

# **History of the Company A (Oakland Home Guard), 5th Infantry Battalion, National Guard of California 1879-1885**

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COMPANY A

Company A, Fifth Infantry Battalion, Second Brigade (formerly Oakland Home Guard)

Reference: Adjutant General's Files

Location: Oakland, Alameda County

Organized September 1, 1861

Reorganized December 30, 1879\*

Reconstituted August 1, 1885\*\*

Commanding Officers

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Commission</u>
Horace D. Ranlett, Captain (reelected Jan. 10, 1878)	May 1, 1873	May 6, 1873***
J. A. C. MacDonald, First Lieut.	Apr. 24, 1879	May 9, 1879***
Henry Levy, Captain	Apr. 22, 1880	May 11, 1880
Henry H. Burrell, First Lieut.	June 3, 1880	June 17, 1880
Albert Smith, Captain (resigned Jan. 27, 1883)	Apr. 29, 1882	May 19, 1882
Joseph S. Green, First Lieut. (resigned June 2, 1883)	Dec. 12, 1881	Jan. 14, 1882
Thomas H. Thompson, Captain (resigned Feb. 2, 1883)	Feb. 8, 1883	Feb. 24, 1883
George F. Wright, First Lieut. (resigned Dec. 1, 1884)	Sept. 13, 1882	Dec. 3, 1883
Gilbert B. Daniels, Captain	Apr. 2, 1885	Apr. 17, 1885
John A. C. MacDonald, First Lieutenant	Apr. 30, 1885	June 8, 1885

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\*Company A, formerly Oakland Home Guard unattached, organized September 1, 1861, designated Company A, Second Infantry Battalion, Second Brigade, December 12, 1879. Eighteen days later on December 30, 1879, Company A, Second Battalion was designated Company A, Fifth Infantry Battalion, Second Brigade. Adjutant General Report 1880, Special Order No. 38, 40, page 72.

\*\*Company A, Fifth Infantry Battalion was designated Company A, Fifth Infantry Regiment, August 1, 1885. Headquarters Papers, Second Brigade, Special Order No. 44, 1885.

\*\*\*Captain H. D. Ranlett and First Lieutenant J. A. C. MacDonald retained their former commissions as of May 6, 1873 and May 9, 1879, respectively, when they commanded the Oakland Home Guard.

COMPANY A (Continued)

Activities: (continued)

Company A was formerly the Oakland Home Guard unattached, organized September 1, 1861. However, on December 12, 1879, the Oakland Home Guard and the San Jose Zouaves, both unattached units, formed a battalion known as the Second Infantry Battalion. Eighteen days later, December 30, 1879, the Second Infantry Battalion was redesignated as the Fifth Infantry Battalion, Second Brigade, and the Oakland Home Guard was designated Company A, Fifth Infantry Battalion.\*

As the Oakland Home Guard, the unit was very efficient in company and squad drills, perhaps due to good attendance of the members. After the corps reorganized in 1879, the report of Samuel W. Backus Adjutant General, showed that Company A, Fifth Infantry Battalion had a percentage of 73.55 per cent at drills for the month of March 1880. This was considered a low average in attendance for a unit with the enthusiasm that the Oakland Home Guard had.\*\*

Nine months later December 21, 1880, a competitive drill was held in San Francisco and all companies that wished to do so could enter. The winning unit as a result of such drill, was to be detailed to Washington, D. C., to represent the State of California at the inaugural ceremonies of the President of the United States on March 4, 1881. Major General William H. L. Barnes and Brigadier-General John McComb of the Second Brigade, were selected as judges.\*\*\* The proceedings of the competitive drill were announced by the judges on January 31, 1881. Company A, Fifth Infantry Battalion, under command of Captain Henry Levy was awarded first honors. The unit was, therefore, given permission to leave the State for the purpose of participating in the presidential inaugural ceremonies to be held March 4, 1881. The members of Company A made the trip to Washington, D. C., under command of Captain Levy.\*\*\*\*

Two years later in September, the report of Sheldon I. Kellog, Jr., Acting Inspector of Rifle Practice, states that Company A had a record in target practice of 1,227 points out of a possible 3,000 or 40.90 per cent, which was only a fair percentage.

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\*Adjutant General Report 1880, General Orders No. 38, 40, page 72.

\*\*Adjutant General Report 1880, General Order No. 15, page 64.

1. \*\*\*Adjutant General Report 1881-1882, General Order No. 29, pages 72, 73.

2. \*\*\*\*Adjutant General Report 1881-1882, General Order No. 2, pages 75, 76.

COMPANY A (Continued)

Activities: (continued)

Aside from drills, target practice and inspections the Company took part in the customary annual parades and its special parades held each year on Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, July Fourth, and Admission Day.

On August 1, 1885, a regimental order was issued whereby the Fifth Infantry Battalion was redesignated as the Fifth Infantry Regiment, Second Brigade. Company A, Fifth Infantry Battalion was designated Company A of the Fifth Infantry Regiment August 1, 1885.\*

W. T. Adel, Captain (reselected April 1, 1880)		
John Hartscke, First Lieut. (reselected June 9, 1879)		
W. T. Adel, Captain (reselected Mar. 30, 1882)	.000.	
Chas. E. Bradley, First Lieut. (resigned Oct. 28, 1882)	Dec. 10, 1881	Jan. 26, 1883
Orvin Paper, Captain (resigned Nov. 7, 1883)	Apr. 13, 1882	Apr. 27, 1883
Albert L. Chittick, Captain	Dec. 3, 1882	Dec. 18, 1883
Edwin M. Mills, First Lieut.	Dec. 20, 1883	Jan. 18, 1884

\*Regimental Order No. 7, Headquarter Papers, Fifth Infantry Regiment.

\*\*Company A, formerly San Jose Cavalry, designated Company A, Second Infantry Battalion, December 15, 1879. Eighteen days later, December 31, 1879, Company A, Second Infantry Battalion designated Company A, Fifth Infantry Battalion, Second Brigade, Adjutant General Paper's 1880, Special Orders No. 38, 40, page 74.

\*\*\*Company A, Fifth Infantry Battalion designated Company A, Fifth Infantry Regiment, Second Brigade, August 1, 1885. Headquarter Papers, Second Brigade, Special Order No. 44, 1885.

\*\*\*\*Captain W. T. Adel and first lieutenant John Hartscke retained their former commissions as of February 16, 1878 and May 26, 1877, respectively, when they commanded the San Jose Cavalry.