History of Battery B, Field Artillery; Battery B, 1st Battalion, Field Artillery; Battery B, 1st Field Artillery Regiment; California National Guard 1911-1917

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BATTERY B

Battery B, Field Artillery, First Brigade Reference: Adjutant General Files Location: Oakland, Alameda County Organized May 31, 1911 Reconstituted December 20, 1912* Mustered into Federal Service June 28, 1916** Mustered out of Federal Service December 21, 1916*** Resumption of Service in the National Guard 1916*** Mustered into Federal Service July 12, 1917**** Redesignated September 24, 1917*****

Commanding Officers				
Name	Rank	Commission		
R. J. Faneuf, Capt.	Mar. 27, 1909+	May 31, 1911		
(promoted to Major Dec. 29, 1912				
C. J. Hogan, First Lieut.	May 31, 1911	May 81, 1911		
(resigned Jan. 28, 1915)				
H. F. Huber, First Lieut.	May 31, 1911	May 31, 1911		
H. F. Huber, Capt.	Jan. 22, 1913	Mar.11, 1913		
E. E. Vicary, First Lieut.	Jan. 22, 1913	Mar.11, 1913		
J. W.White, First Lieut.	Feb. 24, 1915	May 28, 1915		

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*Battery B. Field Artillery Redesignated Battery B, First Battalion Field Artillery, December 20, 1912. <u>General and Special Orders and Circulars</u> 1912, General Order No. 26.

**Battery B as part of the First Battalion Field Artillery mustered into Federal Service for duty on the Mexican Border, June 28, 1916. Adjutant General Report 1914-1920, page 14.

Adjutant General Report 1914-1920, page 14.

****General and Special Orders and Bulletins 1916, General Order No. 34, page 150.

*****Battery B, First Field Artillery mustered into Federal Service for duty during the World War, July 12, 1917. Monthly Return, Battery B, First Field Artillery, July, 1917. Adjutant General's Files.

*******Battery B, First Field Artillery, redesignated Battery B, One Hundred an Forty-Third Regiment Field Artillery, Septemb r 24, 1917. Adjutant General Report 1920-1926, page 32.

*Captain Faneuf retained his former rank date of March 27, 1909, when he was on the staff of the Fifth Infantry Regiment.

Activities:

On May 31, 1911, Battery B, Field Artillery stationed at Oakland was mustered into State Service under the command of Captain R. J. Faneuf, and attached to the First Brigade.

BATTERY B (Continued)

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In order to maintain a high standard of efficiency in modern warfare and become familiar with the new 1905 model field guns they had received from the War Department, Battery B attended many encampments, as shown by the following list:

Year	Location	Month		
<u>Year</u> 1912	Salinas and Vicinity	Aug.]	L1 to	21
1913	Hewson Ranch, Alameda County	Apr. 2	25 to	27
1914	Danville, Contra Costa County	Oct. 1	lo to	12
1915	Gigling, Monterey County	July 1	l8 to	27

The more important of these encampments are described in detail as follows:

Battery B departed from their armory in Oakland at August 11: 9:45 A.M. arrived at 5th and Kirkman Street railroad yards at 10:10 A.M. Loaded escort wagons and horses. Loading completed at 11:20 A.M. Train consisted of 15 cars, divided as follows; 2 coaches, 1 baggage car, 6 flat cars and 6 Stock cars. Personnel 5 officers and 101 men. Animals, 95 horses, 12 mules. Artillery carriages comprised 4 gun sections and one battery and store sections. Three escort wagons and one small wagon, the latter belonging to the Battery were taken. Battery B arrived at Coyote station at 2:35 P.M. and reported to Captain E. H. Yule, Second Field Artillery United States Army, who was there as Inspector-Instructor of Field Artillery and Umpire for Battery B.

August 12: Spent in establishing camp.

<u>August 13:</u> In the morning the battery proceeded to the drill ground north-east of camp on upper flat and was instructed in riding, driving and in the principles of draft. Selection of going into firing positions formed part of the instruction. In the afternoon, the officers went on a terrain ride of seven miles. Instruction in the use of scouts and agents of communication and in the selections of position and the computation of firing data. Enlisted men were instructed in stable duties.

Activities: (continued)

August 14:

Battery B left camp at 8:30 A.M., with firing battery. Marched over same road as taken by officers on terrain ride the afternoon previous. On leaving improved road went into action in wooded field. Later continued on over and old unimproved road that lay principally in bed of a dry ravine and it was necessary on several occasions to dismount cannoncers to make passable certain bad places in the road. Selected and went into position against Goyote on saddle at highest point reached on march. Returned to camp. arriving at 12:40 P.M. Odometer on store limber registered 7 3/5 miles, as distance traveled. Arrived at camp with no casualties although road was rough and while passable for artillery it would not be used except in case of absolute necessity.

Battery left camp at 8:25 A.M., proceeded south and August 15: west to hills overlooking Coyote. Lunch for the men and a small feed for the horses was taken. Two Artillery positions were selected for indirect laying and actual service conditions simulated. In second position 20 rounds of blank ammunition were fired to regulate intervals of discharges and to accustom the animals to the noise and smoke. The terrain was hilly and there being no roads, battery was obliged to make its own way. This exercise was most beneficial to the entire battery. Officers exercised command fully over the units assigned to them, non-commissioned officers and privates had an opportunity with less restraint than if they were being watched by curious people, to perform their various duties and to observe the working of the Army men. Animals. by this time were becoming accustomed to artillery work and in general the draft was good. The Battery left for camp at 2:45 P.M., and arrived at 4:25 P.M.

August 16:

Program for this day the same as on the fifteenth. Left camp at 8:15 A.M. Battery operated over practically same ground. Operated alone in the selection of position and securing firing data. A critique was held by Captain Yule. During the critique Brigadier-General Evans, United States Army, arrived and remained throughout the session. During lunch a fire was observed just south of the battery's position. Leaving one officer in command and one driver with each team, Captain Faneuf, directed the battery to procure sacks, axes and shovels, and to proceed to fight the fire. It was found that this grass fire had been started from the blast of one of the Utah Battery's guns, and had gained much headway, requiring the

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Activities: (continued)

combined efforts of three batteries to extinguish it after three hours of hard work. Several officers and men were overcome by the heat and a few minor burns were reported. Owing to the fact that drivers and cannoncers did not have time to divest themselves of their equipment in order that they could report at once to the fire, several articles of personal equipment were lost consisting of gauntlets, spurs, canteens and meas kits. The burned area covered at least seventy-five acres. Although Battery B had continually on hand each day several wet gunny bage, they were wholly inadequate to extinguish the flames and it was necessary to use brush and branches of trees and in some instances, before fire was controlled cannoncers used their haversacks to extinguish the flames. Battery assembled at 3:30 P.W., and returned to camp by same route, arriving at 4:50 P.M. At 8:00 P.M. Captain Faneuf was instructed by wire by the commander of the "Blue Army" Colonel Corneluis Gardener, to join his command. Colonel Gardener was then at Redwood City. His cavalry under Major Samuel Kay was nearing San Jose. Captain Faneuf's instructions were to remain at Coyote until 2:00 P.M. August seventeenth, and unless Major Kay joined him before that hour, Battery B was to proceed to San Jose with all possible speed or until such time as they met the Cavalry.

August 17:

During the morning preliminary work of breaking camp was connenced. Not having heard further of Major Kay's force of Gavalry from the scout, Captain Faneuf directed the battery hitched in at 1:00 P.M., and ready to move at 1:30 P.H. At this time scouts reported a column of cavalry in sight moving south on Honterey road north of Coyote. This was Major Kay's column. Upon reporting to Major Kay at 1:45 P.M. he directed Battery B to join his command which went into camp on higher land about 1000 yards due east of the camp just vacated. Upon arrival at the new camp site, Captain Faneuf plotted the surrounding country from an observation station 200 yards south of camp. This, with a view of easy defense in case of an attack and without greatly shifting of the guns. Desirable lines of retreat were located. In case of a day attack on this camp Captain Faneuf would have moved the battery 300 yards, as from that position a greater field of fire could be covered.

Activities: (continued)

August 18:

Battery B was awakened at 4:30 A.M. Camp was struct and battery ready to move out at 6:40 A.M., orders having been issued to move at 7:00 A.M. Battery moved out at 7:05 A.M. and waited for Cavalry to form advance guard and take distance. The entire column then proceeded to Coyote Station, thence on Monterey road to Morgan Hill, arriving there at 9:30 A.M. after having traveled a distance of 8 1/2 miles. Camp was immediately made. Captain Faneuf reported to Colonel Bowen, Twelfth United States Infantry, whose command Battery B had joined. Detailed as Chief of Artillery by Colonel Bowen, Captain Faneuf made observations with reference to firing data for the guns as they were in park. Later, Captain Faneuf made an extended survey on the front of the camp site. Selecting an observation station on Reservior Hill, immediately south of Mergan Hill on line of resistance of Colonel Bowen's outpost, Captain Faneuf plotted the surrounding country as formerly. A masked position for the battery was selected from which all roads converging on Morgan Hill from the south could have been swept. No enemy was sighted.

August 191

Battery was awakened at 3:30 A.M. Camp was struct and Battery left to take position previously selected at 5:55 A.M. Wagon train was ordered to return to Coyote. Position was again reconnoitered and occupied at 6:30 A.H. Data obtained the day previous was transmitted to the guns. Although the original aiming point was obscured by the fog, supplemental one was used with the desired result. The previous evening Captain Faneuf had received orders from Colonel Gardener to join him at Coyote at 8:00 A.M. Leaving Battery B under command of Lieutenant Hogan at 6:45 A.M., Captain Faneuf departed for Coyote, arrived there at 7:50 A.M. and reported to Colonel Gardener who with his force had just arrived. For two hours Captain Faneuf went over the ground with Colonel Gardener. Captain Fanauf had previously reconnoitered this ground during the camp at Coyote, and his selection of artillery position was approved by Colonel Gardener. On his return to Morgan Hill, Captain

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Activities: (continued)

Faneuf found that the Battery had been moved from its first position and had been subdivided under direction of Colonel Bowen. The positions then occupied by the subdivided battery were paralled to lateral roads running east and west. Lieutenant Huber was ordered into a position on the side of a rocky hill. Ten horses were required to pull the pieces to this position. Lieutenant Hogan who was asked by Captain Faneuf why such position was chosen stated that he had been ordered by Colonel Bowen to take that particular position over his (Hogan's) protest. The position taken was such that upon the appearance of the enemy from the direction of Morgan Hill, he could not have retreated without proceeding about one fourth mile in the direction of the enemy. No protection was afforded limbers and the hill was of such sharacter that it was doubtful if guns and carriagers could have gotten over it in direct line of retreat. The second platoon under Lieutenant Vicary took a masked position one fourth mile west of Ligutenant Huber's position. He fired, under the emphatic direction of Colonel Bowen, one round of shrapmel (blank) at two mounted men of the "Red Army" who appeared on the sky line. At 2:00 P.M. battery was ordered to withdraw north on read to Madrone where animals were watered at 2:40 P.M. Two other position were taken in withdrawing further, to cover retreat of the infantry retiring from Morgan Hill. At 3:30 P.H. Battery limbered and joined retreating column. Camp was made at Coyote at 5:40 P.H. on site abandoned the morning previous.

August 20:

Battery B awakened at 4:30 A.M. Ready to leave position at 6:30 A.M. As the position selected by Captain Faneuf the preceding day lay 300 yards immediately north of the camp, it was taken at once and battery reported in position at 7:20 A.M., theoretically intrenched. Data previously obtained transmitted to guns. Not having received any orders from "Blue" commander, Captain Faneuf reported the Battery's position by wireless. At 9:20 A.H. the enemy was sighted on east side of

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Activities: (continued)

valley passing over an open space: At 10:00 A.M. another column was seen at same place but all of 7200 yards away and out of Battery B range. At 10:50 A.H. firing had commenced and the smoke of the "Red" Artillery was observed at a range of not less than 5500 yards, at that time Captain Faneuf reported his observation with a request to open fire but was directed to withhold same for the present as it was not desired that Battery B's position be exposed. At 11:55 A.M. Captain Faneuf received a message from Colonel Gardener that Lieutenant-Colonel Morton was heavily engaged and wanting to know if Battery B could reach and support him. Captain Faneuf answered that he could reach him in two hours without being exposed. At 12:25 P.M. Battery B received orders to join the right flank. Left position at 12:35 P.M., proceeded down valley to Coyote Creek and awaited Cavalry escort. Moved out without Cavalry at 1:00 P.M., proceeded north on Monterey road at. fast trot, thence to left under cover of hills to saddle of hills just north of lake. Went into action. From abservation station on high hill could plainly see enery's lines and artillery. Data having been computed, fired first salvo at 1:28 P.M. at 3800 yards range. The Brigade Adjutant then directed Battery B to take position further west on hills in support of Colonel Bowen's troops which were then in reserve. Arrived in this position at 1:56 P.M. and commenced firing at 2:07 P.M. Enemy in plain sight and Battery B commenced firing volleys at successive ranges from 2800 to 3200 yards, sweeping reverse slopes. Recall was sounded at 2:50 P.M. and battery proceeded to camp.

August 21: Battery B returned to Oakland.

On October 13, 1911, five months after its organization Battery B made their first public appearance when they participated in the parade at Oakland to welcome W. H. Taft, President of the United States. The arrival of the Presidential special train at the 16th Street station at 3:30 P.M. was the signal for a great blast of whistles from factories and engines along the water front. More than one thousand persons had gathered to see the President, but he did not leave his car. At the Key Route station, which was reached at 3:45 P.M. the presidential party found a noted group of men in waiting. Naval officers, Army officers and Masons in full

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Activities: (continued)

regalia gave the little Key Route Garden, where the official reception took place, a dignified and coloful appearance. The ceremony in the Garden did not last more than ten minutes. Then the signal was given for the parade to start and it formed at once in front of the station. Mounted police led the way for the presidential carriage and the mile or more of automobiles. The military and naval section of the parade was the finest ever seen in Oakland It was composed of fully 2500 United States Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and National Guardsmen; the latter, represented by Battery B. The parade was headed by a plateon of police under command of Police Captain Charles Bock. The police platoon was followed by the Third Regiment United States, Coast Artillery. A composite regiment formed of several companies of coast artillery under command of Lieutenant-Colonel J. C. Brooks was next. Then came the band and the sailors from the cruiser California and the bugle and drum corps and sailors of the cruiser South Dakota. The parade was closed by Battery B, under command of Captain Ralph Faneuf. The Oakland battery received a great welcome, as it was its first appearance since its organisation. Captain Faneuf received many compliments from the Regular Army Officers on the appearance of his men.*

On November 5, 1911, Battery B, held mounted drill exercises in the Claremont hills near Oakland. The Battery engaged in maneuvers comprising riding, driving standing gum drill, limbering, unlimbering, hitching and unhitching, with remarkable proficiency, greatly to the appreciation of the throng which gathered to witness the exercises. The proficiency was due to the fact that most of the members of the organization were veterans of the war in Cuba and the Philippines. There were hundreds among the onlookers who were not aware until the men and their guns appeared in sight, that there was an organization of that kind in existence in Oakland.**

Battery B, under the direction of Captain Faneuf was busy during the first part of Becamber 1911, preparing for the mimic warfare between the battery and two aviators to take place at the Oakland Motordrome December seventeenth. The experience would be a novel one for the soldiers who had never yet had the opportunity of pitting themselves against the skill and daring of the Aviators. It was to be a mimic warfare in the truest sence of the word. Didier Masson and Weldon Cooke in their aeroplanes would sour over the field watching for an opportunity to drop bombs into the camp of the enemy, and tear up their entrenchments. The demonstration would be interesting from a specacular point of view and would tend to show the efficiency of the air machines egainst the skill of trained soldiers.*** Even the threatening weather could not keep a big crowd away from

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*San Francisco Examiner October 14, 1911, page 1 column 1.

##Oakland Enquirer November 6, 1911 (alippings)

***San Francisco Examiner December 15, 1911 (clippings)

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Activities: (continued)

the Motordrome in Oakland December 17, 1911, and in return for their money the fans were given a combination of motorcycle racing, aviation and military maneuvering. In spite of a brisk wind, Didier Masson, the French Aviator, did not hesitate to ascend and apparently had absolute control of his machine at every stage of his long stay in the air. The sham battle between Masson and Battery B, was all on the side of the troops. The latter took several long range shots at the flying Frenchman, but the latter apparently was too busy to pay much attention to the soldiers beneath him. The bombs which Masson was to drop on the troops did not appear on the scene, although a little later Weldon Cooke the other aviator dropped a few sacks of something in the paddock. No one was killed in the encounter, but the crowd was well pleased.*

The first annual inspection of Battery B, on April 4, 1912, was a revelation of what could be done in a short time by a number of men and officers devoted to the cause of patriotism and the defense of the State and Nation. There were present when Adjutant-General E. A. Forbes, Captain D. H. Currie, United States Army, Captain Ralph Faneuf and Captain Leon Frances, walked down the lines of Artillerymen under inspection, eighty-one officers and men, practically one hundred percent of the membership of the organisation. Attendance was one of the desiderata in the inspection of military bodies and the showing of the battery in that respect met the hearty appreciation of the inspecting officers. After the men had been formed into lines presented a military appearance which did then credit, they were closely examined by the inspectors as to their bearing, the condition of thir uniforms, the cleanly and serviceable state of their side armes and finally in their ability to man the guns of the battery. The last mentioned feature was by far, the most interesting of the evening for reason that the guns and caissons were assembled as if in battery formation for action in the field and, in compliance with orders from Captain Faneuf, the guns were raised and deflected at a number of angles for the purpose of covering various distances. Shells were supplied with celerity and dexterity by members of the various sections from the caisson and instantly expelled from the guns as soon as the shells had sped on their way to the imaginary enemy.

The rapidity of the fire and the precision of the work of the crews was considered remarkable, when it was considered that the battery had been in existence only a year. At the close of the inspection, Adjutant-General Forbes in no uncertain terms complimented the command for their attendance, their appearance and the efficient manner in which they had handled their guns. He stated that the old method of warfare, of looking to the Regular Army as the first line of defense, the National Guard as the second and then finally depending upon volunteers to defend the country was no longer to be maintained, but that jointly the Regulars and the militia would be the first to be called into service. At the present time, man to man, the army of the United States was equal to the best in the world, but by reason of the demands for troops in the Philippines, on the Mexican border, in Alaska and at the Isthmus of Panama, the main body

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#San Francisco Chronicle December 18, 1911 (clippings)

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Activities: (continued)

had been greatly reduced in size and numbers and accordingly, the National Guard of the country would have to be relied upon to supplement the impairment.

General Forbes congratulated the men on the devotion and patriotism they had shown in becoming members of the National Guard, thus showing their love of country and their purpose to serve the same, because of the protection which the laws of the country afforded them. The General's remarks were greeted with applause. There were present during the inspection a number of prominent citizens and ladies, to all of whom the exercises were of a most interesting character. The battery had been organized a year before, the enlistments having required only about two days. In that period, also, the present armory on Franklin Street near 17th Street was secured, and then, through the instrumentality of Adjutant-General Forbes the War Department was appealed to with the result that the battery was in possession of a full complement of guns, caissons, saddles, side arms, uniforms and tents, equal to those of the best appointed battery in the Regular service of the United States. There were about 90 members in the organization and 50 percent of these had seen active service in the field in either Cuba or the Philippines and some of them had been in both. Several of the men too, had been wounded in action, but that fact did not dampen their ardor in the cause of the country.*

On July 4, 1912, in keeping with the custom which had been respected in Oakland for many years, there was to be a formal observance of the anniversary of National Independence. The money to defray the necessary expenses had been provided, and it was expected that the program for the entertainment of the people, both in the afternoon and evening, would be of the same excellent quality that had characterized these exercises in previous years. The first feature of the exercises would be the firing of what was known as the salute to the Union, which according to military regulations, would be fired by Battery B at 12:00 noon, on the knoll in Lakeside Park, overlooking Lake Merritt. This would be the third time that the Battery had made its appearance in public and a great deal of interest was being manifested by the people who expected to be present on the occasion. A battery salute was of rare occurance, because of the scarcity of organisations capable of performing the duty. Battery B would be under command of Captain Faneuf, who was one of the most popular, active and successful Hational Guard members. The full battery with four guns would be employed, each gun firing in succession at intervals of five seconds until the salute of 48 guns was completed, One shot being intended for each state in the Union.**

On December 20, 1912, General Order No. 26, was issued organizing Batteries A, B and C into a battalion of artillery under command of Major Ralph Faneuf, former Captain of Battery B and the Battery was redesignated Battery B, First Battalion Field Artillery.

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*Oakland Enquirer April 4, 1912, page 5, column 4.

Activities: (continued)

A sad relic of the United States Battleship Maine, which was destroyed at Havana, shortly prior to the Spanish-American War was unveiled on the afternoon of February 16, 1913, in Lakeside Park, Oakland, in the presence of a large number of citizens, members of the Grand Army of the Republic, Women's Relief Corps, Son's and Daughters of Veterans of the Spanish-American War and their ladies auxiliary; and dedicated in reverential commemoration of the sailors who lost their lives in that disaster. The ceremony was held under the auspices of the Spanish War Veterans who were patriotically aided by the whole city and vicinity, including Battery B. The exercises were opened with an overture by the United States Navy Band from Yerba Buena Island. The principal address of the day was delivered by B. A. Forester, department commander of the Spanish War Veterans who recalled briefly the disaster which attended the Maine and the horrible fate which met many of the gallant men aboard her. He suggested that the Maine be remembered not in a spirit of vengeance, but in patriotian and with the hope that it might be a battle cry to which all would respond, in practice and in sympathy whenever there might be reason for the troops of this country to take the field in defense of the United States and its institutions. Captain H. F. Huber, of Battery B recited a poem on the destruction of the Maine which had a thrilling effect upon the audience. Major R. J. Faneuf, Commander of the First Battalion Field Artillery, delivered a short and stirring address which abounded in patriotic thoughts. Battery B fired a salute of twenty-one guns.*

Acting upon telegraphic instructions Battery B left Oakland July 10, 1913, for Mills Valley to assist in the work of fighting the raging forest fire which was sweeping over that section and rapidly getting beyond control. Late in the afternoon of July 9, 1913, the following telegram was received from Adjutant-General E. A. Forbest

"Get in touch with men of Battery at once. Liable to be called to fight fire in Marin County any minute."

Immediately upon recipt of the communication, word was sent to the different members of the Battery with orders to hold themselves in readiness for instant departure. Shortly after 1:00 A.M. on the morning of July tenth, another wire was received, ordering the Battery to start at once with full equipment aside from artillery, for Marin County. It was reported that several other companies had been ordered to the scene of the conflagration.** Battery B remained in Marin County until the night of July eleventh, when they returned to Oakland.

While a hundred thousand loyal Oaklanders lined the streets from one end of the downtown section to the other the greatest parade in Oakland's history passed in commemoration of the Nation's Birthday July 4, 1915. It was unique in the history of Oakland parades in many ways. First it started on scheduled time. Through the earlier hours of the morning automobiles, decorated in red, white

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*Oakland Enquirer February 17, 1913, pages 1, 2, columns 1, 2.

**Oakland Enquirer July 10, 1913, page 2, column 4.

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Activities: (continued)

and blue, gay floats and bright uniformed marchers were seen proceeding toward the lower end of the city. Promptly at 10:00 A.M. the music of a brass band was heard at Second Street and Broadway, and a moment later a speeding police auto raced up Broadway, completely clearing the streets. The parade was on, Chief of Police William Wood, heading a detachment of police, including the officers of the department, led the line of march through the streets. Up Broadway they came, and at Highth diverged to Washington, passing the City Hall on Washington Street, and turning thence into Broadway, via 19th Street, for their march and counter-march. They were followed by the National Guard Infantry, which preceded Battery B, and the National Guard Artillery organization under command of Captain H. F. Huber.*

Battery B, on June 28, 1916, was mustered into Federal Service at Sacramento for duty on the Mexican Border. On June thirtieth, the Battery entrained for Hogales, Arizona, where they arrived July third. Battery B performed guard and patrol duty along the border until December fifteenth, when they returned to Los Angeles. The Battery remained at Exposition Park, Los Angeles until December 21, 1916, when they were mustered out of Federal Service.

On June 22, 1917, Battery B, was redesignated Battery B, First Field Artillery. Four months later on September 24, 1917, the unit was mustered into Federal Service for duty during the World War and redesignated Battery B, One Hundred and Forty-Third Regiment, Field Artillery.**

For further information concerning the activities of this unit refer to the History of Battery B, One Hundred and Forty-Third Regiment, Field Artillery, 40th Division.

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*Oakland Tribune July 5, 1915, page 1, column 3. **Adjutant General Report 1920-1926, page 32.