

History of the Troop C, Cavalry, National Guard of California 1895-1905

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TROOP C CAVALRY (Continued)

Activities: (Continued) TROOP C CAVALRY

Troop C Cavalry, unattached, First Brigade
Reference: Adjutant General's Files
Location: Salinas, Monterey County
Organized August 5, 1895
Assigned August 15, 1905*

Commanding Officers

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Commission</u>
Michael J. Burke, Captain	Aug. 5, 1895	Oct. 11, 1895
Fred W. Winham, First Lieut.	Aug. 5, 1895	Oct. 11, 1895
Michael J. Burke, Captain (Re-elected Nov. 15, 1897)	_____	_____
Fred W. Winham, First Lieut. (Re-elected Nov. 15, 1897)	_____	_____
Michael J. Burke, Captain (Re-elected Aug. 27, 1900)	_____	_____
Fred W. Winham, First Lieut. (Re-elected Aug. 27, 1900)	_____	_____
Charles J. Fulle, Captain	Jan. 20, 1902	Mar. 15, 1902
Fred W. Winham, First Lieut. (Continued in Office)	_____	_____
Charles J. Fulle, Captain (Re-elected Jan. 25, 1904)	_____	_____
Fred W. Winham, First Lieut. (Re-elected Jan. 25, 1904)	_____	_____

Activities:

Troop C Cavalry was organized on August 5, 1895, in pursuance to General Order No. 11, July 23, 1895.**

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*Troop C Cavalry, First Brigade assigned to the First Squadron of Cavalry redesignated Troop C, First Squadron of Cavalry, August 15, 1895. 1905.
Adjutant General Report 1906, page 3.

**Adjutant General Report 1895-1896, General Order No. 11, Par. 3, page 76.

TROOP C CAVALRY (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

The occasion was made a gala affair for Salinas, as the residents of the city had sought for many years to obtain a military organization. Agriculture Hall was crowded with interested spectators, many being ladies who seemed to take a great interest in the new troop and the ceremony of mustering them in. There was no attempt at decorating the pavilion, except at the rear of the platform where the stars and stripes were draped in graceful furls with the letters "Troop C, National Guard of California," arranged in the circle. On the stage were seated in uniform, Captain Frank de L. Carrington, United States Army; Adjutant General A. W. Barrett and Colonel F. S. Chadbourne, National Guard of California and the members of the Governor's staff.

Captain Carrington of the First United States Infantry, was the mustering in officer for the ninety men who answered the roll-call. The troops then gathered at the farther end of the pavilion and took the oath to support the constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of California and to obey their commanding officers. This oath, also administered by Captain Carrington, was followed by the election of officers. M. J. Burke was duly elected Captain of the newly organized company and John L. Mathews and Fred W. Winham elected as First Lieutenants.

Captain Burke was then placed in charge of the Troop by the Mustering Officer, whose duties were concluded. The Captain made a few remarks to his men, thanking them and also the ladies for their attendance, and concluded by introducing Adjutant General Barrett. After a few pleasant remarks also to the ladies and adverting to the necessity of the fair sex as a "backing" for the National Guard, the General spoke of the persistence of State Senator Thomas Flint Jr., whose ultimatum always during the session of legislature, when National Guard matters came under discussion, was - "A Cavalry Troop for Salinas." The General then reminded the soldiers of their duties; the necessity of obedience to their superior officers, the need of reading up and studying the tactics and importance of attending drills, to the end that they might always be ready when the State should demand their services. General Barrett's speech was to the point, and with hearty plaudits the assemblage adjourned.

*The Salinas Democrat, August 10, 1895, page 1, column 5.

**The Salinas Democrat, January 25, 1896, page 1, column 5.

TROOP C CAVALRY (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

A reception and banquet was later tendered to the distinguished visitors by a few of the prominent citizens at the "Abbot House" and the menu was simply incomparable. Numerous toasts and witty responses kept the company in a merry mood until after midnight.*

The grand spirit in which Troop C entered into the organization of their unit was maintained throughout the many years of its existence. The members were sincere in their military duties and always striving to be rated among the highest in contests of skill.

Captain Burke was quite anxious to secure new uniforms for his company and during January 1896, made a trip to San Francisco for that purpose. Upon his return, the Captain made it known he had placed an order for them, trusting the boys would be out on full dress parade on Washington's Birthday. The material selected for the blouse was an extra quality dark blue cloth, and the pants were to be made of Kersey, in a lighter shade. The head-gear was to be the regular campaign hat, which would make the whole suit a new regulation uniform.

The week after Captain Burke had placed the order for the new uniforms, the members of Troop C became quite concerned over what they thought were orders for active service. An article taken from a local newspaper, explains the incident as follows:**

Captain M. J. Burke of Troop C Cavalry, received through the mails Monday from Adjutant General Barrett, an ominously large envelope, and as the Captain is somewhat of a humorist, he read what purported to be orders from headquarters to hold the troop in readiness for immediate action. Parties who were standing by and not onto the snap, at once spread the report over town and it was not long until several of the troopers besieged Captain Burke's office and with no little trepidation inquired if the orders contemplated the troop being called on to go into active service. The Captain gravely assured them that the orders were what is known as "silent orders," which would seem to indicate that the situation was grave, and that they should be prepared at a moment's call to face their country's enemies. After keeping the boys

*The Salinas Democrat, February 1896, page 3, column 4.

*The Salinas Democrat, August 10, 1895, page 1, column 6.

**The Salinas Democrat, January 25, 1896, page 1, column 6.

TROOP C CAVALRY (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

in suspense as long as was justified by prudential considerations, he relieved their anxiety by reading the document which was simply certain orders or directions such as are not infrequently received from headquarters.

On the night of February 21, 1896, the troops held their first drill in uniform as their order had been filled and they could now parade on Washington's Birthday. After spending the evening in drilling, and being admired by a great many spectators, the members of Troop C completely surprised Captain Burke with a token long to be remembered. The Captain was escorted to the platform where Honorable Jesse D. Carr was seated, and who then presented Captain Burke with a sabre, as a gift from the Troop.

Lieutenant Frank Vierra conceived the happy thought that started the movement in Troop C which resulted in the purchase of the sabre. Mr. Vierra was full of enthusiasm and energy, in the work of the military company, and one of its most active members. The sabre itself was a perfect specimen of the most approved pattern in modern military weapons. It had an embossed nickel plated silver scabbard, fish skin grip, and a beautifully etched nickel plated blade, and gold mountings. Its cost was seventy-five dollars.*

On March 15, 1896, a group of members from Troop C rode out early in the morning from Salinas to Kelloggs Grove, for a target practice. Upon their arrival, the troops were pleasantly surprised in the way of a delicious "bull's head" breakfast. Lieutenant Winham acted as Chef and was assisted by Private Frank Kellogg. With an appetite whetted by a ten mile ride, the boys "did not do a thing" to that breakfast. The lunch was discussed after which the target practice took place. The final scores showed that some of the troopers were becoming proficient as Marksmen, as one of them made a record which was nearly as good as that held by the State champion.**

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*The Salinas Democrat, February 22, 1896, page 3, column 4.

**The Salinas Democrat, March 21, 1896, page 1, column 8.

TROOP C CAVALRY (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

The first inspection of Troop C held on April 28, 1896, was synonymous of the annual inspections that followed. The troops were a credit to themselves and a pride to their city. The inspection took place at the pavilion which was crowded with ladies and citizens of Salinas and surrounding country who were interested in Troop C and the promotion of its welfare. The inspecting officers were: Adjutant General Barrett, Lieutenant-Colonel J. C. Currier, Lieutenant-Colonel T. A. Nerney, and Major J. W. F. Diss. Captain Burke and his troop came out of the ordeal with colors flying, the efficiency and military bearing of officers and men receiving the unqualified approval of the inspecting officers. At four o'clock in the afternoon, there was a mounted drill at McKinnons field beyond the race track, which again brought praise from the Adjutant General.*

The first Military Ball held in Salinas, was at the dedication of the new Armory during October, 1896. The beauty, wealth and fashion of Salinas were there and being crowded, hardly expressed the condition of the rooms. The ladies and their escorts began to arrive as early as eight o'clock and the stream continued flowing until the grand march was called. A large portion of the crowd was in full evening dress who as they took place under the mellow rays of the incandescent lights for the grand march, presented an ensemble which could vie with any society function in the Metropolis.

Troop C outshone itself in its evolutions, the first feature being the regular drill. During this feature, Captain Burke brought his men to parade rest and then introduced Honorable Thomas Flint Jr., who had been familiarly dubbed, "Father of Troop C." Senator Flint, said that it gave him great pleasure to be there and made some flattering comments on the troopers. Having visited several armories in the State, Senator Flint, adjudged this one as the most convenient and complete in every detail. The Senator spoke modestly of getting the troop for Salinas, and said equal if not more credit was due Adjutant General Barrett and Governor Budd.

At the conclusion of the drill, guard mounting was performed and followed by a full dress roll-call, which concluded the troops military movements. A delegation from the Naval Reserve of Santa Cruz were interested spectators of the drill and guard mount. The dancing which started at 9:30 P.M., and continued on to a late hour, contributed to the success of the first

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*The Salinas Democrat, May 2, 1896, page 1, column 7.

TROOP C CAVALRY (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

Military Ball in Salinas.*

A decided change was made during 1896, in regards to the type of scabbard used in the artillery units of the National Guard of California. The old "time honored" carbine boot which was in use for so many years was being discarded. It in turn was replaced by the improved magazine carbine.

Immediately upon the adoption of the magazine carbine, steps were taken by the ordinance department of the Army to supply a more perfect means of carrying and protecting the new arm. The old boot permitted more or less motion of the arm, which in long and hurried marches became quite annoying to both horse and rider. The barrel and stock were also exposed to the weather. The new scabbard which was made of thick harness leather, thoroughly protected the carbine to the "small of the stock." It also permitted easy insertion or withdrawal and could be suspended from either side of the saddle.

With the passing of the carbine boot; one of the most picturesque, cumbersome and oath producing accoutrements of the mounted service went out of existence. The boot, however, looked very business like as it was carried slung down the side of the saddle or from the shoulder of the fully equipped cavalry man. But to those who were obliged to wear it, it was a constant source of annoyance and positive danger in action as it was fastened to the saddle of the horse and the rider as well. Many a brave soldier owed his death to the fact that being slightly wounded, he fell from his horse and was dragged to death because of his inability to free himself from the "boot." For the same reason, if the horse were shot and fell, the rider had to fall also, and if he escaped injury he ran a good chance of being run down by some of his charging comrades or having his brains kicked out by his wounded horse. This, however, was to be taken care of and the trooper to be in no more danger of going down with his mount. Troop C as one of the four units of Cavalry in the California National Guard, accepted this change as one of the greatest improvements in military science.**

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*The Salinas Democrat, October 17, 1896, page 3, column 6.

**San Francisco Chronicle, October 4, 1896, page 2, column 1.

The Salinas Journal, August 21-1897, page 1, column 1.

**Adjutant General Report 1906, page 33.

TROOP C CAVALRY (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

Encampments were a very essential part of the military training of Troop C. Aside from frequent troop outings the unit participated in many annual encampments. On August 14, 1897, the members of Troop C left for Santa Cruz on an eight day encampment with the entire Third Brigade. The command was carefully drilled by Captain Burke and Sergeant Fuller in preparation for the encampment. Being enthusiastic, the boys wanted to be skilled in the various tactics, and made a fine appearance among the 1400 soldiers to be present at the encampment.

Fifty-five members of Troop C left for Santa Cruz on horse back and arrived there August 15, 1897. They withstood the long ride fairly well, although they were very tired. One of the boys is said to have fallen exhausted from his horse upon arrival at camp, but sustained no serious injury. After a short sojourn to the regimental hospital, he was sufficiently revived to appear in the ranks on Monday morning. The drill on Monday lasted from nine until eleven-thirty o'clock and Troop C made a fine appearance, eclipsing the Sacramento troop, not only in soldierly appearance, but in horsemanship, efficiency, etc. They evidently lived up to their aspirations as the report on the encampment gave Troop C a splendid rating. During their camp life among the many hundreds of Regulars and State Militia, the members bore themselves with that martial air and dignity that becomes the citizen-soldiery of a great State. They performed their duties with such earnestness and precision that among the fifty inmates of the guard house there was but one from Troop C. His cause for being there was for a small remissness of being two minutes late.

In the mounted and unmounted drills, the superiority of Troop C was so marked and unquestionable over other troops as to cause frequent inquiries in regards to them being a company of Regulars. The unit was adjudged to be the best drilled National Guard Troop on the Coast.*

Troop C also performed a practice march from Salinas to Santa Cruz in order to participate in a Camp of Instruction held during July of 1905. The unit left Salinas at 9:00 A.M., on July second and reached San Juan at 3:00 P.M., after traveling a distance of sixteen miles. The troops on their second day of travel went a distance of twenty-six miles, reaching the town of Madrone.** The following day was the Fourth of July and while marching into San Jose the troops found the entire city in the spirit of celebration. Troop D was invited to

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*The Salinas Journal, August 21, 1897, page 1, column 1.

**Adjutant General Report 1906, page 32.

TROOP C CAVALRY (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

stay and participate in the parade which they accepted. There was no time to prepare for the occasion and consequently the troop entered the parade in full marching equipment. The men and horses were covered with dust, having marched eighteen miles during the morning. However, they were extended a hearty welcome and presented a picturesque feature. The Troop had brought along their Chinese cook, who also participated in the parade. He rode in the camp wagon which had strapped on the back of it a cage containing a huge bald eagle. This feature brought a loud applause from all spectators, as did the whole troop who, disregarding their dusty appearance, accepted the invitation to march in the parade.*

The unit remained at San Jose over night and continued their march on the morning of the fifth reaching Santa Cruz at 6:00 A.M. Shelter tents were pitched the first day and on a vacant lot near the beach. On July sixth a site was laid out and a permanent camp pitched. The troops began at once to resign themselves to the military routine of a camp. Their daily schedule was as follows:**

First Call	5:45 A.M.
Reveille	5:55 A.M.
Assembly	6:00 A.M.
Stable Call	6:05 A.M.
Breakfast	7:00 A.M.
Water	7:30 A.M.
Boots and Saddles	7:45 A.M.
Assembly	8:00 A.M.
Recall	10:30 A.M.
Swimming Horses	11:00 A.M.
Dinner	12:00 M
Water	12:30 P.M.
Water and Stables	5:30 P.M.
Supper	6:15 P.M.
Guard Mounting	6:45 P.M.
Assembly	7:07 P.M.
Retreat and Inspection	7:15 P.M.
Taps	11:00 P.M.

This encampment proved very beneficial to all the troops as they entered into it with a determination to accomplish whatever was in store for them.

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*The San Jose Mercury, July 5, 1905, page 2, column 1.

**Adjutant General Report 1906, page 32.

TROOP C CAVALRY (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

Target practice was another essential factor in the military requirements of Troop C. During the target practice of 1896, the unit placed but two men in line for Second-class medals and twenty men for Third-class medals.* This rating was somewhat improved upon during the years that followed, as in 1904, there were forty-eight members of Troop C who received First-class medals. Thirty-one of the medals were issued to distinguished marksman, eight to Sharpshooters and eight to Riflemen. The unit also received special mention for the fact it had the highest per cent of strength in Revolver and the largest number of Distinguished Marksman with the revolver.**

The activities of Troop C was varied and not only consisted of military requirements, but often in paying tribute to departed ones who were loved and respected by the members of the troop.

In November of 1898, a large group of members payed their last tribute of respect to their deceased comrade Peter J. Kelly. He was given a military funeral, with members of the unit acting as pall-bearers. Funeral services were conducted at the Church of the Sacred Heart, by Father Stoetters, the parish priest, who was assisted by Father Ferrer of Gonzales. At the grave the impressive ceremony of the church was said after which a military salute was fired by eight comrades. The small mound that marked the last resting place of the deceased, was covered with beautiful flowers, taps were sounded and the troop returned to their armory leaving their comrade to sleep the sleep eternal, which knows no earthly wakening.***

A few years later, the troop was again called upon to pay tribute to one of their departed members. An order was issued by Lieutenant F. W. Winham, while temporarily in command of the unit, and read as follows:****

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*Adjutant General Report 1896-1898, pages 61, 69.

**General and Special Orders and Circulars 1904, General Order No. 16, page 26.

***The Salinas Journal, November 12, 1898, page 4, column 2.

****The Salinas Journal, January 4, 1902, page 3, column 6.

TROOP C CAVALRY (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

Troop Order No. 1

1. The Almighty having deemed it necessary to call from our midst our comrade, Corporal Herbert E. Trout, I am compelled to issue this, my first order, to pay our last respects to a deceased active member.
2. All members of Troop C will report at the Armory in uniform, Sunday, January fifth at 1:00 P.M., sharp, to attend the funeral.

(Signed) F. W. Winham

First Lieutenant Commanding Troop C.

Impressive religious services were held at the Armory and the remains laid to rest in the I.O.O.F., cemetery, with fitting military honors. The funeral cortege was composed of Troop C, Troop C Red Cross, Salinas Fire Department, Woodmen of the World, and a long line of carriages containing sympathizing friends and citizens. The floral pieces were profuse and many of appropriate design and elaborate.

Troop C as a unit was greatly in demand at all civic and social affairs in and around Salinas. They took part in many parades such as on July Fourth, Decoration Day, Washington's Birthday, and numerous others.

On August 15, 1905, the four unattached units of the California National Guard were formed into a Squadron of Cavalry. Troop C was therefore on that date assigned to the newly organized First Squadron of Cavalry and redesignated Troop C, First Squadron of Cavalry.*

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*Adjutant General Report 1906, page 3.