

# **History of the Yankee Jim Rifles, California Militia/National Guard of California 1863-1867**

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YANKEE JIM RIFLES

YANKEE JIM RIFLES (Continued)

Yankee Jim Rifles, Company E, First Infantry Battalion, Fourth Brigade

Reference: Dead Office File, Row 3, File 5

Location: Yankee Jim, Placer County

Mustered in January 3, 1863

Mustered out December 19, 1867

Commanding Officers

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Commission</u>
John A. Morsman, Captain	Jan. 3, 1863	Jan. 14, 1863
John Keiser, First Lieut.	Jan. 3, 1863	Jan. 14, 1863
John A. Morsman, Captain (Resigned Sept. 4, 1864)	Dec. 26, 1863	_____
John Keiser, Captain	Oct. 8, 1864	Oct. 20, 1864
James C. Parsons, First Lieut.	Dec. 26, 1863	Jan. 11, 1864
John Keiser, Captain	Jan. 20, 1865	_____
E. L. Capin, First Lieut.	Jan. 14, 1865	Feb. 16, 1865
John Keiser, Captain	_____	_____
James C. Parsons, First Lieut.	Jan. 20, 1866	Feb. 10, 1866
S. M. Jamison, Captain	Jan. 12, 1867	Jan. 21, 1867
James C. Parsons, First Lieut.	_____	_____

Activities:

Like other communities in the vicinity, the citizens of Yankee Jim were desirous of having military protection against Indian depredations. Therefore, the necessary steps were taken to enroll members for a volunteer company. The meeting to perfect this organization was held in the Golden Gate Saloon on Saturday evening, January 3, 1863. After the election of officers a ballot was taken to name the company and the title selected was the Yankee Jim Rifles. The first annual election following the organization of the volunteer company was ordered "To be held Saturday, December 26, 1863, six o'clock P. M. at the Saloon of M. B. Tubbs". Captain Morsman was re-elected commanding officer and J. C. Parsons was elected First Lieutenant at this meeting.

Following the organization of the Guard a requisition for arms was filed but due to the fact that the State's supply of new arms was low at that time, Adjutant-General William C. Kibbe issued instructions to Captain Davison of the Fourth Brigade to turn over the arms of the former Shield's Guard to the new company. These arms were apparently not in the best of condition as they were ordered to be turned in for exchange of new equipment. On September third when Captain Morsman turned in the supply to the State Arsenal for exchange, he explained, "That one bayonet and scabard had been

\*Swedge--A tool or form for shaping wrought iron, etc., by hammering or by pressure.

YANKEE JIM RIFLES (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

missing when the arms were transferred from the Shields Guard, but that this missing set was later located and would be turned in from Auburn." Captain Woodin of the Auburn Greys turned in his company's equipment for exchange at the same time and included this extra set with the lot, explaining to the Adjutant-General that it should be credited to the Yankee Jim Rifles.

When the new equipment was received by this company no cartridges or bullet molds were included and the Captain made a hurried request for one or the other of these articles, as it was the desire of the men to participate in the Fourth Brigade's Flag Presentation and target shooting and to do so they must have ammunition. Also Captain Morsman felt it was necessary to have ammunition supplies available in order to be able to keep the interest of the men active. In response to the request one bullet mold was received without a swedge,\* and good shooting was impossible with a ball that was not swedged.

The receipt of the arms enabled the men to attend the Camp of Instruction which was held, September 19, 1863, at Camp Kibbe, formerly known as Oak Knoll near Sacramento. Being a newly formed unit, the camp gave the volunteers excellent training in military maneuvers. The subsistence for the forty-four members of the Yankee Jim Rifles, Company E, First Infantry Battalion for the ten days included:

Meat	438	lbs.
Bread	256	loaves
Vegetables	482	lbs.
Beans	74	lbs.
Butter	44	lbs.
Sugar	66	lbs.
Coffee	31	lbs.
Tea	4½	lbs.
Syrup	2	gal.
Vinegar	4½	gal.
Salt	8	lbs.
Soap	3	lbs.
Pepper	4	cans
Candles	3	boxes
Pickles	2	gal.
Rice	40	lbs.

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\*Swedge--A tool or form for shaping wrought iron, etc., by hammering or by pressure.

YANKEE JIM RIFLES (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

The company was outfitted with uniforms on March twenty-first of the following year under General Order No. 2 of 1864, which required "The arms and uniforms of the State be distributed to the individual members of the company for safe-keeping". This measure was taken as a precaution against fires that often wiped out an entire community, destroying the armory where the militia equipment and supplies were kept. During this unit's existence it suffered the loss of but one complete outfit, and that was when the home of O. H. Young was destroyed by fire in April 1868. Late in the year of 1864, Captain Morsman was forced to ask for a release from the office owing to the fact that his home was so far away it was impossible to officiate as commanding officer. The Captain's resignation was accepted and a special election was held October fifteenth at which time First Lieutenant Keiser was elected to the commanding office.

Although the company was fully uniformed and equipped with arms it did not meet the minimum membership demanded by the State Militia Law as the Muster Roll of September 25, 1865, credited the unit with but twenty-eight men. The Military Law of 1866 created a Board of Location and Organization to reduce the expense of maintaining the National Guard where companies were below normal membership in the ranks. The Yankee Jim Rifles was situated in the mining territory where the population was more or less transient and the membership was small, therefore, it was deemed necessary to instill new strength into the company in order to increase its membership. For this reason when there was a general reorganization of the National Guard of the State the unit was reorganized, July 31, 1866. The same staff of officers were re-elected and the company's roll call included sixty-nine members. This reorganization designated the volunteers as Company E, Yankee Jim Rifles, Fifth Infantry of Regiment. It was evident that even this new change did not bring about the desired results as on September 30, 1867, when the company was called out for drill and target practice only thirty-one members responded.

On November 30, 1867, Captain Jamison reported to E. G. Wait, commanding Fifth Infantry of the Fourth Brigade, that "The drills had been very fair, in fact better than usual for so small a company." Financially, however, the report was not as favorable and it was evident that this volunteer company was losing ground, and its finances were depleted. Therefore, the Adjutant-General deemed it advisable to muster out Company E, Yankee Jim Rifles, and on December 31, 1867, the company was formally disbanded for inefficiency.

\*Designated as Company A, Fifth Infantry, Muster Roll of March 25, 1865.