

History of the 8th Infantry Battalion, Company A (Chico Guard), National Guard of California 1890-1891

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COMPANY A

Company A, Eighth Infantry Battalion, Fifth Brigade (formerly Chico Guard)

Reference: Adjutant General's Files
Location: Chico, Butte County
Organized May 18, 1875
Reconstituted February 15, 1890*
Reconstituted October 31, 1891**

Commanding Officers

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Commission</u>
Cassius B. Swain, Captain	Mar. 26, 1889	June 7, 1889***
Joseph H. Gunby, First Lieut. (Promoted to Captain Adjutant Eighth Infantry Battalion Mar. 4, 1891)	Mar. 26, 1889	June 7, 1889***
John J. Cahill, Captain	Mar. 26, 1891	May 10, 1891
Harry D. Burroughs, First Lieut.	Mar. 26, 1891	May 10, 1891

Activities:

Company A, prior to 1890, was known as the Chico Guard, unattached. On February fifteenth of that year the unit became one of five companies which formed the Eighth Infantry Battalion and was designated Company A.

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*Company A, formerly Chico Guard, unattached, designated Company A, Eighth Infantry Battalion, Fifth Brigade, February 15, 1890. Adjutant General Report 1890, page 4.

**Adjutant General Report 1891-1892, page 40. (The rank date of Colonel Park Henshaw, October 31, 1891, is to be used as the date Company A became attached to the Eighth Infantry Regiment.)

***Captain Swain and Lieutenant Gunby retained their former commissions as of June 7, 1889, when they commanded Chico Guard.

COMPANY A (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

Captain C. B. Swain commanded the company for a number of years and in 1890, received a bronze service medal for eleven years of service in the National Guard. Corporal B. F. Young and Private I. M. Terrill, also received service medals for being associated with the National Guard for a period of fifteen years.* The election of officers on March 26, 1891, revealed the fact that Company A was commanded by the youngest set of commissioned officers in the National Guard of California. Captain Cahill and Lieutenant Burroughs were both twenty-four years of age, while Second Lieutenant Pratt was but twenty-three. These young men proved very capable commanding officers as is shown by the company merits.**

The first activity Company A participated in after becoming attached to the Eighth Battalion was an encampment held at Chico during August 1890.*** Another encampment was held the following year at Camp Allen, Santa Cruz from July 18 to 26, 1891. Company A as part of the Eighth Infantry Regiment attended this camp accompanied by the Sixth Infantry Battalion. The members of Company A were thoroughly drilled in battalion and regimental formations. This being the first encampment of its type attended by the members of Company A, they were forced to contend with some very strong competition from numerous other companies. Their efforts were not futile, as an inspection report by A. D. Cutler, Lieutenant-Colonel and Division Inspector, quotes the average merits of Company A as follows:

Average attendance	70.80 per cent	(fair)
Inspection	4.00 per cent	(good)
Inspection of quarters	5.00 per cent	(very good)

There were thirty-six men present from a membership of fifty-one, which was the smallest membership of any company in the battalion. Therefore, the attendance rating was not a discredit to the company.**** The unit as a part of the Eighth Infantry

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*General Orders, Series 1887-1895, page 85.

**Chico Weekly Chronicle-Record, April 4, 1891, page 1, column 3.

***For additional information concerning the Encampment of 1890, refer to History of Eighth Infantry Battalion, Fifth Brigade.

****Adjutant General Report 1891-1892, page 159.

COMPANY A (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

Battalion was highly commented upon by Captain John O'Connell, First United States Infantry for their rapid progress in battalion and skirmish drills. The Captain gave the troops credit for their accurate and intelligent performance of guard duty. The officers and men were also admired for the manner in which they manifested their duties.*

Aside from the regular weekly drills and parades, Company A also participated in two target practices held during the months of August and September 1890. In the first or preliminary shoot of August, Captain Swain scored thirty-nine points which entitled him to compete in the finals of September. Competition was very keen in the final meet and Captain Swain and twenty-one men of Company A, scored only enough points for Third-class silver medals.**

Company A held a comparatively good attendance rating during the time the unit was attached to the Eighth Infantry Battalion. During 1891 the company's rating, which was based on the monthly drills, never fell below 76.12 per cent, showing the members took a keen interest in all military requirements. At the annual muster and inspection of 1891, held during July, Company A made another good showing. The degrees of merit at this inspection were based upon the following three requirements:

- First - neatness as to person, uniforms, and equipment.
- Second - general bearing and soldierly appearance.
- Third - knowledge of duties.

The average merit for Company A under these conditions was 4.66 per cent *** and the average attendance was 98.2 per cent. The regular weekly meetings and drills, constitute the remaining activities of Company A during the time it was attached to the Eighth Infantry Battalion.

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*Adjutant General Report 1891-1892, page 167.

**General Orders, Series 1887-1895, page 101.

***The average company merits based upon the following score:
Excellent, 6; very good, 5; good, 4; fair, 3; poor, 1.

COMPANY A (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

During the latter part of 1891, it was decided through the Board of Location and Organization to elevate the Eighth Infantry Battalion to regimental organization. Therefore, on October 31, 1891, Company A, Eighth Infantry Battalion was redesignated as Company A, Eighth Infantry Regiment, Fifth Brigade.*

Name	Rank	Year	Commission
Wm. E. Mitchell	1st Lt.	1887	Nov. 17, 1887
Frank Williams	1st Lt.	1887	Nov. 17, 1887
George S. ...	2nd Lt.	1888	Nov. 17, 1888
James R. ...	2nd Lt.	1888	Sept. 23, 1888
James R. ...	2nd Lt.	1888	Nov. 18, 1888
Sam ...	2nd Lt.	1888	Sept. 23, 1888

Company A was organized on October 10, 1887, as the Colosse Guard, established, and on February 10, 1890, was attached to Eighth Infantry Battalion, Fifth Brigade. The company maintained a good rating while in the service as an unattached company and retained the same standards throughout the life of the battalion. As an indication of the service of the company which was obtained through the monthly drills, the following table is given:

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*Company B, formerly Colosse Guard, unattached, redesignated Company A, Eighth Infantry Battalion, Fifth Brigade, February 10, 1890. Adjutant General Report 1890, page 4.

**Adjutant General Report 1891-1892, page 40. (The rank date of ...)

***General Orders, Series 1887-1895, General Order No. 17, page 128.**