

1906 San Francisco Earthquake: Activities of the National Guard and Naval Militia

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National guard of California

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STATIONS AND LOCATIONS OF THE
THE CALIFORNIA NATIONAL GUARD
AND
THE EARTHQUAKE AND FIRE
1906

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ACTIVITIES OF
THE CALIFORNIA NATIONAL GUARD
DURING
THE EARTHQUAKE AND FIRE 1906*

H Almost from the instant the earthquake shock was felt, the National Guard of California and the United States Regular Army men stationed at the Presidio, San Francisco, took an active part in the efforts to alleviate suffering, protect lives and property, and maintain order in the stricken district. ~~The local police force was entirely inadequate to cope with the situation and the task seemed naturally to devolve upon the military.~~ The First Regiment of Infantry, Second Company Signal Corps, First Battalion (four companies) Coast Artillery, Troop A of Cavalry, N. G. C., and three Divisions of the Naval Militia of California were stationed at San Francisco.

P The members of these organizations were among the first to volunteer their services and were doing their utmost to aid in the cause of humanity long before orders to report for duty were received from headquarters. The same was true of the companies stationed in other cities, particularly in Oakland, Alameda, Santa Cruz, San Jose and Santa Rosa.

In San Jose and Santa Rosa the earthquake caused serious damage and the companies of the National Guard stationed in those towns rendered especially creditable service. The troops of the National Guard of California stationed outside of the Bay district responded promptly on receipt of orders from the Governor and Adjutant-General, the last companies arriving from Los Angeles, April twenty-fourth. The entire National Guard and Naval Militia of the State with the exception of the Fifth Division of the Naval Militia stationed at Eureka were on active duty in San Francisco or some other town on the Coast or in the Bay district. The Division of the Naval Militia stationed at Eureka was not ordered into service, ~~owing to its isolated position.~~**

The Regular Troops, stationed at the Presidio, San Francisco, were early on the scene of disaster. General Frederick Funston, commanding the Department of California, ~~and~~ during the temporary absence of Major-General A. W. Greely was in command of the

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221 *The Naval Militia of California having been previously segregated from the National Guard, was called for duty during the earthquake and fire under a separate order by Governor Pardee.

**Adjutant General Report 1906, page 9.

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Pacific Division of the Regular Army, ~~was virtual ruler of San Francisco from April eighteenth to April twenty-second inclusive.*~~

TT General Funston, who lived near the corner of Jones and Washington Streets, San Francisco, reported that he was awakened by the earthquake shock about 5:13 on the morning of the eighteenth. Realizing from the intensity and duration of the shock that serious damage and probable loss of life must result, General Funston hastened immediately to the business district of the city. Reaching Sansome Street he saw several fires already burning fiercely in the vicinity and realized that the firemen who were on the scene were helpless ~~because of~~ ^{because of} the lack of water. Convinced that a serious conflagration was at hand, and that owing to the great extent of the area in which fires already appeared the police force of the city would be inadequate to maintain order, he at once sent a messenger to Fort Mason and the Presidio with orders to the commanding officers at both these stations directing them to turn out their entire garrisons and report for duty to the chief of police at the Hall of Justice.

TT In response to these orders the troops from Fort Mason reported for duty at 7:45 A.M., those from the Presidio at 8:00 A. M., those from Fort McDowell at 10:00 A. M., and those from Fort Miley at 11:30 A. M. The Pacific Squadron under command of Admiral C. F. Goodrich reach San Francisco Bay April nineteenth and on the twenty-first a portion of the command of the Presidio at Monterey arrived. Coast Artillery companies from Fort Baker, a body of marines from Mare Island, and Infantry companies from Alcatraz Island and Angel Island were also placed on duty in San Francisco.**

R ~~Probably~~ The prompt and direct action of General Funston and the troops under his command prevented such looting and robbery during the first few hours after the earthquake. ~~However brave and efficient the city police may have been, they would have been totally unable, from lack of number, to successfully deal with the situation.~~ Detachments of the Federal troops were sent to guard the United States Mint, the Post Office and other Federal buildings. Similar detachments were sent to remove the records of the Pacific Division and the Department of California from the Division and Department Headquarters in the Grant Building and

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*San Francisco Earthquake, Memorial Edition, By James Russel Wilson, page 188.

**Report on California Earthquake, By Major-General A. W. Greely, page 6.

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the Phelan Building which were then threatened, and afterwards consumed by the fire.

R The remainder of the Federal troops were placed under ^{direction} ~~orders~~ of the mayor and chief of police and were distributed about the business district. Some assisted the firemen who worked heroically, but without apparent success to control the fire. Others were doing guard duty at the city and county jails, while still others were patrolling and guarding the ~~down town business district.~~

P During the day and the night of April eighteenth, the companies of the National Guard had acted independently. Brigadier-General John A. Koster, commanding the Second Brigade, National Guard of California who had been at Ukiah on business connected with the activities of the National Guard, returned to San Francisco the evening of the eighteenth and found a considerable portion of his troops already performing patrol duty. It speaks well for these National Guardsmen's conception of duty, that at a time when their own business and homes were threatened with destruction and their families needing their protection, they reported for duty of their own free will, realizing that their services would be needed in the impending disaster.

R Immediately upon learning of the disaster, Governor George C. Pardee proceeded from Sacramento to Oakland and established headquarters in the City Hall ~~there~~. Adjutant-General J. B. Lauck, who had been at Ukiah with General Koster, established his headquarters first at the Occidental Hotel, Bush and Montgomery Streets, San Francisco, then at the Union League Club near Post and Stockton Streets. ~~When~~ *As* the fire approached he moved to the Fairmont Hotel. At 3:00 A. M. on the morning of the nineteenth, he was compelled to move to the North End police station on Washington Street, San Francisco, where he retained headquarters until the evening of the twentieth, ~~when he moved to Oakland.~~ *and then*

P By April twenty-first, all the organizations of the National Guard and the Naval Militia of California, with the exception of the Fifth Division, had been ordered out. On account of the large number of troops on patrol and guard duty in San Francisco, the general impression prevailed that martial law had been declared. This of course, was not the case. ~~Civil law was at no time suspended in the city and~~ All duties performed by Regular and State troops were with the knowledge and consent, if not under direct ~~orders~~ of the civil authorities. All means of communication within the

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Adjutant General Report 1800, page 44.

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city and between San Francisco and ~~the outside world~~ ^{other cities}, except by messenger, were cut off by the destruction of all telegraph and telephone lines. Messages dispatched from the Adjutant-General's Office in Sacramento on the eighteenth of April were delivered in San Francisco April twentieth.

P The first duties performed by the State troops on April eighteenth, were to render assistance to and comfort those who had been driven from their homes by the conflagration, giving medical aid where necessary, assisting the fire department, patrolling the streets, procuring supplies, clothing, etc. The troops were also engaged in removing military property from the armories to places of safety, ~~which were afterwards destroyed~~. There was no organized effort, and no orders were received from ~~San Francisco~~ Headquarters until the morning of April nineteenth. At that time orders were issued from Headquarters that the Mayor desired the National Guard troops to be distributed along Van Ness Avenue where they would endeavor to persuade the people to vacate the buildings and streets east of Van Ness.* The intention was to dynamite the structures between Van Ness Avenue and Polk Street.

P During the time in which the troops were engaged in clearing the streets and buildings east of Van Ness Avenue, strenuous opposition to the plan to dynamite the section was interposed by the chief of police and the acting chief of the fire department. When all was ready to proceed with the work of dynamiting, the wagon containing the explosives could not be located. ~~It was presumed that, being a part of the equipment of the fire department, the wagon was removed by direction of the acting chief of that department to prevent the execution of the Mayor's orders.~~ After the lapse of considerable ~~valuable~~ time, during which the fire was rapidly approaching the avenue, a quantity of dynamite was obtained from another source and the work proceeded. ~~But few buildings in the vicinity of Van Ness Avenue were destroyed by dynamite owing to the rapid advance of the fire. Whether or not a saving of property would have resulted had the work been permitted to go on without delays encountered, is doubtful, as the results obtained by the use of dynamite and gun cotton at various other points in the city were negligible.~~

The conflagration crossed Van Ness Avenue in several places and at one point reached Franklin Street, one block west of the avenue, but was prevented from spreading further by the ~~heroic~~ work of the soldiers and citizens. By the morning of April twentieth,

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*Adjutant General Report 1906, page 44.

**Adjutant General Report 1906, page 45.

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danger from fire in that vicinity was past.* Van Ness Avenue was really the key to the situation. The extra width of that avenue and of Dolores Street to the south, combined with the untiring efforts of the members of the National Guard, the San Francisco Fire Department, and of citizens who voluntarily aided them, saved the western part of the city. ~~Those who criticized and objected to the presence of the National Guard during that critical period cannot refute the statement that to that organization, more than to any other one factor, belonged the credit for saving thousands of San Francisco homes the nineteenth day of April, 1906.~~

After the fire was under control, the troops of the National Guard were continued on patrol duty along Van Ness Avenue and the streets adjacent thereto on the west, with instructions to preserve order, prevent looting and render assistance where necessary.

The military authorities, under ^{directions} ~~orders~~ from city officials, had on the eighteenth and nineteenth of April cleared Market Street and other downtown streets of spectators ~~except newspaper reporters~~. The ~~object of this order was not quite clear, but was strictly enforced. The restriction was probably due to fear that other shocks might occur and cause further loss of life.~~

~~Whatever the reason for the adoption of that course, to it must be attributed the loss of much valuable property that might have been saved if occupants of offices had been permitted to remove their papers and effects. Very few persons were permitted to do so, and later, in some of the residential districts, vast quantities of property that might have been removed was destroyed, the unreasonable restrictions and excessive precautions, contributing largely to that result. The only reason given for the unreasonable restrictions was that it was a precaution taken to guard against looting; but in view of the fact that most of the buildings from which owners were excluded were surrendered to the flames, that explanation was not satisfactory.**~~

News of plundering and looting was carried early to Mayor Schmitz. It was probably that information which impelled him to issue orders to General Funston to instruct his troops to shoot anyone caught in the act of looting. The same orders were issued to

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*Adjutant General Report 1906, pages 51, 52.

**History of San Francisco, By John P. Young, page 832.

the First Regiment of Infantry, National Guard of California,
later in the day.

The following is the proclamation issued by Mayor Schmitz,
Thursday afternoon, April nineteenth.

"The Federal troops, the members of the
regular police force and special police
officers have been authorized to kill
any and all persons engaged in looting
or in the commission of any other crime.

"I have directed all the gas and electric
lighting companies not to turn on gas
or electricity until I order them to do
so. You may, therefore, expect the city
to remain in darkness for an indefinite
time.

"I request all citizens to remain at home
from darkness until daylight every night
until order is restored.

"I warn all citizens of the danger of
fire from damaged or destroyed chimneys,
broken or leaking gas pipes or fixtures,
or any like causes." *

~~Any question of the right or authority of the Mayor to authorize
the killing of any person seems not to have been questioned at
the time. In the great stress and excitement of those days, many
things were taken for granted which had no foundation in reason
or fact. It was thought by many, even by some of the troops,
that the city was under martial law, and yet, all orders were
issued by the civil authorities to the military. It bears testi-
mony to the judgment and forbearance of at least part of the per-
sonnel enforcing order, and to the law abiding qualities of the
people of San Francisco, that during the prolonged and desperate
condition of affairs there should have been but nine deaths by
violence recorded. It is possible, in fact quite probable, that
there were others, but if so, the facts pertaining to them were
never brought to light.~~

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*San Francisco Earthquake, Memorial Edition, By James Russell
Wilson, pages 49, 95.

Two of the nine deaths by violence were caused by troops of the National Guards. The shooting of one citizen by enlisted men of Troop A, First Squadron of Cavalry, and another by members of Company C, First Regiment of Infantry were carefully investigated by the Judge Advocate's Department, Second Brigade. The report of the Judge Advocate asserted the belief that while the soldiers implicated might have effected the desired results by the use of their weapons in another manner, the conditions justified the taking of drastic measures.

The two National Guardsmen accused of the shooting were subsequently tried in a civil court. In one case the jury found the defendant not guilty and in the other case the District Attorney moved for dismissal, which motion was taken by the court. This would seem to indicate that the two men were considered as justified in their actions.* Of the other seven deaths by violence, one man was shot by members of a so-called vigilance committee, one by a regular policeman and one by a special police officer. The responsibility for the remaining four deaths of unknown persons was evidently never placed.

Sensational accounts of injured men who begged to be shot rather than undergo continued suffering or possible death in the flames, and of cases of so-called mercy killings appeared in numerous publications and it may well be that those accounts were true. Anything could have happened in that black playground of suffering and death which was San Francisco during the forty-eight hours following the earthquake.

There were several reports of alleged looting by members of the National Guard. These were also carefully investigated by the Judge Advocate's Department and developed the fact that these could not, except in one instance, be traced as having been committed by National Guardsmen.** There were three or four cases reported in which Regulars were accused of appropriating property not their own. Those cases were sent before military courts.***

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*Adjutant General Report 1906, pages 13, 48.

**Adjutant General Report 1906, page 48.

***Report of Major-General Greely on San Francisco Earthquake, page 4.

Impressments of property were made in a few instances, of conveyances and foodstuffs, but these were cases of the most absolute necessity and were, beyond doubt, fully justified. The destruction of intoxicating liquor was under the authority of the Mayor of the city. In nearly every instance, proceedings under this order were conducted without violence and at places where saloons were selling liquor openly. In a few instances, the unjustifiable action of breaking open saloons and destroying their contents was taken by the troops. This excess of zeal on the part of the soldiers, in what they no doubt considered the interests of public order, and under such disturbed and dangerous conditions, should not perhaps be judged with undue severity.*

Stories that were never verified by confession of the soldiers or city guards included statements that men had been shot for refusing to assist in the work of relief at the water front. *another story, from a reputable citizen of San Francisco, was that dozens who had been driven from their homes along the Barbary Coast and were reluctant to go, had been shot down for lagging behind. It is certain, however, that before the close of the second day after the earthquake, the bounds of reason were overstepped by the guards. Men who had gone back to the ruins of their homes to save some precious article, or to dig from the debris enough money to buy food for the ensuing days of certain suffering, were shot down because, in their dazed condition, they did not obey the command to halt. The blame for the indiscriminate shooting was placed upon certain City guards and University cadets who were immediately withdrawn and relieved from duty.

After the first mad rush of wildly excited people from the swaying and crumbling buildings, cooler heads, especially those who knew the city, made for the parks and hills. These were followed by thousands of others, dazed and groping, as sheep follow the leader of a flock. Men and women of wealth, tourists, business men, laborers, idlers, whites, negroes, Mexicans, all joined the hordes in the parks and on the hills.** All were bewildered and seemed to want to get closer to human beings and farther from the danger which they were striving to escape. How they passed the first night in the parks, in vacant lots, on the ocean front or in the middle of the street, thousands of the homeless could never tell as it deserved to be told. The outside world never realized the full horror of the situation. Then

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*Report of Major-General A. W. Greely, U.S.A., pages 12, 13.

**The Doomed City, By Frank Thompson Bearight, page 33.

later the thousands crowded in the parks saw other thousands coming toward them, but now in many instances they were coming from the direction of the hills, fleeing from the section to which many of those in the park expected to go.

Then came the piteous appeal for water--water first, then food. But always water, and there was little or none. Men, women, and children gathered dirty, rusted tin cans out of the ruins and filled them at the gutters where the fire engines made a stream. Water was carried in hats, in hands, in paper cones, and in small bottles. Even a sip was an evidence of charity and mercy. Some had meat but had no way of cooking it. A woman in silks bent over an improvised stove of two bricks covered by a piece of sheet iron. A man in a silk hat and a Prince Albert coat carried embers from the ruins of a burned building to keep the fire going, and they tried to fry some bacon on top of the rusty iron.

Another family, apparently in poor circumstances was encamped near the couple who had been rich the previous day. Somewhere, somehow, the poor man had come into possession of a loaf of stale bread. The woman in silk and the man in broadcloth watched the poor family hungrily, enviously as the stale bread was being devoured. "I'll give you a thousand dollars for a piece of your bread" said the wealthy man, but the head of the poor family did not seem to hear him. "I forgot" said the wealthy man, "I haven't a cent. We must starve." Then the poor man, without a word, broke his share of the loaf in halves and handed one half to the new neighbors and thence forward fast friends. There were many such incidents in the thousands of improvised tents made of blankets, bedquilts, carpets, rugs and clothing, in the parks of San Francisco and Oakland.

Of the thousands of wholesale and large retail establishments in the city, scarcely half a dozen were saved and these were in remote districts. Even buildings spared by the fire were damaged as to chimneys, so that all food must necessarily be cooked over camp fires. Two hundred and twenty-five thousand people were not only homeless, but also were without means of sustenance and future livelihood. Food, water, shelter, clothing and sewage were all lacking. Water fit for drinking purposes had to be brought long distances. Every large bakery was destroyed or its operation interrupted. Milk and country produce were plentiful in the suburbs,

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*The Doomed city, By Frank Thompson Searight, pages 42-45.

but local transportation was entirely disrupted so that people even of great wealth could obtain food only through charity or public relief. In short, all the things which were essential to the support, comfort, and decency of a well--ordered life were destroyed or wanting.

The only undisturbed organization in San Francisco was that of the Regular Army which was receiving welcome assistance from the United States Navy. The National Guard of California, prompt and eager to perform its duties, had many members distressed by affliction or losses, while others had saved only the clothing which they wore. The San Francisco firemen were exhausted by continuous toil, overwhelmed by the enormous area of fire, many of them were destitute as to clothing and harassed by personal or domestic afflictions. The police department had suffered similarly from burned homes, scattered families and excessive hours of duty.

In the interests of harmony the city was on April twenty-first divided into three districts. One district guarded by the police, the second controlled by the National Guard of California and the third was under the protection of the United States Army, Navy, and Marines. There were still in force rigid regulations as to freedom of personal action which had been considered necessary for the conservation of the public interests. No one was permitted to enter San Francisco from Oakland except on a written pass granted by authority of the Governor of California,*the wording of which was as follows:**

PASS

Name	Frank De Moran
Business	Bring food
Date	April 22, 1906

By authority of Brigadier-General
Funston, U. S. A., the above named person is
recommended for passage.

Good only April 22, 1906

Order of Governor George C. Pardee
By J. B. Lauck
Adjutant-General

Golden Gate Park and the Panhandle looked like one vast camping ground. Fully one hundred thousand persons, wealthy and poor alike, sought refuge in Golden Gate Park alone, and more than a hundred thousand bivouacked at other places of refuge. It was

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*Report on California Earthquake, By Major-General A. W. Greely,
pages 14, 15.

**The Doomed City, By Frank Thompson Searight, Fly Leaf, Front.

estimated that approximately another hundred thousand persons had crossed the Bay to Oakland, Alameda, and Berkeley, and were distributed among the homes and refugee camps in those cities.

The work of evolving a system for supplying the immediate wants of these people was under way. To work out some scheme whereby those in need could get the necessities of life was the job of Governor Pardee, the local city government, and the civic organizations. It was feared that despite all efforts, there would be great distress and that starvation stared many in the face unless immediate aid was forthcoming. The supply of food might last out the week; then unless it was received in large quantities, the city would be in a state of want. Immense amounts of food-stuffs were consumed in the fire in San Francisco, which was the distributing point for the cities about the Bay and interior towns. This supply was swept out of existence and what the resources of the State were was a matter of chief concern to those engaged in relief work.

The seizure by the Citizens Relief Committee, of supplies coming in on trains, was authorized by Mayor Schantz. The chairman of the Executive Committee seized a carload of flour containing 814 sacks. A carload of ice was seized for use in the hospitals. A carload of potatoes was also taken. It was not the purpose of the Committee to confiscate these goods, and the names of the consignees were taken in each case, and as soon as funds were available they were to be paid for. The emergency, however, was such that prompt and firm action was necessary.*

Voluntary donations of supplies commenced to arrive April twenty-first. In this, the little town of Hayward should have credit for the first load of supplies landed in San Francisco for the sufferers. From Oakland Governor Pardee had, on April nineteenth, sent messages of appeal for supplies to the mayors of California cities outside the earthquake belt and it seemed but a few hours before word was received that relief trains were flying to the rescue from Victoria on the north, to the southern boundary of the State and from hundreds of points in the East. 1,702 carloads of food, clothing, and other supplies were received. River boats and ocean steamers brought generous cargoes. The railways shared in the work of relief by moving thousands of the distressed to points both in and out of the State.** Within three hours from the time the first news of the disaster was sent to Los Angeles, the sunny

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*San Francisco Earthquake and Fire, By James Russell Wilson, page 125.

**Adjutant General Report 1906, page 56.

sister city reacted in a manner that left no doubt of the genuine sympathy of the residents of the southern metropolis for the afflicted people of San Francisco.

Immediate steps were taken in the southern city to raise funds for the sufferers. \$25,000 was on hand within five minutes after the first call and \$500,000 was pledged before nightfall. The city council appropriated \$5,000 without delay. Churches announced special collections and it seemed that every financial and social organization in southern California opened subscription lists, and commercial bodies started raising funds. Bakers toiled all night in their furnace-like rooms baking bread for the sufferers and asked nothing but gratitude for it. City policemen, firemen, post office employees and the employees of every business house in the city gave their day's wages. There were fetes, theatre benefits, boxing benefits, dances, concerts, benefit sales and auctions of everything imaginable, the proceeds of which went to the sufferers in the north.

Trainload after trainload of supplies were going to San Francisco and Oakland. The Southern Pacific and Santa Fe railroads were transporting everything free and on passenger train schedule. Steamers laden with clothing, bedding, and provisions for the sufferers were leaving San Pedro. Such was the warm hearted response of the sister city to the south. And this was but one city among a thousand American towns, the hearts of whose inhabitants were stirred to compassion by the measureless catastrophe at the Golden Gate.*

The nation and the world had been quick to respond also. The Congress of the United States, regardless of precedent did what reason and sanity said was necessary, and passed a resolution appropriating a million dollars for relief of the San Francisco sufferers. That no idea of the extent of the disaster existed in the National Capitol at that time was evidenced by the fact that the resolution referred to the homeless as 100,000 in number, when it was evident to all close observers that not less than 250,000 would need shelter by dawn of April nineteenth.

That was only the first act of mercy by an all protecting government for shortly thereafter an additional million and a half dollars was appropriated for the same purpose. By Sunday night following the earthquake, less than five days, messages and contributions had been received from every state in the Union and

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*The Doomed City, By Frank Thompson Searight, pages 104-111.

and almost every city. The grand total of cash contributions at that time was more than eight million dollars. Trainloads of provisions were on the way from the East. Eastern bankers sent an offer of fifty million dollars to the financial institutions that were under the ashes. Poor, bleeding, burning San Francisco's call for help had been answered.*

During the first few days after the earthquake, conditions in San Francisco were such that approximately 350,000 people had to be fed. While the fire was still burning, the Citizens Committee organized a fairly efficient system of food relief. The system was far from perfect, but considering the fact that it was administered by volunteers under conditions of confusion and chaos, the results were remarkably good. Two stations had been established at Golden Gate Park, where such food as was available was issued to the long lines of applicants.

On April twentieth, the issue of food was taken over by the First Battalion, Coast Artillery with Major Francis V. Keesling in command. The number of lines was increased to three then to five, and the enlisted men were assisted by civilians who were paid for their labor in cooked rations. Particular attention was given to women and children, the old and feeble. Where circumstances warranted and occasion demanded, the hale and hearty were compelled to work for their supplies. The routine established at Golden Gate Park by Major Keesling was the beginning of a system of food distribution and sanitation which accomplished much for the health and general welfare of the homeless and needy. Refuse was collected and burned, a patrol system was established, sanitary measures were strictly enforced and supplies were carefully guarded. Major Keesling was making arrangements for further regulation of the camps and for the establishment of information bureaus when his command was moved from the park.

Upon request of Mayor Schantz, the Regular Army took over the task of issuing food supplies on April twenty-second, but several days elapsed before a satisfactory system was established. By April twenty-sixth it was in operation and rations were being distributed from 177 stations in the city by a force that aggregated sixty-four officers and over five hundred enlisted men. Food was distributed on an army ration basis and was in charge of qualified subsistence officers. Special arrangements were made for the proper nourishment of the sick and for small children. Supplies of clothing and bedding were issued on requisitions of authorized inspectors and agents of the Red Cross.

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*The Doomed City, By Frank Thompson Searight, Pages 95-103.

At a conference held at Fort Mason on the morning of April twenty-first, with Governor Pardee, Mayor Schmitz, General Funston, and the chief of police, it was decided to district the city and assign certain territory respectively to the Regular Army, the National Guard, and the police. The district assigned to the National Guard embraced the territory south of Golden Gate Park and from Van Ness Avenue to the Ocean. The extremely large area thus placed under the control of the organizations of the National Guard was occupied by them until the entire re-districting of the city on May eighth. The movement of the troops to the newly assigned district was completed April twenty-second.* The commanding officers were assembled at Brigade Headquarters the evening of April twenty-first and instructed practically as follows:**

The troops of the National Guard were held responsible for the maintenance of order in their district. Officers of all grades and enlisted men were to maintain a courteous but firm attitude and deport themselves in a manner creditable to the organization.

The streets were to be properly patrolled, suspicious characters arrested and brought before the subdistrict commander, who, if in his judgment the cases warranted, would turn them over to the police authorities.

Lights of any kind in residences or buildings and the use of stores of any description were not permitted until further orders.

Fires were permitted only on the streets or roads between the hours of 7:00 A. M. and 6:00 P. M., and must at all times be kept under control.

Sanitary measures were to be strictly enforced.

The sale or disposition of intoxicating liquor in any manner was forbidden.

To the Second Company Signal Corps, National Guard of California, under Captain G. M. Scott, acting Brigade Signal officer, was given the highest commendation by his superior officers for efficient service. Captain Scott directed the laying and operating of the

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*Adjutant General Report 1906, page 46.

**Adjutant General Report 1906, page 47.

military telegraph lines connecting Brigade Headquarters with headquarters of the commanders of the sub-districts, was accomplished by the Signal Corps under great difficulties. Much ingenuity was displayed by individual members of the Corps in laying these lines by dropping them into the temporarily abandoned cable slots between the street car tracks, instead of attempting to erect an overhead system. The method used was both expeditious and economical.*

The most heartening occurrence after the fire, was the appearance of trolley cars on Fillmore Street, Saturday evening April twenty-first. Along the entire line, the first car was hailed with enthusiastic cheers. The resumption of passenger traffic on Fillmore Street was regarded as a harbinger of the swift resumption of travel on all the lines in the city and the rejoicing was general.**

Overhead trolleys were permitted on Market Street April twenty-third. There were protests from some, but as a rule the people were too absorbed in the immediate present. The citizens were not in a condition to properly consider a question of municipal government or to find fault with any movement which even remotely suggested an alleviation of existing conditions.***

Impressment of citizens ceased April twenty-fifth and electric lights were permitted as soon as current was available. Considerable criticism was directed toward the Citizens Relief Committee, the Finance Committee of the Red Cross, and Army Officers for permitting the sale of flour and other supplies to bakeries and restaurants in San Francisco. The practice was inaugurated by the Relief Committee and was followed by the Army when it assumed charge of the relief work. Sales of flour by the Army were claimed to have been made at the request of the Finance Committee of the Red Cross. When flour was sold to bakeries, the Committee was to receive in return, the output of bread at an equitable price. The opening of restaurants relieved many from the necessity of cooking in the streets. To these restaurants, relief supplies were sold and from them were purchased meal tickets for distribution to the destitute.† While the practice of selling raw foodstuffs was probably necessary and justifiable under existing conditions, it provided opportunity for the misdirection of funds of those entrusted with the distribution of supplies were so minded. In the confusion

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*Adjutant General Report 1908, page 49.

**History of San Francisco, By John P. Young, Volume II, pages 846, 847

***History of San Francisco, By John P. Young, Volume II, page 846.

†Report of Major-General A. W. Greely, U.S.A., pages 38, 39.

which existed for some days after the fire, there was no responsible head to be held accountable for the supplies or the proceeds thereof if sold. One of the cities of the country which contributed about ten percent of the flour for San Francisco relief repeatedly urged that its supplies be given in kind to the citizens of the city irrespective of the opinions held by relief officials.

On the day that the Regular Army assumed charge of the distribution of food and other supplies, a systematic plan was formulated and put in operation. Efficient officers were placed in charge of the districts of the city, charged with preventing waste and distress. Supplies were checked and stored, and issued only on requisitions from the proper officials. The system instituted by the army was in its turn severely criticised by those who had become accustomed to helping themselves, but in the main it was satisfactory and the distribution was honestly administered.

Restaurants were later established and operated under direction of army officials where free meal tickets were given to all destitute persons. Those who had funds were required to pay fifteen cents for a good hot meal. In formulating and enforcing restrictions on food issued, appeals were made to the pride and self-respect of the applicants. Methods were also introduced to make it unprofitable and inconvenient for the majority of idlers and impostors to obtain supplies of food. Young children, the aged, and invalids, were always provided with special diet.*

Neither in San Francisco nor in Oakland was there any discrimination against the Chinese. It was agreed from the first that the Orientals could be best cared for in separate camps. An excellent camp was constructed at Fort Winfield Scott on the Presidio grounds and the Chinese camp in Oakland was probably the best camp in that city. In both these places the food was good, the bedding neat and the sanitary conditions excellent. The agent of the Six Companies stated that many of the Chinese were living better than ever before. Near the end of May 1906, the care of the Orientals was assumed by the Chinese Minister.**

General relief work was continued in San Francisco under the direction of officers of the Regular Army until June thirtieth, when the Red Cross assumed charge of the distribution of food and supplies. The Quartermaster's report for the period April 18 to July 20, 1906, gives the total money valuation of

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*Report of Major-General A. W. Greely, U. S. A., page 41.

**Report of Major-General A. W. Greely, U. S. A., pages 46, 52.

relief supplies issued by the army during that time as \$717,141.42. The disbursements of relief funds during the same period was \$224,634.80.*

A word of commendation for the people of San Francisco and the sterling qualities exhibited by them during the days of fire and earthquake must not be overlooked. These people, almost without exception, suffered financial losses varying from a few dollars to total ruin. Nearly 200,000 persons were brought to a state of complete destitution, beyond the clothing they wore or carried in their arms. The majority of the community was reduced from conditions of comfort to dependence on public charity, yet, through it all, the women did not weep, nor did the men bemoan their losses. Besides a spirit of cheerful courage, they exhibited qualities of resourcefulness and self-respect which commanded the admiration of the world. The conduct of the community was conspicuous for its tranquility and common sense. Considering the frightful experiences through which they had passed.

More surprising still was the continued good order during the two and one-half months following the disaster. Unfortunate conditions were freely predicted when the saloons were re-opened, but there was a notable lack of violence or unusual disturbance on that occasion. The percentage of professional beggars and impostors among the applicants for relief was unusually small, not exceeding three percent. It is doubtful whether such a low percentage would have been found in any other large city in the world under similar conditions.** When the Regular Army officials assumed charge of the distribution of supplies there existed a general feeling that every person had a right to relief supplies without interference of the appointed officials, yet the community as a whole accepted the reverse decisions of the army officials with good grace.

The United States Mint and the Post Office escaped the conflagration, although the Post Office Building was damaged considerably by the earthquake. Regular troops were placed in charge of these buildings and their contents.*** The Regulars were assisted by members of the National Guard of California in transferring certain large sums of specie from the mint to the banks of Oakland where cash was needed to meet the increased demand for funds caused by the destruction of the San Francisco commercial institutions.

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*Report of Major-General A. W. Greely, U.S.A., page 105.

**Report of Major-General A. W. Greely, U.S.A., page 47.

***Report of Major-General A. W. Greely, U.S.A., page 6.

From several foreign countries came generous offers of help for the sufferers. Germany, France, Ireland, China, Japan, and many other countries proffered large sums to aid the destitute, but all these offers were kindly but firmly declined by President Roosevelt. The spontaneous contributions of the American people he told them, were ample to meet all requirements.*

On the eighth of May General Order No. 25 was issued from Headquarters of the Pacific Division U. S. A. That order relieved the United States Naval Squadron in San Francisco Harbor and the Naval forces on duty in the city of San Francisco, to take effect at noon May tenth. The same order provided for re-districting the city, dividing it into six districts, five of which were to be under control of Regular Troops and one (the Fourth District) to be controlled by the National Guard of California. The re-districting order also became effective at noon May tenth.**

The Fourth District of San Francisco assigned to the National Guard was bounded on the north by Union Street, on the east by San Francisco Bay, on the south by Market Street to Castro Street thence south on Castro to Eighteenth Street, thence west on Eighteenth to Stanyan Street, thence north on Stanyan Street to Oak Street, thence east on Oak to Devisadero Street, thence north on Devisadero to Union Street.

This district covered the entire business section of the city north of Market Street and a large portion of the residential district. It covered much more territory than any of the other districts, and under normal conditions would contain half the population of the city. A great many of the restrictions imposed on the civilian population were removed and people were allowed much more freedom of action than had been permitted previously.

Neither the Regulars nor the troops of the National Guard were to have control over the actions of civilians who were going about their ordinary business. Their military duties consisted in the guarding of the buildings and supplies owned by the United States and in the protection of exposed property of great value or importance at certain places designated by the Division Commander.

Their non-military duties consisted in furnishing assistance when required by the civil authorities in making arrests, suppressing riots, etc. Their most important non-military function, however, was to assist as much as possible in the work of relief to the needy.

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*The Doomed City, By Frank Thompson Searight, pages 132-134.

**Exhibit C, Report of General John A. Koster, Adjutant General's Office.

For administrative purposes, the district controlled by the National Guard was subdivided into six National Guard Districts.

The First District bounded by Oak Street, Eighteenth Street, Devisadero Street, Castro Street, and Stanyan Street was placed under command of Colonel H. I. Seymour with the Second Infantry, N. G. C.

The Second District, bounded by Golden Gate Avenue, Market Street, Devisadero Street, and Castro Street, was commanded by Colonel W. N. Kelly with the First Infantry, N. G. C.

The Third District, bounded by Union Street, Golden Gate Avenue, Larkin Street, and Devisadero was under command of Colonel R. K. Whitmore with the Sixth Infantry, N. G. C.

The Fourth District, bounded by Union Street, Market Street, Golden Gate Avenue, Stockton Street, and Larkin Street, was placed under command of Captain G. W. Bauer with six divisions of the Naval Militia of California.

The Fifth District, bounded by Union Street, Market Street, Sansome Street, and Stockton Street, was placed under command of Major S. W. Kay with the First Squadron of Cavalry and Company D of the Fifth Infantry, N. G. C.

The Sixth District, bounded by Union Street, Market Street, San Francisco Bay and Sansome Street, under the command of Major F. V. Keesling with the First Battalion Coast Artillery.

The National Guard troops and the Naval Militia remained at the stations above described and performed the duties assigned to them until dismissed from active duty.*

While the city east of Van Ness Avenue south to Townsend Street was a desolate, blackened waste, and thousands of people without shelter or food were cared for at the refugee camps on both sides of the Bay, yet, San Francisco's spirit was not broken. It has been aptly said that the only way to kill the optimism of a Californian is to kill the man himself and that saying was proven especially true of the city by the Golden Gate. In less than a week from

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*Report of Brigadier General John A. Koster, Adjutant General's Office.

the time the city went down in ruins, plans were under way for making repairs wherever practicable or for the erection of new and better buildings. Thousands of laborers were already at work digging and hauling bricks and other debris from the blocked streets.

The bankers were among the first to start reconstruction projects. The Secretary of the Treasury of the United States applauded the bankers by placing fifteen million dollars of Government surplus funds on deposit in San Francisco banks, practically before there were any rejuvenated banks and certainly before the million dollars in the buried vaults had time to cool. Life Insurance Companies suspended collection of premiums on all policies for sixty days, and the Governor proclaimed each succeeding day a holiday to avoid legal complications. Men were at work restoring Government, Telegraph and Telephone service and inspectors were sent from Washington, D. C. to appraise the damage to government buildings and arrange for their repair or restoration. The water companies had more than a thousand men at work making repairs and no one suffered for water.*

Here, it may be appropriate to mention the failure of the water supply of San Francisco at a critical time. The chief loss in the catastrophe of April 1906, was due to fire, whose speed might have been arrested had the city been provided with an adequate water system. U. S. Geological Survey investigations disclosed the fact that the company supplying water to the city was not wholly ignorant of a danger which threatened the water supply. One of the principal sources of that supply was disabled by the earthquake shock through the improper construction of its pipe line across the region of the fault, the existence of which was known to the officials of the company. That such a condition should exist and be permitted to remain unnoticed is deplorable, and it is to be hoped that the people of San Francisco have guarded against a recurrence of the tragedy of 1906 by taking the necessary precautions to insure an uninterrupted water supply under all conditions.**

The general health of the community was considered good during the troublous times subsequent to the earthquake. That condition may be attributed to the prompt and efficient efforts of the medical department of the United States Army. The work of this department began about 9:00 A. M. April eighteenth and continued without interruption until the local authorities and hospitals were in a

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*The Doomed City, By Frank Thompson Searight, pages 135, 136, 139.

**History of San Francisco, By John P. Young, pages 850, 851.

position to take charge of those in need of medical aid. During that time strict attention was given to diet and sanitation and everything was done that was humanly possible under existing conditions to provide for the health of the unfortunates who needed medical attention, and to prevent the spread of any contagious disease.

The records show that there were ninety-nine cases of typhoid fever in the city from April eighteenth to June twenty-third. Of these ninety-nine cases, four cases occurred prior to April eighteenth. Of the remaining ninety-five cases, seventeen died and thirty-three were discharged as cured. Forty-nine cases remained in hospitals or private homes at the date of the report June 23, 1906. Of the smallpox cases there were one hundred and twenty-three recorded, with eleven deaths.* This appears to be a remarkable record when the great number of persons who were subjected to the unusual hardships and exposure incident to the earthquake and fire is considered.

On the twenty-third of April all the troops of the National Guard who had been called for active duty were organized into two provisional brigades.** The First Provisional Brigade under command of Brigadier-General Robert Wankowski, comprised all the troops of the National Guard of California then on active duty in Oakland, Alameda, Berkeley, Santa Rosa, San Jose, and Sacramento. The Second Provisional Brigade under command of Brigadier-General John A. Koster, comprised the troops of the National Guard and the Naval Militia of California (excepting the Fifth Division of the Naval Militia) then on active duty in the city of San Francisco.*** The first of these troops to be relieved from active duty was Company H, Second Infantry, on duty at San Jose, relieved May 9, 1906. Other companies and divisions were relieved from time to time as their services could be dispensed with, until May thirty-first, on which date the last of the National Guard troops were relieved from further active duty.†

The work done by the National Guard and the Naval Militia of California in 1906, in the city of San Francisco and the towns of Santa Rosa and San Jose during the days of the earthquake and fire and the weeks of wearying toil which followed the disaster, is worthy of more than passing notice.

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*Report of Major-General A. W. Greely, U.S.A., page.

**Adjutant General Report 1906, page 58.

***Adjutant General Report 1906, pages 40, 41, 45, 58.

†Adjutant General Report 1906, pages 53-64.

Any member of the California National Guard is as proud of the organization with which he is affiliated and as patriotic as any regular soldier. In times of peace and quiet he makes his living in civil pursuits and his enlistment as a member of the National Guard is purely from patriotic motive and civic pride. In his every day pursuits he is in no way different from his neighbor or fellow workman.

Only in times of strife or dire calamity does the Guardsman appear in a different role. At such times he is subject to call without notice and regardless of any personal loss, inconvenience, or discomfort, he is required to take his station, be it high or low, in the ranks, and to devote all his energy to the performance of whatever duties he may be called upon to perform in the line of duty. The tasks which the National Guardsman may be called upon to perform are often unpleasant but his first duty is to obey the orders of his superiors, so without giving voice to his opinions or thought for his personal safety he performs that duty however repulsive it may be.

Where a man's home is, property placed in his charge will be most carefully guarded. For that reason alone if there was no other, the disaster that overtook the San Francisco Bay district and particularly the city of San Francisco itself, the National Guard was immediately indispensable. The situation was quite beyond the local police. The Regulars within instant reach were comparatively few. The United States warships with their Bluejackets were at a distance. General Frederick Funston, commander of the Department of California U. S. Army, was the only army officer in high authority in San Francisco at the time of the catastrophe, and was on the scene early. To the General it was immediately apparent that a calamity of unusual proportions was imminent. With characteristic resourcefulness and instant decision he immediately ordered as many of the troops of his command as could be contacted, to report to the city authorities for duty in the emergency.

In the absence from the city of Major-General A. W. Greely, General Funston also assumed command of the Pacific Division of the Regular Army. The entire force of Regulars on the Pacific Coast was thus under his direction and he proceeded to order all available troops on the coast to report at San Francisco without delay. Many of General Funston's orders were issued without proper authority, but communication between San Francisco and the outside world had been disrupted by the earthquake and the General proceeded with what he considered his duty.

As soon as it was possible, the General telegraphed the War Department at Washington, stating what he had done and that he would trust to that Department to support his actions. He also requested

the Department to forward all available tents, bedding, and rations to San Francisco as soon as possible. Needless to say, his acts were authorized by the higher authority and the entire equipment of the Pacific Division was placed at his disposal.

General Funston was not the only person who had acted immediately and without orders from superior headquarters. San Francisco was the home station of the First Regiment of Infantry, the First Battalion Coast Artillery, Troop A Cavalry, and the Second Company Signal Corps of the National Guard and four divisions of the California Naval Militia. Brigadier-General John A. Koster commanding the Second Brigade of the National Guard was absent from the city and to communicate with him by wire was impossible. It was also impossible to communicate with the Adjutant-General or the Commander-in-Chief of the National Guard at Sacramento. So without orders from superior headquarters, the organizations of the National Guard and Naval Militia stationed in San Francisco proceeded to perform what they considered their duty. Leaving their homes, many of which had been partially or totally destroyed by the earthquake and taking leave of their terrified families, these men faced all the risk of battle and more. They manned fire engines, fought fire, saved hundreds of human lives, carried thousands of dollars worth of State and privately owned property to places of safety. The body of citizen soldiery preserved order, restrained lawlessness, and aided and protected women and children, assisted the aged and infirmed. No task was too severe to be attempted. No obstacle so great that at least an effort was not made to overcome it.

The National Guardsmen were at once soldiers, firemen, doctors, nurses, and purveyors of food for the hungry. These members of the National Guard and Naval Militia of California who, blistered and breathing ashes, stood guard in San Francisco, Santa Rosa and San Jose were fellow citizens with the same interests at stake that all other good citizens had, and no more; yet they sacrificed themselves and their interests to protect the lives and property of their fellow men. The men of the National Guard gave of their rations to the hungry, they shared the water in their canteens with the thirsty, their field ovens baked thousands of loaves of bread daily when bread was unobtainable elsewhere. The State of California, the cities of San Jose and Santa Rosa and particularly the city of San Francisco owe the members of the National Guard and Naval Militia a debt of deep gratitude for the great work performed by them during the eventful days of April and May 1906.

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Immediately upon learning of the seriousness of the situation in the Bay district, Governor George C. Pardee proceeded from the Capitol to San Francisco and Oakland. Telegraphic communication was impossible for the time being and the Governor was anxious to secure first hand information concerning the calamity which had fallen upon a considerable portion of the State. The Governor established headquarters in the offices of Mayor Frank K. Mott at the City Hall, Oakland, where he was joined on April twentieth by Adjutant-General Joseph B. Lauck. Lines of communication between San Francisco and the outside world were disrupted, but in Oakland the Governor could keep in touch by wire with the Capitol and other cities of the State.

Governor Pardee immediately communicated with Mayor E. E. Schmitz of San Francisco and proffered the services of the State in aid of the sufferers in that city. The Mayor replied that provisions, tentage and supplies of every essential character were needed for those in distress but made no mention of the National Guard or that their services would be appreciated. The Mayor's reply did not deter Governor Pardee in his efforts to render assistance. Through the Adjutant General's Department he called out every organization of the National Guard and of the Naval Militia except one Division, for duty in San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, Santa Rosa and San Jose.

The troops ordered to Oakland and Berkeley were stationed primarily to guard refugee camps in the respective cities, which were filled with San Franciscans who had fled from the burning city across the Bay. Part of these troops also acted as guards for supply depots and others accompanied shipments of supplies and specie across the bay.

Regardless of the invaluable services rendered by the troops of the National Guard, Mayor Schmitz and the Citizens Committee of San Francisco, on the twenty-third of April, requested their withdrawal from the city. The reason for this extraordinary request was ascribed to the tendency of the Guardsmen on certain occasions, to ignore municipal authority. Tales had been circulated that the National Guardsmen were reckless in the use of firearms, that they were officers, lacking in discipline and incompetent to a great extent, on account of intoxication. These tales were duly investigated and were proven to be villainous slander, having been put in circulation by irresponsible persons, particularly among

members of the police force and the special guards appointed by the mayor in the emergency.

There seemed to develop a natural antipathy on the part of the policemen and guards toward the State troops. The guards, or special police as they were called, were generally incompetent, without any conception of the duties to be performed by them. Many of the specials it was afterwards proven had a criminal record. Fraudulent Red Cross representatives were another source from which sprang false charges against the State forces. This was the class of persons largely responsible for the tales which unfortunately found ready listeners among people in high authority in the city who would gladly see the National Guard completely shattered.*

While it was not to be presumed that the Regular Army was responsible for the charges in incompetence against the National Guard, there were many notable instances of absolute disregard on the part of Regular Army officials, for the rights of a National Guard officer.

~~Of the San Francisco newspapers, only one was a serious advocate of the National Guard. The other papers were either non-committal or given to bad slinging. For some reason, the newspapers hesitated to give the Guard the active support which it so well deserved.~~

Needless to say, all the attempts to discredit the troops of the National Guard and their services failed and the accusations against them were proven groundless. Governor Pardee steadfastly maintained his attitude as an advocate of the State troops; refused to recall them at the request of Mayor Schmitz, and the Guard continued on duty in San Francisco, some of them until the last of May. Too much praise cannot be given the Governor and his able assistant, Adjutant-General Lauck for their never ceasing vigilance in using the National Guard and all available material of the State for the care and comfort of the stricken people.

That the men of the Guard were honest, intelligent, well meaning, subordinate and zealous was admitted by the commanding General of the Pacific Division of the Regular Army. General Greely maintained, however, that they were inexperienced. Inexperience of the Guardsmen from a military viewpoint is admitted and is of little consequence. The Regulars were also inexperienced in most of the duties required of them in the emergency of the time. The Guardsmen were human beings taken from all walks of life; not trained in the military accomplishments of the soldiers of the Regular Army. However the patriotism of the Guardsmen could never be doubted. Their

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*Report of Major Francis V. Keesling of the Operations of the First Battalion Coast Artillery, Adjutant General's Office.

sympathy for the weak, the hungry, the aged and infirm, for women and children, for people bereft of all their earthly possessions, did not denote inexperience in the performance of kindly, neighborly, charitable acts. While military accomplishments and experience are highly desirable, they sink to insignificance when compared with a friendly word or a kindly act. After all, much of the work entailed by the distressful emergency of 1906 was of a humanitarian character. Human sympathy and understanding, rather than the brutal self-sufficiency of the police was needed. Generous motives and kindly acts were more desirable under the circumstances, than the trained unemotional stolidity of the professional soldier.

Our National Guardsmen are our friends and neighbors. We have in these United States, millions of men who are potential members of the National Guard. They are the same kind of men that composed it in the Revolution and in the Civil War who gave their all cheerfully and willingly. The men of the National Guard and the Naval Militia of California performed their duties thoroughly and well in response to the call for aid for the homeless and afflicted in San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, San Jose, and Santa Rosa, during the memorable days which followed the disaster of April 18, 1906.

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