

**History of the 1st Cavalry Regiment,
California Militia and National
Guard of California and the 1st
Cavalry Battalion,
National Guard of California
1864-1881**

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FIRST CAVALRY BATTALION

(FIRST CAVALRY REGIMENT)

First Cavalry Battalion, Second Brigade (formerly First Cavalry Regiment)

Reference: Adjutant General's Files

Location: San Francisco, San Francisco County

• Mustered in January 30, 1864*

• Mustered out July 8, 1868**

• Reorganized and mustered in July 24, 1868***

• Mustered out September 23, 1881****

Commanding Officers

First Cavalry Regiment

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Commission</u>
C. L. Taylor, Colonel	Jan. 30, 1864	Feb. 9, 1864
Abijah McCall, Lieut. Colonel	Jan. 30, 1864	Feb. 9, 1864
Garrett G. Bradt, Lieut. Colonel	Nov. 1, 1867	Nov. 9, 1867
J. H. Marston Sr., Major	Jan. 30, 1864	Feb. 9, 1864
Michael Fennell Jr., Major	Jan. 30, 1864	Feb. 9, 1864
H. M. Leonard Jr., Major	Nov. 3, 1865	Nov. 15, 1865
Lewis F. Parker Jr., Major	Nov. 1, 1867	Nov. 11, 1867
H. S. Baldwin, First Lieut.	Feb. 18, 1864	Apr. 2, 1866
Surgeon		
David Moore, Lieut. Adjutant	Nov. 1, 1866	Nov. 12, 1866
Samuel P. Pikes, Lieut. Adjutant	Mar. 9, 1866	Feb. 13, 1867

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~*First Cavalry Regiment organized January 30, 1864, by electing Regimental Officers. Historical Records, Second Brigade 1861-1867, page 15. Adjutant General's Office.

•**First Cavalry Regiment mustered out in accordance Special Order No. 43, July 8, 1868. Historical Record, Second Brigade 1864-1870, page 49. Adjutant General's Office.

***First Cavalry Battalion mustered in July 24, 1868.

Historical Record, Second Brigade 1864-1870, page 190. Adjutant General's Office.

****First Cavalry Battalion disbanded in accordance with General Order No. 21, September 23, 1881. Adjutant General Report 1881-1882, page 87.

Activities: (continued)

Commanding Officers (cont.)

First Cavalry Regiment

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Commission</u>
Patrick R. O'Brien, Major (reelected Aug. 24, 1872)	July 24, 1868	Aug. 25, 1868
M. A. McLaughlin, First Lieut. Adjutant	Nov. 20, 1868	Nov. 27, 1868
James T. Finn, First Lieut. Adjutant	July 3, 1872	July 9, 1872
Charles K. Breeze, First Lieut. (promoted to Surgeon staff)	Nov. 20, 1868	Nov. 27, 1868
Abraham Newman, First Lieut. (promoted to Adjutant Governor's staff)	May 23, 1873	June 30, 1873
A. Stewart, First Lieut. Surgeon	June 14, 1876	June 26, 1876
R. H. Orton, Major	Aug. 14, 1878	Sept. 12, 1878
G. J. Van Vlack, First Lieut. Surgeon	Oct. 4, 1878	Oct. 12, 1878
William G. Elliott, First Lieut. (resigned Nov. 16, 1878) Adjutant	Sept. 25, 1878	Oct. 1, 1878
Edward C. Conroy, First Lieut. Adjutant	July 27, 1880	Aug. 10, 1880

Activities:

The First Regiment of Cavalry was organized on January 30, 1864, when C. L. Taylor was elected Colonel; Abijah McCall, Lieutenant-Colonel; J. H. Marston Sr., Major; and Michael Fennell Jr., Major. The regiment was composed of nine cavalry units in 1864. Company A, First Light Dragoons was located in San Francisco. Company B, San Francisco Hussars was also a San Francisco unit. Company C, Jackson Dragoons was a third San Francisco company. Company D, Suisun Cavalry was located in Suisun City, Solano County. Company E, Redwood Cavalry was located in McCartysville, Santa Clara County. Company F, Burnett Light Horse Guard was situated in San Jose, also in Santa Clara County. Company G, Contra Costa Guard was located in San Pablo, Contra Costa County. Company G, New Almaden Cavalry located in New Almaden, was also a Santa Clara County unit. Company H, Jefferson Cavalry was from Redwood City, San Mateo County, and Company M, Lincoln Cavalry was from Tomales, Marin County.

Activities: (continued)

Four changes in the regimental units were made in 1866. On August 4, 1866, Company G, Contra Costa Guard was mustered out and the New Almaden Cavalry was attached to the regiment as Company G. Four days after the mustering out of the Contra Costa Guard, Company H, Jefferson Cavalry was mustered out and the Napa Rangers became Company H. Two days later, August 10, 1866, Company E, Redwood Cavalry was mustered out and the Santa Cruz Cavalry became Company E. Fifteen days later, Company M, Lincoln Cavalry, of Tomales was mustered out, leaving the regiment at the close of 1866 with eight units.

Perhaps several reasons contributed toward the mustering out of the above units. The first was a waning interest in military affairs at the conclusion of the Civil War. Still another was the expense of furnishing their own horses and the maintainance of the same during peace time. The First Cavalry Regiment, National Guard of California remained in the service of the State until July 8, 1868, when the regiment was disbanded. This action was taken after the passing of the law of 1868, which recommended that the number of units in the National Guard be reduced to a maximum of sixty companies. The Board of Location and Organization decided to disband and muster out many of the military companies whose location made it difficult to concentrate them conveniently, and where the transient population made it almost impossible to maintain a well drilled unit of the militia. Five of the eight companies in the First Cavalry Regiment were mustered out under this decision, namely: Santa Cruz Cavalry January 12, 1868, New Almaden Cavalry June 2, 1868, Burnett Light Horse Guard June 4, 1868, Napa Rangers June 8, 1868, and the Suisun Cavalry on June 9, 1868.

Only three of the original eight companies remained after the regiment disbanded, and they were organized into the First Cavalry Battalion which was mustered in on July 24, 1868. The three companies composing the Battalion were the First Light Dragoons, Company A; San Francisco Hussars, Company B; and Jackson Dragoons, Company C. A new company, Haight Light Horse Guard was organized on October 12, 1868, and mustered in as Company D, First Cavalry Battalion. All four companies were located in San Francisco. The first change in the battalion came on May 29, 1872, when Company D, Haight Light Horse Guard was mustered out of service as further curtailment in appropriations by the legislature caused the Board of Location and Organization to make a further reduction in the units in the National Guard.

Activities: (Continued)

The mustering out of Company D caused considerable ill-feeling by members of that organization toward the National Guard authorities. They were a very efficient company and having spent a considerable amount of money in purchasing uniforms, helmets, saddle blankets and other equipment not furnished by the State, the unit felt they were being ill-treated. Especially since the equipment would be useless to them unless they remained in the service. However, they were mustered out as ordered on May 29, 1872.

No further changes were made until June 1, 1881, when Company C, Jackson Dragoons was ordered consolidated with Company A, and all the officers of Company C were honorably discharged from the service of the State. The consolidation left only two companies, Company A and Company B in the battalion. About four months later, September 23, 1881, Companies A and B were consolidated and the First Cavalry Battalion was disbanded on the same day, September 23, 1881. The foregoing is a brief sketch of the changes made in the regiment from the time of its organization in 1864, till its disbandment in 1881. The table on the following page indicates the changes made in the regiment during its existence. No documents of the activities of the First Cavalry Regiment can be found. It is doubtful whether the regiment of all eight companies ever paraded together at one time. The distance and cost of hire of horses made it too expensive to get together as a regiment. However, the San Francisco companies were usually in demand for parades, although few records are available. One of prominence was for the reception of the victorious Creedmoor Rifle Team on November 5, 1877. The team went east and entered into competition with teams from other States, and won first prize. The victory thus gained was climaxed with a big reception to the team when it arrived in San Francisco. The cavalry battalion paraded in their honor. The parade terminated at the armory of the First Infantry Regiment, where an informal program and presentation of the trophy to the care of the Adjutant General of the National Guard of California.

The Cavalry Battalion was called to arms several times during the anti-Chinese labor demonstrations of 1876 to 1880, in San Francisco.* The first call came on July 27, 1877, when rioting

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*For additional information concerning the anti-Chinese Labor Demonstration 1876-1880, refer to Company C, First Infantry Regiment, Second Brigade. Adjutant General's Office.

A	B	C	D	E
Company A, San Francisco (First Light Dragoons) <u>1864</u>	Company B, San Francisco (San Francisco Hussars) <u>1864</u>	Company C, San Francisco (Jackson Dragoons) <u>1864</u>	Company D, Suisun (Suisun Cavalry) <u>1864</u>	Company E, McCartysville, (Redwood Cavalry) <u>1864</u> Company E, Watsonville (Santa Cruz Cavalry) <u>1866</u>
F	G	H	I	K
Company F, Santa Cruz (Santa Cruz Cavalry) <u>1864</u>	Company G, San Pablo (Contra Costa Guard) <u>1864</u>	Company H, Redwood City (Jefferson Cavalry) <u>1864</u>	Company I, San Jose (Burnett Light Horse Cavalry) <u>1864</u>	Company K, New Almaden (New Almaden Cavalry) <u>1864</u>
Company F, Gilroy (Burnett Light Horse Guard) <u>1866</u>	Company G, New Almaden (New Almaden Cavalry) <u>1866</u>	Company H, Napa (Napa Rangers) <u>1866</u>		
M				
Company M, Tomaes (Lincoln Cavalry) <u>1864</u>				

FIRST CAVALRY BATTALION, SECOND BRIGADE

1868-1881

A	B	C	D	
Company A, San Francisco (First Light Dragoons) <u>1868</u>	Company B, San Francisco (San Francisco Hussars) <u>1868</u>	Company C, San Francisco (Jackson Dragoons) <u>1868</u>	Company D, San Francisco (Haight Light Horse Guard) <u>1868</u>	
Company A and Company C, consolidated <u>1881</u>	<p><u>Note:</u> The year dates in the table indicate the year the companies were attached to the First Cavalry Regiment and First Cavalry Battalion, Second Brigade.</p>			

Activities: (Continued)

by anti-Chinese agitators resulted in an attack being made on the Chinese section of San Francisco, where one Chinese laundry was said to have been set on fire by the enraged mob. Chinese were beaten and considerable property was damaged. The Committee of Safety and the police were unable to preserve order. The National Guard, which had been under arms for ten days, was finally called out to restore order. The cavalry battalion of three companies performed excellent duty. One night on duty by the National Guard proved to be sufficient. Order was restored and the next day the militia was dismissed, subject to immediate call if needed.

However, quiet reigned until November 10, 1877, when further disturbances occurred. The Second Brigade, of which the First Cavalry Battalion was a part, was called to arms again, but the cavalry units were not needed to restore order. The fact that the militia was ready to go into action on short notice probably prevented the radical leaders from attempting any mob violence. On January 16, 1878, the Chief of Police, of San Francisco, again called for assistance and again the Second Brigade was called to arms. For eleven days the battalion was under arms and then was dismissed.*

The labor and anti-Chinese elements gained in strength, but pursued peaceful methods in obtaining their objective, the exclusion of Chinese from entering the United States. A few radical leaders made threats against the National Guard and constituted authority, but the majority of the laborers refused to follow. The passage of the Chinese Exclusion Law in 1882, removed the cause of most of the unrest among the laboring class, and the services of the National Guard were not needed again.

On August 23, 1879, Charles De Young, editor and owner of the San Francisco Chronicle, shot and critically wounded Dr. I. S. Kalloch. The shooting climaxed a bitter political fight in the city election in San Francisco. Dr. Kalloch was the candidate of the Workingmen's Party, and the San Francisco Chronicle was using their paper to defeat him. The Second Brigade was called out in anticipation that an attempt would be made to lynch De Young. The fact that the National Guard was ready for

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*Adjutant General Report 1877-1879, page 76.

Activities: (continued)

any emergency probably prevented an attempt to lynch him, as feeling was running high among the labor element. De Young's life was saved at that time, but his respite was short lived. On April 23, 1880, just eight months after the shooting of Dr. Kalloch, Charles De Young's life was taken by a bullet from a gun in the hands of Dr. Kalloch's son, Issac M. Kalloch. Dr. Kallock recovered from his wound and was elected Mayor of San Francisco.*

The next item of interest was the inspection report of Major Fred G. Smith, Inspector Second Brigade in 1878, 1879, and 1880, showed that each unit in the battalion was fair to good. Of the inspection of the battalion in 1880, Major Smith made the following comment:

"Major Orton cannot receive too much praise for the work he has done and is doing. He is a most pains-taking officer. I am informed that all the clerical work of the battalion is attended to by himself, as well as supervising the drills of his companies. Major Orton is not seconded in his efforts, as he should be, by the company officers (some of whom seem to have no idea of their duties), and until he is, material improvement in the battalion can hardly be expected. However, I notice changes for the better in many things, particularly the drill of the battalion."

Whether the condition of the battalion and the type of officers in command was responsible or not, the fact remains that during the rigid inspection of the National Guard in 1881, in order to muster out or consolidate the weak companies, the battalion was found wanting and Company C was consolidated with Company A on June 1, 1881. About four months later, September 23, 1881, Companies A and B were consolidated. In the space of four months all three companies of the battalion were merged together into one company that was thereafter known as the San Francisco Hussars, unattached. As a rule most of the members of the cavalry companies were men of means, as the cost of being a cavalryman at that time was prohibitive for the average working man. The cost of uniforms, regalia, hiring or maintaining

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2, *For additional information concerning the shooting of Charles De Young, April 23, 1880, refer to the First California Guard. Adjutant General's Office.

Activities: (continued)

a horse of one's own was a part of the cost, as the National Guard at that time furnished only arms and ammunition to the companies. Undoubtedly, it was difficult to find enough recruits to maintain the minimum number of men allowed by law. Cavalrymen should have money, and men who earn large amounts of money are usually too busy to donate time and money to the National Guard, especially in times of peace.

The consolidation of Companies A and B resulted in the First Cavalry Battalion being mustered out of service on September 23, 1881, in accordance with General Order No. 21.* The same order provides that the officer detailed to effect the consolidation would give honorable discharge to any member of the company who may prefer such discharge rather than enter the company with which his former command is consolidated. Any member who shall prefer to receive an honorable discharge, as here provided, and who shall reenter the military service of the State within thirty days, shall be considered as having been absent with leave. Should he, in future, make an application for exempt certificate, his years of service to the State will be considered consecutive. The order also provided the officers of Company A should be honorably discharged, while the officers of Company B became the commanding officers of the new company.

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. Adjutant General Report 1881-1882, page 87.