History of the Halleck Rifles, California Militia
1862-1866

This history was completed in 1940 by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in conjunction with the California National Guard and the California State Library.

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Halleck Rifles, Fifth Brigade
Reference: Dead Office File, Row 3, File 6
Location: Weaverville, Trinity County
Mustered in October 7, 1862
Mustered out August 25, 1866

Commanding Officers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Commission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John R. Rothenbucher, Captain</td>
<td>Oct. 7, 1862</td>
<td>Oct. 13, 1862</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Resigned Feb. 23, 1863)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cornelius McGowan, Captain</td>
<td>July 12, 1863</td>
<td>July 27, 1863</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oliver H. Norcross, First Lieut.</td>
<td>Oct. 5, 1863</td>
<td>Oct. 12, 1863</td>
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Activities:

On August 26, 1858, Governor Weller received the following information from the citizens of Trinity County:

"We respectfully represent that the Indians inhabiting the County have assumed a hostile position toward our citizens, and have already perpetrated numerous outrages. In this particular locality the Indians have in the past four or five years killed some fifteen or twenty citizens, besides causing much loss of property and greatly impeding the commerce which has grown up between this county and Humboldt. These outrages call for immediate redress, and we deem it of the most vital importance to our coast trade, and well being generally, that these Indians should be driven from their present hiding place and if not exterminated, at least driven to some place where there is no such opportunities to do mischief."

Governor Weller sent Adjutant General William Kibbe to the northern counties to take charge of the situation. He secured a company of United States Cavalry, under the command of Captain Underwood, and the citizens of the county formed a volunteer militia company commanded by Captain J. G. Messic. These companies had by the first part of 1859, gathered up all hostile Indians and placed them on the Federal Reservation under strict guard.**

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*Petition to Governor Weller, August 25, 1858, State Archives, State Capitol.

**Letters from General Kibbe to Governor Weller, State Archives, State Capitol.
Activities: (Continued)

In order to maintain the peace that the soldiers had secured for them, the towns in Trinity County took steps to form their own volunteer military companies. In Weaverville, Trinity County, on October 7, 1862, the citizens organized the Halleck Rifles, a volunteer military unit, commanded by Captain Rothenbucker. This company had a twofold purpose, first to check any Indian depredation in the county, and secondly to prevent any display by the Secessionists during the War of the Rebellion. The Halleck Rifles were composed of forty-five of the most loyal Union men to be found in Trinity County, and were well equipped and splendidly drilled. In February of 1863, the company lost the services of Captain Rothenbucker who resigned to join the regular United States Army for service in the Civil War, but the unit obtained Captain McGowan, a capable officer to replace him.

Incompleteness of the files prevents giving a full history of this company, but upon the recommendation of Adjutant General George S. Evans, the Halleck Rifles was mustered out of the service of the State of California, August 25, 1866.