

History of the Troop D, 1st Squadron of Cavalry, National Guard of California 1911-1917

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TROOP D
Troop D, First Squadron of Cavalry (formerly Troop D Cavalry)

Reference: Adjutant General's Files

Location: Los Angeles, Los Angeles County

Organized August 9, 1895

Assigned August 15, 1905*

Redesignated July 31, 1908**

Reconstituted May 1, 1911***

Mustered into Federal Service June 26, 1916****

Mustered out of Federal Service November 17, 1916*****

Resumption of Service in the National Guard 1916*****

Mustered into Federal Service August 24, 1917+

Redesignated September 24, 1917++

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<u>Name</u>	<u>Commanding Officers</u>	<u>Commission</u>
Ansel E. O'Banion, Capt. (resigned July 31, 1906)	<u>Rank</u> Nov. 24, 1905	----- Oct. 30, 1906
Thomas C. Waterous, Capt. (resigned Aug. 29, 1907)	Sept. 28, 1906	Oct. 30, 1906
James Gunn, Capt.	Oct. 11, 1907	Nov. 18, 1907
J. W. Jones, First Lieut. (promoted Staff Officer Nov. 22, 1905)	Jan. 29, 1904	Mar. 2, 1904
James Gunn, First Lieut. (promoted Capt. Oct. 11, 1907)	Mar. 28, 1906	Apr. 13, 1906
Jesse McComas, First Lieut.	Oct. 11, 1907	-----
James Gunn, Capt. (reelected May 13, 1909)	-----	-----
Jesse McComas, First Lieut. (reelected May 13, 1909)	-----	-----

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*Troop D Cavalry, unattached, First Brigade redesignated Troop D, First Squadron of Cavalry, Aug. 15, 1905. Adj. Gen. Report 1905, page 3.

**Troop D, First Squadron of Cavalry, redesignated Troop D Cavalry, unattached, First Brigade, when Headquarters First Squadron Cavalry ceased to exist, July 31, 1908.

General and Special Orders and Circulars 1908. G. O. No. 15.

***Troop D Cavalry, redesignated Troop D First Squadron Cavalry when Headquarters First Squadron Cavalry was reorganized, May 1, 1911.

General and Special Orders and Circulars 1911. Special Order No. 5.

****Troop D as part of the First Squadron of Cavalry was called into Federal Service for duty on the Mexican Border, June 26, 1916. Adjutant General Report 1914-1920, page 16.

*****Adjutant General Report 1914-1920, page 16.

*****General and Special Orders and Bulletins 1916, G. O. No. 34, p.150.

*Troop D as part of the First Squadron of Cavalry, was mustered into Federal Service during the World War, August 24, 1917, Muster Roll, Troop D, First Squadron Cavalry August 24, 1917. Adjutant General Files.

**Troop D redesignated Headquarters 40th Division Sept. 24, 1917. Adjutant General Report 1914-1920, page 22.

Commanding Officers (Continued)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Commission</u>
James Gunn, Captain (Continued in Office)		
Milton Hesselberger, First Lieut.	July 21, 1911	Aug. 29, 1911
James Gunn, Captain (reelected Oct. 20, 1913)		
Ray Rogers, First Lieutenant	Nov. 21, 1913	Jan. 7, 1914

Activities:

Troop D, First Squadron of Cavalry was organized August 9, 1895 as Troop D Cavalry, unattached. The unit retained that designation until August 15, 1905, when it was assigned to the First Squadron of Cavalry, as Troop D.

The first major activity of the unit was in answer to a call for troops, when, on April 18, 1906, San Francisco was affected by a severe earthquake. The unit, together with the Signal Corps and Companies B, G, K, and M of the Seventh Infantry, left Los Angeles on April 21, and arrived in Oakland on the afternoon of April 22. The troops began their duties at once in a most cheerful manner as they were eager to assist the citizens of the stricken district. Troop D not only did a great deal of relief work, but also assisted the civil authorities in conjunction with the regular troops, in preserving order in both the burned and unburned districts. The unit also assisted in guarding the several relief camps, located in San Francisco and Oakland in addition to patrolling the streets and guarding various public buildings, banks, and storehouses. Troop D remained on duty until May 12, 1906, when their services were no longer needed. The work of the National Guardsmen during this period was greatly praised by all who had occasion to realize the extent of their untiring efforts in an aim to be of assistance.

Aside from the regular weekly drills, the military duties of Troop D consisted of annual encampments and target practice.

On October 4, 1908, Troop D accompanied the Seventh Infantry Regiment to Atascadero for an annual encampment of National Guardsmen which included 1900 citizen soldiers. Two special trains were chartered for transporting the troops, their baggage, and horses. Troop D was assigned to the first train which also carried Brigadier-General Robert Wankowski and his staff.

The various units were drilled thoroughly in the actual field work of a soldier while at camp. During the afternoon of October seventh, while the regulars enjoyed an afternoon rest, the 1900 National Guardsmen marched for several miles over ten different routes. They were accompanied by United States Army officers as umpires, for advance, rear and flank guard, exercises and movements against an imaginary enemy. Returning late in the afternoon, footsore and weary, the soldiers had the satisfaction of being commended for

TROOP D (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

their work. Each day brought new types of maneuvers for Troop D to participate in, which also eliminated any cause for monotony.

While at camp during the night of the eleventh the unit experienced an unexpected "call to arms". The entire camp was aroused by the first call of the alarm and in a short time was taken up by every bugler and trumpeter in the two mile long camp. Repeated from knoll to knoll the alarm filled the night with the stirring notes of the most thrilling of all calls in time of war. The declaration of war on San Luis Obispo county by Monterey county and a threatened attack by the enemy coming from the north by way of Paso Robles existed only in the imagination of the Atascadero umpires; but the chill, frosty night air was intensely real to the tired officers and soldiers who tumbled out of their tents grumbling and cursing.

Umpires quickly appeared and handed to regimental commanders, orders directing them to take up positions assigned to them, two miles north of camp. The scheduled positions of all troops were readily taken and by the time the sun appeared, there was visible a front of over a mile long with outposts, pickets and patrols, giving the nearest semblance to war of any previous maneuvers. Aside from the National Guard of California, there were the National Guard of Arizona and regulars from California, Arizona and New Mexico, numbering five thousand troops in all.

The last day of the encampment, October fifteenth, was confined mainly to the troops breaking camp and boarding trains for their home towns. Troop D left camp at three-fifty P. M. after ten days of strenuous drilling and maneuvering, but felt that the time was well spent as it was the first time the unit had been drilled so thoroughly in war maneuvers.*

On October 1, 1910, Troop D prepared for another encampment at Atascadero. The previous encampment having proven so successful, the site of Atascadero was again selected. The members of Troop D met on the morning of the first and assisted in getting their large equipment to the stations. The troop and Captain James Gunn, together with the other Los Angeles companies which consisted of the Seventh Infantry and Company A of the Signal Corps, dined at downtown cafes for lunch. The unit then marched to the station to join the Infantry

*The Los Angeles Herald, October 4, 1908, page 5, column 2.
The Los Angeles Herald, October 15, 1908, page 8, column 5.

Activities: (Continued)

companies before leaving at three-thirty P. M.

Upon arrival at Atascadero, an officer of the regular army assigned the quarters and the driving of tent stakes began at once. The routine duties were outlined as follows:

<u>5:30 A.M.</u>	Reveille
<u>5:45 A.M.</u>	Assembly
<u>6:00 A.M.</u>	Mess Call
<u>6:45 A.M.</u>	Fatigue
<u>8:00 A.M.</u>	Drill
<u>11:00 A.M.</u>	Fatigue
<u>12:00 A.M.</u>	Mess
<u>1:00 P.M.</u>	Drill
<u>3:50 P.M.</u>	Guard mount
<u>4:50 P.M.</u>	Retreat
<u>5:30 P.M.</u>	Mess
<u>10:45 P.M.</u>	Call to quarters
<u>11:00 P.M.</u>	Taps

This schedule was altered somewhat as many of the drills turned out to be maneuvers in the form of sham battles or exercises.

The day set aside for the annual sham battle was the greatest event of the encampment. It was an event that every officer and private looked forward to each year. The night previous to this spectacular scene closely resembled the real action in real warfare. The commanding officers were assigned their duties and stations and arranged their troops the night before in the formations planned. During this night, the militiamen got a touch of something very close to real war times, by sleeping on the ground rolled in their blankets.

Just two days before the encampment ended, the four thousand troops were reviewed by Governor Gillett, and a drizzling rain fell through out the ceremony, which eliminated the spectacular maneuvers.* Many

*The Los Angeles Herald, October 1, 1910.
The Los Angeles Herald, October 15, 1910.

TROOP D (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

encampments such as these were participated in by Troop D prior to entering the world war in 1917.

The unit also took part in many annual target shoots. During the year of 1910, the unit made a very good record by the number of men who received medals. The order in which the troops qualified with the revolver were as follows:

Expert 5

Sharpshooters 6

Marksmen 13

A rifle practice was also held at the same time in which the troop made equally as good a showing. There were twenty-four members of Troop D that were issued medals for the following qualifications:

Distinguished Marksmen 1

First Class Riflemen 2

Riflemen 21

The troop did not keep up their standard of efficiency as the yearly reports show a gradual decrease in the number of medals issued. For the year of 1914, the unit had but eleven men qualify for medals in revolver practice and twelve in rifle practice. The year of 1915 brought a change in the type of fire arms used. Instead of the much used revolver, the automatic pistol was introduced at National Guard target shoots. This change seemed to inspire the members of Troop D, as a slight increase is noted in the report. Thirteen men qualified for medals in the pistol practice and twenty-two in rifle practice.*

The activities of Troop D were not all confined to military tactics. The unit was called upon to participate in many outstanding parades and entertainments. One of the most elaborate parades the unit had the honor of participating in was the La Fiesta held in Los Angeles on May 10, 1907. The parade took place during the Shriners' Convention, which brought an additional 20,000 persons to the flower-bedecked city. Never in the history of the order was there anything so beautiful offered for their delectation. Never in the annals of the Shrine had the ten thousands marched between flower-lined streets, or watched for hours the passing of blossom-clad carriages and witnessed such sights of floral beauty.

The parade was a wonderful sight to see, and division eight was

*General and Special Orders and Bulletins 1916, pages 34 and 39.

TROOP D (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

notable for the fact that it was the trooper's section. The boys, who fight on horseback and send the thrills through hearts manly and feminine, had the right of way here. As befits a trooper's division, none but patriotic airs were rendered and they were given with a will. As the uniforms of the boys from Troop D hove in sight, the word passed as if by magic. The khaki and yellow uniforms, the raised sabers and the martial riding of the men, sent a thrill as far as eyes could see the war like picture. The men in line sat astride their horses like cavalrymen, erect and steady. They looked neither to the right nor left. At word of command they wheeled or changed formation with a clash of sabers and a clatter of hoofs that was inspiring. It was hard to tell, judged by the cheering, whether the Troop D boys made the greatest hit with the men or women on the curb line and beyond.*

The following year, on October twelfth, President William Taft visited the city of Los Angeles and in his honor, a parade was held. Troop D again played an important role as escort to the official carriage. When the formal reception to the President was concluded and he entered his waiting automobile, a sharp command was given outside the gates of Arcade Depot and Troop D swung into three platoons and rounded into East Fifth Street on a trot. The great crowds surged back, the bugle sounded and the street parade was on. Following the gallant horsemen, and surrounded by an escort from the troop, came car number one bearing the President, his military aide, Captain Archibald Butt, Mayor George Alexander, Secret Service Agent Sloan, and Ralph Hamlin, owner and chauffeur of the car. The machine, a great shining Franklin, was decked with smilax, asparagus ferns and huckleberry shrubbery, splotted with yellow chrysanthemums and gay with yellow ribbon. It was quite an honor for Troop D to head the procession of not less than forty cars, each carrying its share of dignitaries.*

Troop D, as a unit, was called into Federal Service twice during the years of its existence. The first call was issued on June 18, 1916, when troops were needed to guard the Mexican Border. Captain James Gunn reported at Sacramento with ninety-nine enlisted men and was mustered into Federal Service on June 26, 1916. The troops were sent to Nogales, Arizona, where they performed guard and patrol duty until November 11, 1916. A hearty welcome was extended the members of Troop D when they returned to Los Angeles from their five months of duty on the Border. They were also highly commended upon in performing their duties well and willingly.

*The Los Angeles Herald, May 11, 1907, page 1, column 6.

*The Los Angeles Herald, October 12, 1908, page 6, column 2.

TROOP D (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

The unit was home from the Mexican Border but a short time when it became a central figure among the militia companies of California. Troop D had been selected to loan all of the company's property to William R. Hearst for the purpose of taking the moving picture "Patria". At that time Troop D had in their possession property belonging to the Medical Corps, Signal Corps, and also Quartermaster supplies. A contract was drawn between William R. Hearst and Governor Hiram W. Johnson, Commander-in-Chief of the California National Guard, which required William Hearst to post a \$10,000 bond. The time allotted for the use of the property was during a period beginning December 15, 1916, and ending February 15, 1917. The property was to be at all times during such use in charge of duly commissioned officers and enlisted men of the National Guard of California.

OUTLINE HISTORY

The novelty of this occasion had barely passed when Troop D was again called into Federal Service. They had the opportunity of serving their country during the World War. Through a proclamation issued by President Woodrow Wilson, July 3, 1917, Troop D was mustered into Federal Service, August 5, 1917, and designated Headquarters Troop, 40th Division.*

*Adjutant General Report 1914-1920, page 22.