

# **History of the 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, Company A (San Diego Rifles), National Guard of California 1890-1895**

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, 24 January 2015

Original document on file at the California State Library

COMPANY A

Company A, Ninth Infantry Regiment, First Brigade (formerly San Diego Rifles)

Reference: Adjutant General's Files  
Location: San Diego, San Diego County  
Organized September 7, 1890  
Reconstituted February 8, 1890\*  
Consolidated and redesignated December 7, 1895\*

<u>Name</u>	<u>Commanding Officers</u>	
	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Commission</u>
Edward E. Spileman, Captain	Mar. 13, 1890	Mar. 26, 1890
Arthur G. Hartley, First Lieut.	Mar. 13, 1890	Mar. 26, 1890
Edward E. Spileman, Captain (reelected Apr. 15, 1892)	_____	_____
Arthur Hartley, First Lieut. (reelected Apr. 15, 1892)	_____	_____
Edward E. Spileman, Captain (reelected June 29, 1894)	_____	_____
James H. Walker, First Lieut.	June 29, 1894	Aug. 2, 1894

**Activities:**

Company A was formerly the San Diego Rifles, an independent military company, organized in San Diego, San Diego County, September 7, 1889. On February 8, 1890, when the new Ninth Infantry Regiment was organized in the First Brigade, the San Diego Rifles were attached to the regiment and designated Company A. The unit was commanded by Captain Edward E. Spileman, the son of Colonel Spileman, commander of the Ninth Infantry, and was the youngest

.ooo.

\*Company A, formerly San Diego Rifles, redesignated Company A, Ninth Infantry Regiment, February 8, 1890.  
Adjutant General Report 1890, page 3.

\*\*Companies A and B, when the Ninth Infantry Regiment disbanded December 7, 1895, consolidated and redesignated Company B, Third Battalion. Two days later, December 9, 1895, Company B was designated Company B, Seventh Infantry.  
Adjutant General Report 1895-1896, General Orders No. 17, 18, pages 86, 88.

COMPANY A (Continued)

Activities: (continued)

Captain of a National Guard company in the United States. Although only twenty years old, Captain Spileman was considered to be one of the finest drillmasters in California and possessed the ability to impart that knowledge to the members of his company.

The first recorded major activity of Company A was on April 23, 1891, when the company paraded in honor of President Benjamin Harrison at San Diego. The reception as a whole, passed off successfully without any event calculated to mar the occasion. The Presidential train reached the D Street depot at six-thirty A. M. The City Guard Band, Company E of the Ninth Regiment, United States Army and quite a number of local citizens were at the depot to meet the train. As it approached, the band played "Hail to the Chief." Although the hour was early, President Harrison appeared on the rear platform and gracefully bowed his thanks for the reception. Colonel Elmer Otis and Captain Henry Sweeney of the Regular Army who were mounted, took stations at the wheel of the President's carriage and a further special escort was provided by the members of the Heintzelman Post, under command of Senior Vice Commander E. H. Miller. Led by the Coronado band, the procession as thus formed, moved from the wharf into H Street, where Companies A and B of the Ninth Infantry, under command of Colonel E. B. Spileman, had been held in waiting. When H Street had been reached, marching orders were again given and the entire procession moved to India Street. Passing the military post, the company stationed there was drawn in "present" order and later a military salute was fired in honor of the visitors. The procession when finally formed was one of the longest ever seen in the city.\*

Company A attended the First Brigade encampment held at Santa Monica, August 15 to 24, 1891 and captured three of the four prizes offered for competition which were as follows:

Best drilled company

Best drilled officer, Captain E. E. Spileman

Best drilled private, Private H. G. Thelin.

Captain J. J. O'Connell of the First United States Artillery and instructor to the National Guard of California, stated that he had never seen finer execution than that of Company A and that Captain Spileman, though the youngest, was clearly one of the best and most capable officers in or out of the army.\*\*

.oOo.

\*Daily San Diegan, April 23, 1891, page 1, column 4.

\*\*Daily San Diegan, November 13, 1891, page 4, column 1.

Activities: (continued)

Since the organization of Company A, it had been the custom of Colonel E. B. Spileman together with Captain E. E. Spileman, the company's commander, to furnish social amusements along with military duty. The banquet held the night of October 18, 1892, was a little out of the ordinary and a number of friends of the organization were invited to be present. Many prominent officials of the National Guard were present. An exhibition drill, consisting of the new manual of arms and company movements, was given and was greeted with many genuine bursts of applause, for the execution of all commands was given with promptness and precision, showing that a master hand had been at the helm of instruction and that intelligence had been present to receive it. The drill was followed by a soldier's banquet except that the provender was a little "high" for the ordinary defender of his country. Doctor David Gochenauer was master of ceremonies and as usual filled the position with honor to himself and pleasure to the guests. The visitors occupied two, side tables and the officers and men of Company A, fifty strong, filled two long tables at the south end of the armory. The menu was prepared by the company's colored cooks in the company kitchen adjoining the drill hall of the armory and everything served was expected to be smoking hot. The first toast "Captain Spileman," the commander and Instructor of Company A was responded to by Judge W. L. Pierce, who congratulated the company on having at their head such a gentleman and soldier, referring to the fact that in three years the organization had made a name that reflected great credit to itself and the National Guard.\*

The principal concern of Company A seemed to be in having a well drilled organization and not much attention was given to target practice. In September of 1891 at the yearly target practice, Company A had five, second class and twenty-two, third class marksmen, a total of twenty-seven qualified shooters, a record they were never able to better.

A drill contest between National Guard companies was to be held at Omaha, Nebraska on June 5, 1892. Three prizes were offered, one for \$5,000.00, one for \$2,000.00 and one for \$1,000.00 for the best drilled companies. The members of Company A talked the matter over and decided to enter the contest. Captain Spileman

.000.

\*Daily San Diegan, October 19, 1892, page 1, column 6.

COMPANY A (Continued)

Activities: (continued)

was authorized to send a letter to that effect. The company would go with thirty-five or thirty-six men, sufficient to form six sets of fours, properly officered. The members had entered into the scheme vigorously and drilled regularly.\* Unfortunately no record appears of the company ever making the trip.

On June 28, 1894, a nationwide Railroad Strike completely paralyzed the transportation facilities of the State. For some unknown reason, Company A and the other units of the Ninth Infantry were not called into active service. The United States Marshal for the southern district made a request upon General Thomas H. Ruger, commanding the Western Division of the Regular Army, for assistance at Los Angeles and six companies of Regulars under command of Colonel W. R. Shafter, were dispatched to Los Angeles, July second. The Regular troops experienced little difficulty in the south and without meeting any serious resistance, took possession of all railroad property in Los Angeles.\*\*

Company A was an active participant in the week celebration held in San Diego, September 27 to October 4, 1894, in honor of the 352 Anniversary of the discovery of San Diego Bay by Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, a native of Portugal but a navigator sailing under the Spanish flag. Juan Cabrillo, with his ships arrived at the mouth of the harbor on the evening of September 27, 1542, and on the morning of the twenty-eighth, he entered the harbor and came to a landing. The informalities of the celebration began on the night of the twenty-seventh with the arrival of a special train from Los Angeles. Aboard the train were members of the Seventh and Ninth Regiments, together with bands from Los Angeles, Pomona, Riverside and Santa Ana, the Golden Gate Park Band of San Francisco, the Los Angeles Naval Reserve and one or two other organized bodies.

On the morning of September twenty-eighth at nine o'clock, a strictly military parade, not on the program, was held under the command of Colonel H. B. Spileman. The procession was formed of

.oOo.

\*Daily San Diegan, April 11, 1892, page 8. column 1.

\*\*For additional information, refer to the National Guard and the Railroad Strike.  
Adjutant General's Office.

COMPANY A (Continued)

Activities: (continued)

the Seventh and Ninth Infantry Regiments, the Los Angeles and San Diego Naval Reserves and a detachment of United States Regulars from the post, with the bands attached to the several companies.\*

On April 19, 1895, Company A marched in celebration of La Fiesta De Los Angeles, a street carnival held each year by the merchants of Los Angeles. It was La Fiesta's big military day and was a little late in starting, but that gave the favored multitude on the tribunes a better opportunity to gaze upon the royal assemblage about the throne and feast the eyes on the exquisite derby day gown which the Queen wore and the embellishments that had been added to the throne. Exactly at two o'clock, the platoon of police, heading the fourth grand pageant to pass before La Reina, appeared rounding the corner and marched gallantly into the parade past the canopied throne, followed by Grand Marshal R. W. Pridham and his chief of staff, General Johnstone Jones and aids.

The Burbank Theater band marched at the head of the next section of the parade that was led by Adjutant General C. C. Allen from Sacramento and Brigadier-General E. P. Johnson of the First Brigade, mounted on finely caparisoned horses. They saluted her majesty with drawn swords and gave way to their staff that trooped by, also giving the military salute. Then Green's Santa Barbara Military Band swung by, leading the Ninth Infantry at the head of which rode the bugle corps and Colonel E. B. Spileman and his aids, Lieutenant Colonel John R. Berry, Major C. S. McKelvey and Major F. C. Prescott.

The Ninth Infantry tramped along in splendid array and following their officer's sword salutes. Each company, as it passed in the royal review, came to the right shoulder arms and hurried along after the rest. Their handsome silk American Flag and the great blue Regimental Flag bearing the seal of the State, were dipped before her majesty and as the gallant soldiers paced by in rhythmic cadence, the enthusiastic spectators burst into cheers of applause. The regiment made a fine showing and frequent cries of "Bravo, Riverside! and Bravo, Pasadena! Bravo, San Diego! and Santa Paula!" were heard as these companies passed by groups of their admirers, causing smiles of pride to creep over the stoical looking soldiers.\*\*

.oOo.

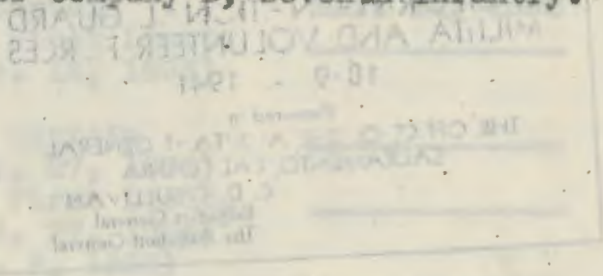
\*San Diegoan Sun, September 27, 1894, page 5, column 5.

\*\*Los Angeles Herald, April 20, 1895, page 1, column 1.

COMPANY A (Continued)

Activities: (continued)

During the Railroad Strike of 1894, a need for a complete reorganization of the National Guard was apparent. The most important result of the reorganization was that many of the top officers were placed on the retired list. This corrected a situation that had long existed in the Guard, namely that the service was top-heavy with commanding officers. On December 7, 1895, General Order No. 17, was issued which consolidated the Seventh and Ninth Infantry Regiments into three battalions of infantry with four companies each. Companies A and B of the Ninth Infantry consolidated to form Company B of the Third Battalion. Two days later on December ninth, General Order No. 18, was issued which redesignated the three battalions as the Seventh Infantry Regiment.\* For additional information concerning the activities of Company A, refer to History of Company B, Seventh Infantry.



.000.

\*Adjutant General Report 1895-1896, General Order No. 17, 18, pages 86, 88.