

History of the Tulare Home Guard, California Militia 1863-1866

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TULARE HOME GUARD 175

Tulare Home Guard, Third Brigade

Reference: Dead Office File, Row 3, File 8

Location: Visalia, Tulare County

Mustered in May 2, 1863

Mustered out August 11, 1866

Commanding Officers:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Commission</u>
William Powell, Captain (Resigned February 4, 1864)	May 2, 1863	Aug. 19, 1863
George Duncan, First Lieutenant	May 2, 1863	Aug. 19, 1863
John Swanson, Captain	Feb. 27, 1864	Mar. 11, 1864
George W. Duncan, First Lieutenant (Reelected February 27, 1864)		
C. P. Majors, Captain	May 6, 1865	June 7, 1865
George Duncan, First Lieutenant (Reelected May 6, 1865)		

Activities:

In Visalia, Tulare County on May 2, 1863, a volunteer cavalry company known as the Tulare Home Guard was organized and sworn into the service of the State. This unit was composed of sixty-eight men under the leadership of Captain William Powell.

Unfortunately dissension arose in the ranks of the Tulare Home Guard shortly after they were organized. On February 4, 1864, a committee of the company's members asked Captain Powell to resign.

In complying with their request Captain Powell published the following notice to the officers and men of the Tulare Home Guard:

"Consideration of self-respect impels me to resign the command of your company. I have been informed that certain charges have been preferred against me and that a committee has been appointed to request me to answer. What these charges are I know not neither do I seek to know. The very fact of their being received by you dictate my course of action! As your Captain I can answer to nothing. As a private citizen I will answer to anything. In preserving my own dignity, I maintain yours."

"In parting from you in my official capacity I have the proud consciousness of knowing that I have done everything in my power to promote the efficiency and harmony of your company, contending against extraordinary efforts used by your enemies and professed friends to defeat your organization. How I have succeeded you alone can judge. For

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Activities: (Continued)

you I have the warmest feelings of personal regard. My best wishes will ever be with you either in your individual or official capacity, and the associations that have existed between us will ever be a source of pride and gratification to me."

"Receive my grateful thanks for the prompt and cheerful manner in which you have yielded obedience to my commands while on duty and for your assistance in maintaining order and discipline."

On February 27, 1864, John Swanson was elected to succeed Captain Powell as commander of the Tulare Home Guard and despite the fact that Captain Swanson was an able leader, the company was never to recover from the loss of Captain Powell, which resulted in a steady decrease in the company's membership.

On December 12, 1865, the Tulare Home Guard was called out to preserve order during the execution of E. M. King, convicted of the murder of J. N. Rogers. The prisoner was either insane or a reckless and hardened criminal. While being brought out he made rather a long speech in which he denied the murder.*

This execution was probably the last official act of the Tulare Home Guard for on April 2, 1866, the Captain asked that the company be mustered out of service for at that time there was not more than twenty men in active service. Upon the recommendation of Adjutant General George S. Evans, the Tulare Home Guard was mustered out of the service of the State, August 11, 1866.

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Company K, and attached to the Second Infantry Regiment, Second Brigade. The company received its arms and equipment in September 1863, but no uniforms were available from the State at that time and unlike some of the other companies of the Second Regiment, the members of the O'Neill Guard did not provide their own uniforms.

The High O'Neill Guard attended the Second Brigade encampment held in Alameda in the Summer of 1863, but being without uniforms were unable to make the showing or win the applause they were entitled to by reason of their military skill and patriotic zeal.

The company devoted much time and effort to target practice and drill and attained a high degree of efficiency in both. The membership of the unit was kept up as the Muster Roll of June 15, 1865, showed an enrollment of sixty-seven men. It was, therefore,

*Daily Alta California, December 14, 1865, Page 1, Column 4.