

History of the Sacramento Light Artillery, California Militia/National Guard of California 1864-1880

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Sacramento Light Artillery, unattached, Fourth Brigade

Reference: Dead Office File, Row 4, File 2

Location: Sacramento, Sacramento County

Mustered in October 7, 1864

Reorganized and redesignated July 6, 1866*

Redesignated January 13, 1869.**

Reorganized March 19, 1880***

Commanding Officers

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Commission</u>
Edgar Mills, Captain	Sept. 30, 1864	Oct. 7, 1864
Wyman McMitchell, First Lieut. (Resigned March 6, 1865)	Sept. 30, 1864	Oct. 7, 1864
S. S. Montague, First Lieut.	Mar. 6, 1865	April 20, 1865
S. S. Montague, Captain	Sept. 27, 1866	Oct. 3, 1866
E. M. Howison, First Lieut.	Sept. 27, 1866	Oct. 3, 1866
Joseph Davis, Captain	Sept. 29, 1868	Oct. 8, 1868
Albert Leonard, First Lieut.	Sept. 29, 1868	Oct. 8, 1868
Joseph Davis, Captain (Re-elected Oct. 7, 1870)		
M. H. Davis, First Lieut.	Oct. 7, 1870	Oct. 15, 1870
Joseph Davis, Captain (Re-elected Oct. 7, 1872)		
John B. Sherburn, First Lieut.	Oct. 7, 1872	Nov. 12, 1872
John B. Sherburn, Captain	Oct. 6, 1874	Nov. 2, 1874
Joseph M. Robbins, First Lieut.	Oct. 6, 1874	Nov. 2, 1874
Joseph M. Robbins, Captain (Resigned June 3, 1878)	Feb. 11, 1876	April 19, 1876
A. C. York, First Lieut.	Feb. 11, 1876	April 19, 1876
Edward D. Hagan, Captain	Aug. 16, 1878	Aug., 22, 1878
George Herbert Frances, First Lieut.	Feb. 11, 1878	Feb. 16, 1878
Jonathan L. Atwood, Captain	Aug. 8, 1879	Aug. 20, 1879
Eugene Kueneman, First Lieut.	Dec. 26, 1879	Jan. 13, 1880

*Sacramento Light Artillery reorganized under act of State Legislature and redesignated Sacramento Light Artillery, Company A, First Battalion Artillery, Fourth Brigade, July 6, 1866.
Historical Record Fourth Brigade, 1864-1867 page 190.

**Sacramento Light Artillery, Company A, First Battalion Artillery redesignated Sacramento Light Artillery, unattached, Fourth Brigade, January 13, 1869.
Adjutant General's Report 1867-1869, Special Order No. 1, page 157.

***Sacramento Light Artillery redesignated Battery B, First Artillery Regiment, Fourth Brigade, March 19, 1880.
Adjutant General's Report 1880, Special Order No.19, page 76.

Activities:

This company, composed of sixty-nine men, rank and file, adopted the name Sacramento Light Artillery and was mustered in as a unit of the State Militia, October 7, 1864.

Their field equipment at the time consisted of four brass field pieces (two six-pounders and two twelve-pounders) with carriages and accoutrements complete. Great difficulty was experienced at that time in securing military equipment of any description and the unit was considered fortunate in obtaining the accoutrements that were allowed them. Captain Joseph Davis was highly commended for the great proficiency in drill and celerity and precision with which his company executed many difficult maneuvers at the review held at Oak Knoll, Yolo County in 1870.

The company was ordered by the Adjutant General's Office to hold itself in readiness for immediate activity, owing to the unsettled conditions brought about by the War of the Rebellion. However, nothing extremely disquieting occurred locally during the first years of the company's existence.

Under the Legislative Act of 1866, providing for the reorganization of the State Militia, the Sacramento Light Artillery was reorganized and mustered in on July 6, 1866, as a unit of the National Guard of California, and designated as Company A, First Battalion of Artillery, Fourth Brigade. One of the interesting events before the Sacramento Light Artillery became attached to the First Artillery Regiment in 1880, was the Encampment held at the State Fair in 1879. The principal activity during the Encampment was the sham battle. This mock battle was held on a beautiful warm day and an immense crowd had gathered to witness the battle. Spectators filled the grandstand to capacity and thousands were forced to stand on the field. The officers capering up and down the field on their chargers made a dazzling picture.

At last the battle began first with an advance, then a retreat, then a deadening volley from the Sacramento Light Artillery followed by another advance while the officers recklessly rushed in between the combatants at the risk of their lives. Then an advance, then a retreat, then the cannon hauled up, then as suddenly turned back. There were soldiers on their feet, soldiers on their knees, while round and about them the blank cartridges volleyed and thundered. The flags lay limp and close in the noonday sun, the smoke rolled from the howling muskets of War. At the appearance of a flag of truce, the hostilities ceased and Leslie Goff of the Sacramento Light Artillery came galloping from the battery calling for a physician to treat the two men of the artillery who had been injured. The accident was caused by the premature explosion of the cannon and happened as follows:*

At the time the accident occurred the gunner (H. A. Conway) of No. 3 cannon after having received orders

*Sacramento Bee, September 12, 1879, page 3, column 1,2.

SACRAMENTO LIGHT ARTILLERY (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

Eureka Ran from Captain Atwood not to fire until further com- Brigade
Referen mand, took the place of No. 1 (the rammers position)
Locatio and assumed authority to fire the gun. By the re-
Mus peated and continous ramming of the charge by H. A.
Mus Conway a premature explosion was caused, which
resulted in the accident. Conway was injured and
at first the physician thought it would be necessary
to amputate the gunner's hand, but fortunately this
course was not necessary. The second member of the
Name artillery, H. Connelly, had his hands painfully al-
Henry A. though not seriously injured. No blame for the
Adam B. accident was attached to Connelly who thumbed the
H. G. R. vent, and was so careful that he had both thumbs
John R. over the hole at the time of the explosion. Fortun-
activities ately the accident was not of a more serious nature
and luckily Captain Atwood had given orders to have
Moore's the guns depressed, and at the time of the accident
name fr were in the position of what is known as action right.
his ho When the explosion occurred the rammer was driven out
nose. at great force, struck a post in the field and recoiled
acted in the air, otherwise it would have plowed a furrow
through the large crowd assembled in the vicinity.

During Due to the accident the sham battle continued only for
formed a short time and the balance of the programme was cut
their short. The respective commands passed in review before
gave the Judges stand, then stacked arms in the field and
milita broke ranks. The sham battle had been a great success
the B. and the troops showed a good knowledge of military
Act of tactics. The cannon that was responsible for the acci-
B. 1884 dent was an old and condemned piece, unfit for service.
the boo The company hoped that the old gun would be speedily
conduct replaced with a new one of modern design. H. A. Conway
and the was the third man who had been crippled by the same piece,
Nevada the two other men having lost their arms on previous
ing whi occasions, one while firing the centennial salute.

In March 1880 upon the recommendation of the Brigadier-General,
commanding the Fourth Brigade, it was ordered that the Sacramento
Light Artillery together with certain other companies compose a
regiment to be known as the First Artillery Regiment, the Sacramento
Light Artillery to be known and designated as Company B.
For additional information concerning this unit refer to the history
of Battery B, First Artillery Regiment, Fourth Brigade.