

History of the Signal Corps, 4th Brigade, National Guard of California 1887-1895

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SIGNAL CORPS, FOURTH BRIGADE

(Continued)

Signal Corps, Fourth Brigade

Reference: Adjutant General's Files
Location: Sacramento, Sacramento County
Organized August 1, 1887*
Reorganized July 17, 1889**
Reorganized July 23, 1895***

Commanding Officers

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Commission</u>
Wm. H. Sherburn, Major	Oct. 26, 1887	Nov. 12, 1887****
Fred L. Martin, First Lieut. (Re-elected June 18, 1894)	June 20, 1892	Aug. 6, 1892*****

Activities:

In 1887 the Fourth Brigade had an organized signal corps which was attached to the First Artillery Regiment. The law changed in 1889 and accordingly, regiments were no longer allowed to have individual signal corps, but instead a Brigade Corps was substituted. A brigade was allowed to recruit ten men from each regiment with the preference going to the former members of the regimental corps. Although the change was effective from April,

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*The organization date of the Regimental Signal Corps is taken from the enlistment date of Major Wm. H. Sherburn into the National Guard Service August 1, 1887. Adjutant General Report 1893-1894, page 38.

**Signal Corps, Fourth Brigade, formerly Regimental Signal Corps, designated Signal Corps, Fourth Brigade, July 17, 1889. Adjutant General Report 1890, page 5.

***Signal Corps, Fourth Brigade designated Signal Corps, Third Brigade, July 23, 1895. (Date of organization Signal Corps, Third Brigade) Adjutant General Report 1895-1896, page 28. Adjutant General Report 1895-1896, General Order No. 2, page 76, paragraph 5.

****Major Wm. H. Sherburn retained his former rank and commission as of October 26, 1887, when he commanded the Regimental Signal Corps, Fourth Brigade.

*****The post of First Lieutenant was vacant until June 20, 1892, when Fred L. Martin was elected First Lieutenant and commissioned August 6, 1892.

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SIGNAL CORPS, FOURTH BRIGADE (Continued)

Activities: (continued)

it was not until July 17, 1889, that the Fourth Brigade Signal Corps was organized.*+ The corps was under command of Major Wm. Sherburn, a Brigade Signal Officer, until the year of 1892. The Legislature of 1889, authorized the election of an officer for the Third Brigade Signal Corps, with rank as First Lieutenant. However it was not until May 20, 1892 that Fred L. Martin was elected First Lieutenant and assumed command of the unit.

The Signal Corp's drill consisted of the necessary routine appropriate to their line of work such as signaling with wands, flags, torches and heliographs. The use of the telescope and the establishing and changing of stations in conjunction with the required infantry maneuvers was practiced also. The heliograph was a method of telegraphing by the sun's rays and in 1891 a range of heliograph signaling had been extended to 18 miles, while the longest range of flag signaling had been twelve miles. The signal corps was a vital necessity in time of a riot or war, for with the preconcerted system of signals, messages could be relayed or communicated for great distances. The Signal Corps attained their greatest degree of efficiency while on encampments when stations were established at different points and messages relayed. The men were trained during these Camps of Instruction in preparedness for taking the field and to be in readiness to render competent service when called upon. However, lack of material on file with reference to the Fourth Brigade Signal Corp's activities during outings prevent a full narrative of their duties. Undoubtedly the Signal Corps was an efficient unit as the returns on record for the three month period of January, February and March of 1894 indicate that with ten members the first month, there was 86 per cent present for drills, that the second month there was 88 per cent present and the third month recorded an attendance percentage of ninty.

In 1895, the entire National Guard was reorganized into three brigades. Accordingly with the disbandment of the Fourth Brigade, the Signal Corps, Fourth Brigade was transferred to the Third Brigade and the former Signal Corps, Third Brigade was mustered out of the State service, July 23, 1895.**

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+ *Adjutant General Report 1890, page 5.

**Adjutant General Report 1895-1896, General Order No. 11, page 76, paragraph 5,6.