

# **History of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Company (former National Guard), Coast Artillery Corps, National Guard of California 1909-1917**

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Third Company, Coast Artillery Corps, First Brigade, (formerly Nat. Guard)

Reference; Adjutant General's Files

Location: San Francisco, San Francisco County

Organized August 31, 1855

Redesignated May 8, 1861\*

Reconstituted April 19, 1901\*\*

Reconstituted May 11, 1907\*\*\*

Redesignated April 21, 1909\*\*\*\*

Mustered into Federal Service and redesignated Aug. 5, 1917\*\*\*\*\*

Commanding Officers

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>		<u>Commission</u>
Walter Parker Garfield, Capt. (Declined to appear before Examining Board)	June	1, 1909	
James Carnis Young, First Lieut. (Dismissed Oct. 29, 1909)	June	1, 1908+	Apr. 21, 1909
Philip Lee Bush, Capt. (Retired Sept. 30, 1912)	Apr.	14, 1909++	Apr. 27, 1910
William A. Hamilton, First Lieut.	May	25, 1910	June 9, 1910

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\*National Guard, unattached, designated Co. C, First Inf. Reg., Second Brigade, May 8, 1861. Adjutant General Report 1861, page 97.

\*\*Co. C, First Inf. Reg., Second Brigade redesignated Battery C, First Battalion Coast Artillery, Apr. 19, 1901. Adjutant General Report 1901-1902, G. O. No. 5, par. 3, page 66.

\*\*\*Co. L, formerly Co. C, First Battalion, Coast Artillery redesignated Co. L, Fifth Inf. Reg., Second Brigade, May 11, 1907.  
General and Special Orders and Circulars 1907, G. O. No. 10, par. 4.

\* Company L, Fifth Inf. Reg., Second Brigade redesignated Third Co., Coast Artillery Corps, Apr. 21, 1909 General and Special Orders and Circulars 1909, G. O. No. 9,.

\*\*\*\*\*Third Co., Coast Artillery Corps, mustered into Federal Service, Aug. 5, 1917. Muster Roll, Third Co., First Coast Defense Command, Aug. 23, 1917. Adjutant General Files.

+First Lieutenant James Carnis Young retained his rank date as of June 1, 1908, when he commanded Co. L, Fifth Inf. Reg. Second Brigade.

++Capt. Philip Lee Bush retained his rank date as of Apr. 14, 1900, when he was Captain, Second Brigade Staff, Nat. Guard of Calif. Adjutant General Report 1901-1902, page 170.

THIRD COMPANY, COAST ARTILLERY CORPS (Continued)

<u>Commanding Officers (Continued)</u>		
<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Commission</u>
Alexander Turner Schenck, Captain (resigned March 2, 1915)	April 20, 1909	Nov. 8, 1914
James Daniel Murphy, First Lieut. (resigned April 22, 1915)	Feb. 12, 1913	March 11, 1913
Conrad Benjamin Ohnemuller, Capt.	April 19, 1915	May 3, 1915
Elmer Harman Schwarz, First Lieut.	Nov. 16, 1915	Dec. 7, 1915
Elmer Harman Schwartz, Captain	Aug. 4, 1917	Aug. 4, 1917
Guy Austin Barker, First Lieut.	Aug. 4, 1917	Aug. 4, 1917

**Activities:**

The newly designated Third Company, Coast Artillery Corps unit was one of the few remaining companies whose record dated back to the early fifties in California history. Organized and known as the "National Guard" on August 31, 1855, the company was soon one of the strongest units in the National Guard. In 1861 when the First Infantry Regiment was organized the National Guard company was attached to it and designated Company C. The unit remained a member of the First Infantry Regiment until April 19, 1901, when it was detached and redesignated Battery C, First Battalion, Coast Artillery. Six years later the First Battalion, Coast Artillery was discontinued. Battery C was transferred to the Fifth Infantry Regiment on May 11, 1907 and designated Company L of that Regiment. Two years later Company L, Fifth Infantry Regiment was detached and designated Third Company, Coast Artillery. The unit up till this date was fifty-four years old and was one of the few companies in the State Service that had never been consolidated or disbanded, in fact in it's early history the unit had taken under its wing the former Shields Guard and furnished members and necessary officers to keep that unit going. Later, the two units formed a social organization known as the "Nationals", which was destined to place a blot upon the splendid record of these two units.

Before going further on the story of the "Nationals" another odd item in the history of Third Company was, that in all its designations since first being called Company C, the unit has had either the third letter of the alphabet or else the numeral three in its designations with the exception of the two years as Company L, Fifth Infantry Regiment. Even on entering the Federal Service in 1917, the unit was designated Twenty-Third Company.

The story of the "Nationals" is regrettable because it eventually led to insubordination in the two units and the dismissal of the two commanding officers. The controversy started when the First and Third companies were ordered to move from their armory on Eddy Street to the newly selected armory of the Coast Artillery Corps on Van Ness Avenue. The "Nationals" for years had main-

THIRD COMPANY, COAST ARTILLERY CORPS (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

tained an elaborately furnished club room in conjunction with their armory. The two units signed a petition and sent it to Governor James N. Gillett, requesting that the organization be permitted to remain in their armory. The signers of the petition were guilty of insubordination, in that their regimental commander Colonel Charles S. Hewes had ordered the two companies to move to the new location. The State and Federal property and equipment was moved to the new armory on July 4th and 5th, 1909. However, on drill nights only a few members would go to the new armory, and would then be dismissed by the commanding officer, and all would retire to the clubrooms to spend the evening.

The monthly return of the Third Company for August, 1909 shows that on August twenty-third and August thirtieth, no men were present at the regular drill hour. First Lieutenant James C. Young was the only member present. About two weeks later September 15, 1909, Lieutenant Young, who had been in command of Third Company since the retirement of Captain John J. Hyer on April fifteenth, was relieved of the command of the Third Company. Captain Philip L. Bush, National Guard of California, retired, was placed in command on the same day and proceeded to recruit new members to take the places of all men who were dismissed during the difficulty. Lieutenant Young was dismissed from the National Guard on October 29, 1909.\* Second Lieutenant Albert V. Collett of Third Company was also dismissed. This action practically closed the "rebellion" and Third Company soon assumed its place among the loyal units of the Corps. Many of the best and most valuable members had been separated from the Third Company and the record of this unit at rifle practice in 1912 revealed the fact that it takes time and practice to make good marksmen.

In that year Third Company was at the bottom of the list with only nine members having earned a medal for shooting that year. The next year 1913, the unit was third from last, while, in 1914 they tied with Fourth Company, Coast Artillery Corps for last place. In 1916 Third Company was fifth in line, having risen from last to fifth place. This was their last record before entering the Federal Service in 1917.

Under the subject of encampments it should be noted that neither the First or Third Companies attended the exercises at the Presidio in 1909. Therefore, the first Coast Artillery Corps encampment attended by Third Company was on June 11 to 18, 1910.

The report of Captain Philip Bush of Third Company to the Adjutant, Coast Artillery Corps gives a brief sketch of the activities of the Third Company. The report states that on:

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\*General and Special Orders and Circulars 1909, Special Order No. 6, par. 45.

THIRD COMPANY, COAST ARTILLERY CORPS (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

- June 11 Company assembled at their armory at 1:00 P. M., marched to the Presidio at 3:00 P. M., arrived there at 5:30 P. M. and pitched camp.
- June 13 Instruction at 12 inch guns and in plotting room of Battery Lancaster. Next came company instruction in extended order. Evening parade.
- June 14 Instruction at 12 inch guns and plotting room of Battery Lancaster. Battalion extended order. Evening parade.
- June 15 Sub caliber practice at 12 inch guns and detail in plotting room of Battery Lancaster. Battalion extended order. Evening parade.
- June 16 Full service practice at 12 inch guns and detail in plotting room and primary station of Battery Lancaster. Evening parade. Call to arms at 8:30 P. M.
- June 17 Call to arms at 4:55 A. M. Sub caliber practice at 12 inch guns and detail in plotting room and primary station of Battery Lancaster. Call to arms at 2:55 P. M. Battalion extended order; attack in three lines. Evening parade. Call to arms at 8:30 P. M.
- June 18 Attendance at Mortar Battery, sub caliber practice. Payment of troops. Breaking of camp. Departed from camp ground at 3:30 P. M. Arrived at armory 5:45 P. M. Dismissed.

"Setting Up" exercises each morning immediately after reveille. Detail participating in guard mount duty each day at 1:30 P. M. Lectures for officers by Captain Casey, Colonel Deem and Captain Ashburton, were attended in the evenings."

The Captain reported that 65.11 per cent of the enrollment of his company attended the Camp, and all evinced great enthusiasm for their work. The remainder of the Captain's report deals with commendations and views on how to improve the encampments.

The next year's encampment was also held at the Presidio on July 15 to 22, 1911, inclusive. The schedule of exercise for this

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THIRD COMPANY, COAST ARTILLERY CORPS (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

camp was practically the same as for the previous year. There was a change in recommendations for improving the encampments. Captain Bush believed that guard mount and afternoon parades should be eliminated and the time devoted strictly to artillery practice. He believed further that the practice of firing service charges by the militia should be abandoned and sub-caliber practice be substituted. He was of the opinion that the extra time and money spent on service firing could be more profitably spent for more sub-caliber practice. The Captain argued thus:

"Omitting all consideration of the extra time consumed in handling service projectiles and ammunition so as to reduce the possibility of accident to a minimum, experience has shown that the time consumed is a very considerable amount. (1) In waiting for atmospheric conditions with reference to fog, to be such as to permit service firing with safety. (2) In waiting for incoming and outgoing seacraft to get safely out of the range of fire. (3) In waiting for a tug to go out, maneuver, and plant the target. The experience this year as far as my command was concerned was far from satisfactory in this respect. We spent Thursday from 12:00 M. to 4:00 P. M. and Friday from 1:00 to 6:00 P. M. at the emplacements. In addition to this the command was held in readiness to report to the Battery Saturday morning from 7:00 A. M. to 12:00 M. In all this period we were assigned to Gun Number One, Battery Cranston, for about fifteen minutes on Thursday afternoon and fired only one service shot. There is very little time lost in sub caliber practice, due mainly to the fact that the range is much less; the fog does not interfere; the time lost in an entire morning owing to the tugs turning at each end of the course; is not nearly as much as the time consumed in waiting for the tug to get out to the necessary distance for service practice and then in planting the target; to say nothing of the time consumed in planting the second target providing the first is demolished, as was the case this year. In sub caliber action the tug tows three targets; if anything happens to one, the other two would still be in condition. Money appropriated for this service firing could be allotted to additional sub caliber practice during the maneuvers and to additional sub caliber work during the year; especially as home stations of California commands are located almost directly at Artillery Posts."

First Lieutenant William Angus Hamilton of Third Company stated that:

"During the entire period of the encampment, I per-

THIRD COMPANY, COAST ARTILLERY CORPS (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

formed my duties as First Lieutenant, Third Company, Coast Artillery Corps, National Guard of California, I was Officer of the Day once and observed the deflections during the service firing of the First, Fourth, and Sixth Companies. During the artillery drills of the Third Company, I acted as emplacement officer. A distinct forward movement was noted along all lines making for discipline and efficiency over the 1910 encampment. The infantry work at parade and guard mounting was fairly good. The extended order work was poor. So far as I could observe in the limited time at my disposal, the work in the plotting room and at the observing stations was well done, due in large part to the careful instruction they had received the preceding year. There was a very decided improvement in obedience to orders, observance of military courtesy, smartness of appearance and general knowledge of duties on the part of both officers and men. Great improvement was also noticeable in artillery work. The telephone operators, however, proved unsatisfactory in a large number of cases. It is suggested that an effort be made by company commanders to properly train the men who are in charge of this important duty. Only faithful and continuous practice with the instruments can accomplish the deserved results."

Lieutenant Hamilton believed that commissioned officers should be advanced according to their efficiency and ability rather than by election from their company. His report states that:

"Promotions should be made absolutely on merit and not as the result of election and every inducement should be held out to the earnest and ambitious officer. This condition is a survival of other days and is bound to militate against the well being of the organization generally, and tends to keep many well educated men who would make able officers, out of the Reserves. These men realize that they would rarely be elected by the enlisted men. Popular electives, the referendum and the recall have no place in the military establishment. Furthermore, a short term of office inevitably causes the officers to cater to the men; introduces petty politics into the situation and has for more effect on the military organizations than is generally supposed. Coast Artillery reserve officers should hold their commissions for life and every inducement should be held out to them to develop into able and efficient officers."

THIRD COMPANY, COAST ARTILLERY CORPS (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

His next suggestion which was to follow also proved to be sound:

"Some method should be devised by which the Coast Artillery reserves can be placed more directly under the control of the United States. This, in my judgment, is the crux of the whole situation. It would do more than anything wise to build up the organizations, as it would not only make for increased efficiency among those already in the service, but would also attract a class of men who, under State control, are absolutely beyond reach."

With the adoption of the National Defense Act of 1916, five years after Lieutenant Hamilton's report, several of the improvements that he believed to be so essential were realized. Each year the Third Company attended the annual encampment, their last appearance before the World War having been on July 9 to 23, 1916. The first week of that encampment was devoted to sub caliber firing, and the second week was given over to service firing.

The Coast Artillery Corps, National Guard of California was for the first time in complete charge at the Presidio and Colonel Henry C. Mathewson, Coast Artillery Corps, National Guard of California was in charge of the Artillery Corps. Captain W. P. Platt, United States Army, was military instructor, and was well pleased with the showing made by the National Guardsmen.\*\*

The Third Company, as part of the Coast Artillery Corps, was called upon on numerous occasions to participate in parades and celebrations. A few of these will be enumerated here: on the occasion of President Taft's visit to San Francisco on October 14, 1911, Third Company paraded; again on October 22, 1913, in honor of Portola Day celebration and at the Ball of all Nations on May 2, 1914. In 1915 they acted as escort to the Liberty Bell when it was sent to the Panama Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco on July seventeenth of that year. The company escorted ex-President Theodore Roosevelt on July 21, 1915, and on October 4, 1916, paraded for the Path of Gold celebration.\*\* There were holiday parades on February twenty-second, May thirtieth and July fourth of each year, and occasionally on September ninth.

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\*San Francisco Call, July 12, 1916, page 3, column 6.

\*\*For additional information concerning parades, refer to the History of Coast Artillery Corps, National Guard of California. Adjutant General's Office.

THIRD COMPANY, COAST ARTILLERY CORPS (Continued)

**Activities: (Continued)**

The story of this unit while in the Coast Artillery Corps, closes on August 5, 1917. On that date the Third Company, Coast Artillery Corps, was mustered into Federal Service and redesignated Twenty-Third Company, First Coast Defense Command.

Mustered out of Federal Service September 21, 1906  
Re-designated April 23, 1907  
Re-designated May 11, 1907  
Re-designated April 2, 1909  
Mustered into Federal Service August 25, 1917

Company F, 1st Infantry, San Francisco, California, redesignated and transferred to the Coast Artillery Corps, August 25, 1917. Adjutant General

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CALIFORNIA NATIONAL GUARD  
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THE OFFICE OF THE  
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SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA  
1921

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