.

In accordance with the action of the Board of Location and Organization of the National Guard, a meeting was held on April 18, 1901, directing a reorganization of the First Infantry into a regiment of eight companies, and the transfer of Companies C, F, G and K, First Infantry, to batteries of the Coast Artillery, and the organization of these four units into the First Battalion of Artillery. With the detachment of these units there remained only eight companies in the First Infantry Regiment. Therefore, after April 19, 1901, Company L ceased to exist.**

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*Adjutant General Report, 1899-1900, Page 80, General Order No. 3, par. 8.

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

COMPANY M

Company M, First Infantry Regiment, Second Brigade (formerly San Francisco Cadets)

Reference: Adjutant General's Files

Location: San Francisco, San Francisco County

Organized December 9, 1895*

Mustered into Federal Service May 6, 1898 **

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

Reorganized as Company M November 29, 1899 †

Discontinued April 19, 1901 ††

Commanding Officers

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Commission</u>
Thomas O'Neil, Captain (Reelected Oct. 8, 1896)	Aug. 29, 1888 †††	
Edward D. Carroll, First Lieut. (Reelected Oct. 2, 1895)	Sept. 19, 1892 †††	

Thomas O'Neil, Captain (Reelected Feb. 28, 1900) (promoted to Lieut. Colonel May 10, 1900)		
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William L. Wall, First Lieut.	Feb. 28, 1900	Dec. 22, 1900
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William L. Wall, Captain	July 10, 1900	Dec. 22, 1900
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Richard Callopy, First Lieut.	July 10, 1900	Dec. 22, 1900
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Activities:

The new Company M was formerly the San Francisco Cadets, organized on August 7, 1863, and in 1864 attached to the Second Infantry Regiment and designated Company H. The unit furnished several officers for new companies that were organized later on.

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* Battery G, Second Artillery, consolidated with Battery H, formerly San Francisco Cadets, organized on August 7, 1863, became Company M, First Infantry, Second Brigade, December 9, 1895. Adjutant General Report 1895-1896, General Orders No. 17 and 18, pages 86 and 88.

** Company M, as part of the First Infantry, was mustered into Federal Service during the Spanish American War May 6, 1898. Adjutant General Report 1899-1900, page 4.

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

† Company M, as part of the First Infantry Regiment, reentered the National Guard of California on November 29, 1899. Adjutant General Report 1899-1900, page 79.

†† Company M, was redesignated Company G, First Infantry, on April 19, 1901, and Company M, First Infantry Regiment ceased to exist. Adjutant General Report 1901-1902, General Order No. 5, page 66, par. 2.

††† Captain Thomas O'Neil and Lieutenant Edward D. Carroll retained their former rank dates as of August 29, 1888 and September 19, 1892, respectively, when they commanded Battery G, Second Artillery Regiment, Second Brigade.

COMPANY M (Continued)

Activities: (Continued) property, has lost none since last

On June 1, 1881, the Second Infantry Regiment was reorganized as the Second Artillery Regiment, and Company H was redesignated as Battery H. When the National Guard was reorganized on December 7, 1895, into battalions of four companies each, Battery G, Second Artillery was consolidated with Battery H and the unit redesignated as Company M, Sixth Battalion, Second Brigade. * The officers of Battery H continued as the commissioned officers of the new Company M. On December 9, 1895, General Order No. 18 was issued, and provided for the organization of the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Battalions into a twelve company regiment to be known as the First Infantry Regiment. ** Therefore, the new Company M, while being a new unit in the First Infantry Regiment, was in reality an old and very efficient company.

Soon after the reorganization of Company M, the unit was inspected by Major Charles Jansen, Inspector of the Second Brigade, who reported that the State property was well taken care of; records excellent; finance amounted to \$11.22; drill night Friday; officers meeting once per month; non-commissioned officers meeting once per month, ninety per cent present; company fell in on time, formation good, men steady in ranks; company drill very good, manual by numbers fair, without numbers excellent; platoon movement fair; instructions of lieutenants and non-commissioned officers good; the general management of the company by the Captain very good. The report concluded with the statement that Captain O'Neil was a good and efficient officer.

At target practice Company M failed to rate very high. The records show that the unit had no First Class marksmen, one Second and twenty-one Third Class marksmen. Other records of the unit, while in the First Infantry Regiment are not available.

From the 1898 Inspection Report of Major Charles Jansen, Second Brigade Inspector, the following General report of Company M is taken:

"Quarters and property inspected in the afternoon. Quarters, lockers, storeroom and clothing all in excellent condition. Records excellently kept, emergency call squad system and property well kept. At the inspection held that evening, the company's discipline was excellent, manual of arms excellent, company movements excellent; platoon movements very good; extended order very good. Appearance of men neat and clean, clothing clean, but old and worn out, men strong and hardy, good for active service. Captain O'Neil is a very good officer, takes good care of the United States and

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* Adjutant General Report 1895-1896, General Order No. 17, page 86

** Adjutant General Report 1895-1896, General Order No. 18, page 88.

as the 1st Infantry Regiment and Company M was reorganized
on June 1, 1897, the Second Infantry Regiment was reorganized
Activities: (Continued)

COMPANY M (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

State property, has lost none since last inspection; twenty-nine men were discharged last muster. There are to be condemned fifteen pair of pants, nine blouses, sixty-two haversacks, old style, ninety-three canteens. The company is short of overcoats; otherwise it is well provided.**

On August 29, 1897, Company M, with the First Infantry Regiment, held an encampment at Ukiah which lasted nine days. Besides the usual reviews, parades and other field maneuvers, the regiment engaged in silhouette target practice. The guardsmen manifested great interest in this type of practice. Major Charles Jansen, Inspector of the Second Brigade, declared the discipline of the regiment was good, the behavior of the men in and out of camp, was excellent, the courtesy between officers was duly and properly observed. Officers and men were very attentive to their duties. There were no decorations in camp, nor any social events; the camp was strictly military in character. Colonel James F. Smith administered the affairs of the camp efficiently, with credit to himself and the regiment. **

The encampment that Company M participated in the the following year was entirely different from previous routine camps, where drills, parades and sham battles were engaged in by the men. The members of Company M in the year 1898 encamped with the United States Volunteer Forces in the Philippine Islands, under actual war conditions and fighting against the Spaniards in the Spanish American War. On April 23, 1898, President William McKinley issued a call for volunteer troops for the war against Spain. Governor James H. Budd of California, then ordered the First Infantry Regiment, the Seventh Infantry Regiment, the Sixth California Volunteer Regiment, of eight companies, and the First Battalion Heavy Artillery, consisting of four batteries, into the United States Volunteers. On May 6, 1898, the First Infantry Regiment, to which Company M was attached, was mustered into the Federal Army and went into camp at the Presidio in San Francisco the next day.

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* Inspection Report, Company M, by Major Jansen - on file Adjutant General's Office.

** Adjutant General Report, 1896-1898, page 25-26.

** San Francisco Examiner, August 27, 1899, page 2, columns 1, 2; Page 3, column 1.

Activities: (Continued)

The Regiment was with the first expedition of troops to sail for the Philippines. * Company M, with the First Infantry Regiment, remained in the United States Service sixteen months after which they returned to San Francisco and were mustered out of Service on September 21, 1899. While in the Philippines the unit lost more men from disease than they did by gunfire. The casualties sustained by Company M were the loss of four men. Sergeant Joseph W. Maher was killed in action and Peter H.S. Fisher, Eugene Merwin and Stephen Burdell died of disease.

On August 26, 1899, San Francisco gave a welcome to the First California Volunteer Regiment on its return from the Philippines. The parade was a glorious one, participated in by nearly fourteen thousand men and women of the various civic, fraternal and military organizations of San Francisco and vicinity. The "Fighting First" passed in its last review as a volunteer regiment; its brief, bright record to go down in history in letters of gold. In less than a month Company M was mustered out of the United States Service to again follow the arts and trades of peace. The men who fought with Spain fought again their battles within the walls of their homes, and the stories told at far away campfires were retold around the firesides at home. **

On November 29, 1899, Company M, with the First Infantry Regiment, reported for duty in the National Guard, and were accepted again as the First Infantry Regiment, Second Brigade. However, Colonel James F. Smith did not return to the service of the National Guard. Lieutenant Colonel Victor D. Duboce was promoted to Colonel of the Regiment. Captain Thomas O'Neil of Company M, who had acted as Major of the Volunteers while in the Philippines, was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel on May 10, 1900. Three months later Colonel Duboce died and Lieutenant Colonel O'Neil was then promoted to the office of Colonel of the First Infantry Regiment. Upon the promotion of Captain O'Neil, Lieutenant L. Wall was advanced to the Captaincy of Company M.

Artillery Battalion. In General Order No. 5, dated April 19, 1901, Company M was reorganized as Company G, First Infantry Regiment, Second Brigade. ** -oOo- transfer of Company M to Company G, Company M, First Infantry Regiment, ceased to exist.

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

** San Francisco Examiner, August 27, 1899, page 2, columns 1, 2; Page 3, column 1.

** Adjutant General Report, 1901-4-302. General Order No. 5, page 66.

COMPANY M (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

Under the provisions of paragraph eight of General Order No. 3, issued April 23, 1900, each organization that had rendered meritorious service in the United States Volunteers was allowed to have such service engraved on silver rings, and fastened to the pikes of the colors, standards or guidons; the rings to be one inch wide and placed one inch apart, commencing one inch from the spear head. In accordance with the order, the First Infantry Regiment, of which Company M was a unit, was allowed five rings on the National Colors. The rings bore the following inscriptions:

- "Spanish American War, 1898"
- "Malate Trenches, July 31 and August 1, 1898"
- "Manila, August 13, 1898"
- "Filipino Insurrection, February 5 to Mar. 21, 1899"
- "Island of Negros, March 23 to July 4, 1899" *

Upon reentering the National Guard, Company M resumed its duties where it had laid them down in May, 1898, when they entered the Federal Service. Many of the men returning home from service were faced with the fact that their positions in the business world had been filled by someone else during their absence, and they were compelled to find a new occupation. This situation however, was one that the National Guard might be called upon to face at any time, and unfortunately, must be accepted as the duty of the citizen soldiery. Uncomplaining, Company M, continued the drills, parades and target practice; and whatever orders were issued were deadily obeyed. When in 1901 the Political Code was changed so as to provide for a four battery Artillery Battalion, it was good judgment on the part of the Board of Location and Organization to select four of the older companies of the First Infantry Regiment, since most of them had been in the Artillery in the earlier history of the National Guard. They selected Companies F, G, C and K, First Infantry Regiment, to form the Artillery Battalion. In the same General Order No. 5, dated April 19, 1901, Company M was redesignated as Company G, First Infantry Regiment, Second Brigade. ** With the transfer of Company M to Company G, Company M, First Infantry, ceased to exist.

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3 * Adjutant General Report 1899-1900. General Order No. 3, April 23, 1900, page 80.

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