

# **History of the Company B (former Shields Guard), 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Coast Artillery, National Guard of California 1901-1907**

This history was completed in 1940 by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in conjunction with the California National Guard and the California State Library.

Digitized by the History Office, Camp San Luis Obispo, 13 January 2015

COMPANY B

Company B, First Battalion Coast Artillery, Second Brigade (formerly Shields Guard)

Reference: Adjutant General's Files

Location: San Francisco, San Francisco County

Organized January 3, 1862

Reconstituted March 31, 1882\*

Reconstituted December 9, 1895\*\*

Mustered into Federal Service May 6, 1898\*\*\*

Mustered out of Federal Service September 21, 1899\*\*\*\*

Reorganized as Company G, First Infantry Regiment Nov. 29, 1899+

Reconstituted April 19, 1901++

Redesignated May 11, 1907+++

.ooo.

\*Company B, Third Infantry Battalion, formerly Shields Guard, redesignated Company G, First Infantry Regiment, March 31, 1882.

Adjutant General Report 1881-1882, General Order No. 6, page 93.

\*\*Company G, First Infantry Regiment, Second Brigade redesignated Company G, Fourth Battalion, December 7, 1895. Two days later December 9, Company G, Fourth Battalion redesignated Company G, First Infantry Regiment, Second Brigade. Adjutant General Report 1895-1896, General Order No. 17, 18, pages 86, 88.

\*\*\*Company G as part of the First Infantry Regiment was mustered into Federal Service May 6, 1898.

Adjutant General Report 1899-1900, page 4.

\*\*Adjutant General Report 1899-1900, General Order No. 11, page 68.

+Company G as part of the First Infantry Regiment re-entered the National Guard, November 29, 1899.

Adjutant General Report 1899-1900, page 79.

++Company G, First Infantry Regiment redesignated Battery B, First Battalion of Artillery, April 19, 1901.

Adjutant General Report 1901-1902, General Order No. 5, page 86.

+++Company B, First Battalion Coast Artillery transferred to Fifth Infantry Regiment and redesignated Company H, Fifth Infantry Regiment, Second Brigade, May 11, 1907.

General and Special Orders and Circulars 1907, General Order No. 10.

2504

✓

COMPANY B (Continued)

<u>Commanding Officers</u>			
<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>		<u>Commission</u>
William N. Swasey, Captain (Re-elected Nov. 10, 1902) (Resigned May 19, 1903)	Oct. 22, 1900		Apr. 19, 1901
Walter Scott Grattan, First Lieut.	Oct. 22, 1900		Apr. 19, 1901
Claire P. Knerr, First Lieut.	Nov. 10, 1902		Jan. 18, 1903
Walter Scott Grattan, Captain (Re-elected June 12, 1905)	June 8, 1903		June 30, 1903
John W. Cobby, First Lieut.	Jan. 23, 1905		Mar. 1, 1905
John C. Magle, First Lieut.	Mar. 25, 1907		Apr. 18, 1907 25

**Activities:**

Company B, First Battalion Artillery was an old organization, having been organized January 3, 1862, as the Shields Guard. It was one of the companies that composed the Irish Regiment and its members were nearly all Irish. In the Irish or Second Infantry Regiment, the Shields Guard was designated Company C. In 1868 the regiment was mustered out but in 1868 the First Infantry Battalion was organized and the Shields Guard was designated Company B, First Infantry Battalion. In 1871 the first Battalion Infantry was increased to a regiment and redesignated Third Infantry Regiment. Another change took place on June 1, 1881, when the Third Regiment was disbanded and the Shields Guard was then redesignated Company B, Third Infantry Battalion. The following year on March 31, 1882, Company B, Third Infantry Battalion was transferred to the First Infantry Regiment and redesignated Company G. At the same time the Third Infantry Battalion was disbanded.

The discontinuance of the Third Infantry Battalion caused a great deal of dissatisfaction among the two companies then in the Battalion. Company A was dissatisfied because it was to be transferred to the Second Artillery Regiment and designated Battery E. They refused to obey the above orders and a new Company E was organized and mustered in its place. Company B the second unit, formerly Shields Guard, offered considerable opposition to their transfer to the First Infantry Regiment. Captain Henry P. Filgate and First Lieutenant Henry F. Gittings resigned their commissions rather than enter the First Regiment. At that time Company C, First Infantry known as the "National" because of its having been organized as the National Guard, August 31, 1865, had more members than they knew what to do with. The members decided to play big brother to Company G. First Lieutenant Charles P. Le Breton of Company C was transferred to Company G

## COMPANY B (Continued)

### Activities:

and elected Captain of the newly reorganized unit. Many members of Company C transferred to the new Company G, (formerly Company B, Third Infantry Battalion) and the new company soon developed into an unusually strong unit in the National Guard. Because of the assistance rendered to Company G by Company C, both units soon were known as the "Nationals."

The above introduction furnishes a good illustration of the background of the unit that on April 19, 1901, was selected as one of the four companies that should compose the First Battalion of Artillery. Company G, First Infantry Regiment on that date was detached from the First Regiment and redesignated Company B, First Battalion Artillery, which is where this story begins. The first subject to be discussed will be the relative standing of Company B at the annual inspection, both in the Battalion and National Guard as a whole. In 1902 Company B was fourth in the battalion, and eighteenth in the National Guard; in 1904 the unit was second in the battalion, at inspection, and thirteenth in the National Guard of California; in 1905 was first in the battalion and eighth in the entire National Guard. In 1906, at the last inspection of the battalion Company B was third in the battalion rating and thirty-second in the National Guard of California.

In target practice in 1902 Company B was second highest in the battalion, and the same was true in 1904, Company B only being exceeded by Company C. In 1906 Company C was the only unit showing in the battalion score. These ratings are on the basis of the number of men from each company that scored high enough to win either a Sharpshooter, Expert Riflemen or Riflemen medal.

Company B attended the first encampment held by the battalion, which was at Santa Cruz, from June twelve to twenty-second, 1901. The next year the battalion held a battalion encampment in Stockton June 14 to 21, 1902. In July 4 to 12, 1903, Company B with battalion, camped in Stockton again. In 1904 the first joint Army-National Guard encampment was held at Atascadero from August 13 to 26.\* No encampments were held in 1905 or 1906. The Earthquake and Fire of 1906 was accepted by the War Department in lieu of an encampment for that year.

The service rendered by Company B during the Earthquake of April, 1906 was splendid. The assistance rendered to the helpless,

.000.

\*For further information on encampments refer to History of First Battalion Coast Artillery. Adjutant General's Office.

COMPANY B (Continued)

## Activities: (continued)

protection supplied for the weak, the requisition of supplies, and the salvaging of the food from burning buildings will long stand out in the memories of thousands of people who in that hour were either injured or panic stricken and looking for aid.\*

And now the last paragraph of Company B will enumerate some of the parades held by the unit. Company B as part of the First Battalion Coast Artillery took part in two military funerals. The first was for Adjutant General W. H. Seamans, National Guard of California, January 12, 1902. The second was to honor Major-General W. H. L. Barnes, National Guard of California, retired, whose funeral was held on July 24, 1902. The Fourth of July always called for a parade in the National Guard. The same was true of Memorial Day, May 30. Other parades participated in by Company B were on May 12 and 13, 1903, both held in honor of the President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt, who was visiting San Francisco at that time.\*\*

In the early part of 1907, during the period that the National Guard was making changes to meet the requirements of the Dick Militia Law, it was decided to discontinue the Coast Artillery. As a result of the decision Company B was transferred to the Fifth Infantry Regiment and redesignated Company K, Fifth Infantry, May 11, 1907.

.ooo.

\*For additional information refer to the California National Guard and the Earthquake and Fire of 1906. Adjutant General's Office.

\*\*For additional information concerning parades refer to History of First Battalion Coast Artillery. Adjutant General's Office.