

# **History of the Conner Guard, California Militia 1863-1866**

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CONNER GUARD (1877)

Conner Guard, First Brigade

Reference: Dead Office File, Row 3, File 8

Location: Monterey, Monterey County

Mustered in June 4, 1863

Mustered out November 17, 1866

Commanding Officers

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Commission</u>
John O. Wheeler, Captain	June 12, 1863	Aug. 12, 1863
John Wallace, First Lieut.	June 12, 1863	Aug. 12, 1863
John O. Wheeler, Captain (Re-elected July 2, 1864)		
John Wallace, First Lieut. (Re-elected July 2, 1864)		
John O. Wheeler, Captain (Re-elected July 1, 1865)		
John Wallace, First Lieut. (Re-elected July 1, 1865)		

Activities:

Muster Out Roll was dated November 17, 1866, and remarks indicated that only thirty-two colt revolvers and thirty-five Monterey and the surrounding territory felt the need of military protection as the region was situated on an unprotected coast and it was considered a vulnerable location for an attack by foreign invaders. Therefore, on June 4, 1863, at a meeting held in the historic old Monterey Court House, the Conner Guard was organized and the necessary papers filed with the Adjutant General's Office for approval. This company desired to be recognized as a cavalry unit equipped with the necessary arms. However, they also asked that Headquarters supply them with a piece of Artillery. The records showed that the unit succeeded in getting their equipment for cavalry but no artillery was ever furnished the company. The soundness of the plans of the Conner Guard to augment the cavalry with an artillery unit was exemplified, when, in February 1865, the Federal troops under the leadership of Captain O'Brien earnestly requested the government to furnish an artillery unit to strengthen his command. Many citizens of Monterey were Secessionists and the Federal troops had the effect of restraining them in both speech and acts.

Due undoubtedly to the great distance between the Capital and the First Brigade Headquarters, to which the Conner Guard was attached, there are few records or papers on file regarding their activities. In 1865 they received new cavalry uniforms and were well equipped as a cavalry company.

However, interest in the company's activities waned and during the fall of 1865 when Captain Wheeler moved from Monterey, the unit

CONNER GUARD (Continued)

Sacramento Sharpshooters, Company F, Second Infantry Battalion,  
Activities: (Continued) Fourth Brigade.

References: Dead Office File, Row 4, File 4.  
stopped their regular drills, and meetings were held irregularly. The First Lieutenant assumed command but never was elected Captain. Later on dissension arose between the commanding officer and the Armorer, the former refusing to recognize the Armorer and the Armorer refusing to turn the keys over to the Lieutenant, who then broke the lock and gained entrance while the Armorer still held the keys. Captain\* June 6, 1863 June 18, 1863

Early in November 1866, Captain Wheeler whose resignation had not been accepted and, therefore, was a party to the \$3000.00 Bond on file at Headquarters, received orders from Adjutant General Evans to muster out the Conner Guard. Upon convening, questions arose among the members of the company as to whether the members of the unit could keep their colt revolvers if they paid the State the original cost of the weapons, as some members desired the pistols for "sentimental reasons". The meeting was adjourned to await for further instructions from Headquarters, since the Captain refused to disband the company until all property was accounted for. (Elected Oct. 25, 1864)

The final Muster Out Roll was dated November 17, 1866, and remarks indicated that only thirty-two colt revolvers and thirty-five uniforms were returned to the State. Apparently the members that desired to do so were permitted to keep either uniform or pistols if they paid for them.

Activities:  
A petition signed by forty-seven citizens of Sacramento, asking permission to organize a company of Sharpshooters under the State Militia Law, was presented to the Honorable Robert C. Clark, Judge of the County Court of Sacramento County, on May 28, 1863. In accordance with the request, Judge Clark appointed Captain Benjamin F. -000- of Sacramento to superintend and preside over the organization of said company of Sharpshooters. The organization was perfected June 6, 1863. The title Sacramento Sharpshooters was adopted, and on the following day the company was mustered into the service of the State as Company F, Second Infantry Battalion, Fourth Brigade.

According to correspondence on file, the title "Sharpshooters" was most appropriate, as the members of the company had previously been members of the Sacramento Rifle Club. All were "crack" shots, noted for their ability with the rifle and proud of their records. The Sharpshooters purchased their own uniforms consisting of regulation caps, blue coats and dark trousers, trimmed with white

\*Captain Hamilton was promoted to the Rank of Colonel, Fourth Regiment, Fourth Brigade, as per notation on Muster Roll of September 26, 1864.