

History of the Troop A (First California Guard), Cavalry, National Guard of California 1895-1905

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TROOP A CAVALRY

Troop A Cavalry, unattached, Second Brigade (formerly First California Guard)

Reference: Adjutant General's Files
Location: San Francisco, San Francisco County
Organized July 27, 1849
Reorganized June 1, 1881*
Redesignated May 5, 1885**
✓ Redesignated ~~June 14, 1893~~*** July 1
Reconstituted June 23, 1895†
Assigned August 15, 1905‡

Commanding Officers

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Commission</u>
Hugh Sime, Captain	Sept. 13, 1893	Sept. 23, 1893‡‡‡
Royal A. Holcombe, First Lieut.	Sept. 13, 1893	Sept. 23, 1893‡‡‡
C. A. Jenks, Captain	June 26, 1896	July 13, 1896
Marius Burnett, First Lieut.	June 26, 1896	July 29, 1896

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*Troop A Cavalry, formerly First California Guard, Light Battery A, unattached, redesignated Company B, Second Artillery Regiment, Second Brigade, June 1, 1881.
Adjutant General Report 1881-1882, General Order No. 11, page 81, Par. 6.

**Company B, Second Artillery Regiment, Second Brigade designated Company A, Second Artillery Regiment, Second Brigade, May 5, 1885.
Adjutant General Report 1885-1886, Special Order No. 25, page 113.

***Company A, Second Artillery Regiment, Second Brigade detached from Second Artillery and redesignated Battery A, Light Artillery, unattached, ~~June 14, 1893~~ July 1
Adjutant General Report 1893-1894, General Order No. 7, page 96, Par. 2.

✓ †Battery A, Light Artillery, Second Brigade designated Troop A Cavalry, Second Brigade, July 23, 1895.
Adjutant General Report 1895-1896, General Order No. 11, page 76. *par. 2 (d)*

✓ ‡Troop A Cavalry, Second Brigade assigned to the First Squadron of Cavalry redesignated Troop A, First Squadron of Cavalry, August 15, 1905.
Adjutant General Report 1906, page 3.

‡‡‡Captain Sime and Lieutenant Holcombe retained their former commissions as of September 23, 1893, when they commanded Battery A, Light Artillery, Second Brigade.

Commanding Officers (Continued)		
Name	Rank	Commission
Marius Burnett, Captain	Jan. 18, 1898	Mar. 14, 1898
E. W. Elfendahl, First Lieut.	Jan. 18, 1898	Mar. 14, 1898
Charles Jansen, Captain	Feb. 21, 1900	April 6, 1900
C. F. Wells, First Lieut.	July 18, 1900	Aug. 25, 1900
Charles Jansen, Captain (Re-elected Feb. 19, 1902)	_____	_____
C. F. Wells, First Lieut. (Re-elected Feb. 19, 1902)	_____	_____
Charles Jansen, Captain (Re-elected Apr. 11, 1904) (Promoted Brig. Gen. June 7, 1905)	_____	_____
Roland Charles Greeninger, Capt.	June 26, 1905	Aug. 12, 1905
E. H. Carr, First Lieutenant	June 27, 1904	Aug. 11, 1904

Activities:

On March 26, 1895, Section 1912 of the State Political Code was amended to read as follows: The organized uniformed militia known as the National Guard of California shall not exceed sixty-nine companies. Sixty of these companies shall be infantry or artillery, as the Board of Location may direct; and five companies of the Naval Battalion and the other four companies shall be distributed to such arms of the service as the Board of Location may direct. By this reorganization the six brigades, nine regiments, and one battalion organization were consolidated into three brigades, five regiments of infantry, one battalion of Naval Militia, and four unattached troops of cavalry, dispensing with about 150 commissioned officers. Under this reorganization many of the companies in the Guard were either mustered out of service, consolidated, or redesignated.

On July 23, 1895, General Order No. 11 was issued which stated that Battery A, Light Artillery in San Francisco was to be discontinued as such, and enrolled as a company of cavalry to be known and designated as Troop A Cavalry, unattached, Second Brigade. By this order Troop A became the final designation of the oldest military organization in California, having been organized in San Francisco, July 27, 1849, as the First California Guard. During the intervening forty-nine years this company had the following designations: Company B, Second Artillery Regiment, Second Brigade. Company A, Second Artillery Regiment, Second Brigade, and Battery A, Light Artillery, unattached, Second Brigade. This company was regarded as a highly competent military

TROOP A CAVALRY (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

organization and had more than justified its long existence.

Immediately following the reorganization, Troop A was still equipped as a Light Battery and considerable difficulty was experienced in obtaining cavalry equipment.

Troop A, in order to establish themselves as an efficient military organization, attended many encampments, which were as follows:

<u>Month</u>		<u>Place</u>	<u>Year</u>
May	30 - 31	Ingleside	1896
Aug.	21 - 31	Dimond's Canyon	1896
July	10 - 18	Healdsburg	1897
June	15 - 23	Santa Cruz	1901
June	21 - 29	Santa Rosa	1902
July	3 - 5	Lorin, Alameda County	1903
Feb.	20 - 22	Lorin, Alameda County	1904
Aug.	13 - 26	Atascadero	1904

The major encampments in this list are described in detail as follows: On March 28, 1901, General Order No. 2 was issued which stated that the First, Second and Third Brigades would assemble and encamp for discipline and drill at the State Camp of Instruction at Santa Cruz from June 15 to 23, 1901. The camp site was located on the State military reservation. The site included 140 acres, with the privileges of sufficient maneuvering ground east of and adjacent to it, and something over two miles in an easterly direction from the railway station and principal business of the town. Troop A, together with Troops B, C, and D were consolidated into a squadron, under the command of the senior Captain present, and encamped together for administrative purposes. They performed the duties allotted to them with great promptness and effectiveness. In drills on the practice marches and in patrol duty, it would be difficult to find a more effective body of men than these four troops of cavalry proved to be, and considering that they were dependent for horses upon what they could hire, they were well mounted and able to march and parade in a creditable manner.

TROOP A CAVALRY (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

Troop A encamped at Santa Rosa in 1902, from July 21 to 29. The camp schedule was as follows:

- Saturday, June 21 Troop A left San Francisco at 9:00 A.M., for Santa Rosa on a practice march. They went by way of Sausalito, halting one hour at Larkspur for lunch. The company rode through San Rafael to Novato arriving there at 6:30 P.M., where they bivouacked for the night.
- Sunday, June 22 In the morning at 6:00 A.M., Troop A left Novato arriving at Santa Rosa at 4:00 P.M., and establishing camp.
- Monday, June 23 In the morning at reveille, camp duties commenced.
- Wednesday, June 25 "Boots and Saddles" were sounded at 6:00 A.M., and the company rode to Healdsburg to meet General Warfield at the railroad depot, and escorted him to Camp Mathieson, Grand Army of the Republic. The company left Mathieson at 2:00 P.M., arriving at their camp at 6:30 P.M., the march was 34 miles.
- Thursday, June 26 In the afternoon General J. H. Dickenson and staff were met by the troop at the railroad depot and escorted to camp.
- Friday, June 27 In the afternoon General R. H. Warfield and staff were also met at the depot by the troop and escorted to the camp. Troop A broke camp.
- Saturday, June 28 In the morning "Boots and Saddles" were sounded at 10:00 A.M., when the homeward march began, returning by the same route they came, arriving at the armory in San Francisco.
- Sunday, June 29 The practice march and camp at 4:00 P.M., was highly satisfactory to the commanding officer of the troop, as a great many field and camp duties had been performed, being very instructive and beneficial. All duties were performed cheerfully. Discipline and behavior of the men was excellent.

TROOP A CAVALRY (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

In 1904, the first of a series of Joint Army and Militia encampments were held. Troop A attended the one held at Atascadero from August 13 to 26, 1904. Troop A departed from their armory, Friday, August twelfth, arriving at the Southern Pacific Depot at Third and Townsend Streets in time to embark on the train leaving at 10:00 P.M. The saddles and horse equipment having previously been sent to the depot, the men then secured their individual equipments and carried them in the coaches. Although the command consisted of but two commissioned officers and twenty-eight enlisted men, it was discovered that the one coach allowed Troop A was too small inasmuch as the entire packed saddles, bridles and equipments were taken into the coach, consequently the men were more or less cramped during the trip. The train arrived at Atascadero at 9:15 A.M., Saturday, August 13. The detraining of Troop A was under the direction of Captain Nance, Ninth United States Cavalry, and was escorted to camp by Lieutenant Camp, Ninth United States Cavalry.

Troop A reported for duty to Colonel Godwin, commanding the Provisional Cavalry and to Colonel S. P. Jocelyn, Chief of Staff, Provisional Division. The details for the Camp of Instruction were as follows:

- Saturday, August 13 Establishing camp.
- Sunday, August 14 Squadron review.
- Monday, August 15 Squadron drill and extended order.
- Tuesday, August 16 PROBLEM NO. 1, Advance and Rear Guard:
Troop A operated with Troop K,
Ninth United States Cavalry,
Captain Charles Jansen of Troop A
in command.
- Wednesday, August 17 PROBLEM NO. 2, Attack and Defense of
Convoy:
- Thursday, August 18 Attack and Defense:
Troop A operated independently along
Atascadero Creek, performing scouting
duty and reconnoitering the ground
south of Carral Hill. The scouts from
Troop A discovered the enemy and in-
formation was conveyed to Lieutenant-
Colonel Stewart, commanding the Blue
forces, one hour and a half after
leaving the main body.

TROOP A CAVALRY (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

- Friday, August 19 Reconnoissance in force.
- Saturday, August 20 March and deployment of a division.
- Sunday, August 21 Division review at Atascadero.
- Monday, August 22 Attack and Defense of an entrenched position.
- Tuesday, August 23 Troop A supported a detachment of the Fifth United States Field Battery. Passage of a defile. Captain Nance, Ninth United States Cavalry, organized militia and supported field battery, commanded by Captain Langdon.
- Wednesday, August 24 Review to Governor George C. Pardee and payment of troops.
- Thursday, August 25 Broke camp at 1:00 P.M. Train departed from Atascadero at 3:00 P.M.
- Friday, August 26 Arrived in San Francisco the following day.

Guard duty was performed every afternoon in camp in conjunction with the troops of the Ninth United States Cavalry. The discipline of the troop during the entire encampment was excellent, all of the duties were performed by the men cheerfully and with spirit.

In the compulsory target practice that was held each year as required by law, Troop A had 12 qualified Marksmen in 1895 and 17 in 1896. After 1896, a greater part of their practice was given to the use of the revolver. In 1902, Troop A had 23 qualified Marksmen with the revolver, and 19 in 1903, this being the last target practice report of the troop as an unattached company.

Following the organization of Troop A Cavalry the unit planned to change its headquarters from a building on Pacific Avenue to some place nearer the center of town. The matter of a change had been discussed some time before and the scheme was met with general favor. A committee of three men had been appointed to find a building in the neighborhood of Union Square which might be converted into an armory. For a couple of years the old

TROOP A CAVALRY (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

Company A, Light Artillery, which had its headquarters on Pacific Avenue, found it difficult to secure recruits because its headquarters were so far from town. When the battery was transformed into Troop A Cavalry the same difficulty presented itself and the members, therefore, set about to remedy the evil.

If suitable quarters could be found in the downtown district the troop would give up the tan-bark ring and riding classes which were features of the mounted branch of the National Guard. The armory occupied by the troop was built for Light Battery A about six years previous, and was now occupied by one of the Naval Battalion Companies, the cavalry organization and riding academy.* The committee was successful in finding a more commodious armory, and Troop A moved to 223 Geary Street.

The evening of August 1, 1896, was "Military Night" at the shutes in San Francisco, and the occasion was to be devoted to the National Guard and particularly to Troop A which was the oldest military organization in the State. At 7:45 P.M., there would be a salute of 47 cannons. At 9:30 a squad of men picked from Troop A would give a saber drill and at the conclusion of the regular performance in the Casino the floor would be cleared and a Military Ball inaugurated.**

On February 16, 1897, it was announced that Troop A had secured as honorary members several millionaires and had become possessors of horses. Captain C. A. Jenks who had taken command of Troop A was working hard to get the troop into good condition. A short time before Walter Price had been elected as Lieutenant and he had been of great aid in putting the cavalry on a good basis. Lieutenant Price was formerly a member of the noted Troop A of the National Guard of the State of New York, which was the most exclusive organization of its kind in New York City, ranking with the Regular Army Troops. Following the lines on which the famous New York Troop was formed, Captain Jenks and Lieutenant Price secured the aid of prominent people in San Francisco. The law allowed 10 honorary members to a troop, and Walter S. Hobart, Mayor, J. D. Phelan of San Francisco, Joseph Tobin, George Pope, Joseph D. Grant, Adolph Spreckles, Richard Tobin, Hugh Tevis, George M. Newhall and J. Downey Harvey were

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*San Francisco Call, January 13, 1896, page 5, column 3.

**San Francisco Chronicle, August 1, 1896, page 8, column 6.

***San Francisco Chronicle, April 13, 1899, page 14, column 6.

TROOP A CAVALRY (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

the 10 who joined Troop A.

The influence and financial aid of these members assured the success of the troop. Besides the assistance given by these men, Captain Jenks secured as presents 16 horses from some prominent San Francisco people. It was the intention of the officers to secure at least 25 horses before March 15, 1897. Then the troop would be divided into three platoons of 25 men each, and each platoon would be drilled one night each week. It was the plan of the cavalry men to erect a stable and armory in the Richmond District or some other suburb where the troops could drill with ease. The stable would be fitted up to hold 25 horses at first with a saddle room adjoining as well as a large room with lockers for the men. Pistol and carbine racks would be placed in this room. Adjoining these rooms an assembly and social room would be built and the billiard table, piano and other furniture of the troop would be moved from the armory at 223 Geary Street. Captain Jenks had been fortunate enough to secure the services of an experienced First Sergeant from the Regular Army. He was Sergeant G. W. Moffatt, ranking sergeant of Troop B, United States Army stationed at the Presidio.*

On April 21, 1898, the United States declared war against Spain. During the following three months forty-eight companies of the California National Guard were mustered into Federal service for duty. Troop A for some unknown reason did not enter the service of the United States, but remained in San Francisco for the duration of the war.

On April 12, 1899, Troop A participated in the funeral services of Colonel William C. Smith, late commander of the First Tennessee Infantry Regiment, United States Volunteers, which was held at the Masonic Temple under the auspices of the Grand Commandery of California. The military escort was composed of Troop A and Signal Corps, Troops B and M, Fourth United States Cavalry, and Companies A and I, Twenty-fourth Infantry, United States Army, headed by a military band. A riderless horse, with the saddle draped in mourning, was led behind the hearse.**

On February 1, 1900, Troop A again marched in a funeral procession to pay homage to Major-General Henry W. Lawton. A line of march was formed with a squad of police mounted and

*San Francisco Examiner, February 1, 1900, page 12, columns 2, 3, 4.

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**San Francisco Examiner, May 1, 1901, pages 1, 2, 3.

*San Francisco Chronicle, February 16, 1897, page 11, column 7.

**San Francisco Chronicle, April 13, 1899, page 14, column 6.

TROOP A CAVALRY (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

on foot. Then came Troop F and G, Sixth United States Cavalry, followed by Troop A and a detachment of the Signal Corps. On the caisson rested the body of General Lawton, attended by 6 artillery men in dress uniform. A committee of 100 Odd Fellows, including the past grand officers of the thirty-six lodges in the city, joined the escort bringing up the rear.*

On May 14, 1901, Troop A paraded in San Francisco in the reception to President William McKinley. Four splendid black horses drew the Presidential carriage. Four mounted policemen skirted the curb, four policemen on foot flanked the carriage between the police at either side of the carriage were detectives and directly behind were Captain Foster, Chief Hazen and Agent Moffitt of the Secret Service. Preceding the carriage was a body of mounted police with the Chief and his Captain in their van, then General R. H. Warfield, the Grand Marshal and his staff mounted and in full dress, the Park Band, Troop A Cavalry the special escort, the Veteran Guard of California, Grand Army of the Republic as guard of honor for the battle flag of McKinley's old regiment, and then the President's carriage. Then came a long line of carriages with the Executive Committee and with them the various members of the Presidential party.**

Troop A on January 28, 1903, participated in the benefit for the memorial fund of Father McKinnon at Mechanic's Pavillion in San Francisco. The music was martial and of excellent selection, the drilling of the soldiers skillful and executed with precision. Many of the soldiers who went to the Philippines with the late Chaplain were there in civilian as well as military clothes. These old comrades found one another and their reminiscences of the gentle character and unselfish life of the dead priest formed a beautiful tribute to his memory. The entertainment opened with a concert by the combined bands of the Third Artillery Corps and the Naval Training Station. Adjutant General George Stone, who represented Governor Pardee reviewed the troops under the command of Colonel Thomas F. O'Neil. The following militia took part in the benefit, Naval Apprentices, First Infantry Regiment, First Battalion Artillery, Troop A, Naval Militia of California, and a battalion of the Columbia Park Boys Club. Exhibitions and drills were given by nearly all of the organizations that took part in the benefit.***

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*San Francisco Examiner, February 2, 1900, page 12, columns 2,3,4.

**San Francisco Examiner, May 15, 1901, pages 1, 2, 3.

✓ ***San Francisco Examiner, January 29, 1903, page 7, column 2.

TROOP A CAVALRY (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

On March 9, 1905, Colonel Thomas Wilhelm, United States Army, Assistant Inspector General of the California National Guard made the following report on Troop A:

"The attendance at drills during the past year, as shown by the troop returns was 70 per cent. The enlisted men numbering 55 are a good class of clerks, mechanics, and students. The organization is available for domestic emergency, and could be assembled for duty in two hours, mounted in four hours, and for field service in about twice that time. Property, stores, and equipment are in good condition and well kept. The troop is sufficiently armed, uniformed, and equipped for active service in the field. Target practice is held once a month. Considerable instruction has been given in fire discipline, sighting and estimating distance. In addition to the thirteen days in camp at Atascadero, the troop has had two practice marches of one day each. Instruction given in camp was according to United States Cavalry Regulation.

Percentage of attendance at inspection and muster, good 82 per cent; promptness at roll-call and troop exercises, very good 91 per cent; military appearance, very good 92 per cent; discipline, good 86 per cent; condition of arms, fairly good, 70 per cent; condition of equipment, very good 90 per cent; condition of clothing, very good 90 per cent; condition of records, fairly good 73 per cent; troop movements, good 84 per cent; manual of arms and other exercises, good 86 per cent; general average 84.4 per cent."

In accordance with the provisions of Sections 1927 and 1933, Political Code of California on August 15, 1905, Troops A, B, C, and D Cavalry were organized into a squadron of Cavalry under the command of Major Samuel Kay. For additional information concerning the activities of this unit, refer to the history of Troop A, First Squadron of Cavalry, California National Guard.