

History of the 6th Separate Company, Infantry, California National Guard 1918-1918

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SIXTH SEPARATE COMPANY

(FRESNO)

Sixth Separate Company, Infantry, California National Guard
Reference Adjutant General's Files
Location Fresno, Fresno County
Mustered in January 17, 1918*
Mustered out February 20, 1919**

Commanding Officers

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Commission</u>
Samuel L. Gallaher, Captain	January 17, 1918	February 13, 1918
Bernard W. Brandt, First Lieut. (resigned August 5, 1918)	January 17, 1918	February 13, 1918

Activities:

The Sixth Separate Company, California National Guard, was mustered into the service of the State on January 17, 1918 in Fresno. One hundred five men raised their right hand at the city auditorium and took the oath of allegiance. The ceremony was conducted by Major L. D. Collins, representing the Adjutant General's Office. S. L. Gallaher was appointed Captain and Bernard Brandt, First Lieutenant. The mustering in was followed by a congratulatory speech by Mr. M. B. Harris, representing Mayor Toomey who was unable to be present on account of illness.***

The Sixth Company was in existence about thirteen months, during which time the organization participated in two parades. The first was Memorial Day, May 30, 1918. Automobiles which had been contributed by citizens waited on Fresno Street to convey the marchers to the cemetery. Major Ed Jones of the Fresno Home Guards was Grand Marshal in the parade. At the cemetery, a ceremony more impressive than any in the history of Memorial Day exercises in Fresno County, was held. Liberty cemetery was dedicated to the memory of the soldiers and

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*Sixth Separate Company designated Company F, and mustered into the service of the State, January 17, 1918.
Adjutant General Report 1914-1920, page 116.

**Sixth Separate Company mustered out, February 20, 1919.
General and Special Orders 1919, page 6.

***Fresno Republican, January 18, 1918, page 16, column 3.

SIXTH SEPARATE COMPANY (Continued)

(FRESNO)

Activities: (Continued)

sailors who lost their lives during the war.

The military features of the program with which the dedicatory ceremony closed, brought close to home the reality which inspired the call for special forms of observance of the day in 1918. The Junior Marine Scouts formed a hollow square around the flag pole. Enclosed in the square were the graves of three Fresno boys who had given up their lives in the military service and also markers for others whose bodies lie elsewhere. The Musicians Union band, the male chorus and twenty-five little girls from Hawthorn School, were inside the square, each having a part in the final number on the program, the flag raising and the decoration of the fresh made graves. As the flag was raised by Corporal H. I. Johnston of the United States Marine Corps, and Corporal I. Olsen of the United States Army recruiting station, the band played 'The Star Spangled Banner', and in the distance the National salute was fired by a squad from the local camp of the United Spanish-American War Veterans. When the flag was solemnly lowered to half mast, the male chorus sang 'The Vacant Chair' as the white clad group of school girls knelt in reverence to strew the honored graves with blossoms. With the girls still kneeling and the climax of the spectacle gripping each heart, the High School Cadets fired the last salute and taps was sounded by the buglers of their battalion. All realized that the highest tribute had been paid to memory as the hallowed graves were touched by the blossoms falling from the hands of lovely childhood. In the memories of old and young, Memorial Day of 1918 will live apart as sacred.*

The next parade in which the Sixth Company participated took place on July 4, 1918. Like Memorial Day the fourth of July seemed to have a new meaning to the citizens of our land. The residents of Fresno held a new kind of parade. Mothers; some wearing four and five stars on the service flag that wrapped their sleeves, brought the war closer than ever before. These

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*The Fresno Republican, May 31, 1918, page 20, column 1.

SIXTH SEPARATE COMPANY (Continued)

(FRESNO)

Activities: (Continued)

mothers marched behind a banner on which was inscribed: 'We Are Proud Of Our Sons In The Service'. The Red Cross division was beautiful. Civic and Church organizations with Service Flags were in the line. Eleven nations were represented in the parade. The Sixth Separate Company was one of the units in the military division in this most unusual and patriotic spectacle. Many of it's members had entered the Federal Service, and many in the unit were destined to go in the near future.*

The final muster out of the Sixth Company of Fresno was the result of the gradual weakening of the unit by enlistments and drafts into the United States Army. The records show that in April 1918, 24 men were inducted into the United States Army, while in May of the same year, 48 enlisted men entered the Federal Service, and one Lieutenant resigned. Five enlisted men were taken in June, fourteen in July and six in August. On February 20, 1919, when the unit was mustered out, the muster out roll disclosed the fact that there was only one commissioned officer and but six enlisted men in the company.

The muster out roll of the Sixth Separate Company shows that 107 men had been drawn from the Sixth Company for the Regular Army, and of that number, 95 men received promotions to higher grades on entering the Regular Army. Seven men from the company received commissions. This record indicates that the Sixth Company had served its Country well in that it drilled and trained so many men who later entered the United States Army. The California National Guard can well be proud of the service thus performed, and it was unfortunate that the unit could not continue.

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*The Fresno Republican, July 5, 1918, page 6, column 1.