

History of the Haight Light Horse Guard, National Guard of California 1868-1872

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HAIGHT LIGHT HORSE GUARD

Haight Light Horse Guard, Company D, First Cavalry Battalion, Second Brigade

Reference: Dead Officer File, Row 5, File 2
Location: San Francisco, San Francisco County
Mustered in October 12, 1868
Mustered out May 29, 1872

Commanding Officers

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Rank</u> | <u>Commission</u> |
|---|---------------|-------------------|
| George T. Knox, Captain | Oct. 29, 1868 | Nov. 11, 1868 |
| John G. Taylor, First Lieut.* | Oct. 29, 1868 | Nov. 11, 1868 |
| J. A. McGoughlin, First Lieut. (resigned Dec. 1869) | May 18, 1869 | June 14, 1869 |
| George T. Knox, Captain (reelected Nov. 7, 1870) (resigned July 14, 1870) | | |
| Alex H. Henderson, First Lieut. | Dec. 14, 1869 | Jan. 24, 1870 |
| James F. Finn, Captain | Nov. 1, 1871 | Dec. 13, 1871 |
| John E. Millar, First Lieut. | Nov. 1, 1871 | Dec. 13, 1871 |

Activities:

The citizens of San Francisco had their petition for the organization of a Cavalry company approved and were mustered into the service of the State, October 12, 1868. The new company was designated as the Haight Light Horse Guard, Company D, and attached to the First Cavalry Battalion, Second Brigade, commanded by Brigadier-General John Hewston, Jr. The corps was named in honor of H. H. Haight, who was Governor of the State at that time. A bond of \$8,000 was filed and the eighty stand of arms and accoutrements were received October twentieth of that year. An allowance of fifty dollars a month was given the company for armory rent. The uniforms were not provided by the State until January 1869.

Due to the lack of material on file, it is impossible to relate the activities of the Light Horse Guard during the four years they were in the service, but it is evident from a letter written by First Lieutenant Millar to the Governor in 1872, that the company was efficient and well officered. The reduction of the military force by the Legislature in 1872 as an economy measure, rendered it necessary to disband certain companies, one of which was the Light Horse Guard. First Lieutenant Millar, on behalf of the company asked for a reconsideration of the facts, and if the disbandment order could not be revoked, desired permission to retain the company's arms under bond which would enable the corps

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*John G. Taylor promoted to Governor's Staff, May 18, 1869.

HAIGHT LIGHT HORSE GUARD (Continued)

Hewston Guard, Unattached, Second Brigade

Reference: Dead Office File, Row 6, File 4

Activities: (continued)

to continue as an independent unit. He stated that through personal pride in their unit, the members had spent large sums of money on helmets, medals, saddle blankets and private uniforms not furnished by the State, which amounts would be lost to the members if the company was mustered out of the State service. Mention was also made of the regularity with which drills were held and the good attendance at parades, the manner and degree to which the officers had perfected themselves in military routine, and that discipline and subordination was up to a standard seldom reached by a militia company. The members had hoped, as a last resort, for a consolidation of companies whereby they would be entitled to be credited as individuals the time already served in the service of the State.

Despite the high standard of efficiency attained by the Light Horse Guard, they were honorably mustered out of the service by Special Order No. 7, May 29, 1872.*

Activities:

On June 18, 1869, a petition was presented to Governor W. A. Haight, signed by fifty-one citizens of Patalana requesting a company, known as the Washington Guard, from the Company to be mustered into the National Guard. A meeting was called to complete the organization of .000. company and the unit decided to adopt the name of Hewston Guard rather than Washington Guard. The name was to be in honor of Brigadier General John Hewston of the Second Brigade. Special Order No. 13 was issued by Adjutant General James A. Allen, requiring General Hewston to appoint a suitable officer to muster in the Hewston Guard, which was accomplished on June twenty-ninth of the same year.

The necessary Bond was filed and a requisition was made out July first for sixty stand of arms, the required accoutrements, and sixty sets of uniforms. On July seventh the Hewston Guard received sixty rifles and accoutrements, sixty uniform coats, thirty-

*Adjutant General Report 1872-1873, page 89.. Captain Armstrong was a veteran of the Mexican war and soon developed the Hewston Rifles into a well drilled and disciplined unit of the National Guard. In a letter, March 8, 1875, to Adjutant General L. H. Foote, the Captain advised the General that his company had been uniformed