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

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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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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Commission</th>
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<td>S. O. Houghton, Capt</td>
<td>July 3, 1863</td>
<td>Oct. 3, 1863</td>
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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 compiled 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."
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.