

History of the National Light Artillery, California Militia 1863-1866

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NATIONAL LIGHT ARTILLERY

National Light Artillery, Second Brigade

Reference: Dead Office File, Row 7, File 5

Location: San Jose, Santa Clara County

Mustered in: October 1, 1863

Mustered out: July 12, 1866

Commanding Officers

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Commission</u>
S. O. Houghton, Captain	July 3, 1863	Oct. 3, 1863
C. T. Healy, First Lieut.	July 3, 1863	Oct. 3, 1863

Activities:

On June 17, 1863, a ten day notice was given that the citizens of San Jose were intending to organize a volunteer military company known as the National Light Artillery. County Judge Isaac Senter appointed Charles T. Healy to preside over the meeting. On July third, the company was duly organized with S. O. Houghton as Captain and mustered into the service of the State of California, October first of that year.

This company was not formed, however, without a bitter contest between John Kenney, Sheriff of Santa Clara County, and members of the organization. The Sheriff sent a letter to Brigadier-General John Ellis, stating that there were persons in that city planning to organize a military company with the view of getting one of the new light batteries expected by the State; that the persons most active in getting up the company were, and had always been, under the control of the Secessionists. General Ellis requested A. L. Rhodes, a San Jose citizen, to investigate and send to him a copy of the company's muster roll with each man's political party marked on it. Rhodes complied with the request, and also stated that half the men were Secessionists, but Captain Houghton and First Lieutenant Healy were good Union men.

General Ellis on July 31, 1863, sent a report to the Adjutant General that he had received a statement from Charles Healy, superintendent of the organization of a new National Light Artillery Company in San Jose; that he had also received information which convinced him that members of this company were disloyal to the Union and he had informed S. O. Houghton, the Captain-elect, that it was impossible to approve the proceedings under the circumstances. Captain Houghton wrote to General Ellis, and told him that the report was made by some cowardly slanderer, instigated by malice; he stated that "his company was composed of loyal men, and if he knew that anyone not true to the Union had become a member, he would take prompt measures to terminate his connection with the company." The

Mustered out August 4, 1866
 Location: San Jose, Santa Clara County
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 NATIONAL LIGHT ARTILLERY, Second Brigade

NATIONAL LIGHT ARTILLERY

NATIONAL LIGHT ARTILLERY (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

Captain also demanded to know the names of the accusers and accused, so that he could seek an investigation from the Adjutant General's Office. General Ellis replied that it would serve no good purpose to make it a matter of accusation and recrimination among neighbors by making known either the names of the accusers or accused, and that all information would be turned over to the Adjutant General.

Unfortunately no further records of any of the company's activities appear other than participating in the usual drills. On July 12, 1866, no longer able to keep the company's membership up to the standard required by law, the unit was disbanded and mustered out of service.

Adm Hagy, First Lieut.	Oct. 10, 1863	Nov. 12, 1863
M. S. Grover, Captain	Aug. 20, 1864	Sept. 9, 1864
W. S. McLean, First Lieut.	Aug. 20, 1864	Sept. 9, 1864
Jacob W. Tewksbury, Captain	Jan. 17, 1865	Jan. 30, 1865
Lewis H. Reynolds, First Lieut.	Jan. 17, 1865	Jan. 30, 1865

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The Contra Costa Guard, Company G, San Pablo, Contra Costa County, was organized as a volunteer cavalry unit, October 13, 1863. The commanding officers elected were G. E. White, Captain and A. Hagy, First Lieutenant. Acquisition of arms and a fund for \$3,000 was approved and filed March 13, 1864, but it was not until September of that year the corps received the cavalry arms, pistols and accoutrements.

During the War of the Rebellion numerous companies were organized in San Francisco for home protection and, as many of the units had volunteered their services for the War, it was necessary to fill these existing vacancies in order to keep the militia up to the required strength. After the War, the State Legislature materially reduced the military force by the enactment of the Military Law of 1866. The Contra Costa Guard, although efficient and well officered, was considered unnecessary for defense purposes by the Board of Supervisors and was, therefore, mustered out in accordance with the first section of the Law August 4, 1866.