

# **History of Ambulance Company No. 1, National Guard of California 1913-1917**

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Ambulance Company No. 1

Reference: Adjutant General's Files

Location: Napa, Napa County

Mustered in January 1, 1913\*

Mustered into Federal Service June 30, 1916\*\*

Mustered out of Federal Service October 31, 1916\*\*\*

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

Mustered into Federal Service August 20, 1917\*\*\*\*\*

Redesignated October 13, 1917x

Commanding Officers

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Commission</u>
Charles H. Bulson, Captain (Assigned to Ambulance Co. No. 1, Mar. 26, 1913) (Gen. and Spec. Ord. and Cir. 1913, Gen. Ord. No. 4)	A ug. 5, 1911	Aug. 9, 1911
Jack K. Ransom, First Lieutenant (Assigned to Ambulance Co. No. 1, Apr. 24, 1913) (Gen. and Spec. Ord. and Cir. 1913, Spec. Ord. No. 6) (Resigned April 6, 1914)	Mar. 26, 1913	Apr. 10, 1913
Charles B. Caldwell, First Lieut. (Assigned to Ambulance Co. No. 1, Apr. 24, 1913) (Gen. and Spec. Ord. and Cir. 1913, Spec. Ord. No. 6)	Mar. 27, 1913	Apr. 10, 1913
George R. Myers, First Lieutenant (Assigned to Ambulance Co. No. 1, Apr. 25, 1914) (Resigned June 17, 1915)	Apr. 7, 1914	Apr. 24, 1914

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\*Adjutant General Report 1910-1914, page 9.

\*\*Ambulance Co. No. 1 mustered into Federal Service for duty on the Mexican Border, June 30, 1916. Adjutant General Report 1914-1920, page 14.

\*\*\*Adjutant General Report 1914-1920, page 14.

\*\*\*\*General and Special Orders 1916, G. O. No. 34, page 150.

\*\*\*\*\*Ambulance Co. No. 1, mustered into Federal Service for duty during the World War August 20, 1917. Monthly Return Ambulance Co. No. 1, August 20, 1917. Adjutant General Files.

xAmbulance Co. No. 1, redesignated 157th Ambulance Company 115th Sanitary Train, 40th Division October 13, 1917. Adjutant General Report 1914-1920, page 22.

AMBULANCE COMPANY NO. 1

Commanding Officers (Continued)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Commission</u>
Edouard S. Loizeux, Captain	June 8, 1914	June 15, 1914
C. E. Lewis, Captain (Assigned to Ambulance Co. No. 1, Feb. 17, 1916)	May 28, 1915	July 12, 1915
E. C. Turner, Captain	June 6, 1916	June 19, 1916
Charles S. Freedman, First Lieut. (Assigned to Ambulance Co. No. 1, June 21, 1916)	June 21, 1916	June 21, 1916
Robert M. Jones, First Lieut. (Assigned to Ambulance Co. No. 1, June 22, 1916) (Resigned July 20, 1916)	June 22, 1916	June 22, 1916
Ray K. Barry, First Lieutenant (Assigned to Ambulance Co. No. 1, Sept. 6, 1916)	July 5, 1916	July 5, 1916

**Activities:**

The organization of Ambulance Company No. 1 at Napa on January 1, 1913 marked a new era in the history of the California National Guard. It was not until 1913 that the State Legislature passed a bill which placed the unit on a basis similar to that of the Regular Army. Previous to that time, the California National Guard had no ambulances in its organizations, and the Hospital Corps, before its reorganization, was known as the weak spot of the National Guard. The reorganization also effected the Medical Corps, through which was organized the Field Hospital Company No. 1.\* Both of these units were fully organized and equipped and with the addition of an Ambulance Company, it was believed that the California troops would be capable of taking proper care of their sick and wounded in the field.

First Lieutenant Howard W. Seager, of the Medical Department, Seventh Infantry, was in addition to his other duties, also in temporary command of the newly organized Ambulance Company. The Lieutenant was also detailed as recruiting officer to enlist fifty-four men, the number required to form this unit.

Ambulance Company No. 1 was first organized in Los Angeles, but due to lack of enlistments, the location was changed to Napa, California. The Hospital Corps Detachment, First Squadron of Cavalry, was transferred to Ambulance Company No. 1, giving the unit a good start in recruiting a company sufficient to meet National Guard requirements.

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\*For further details refer to History of Field Hospital Company No. 1.

AMBULANCE COMPANY NO. 1 (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

The company returns for the month of May 1913 record a membership of forty-eight men, with an additional five new recruits during the month.

The unit participated in the Memorial Day exercises at Napa, May 30, 1913, and marched as a unit to the cemetery where Memorial services were held.

From July 6 to July 16, 1913, Ambulance Company No. 1 attended an encampment at Santa Cruz. Their duties at the encampment consisted of practical demonstrations of work in the field, and attending lectures concerning the duties of an ambulance company in time of actual warfare.

Ambulance Company No. 1 had an opportunity to display their knowledge of team work, when, on September 30, 1913, the unit was ordered to assist in fighting a forest fire. The following is a detailed account of the work performed by the company on that occasion.

On the afternoon of September thirtieth, the Commanding Officer of Ambulance Company No. 1, California National Guard, received orders by telephone from the Adjutant General to assemble the Company, and with sufficient rations, proceed to the scene of the fire near Chiles, Napa County, and to render all possible assistance to the civil authorities of the district in the protection of life and property from the fires then raging in that vicinity.

In compliance with the above order, which was received at 3:00 P. M., September thirtieth, Ambulance Company No. 1 promptly assembled at their armory, where the troops were supplied with overalls. At 3:50 P. M., the first auto trucks pulled out with thirty men, under Lieutenant J. K. Ransom; at 4:20 P. M., the Commanding Officer, accompanied by District Attorney N. F. Coombs of Napa County, Deputy Fire Warden William Moore, and four enlisted men, departed in an automobile for the scene of the conflagration. Autos were left to pick up the remainder of the men (about 15), who failed to reach the armory in time to proceed to the burning district with the first auto loads. Most of the men were employed at the Navy Yard, Mare Island, and at the Cement Works at Napa Junction, and could not reach the armory until about 5:30 P. M. Waiting autos rushed the men to the fire. With these late arrivals, the force numbered three officers and forty-three enlisted men, out of a total company membership of four officers and forty-nine men.

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AMBULANCE COMPANY NO. 1 (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

Information was received at Napa that it would be impossible to proceed directly to the scene of the fire, which was raging in Sage Canyon, on account of fallen trees and burned bridges. It was necessary therefore to make a detour of about six miles over the Chiles Valley road. The Commanding Officer who arrived at the scene in advance of the other members of the company had an opportunity to make an investigation before the arrival of the men. The Quartermaster and cooks, with rations, in a fast truck, also arrived in advance of the men. A temporary camp site was located, and the cooks instructed to have hot coffee prepared for the men on their arrival. As soon as the coffee was served, the men were rushed in auto trucks to the fire which was about two and one-half miles distant from the camp. The Commanding Officer decided that it would be necessary to cut a trail up a steep ridge for about one and one-half to two miles, to meet the back fire which had been started by civilian fire fighters. This was over a steep mountain ridge, separating the fire zone from the Valley proper, and if the flames passed this barrier, they would sweep the Valley. The men were put to work with bolos and axes, and in about two and one-half hours, had a trail eight feet wide and approximately two miles long, cut through the brush. From this trail, a back fire was started, and with constant watching the fire soon burned away from the ridge, thus cutting off all danger at that point. It was discovered about that time, that the back fire which had been started by the civilian fire fighters, at the County Road in Sage Canyon, had crossed the road and was making rapid progress down the Canyon. A detachment of soldiers was rushed to this point, and after a hard fight, had the flames under control.

The commanding officer then received word through Supervisor Weber, that State Forester Dodge had arrived and had taken fifteen members of Ambulance Company who arrived late, and put them fighting the fire at the junction of the Sage Canyon and Chiles Valley Roads. The fire at that point was sweeping over the mountain to the west, and along the ridge to the north. The Commanding Officer did not see the men until the following morning. At about 2:30 A. M., the situation was well in hand, fire patrols were established and the men sent to camp for supper and rest.

As soon as the militia arrived and took charge, every civilian fire fighter withdrew, except one man who was familiar with the country, and remained to act as guide. The others returned to their homes for a much needed rest.

Activities: (Continued)

The following morning, State Forester Dodge was located, and the Commanding Officer of Ambulance Company No. 1 asked for a conference with Deputy Fire Warden Moore, District Attorney Coombs and a number of citizens. It was the opinion of the Commanding Officer that now the greatest danger was past, the citizens could control the situation, and suggested that State Forester Dodge enlist a sufficient force of civilians and take charge. The Commanding Officer agreed however, not to withdraw his company until a force large enough to handle the situation could be assembled. Then the Commanding Officer, accompanied by State Forester Dodge and District Attorney Coombs, rode up the valley gathering all the available men in the neighborhood. A force of thirty men was soon assembled and, under State Forester Dodge, took charge of the situation. The principal work now to be done was to patrol the fire line and permit no new fires to start.

Ambulance Company No. 1 returned to their Home Station, where they arrived about 2:00 P. M., October first, after twenty-four hours of strenuous but efficient work. Much credit was due District Attorney Nathan F. Coombs, who accompanied the company and remained with them constantly. He also ably assisted the Commanding Officer and State Forester Dodge in assembling the civilian fire fighters.

It was remarkable that a company made up of young men employed about the city in various places and many in business for themselves, could be gathered together in so short a time, ready for active duty. They threw themselves into the work with spirit and energy, never faltering until the object of their efforts was attained. That the local authorities were highly pleased and gratified with the results accomplished, was evidenced by a letter written by District Attorney Coombs to Captain Bulson. Extracts from Captain Bulson's report and the letter from District Attorney Coombs read as follows:

"As Commanding Officer of Ambulance Company No. 1, I am highly gratified at the quick work accomplished by the men. I cannot speak too highly of their conduct and unselfish devotion; as well as the pride they take in their organization.

(Signed) (Captain) C. H. Bulson".

The letter written by District Attorney Coombs, and which accompanied Captain Bulson's report, complimented the troops in many ways. Mr. Coombs personally thanked the officers and men of Ambulance Company No. 1 for the courageous and manly way in which they assisted in saving homes and property in Chiles Valley.

Activities: (Continued)

He also stated that it was the 'finest piece of fire-fighting he had ever seen'. In concluding his letter, the District Attorney remarked that the general demeanor and discipline of the company was excellent; that he enjoyed being with such a manly crowd of boys; and that he was proud to know that Napa so generously supported the present Ambulance Corps.

The unit was, as during this particular activity, always outstanding in their undertakings. They participated in many social and civil activities throughout the many years the company was in existence.

The opportunity for serving their country in time of war came when, on June 18, 1916, the President of the United States issued a call for troops for duty on the Mexican Border. Within twelve hours after receiving orders to mobilize, the Captain of Ambulance Company No. 1 reported his organization in readiness to entrain.

The State Fair Grounds at Sacramento was the site chosen for mobilization of the troops preparatory to leaving for the Mexican Border. Officers of the Staff Corps and departments were detailed to prepare the grounds for that purpose. One-half mile of ten-inch water main was laid, water was piped over the entire inner field of the race track and shower baths and latrines were installed.

Troops began to arrive immediately upon completion of the camp on June twenty-second. Ambulance Company No. 1 reported June twenty-third, and was mustered into Federal Service June 30, 1916, by Captain Hannigan, United States Army. The organization left mobilization camp July 4, 1916, and arrived at Nogales, Arizona, July sixth.

Although the troops did not see active service on the Border, they were busily engaged in training and attending schools of instruction. Officers and men acquired valuable knowledge of what would be required of them in actual warfare. During the month of August, the company received eighteen riding horses and sixty-four mules; necessary instruction in equitation and the handling of these animals was given. The troops were also instructed in Medical Department work and keen attention was given to the school of instruction, under direction of Major Shockley, M. D., United States Army.

AMBULANCE COMPANY NO. 1 (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

Ambulance Company No. 1 was transferred to various localities while at the Border, but their headquarters remained at Nogales, Arizona. The Company was attached to the First Brigade from September 10 to September 30, 1916, inclusive, during which time they performed the usual routine camp and other duties pertaining to their branch of the service.

The unit remained at the Border until October thirty-first, when the troops were mustered out of Federal Service, and returned to their home station at Napa, California. A few months after having resumed service in the California National Guard, Ambulance Company No. 1 responded to the call of March 26, 1917, by the President of the United States, for troops to participate in the World War. Ambulance Company No. 1 was mustered into Federal Service, August 5, 1917, as the 157th Ambulance Company, 115th Sanitary Train, 40th Division.\*

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\*Adjutant General Report 1914-1920, pages 21 and 22.