

# **The California Volunteers and the Civil War: An Introduction**

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CALIFORNIA VOLUNTEERS AND THE CIVIL WAR

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## CALIFORNIA VOLUNTEERS AND THE CIVIL WAR

### INTRODUCTION

The State of California, although located a great distance from the more active scenes of the War of the Rebellion was not called upon to furnish troops for immediate service against the Confederate forces and no quota to be filled was assigned to the state. Yet during the War, calls were made upon California by the President of the United States for several regiments and battalions, aggregating more than sixteen thousand men, besides five hundred who were enlisted within its borders and became part of the quota of the State of Massachusetts, and eight companies raised for the Washington Territory.

Under Section Eight of the Constitution, Congress was given the power "to provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining the Militia, and for governing such part of them as may be employed in the service of the United States, reserving to the states respectively, the appointment of the officers, and the authority of training the Militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress." This Section of the Constitution also "provided for the calling forth of the Militia to execute the laws of the Union, suppress insurrection and repel invasions." The Act of Congress of July 22, 1861, calling out five thousand volunteers, was in accordance with the above Section, and had in all cases been so conceded. This foregoing Act of Congress required the President to issue his proclamation or make a requisition for the troops required, noting the States from which the same were furnished according to the Federal population.

The rank and file of the California contingents were made up to material of which any State or nation might be proud. With the exception of those men enlisted for Massachusetts, the California forces took no part in any of the great battles of the Civil War, yet the service they rendered was of as great importance as that rendered by those from other States. The service that was expected of the California Volunteers was severe, entailing long and fatiguing marches across burning deserts and among almost inaccessible mountains. They were engaged in hundreds of battles with the Indians and also came in contact with small forces of Confederate troops on the frontiers of Texas and Mexico, never knowing defeat. There is on record, reports of several encounters with the Indians in which was exhibited a valor worthy of a better foe.

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In the subsequent history concerning the California troops will be found interesting versions of the important roles these forces played in the "War of the Rebellion."

Following is a list of independent companies of the State Militia and their redesignation upon entering the service of the United States during the War of the Rebellion:

Organization, State Militia

Amador Mountaineers  
Auburn Grays  
California Cavalry Battalion  
  
California Hundred  
  
California Volunteers, Co. C  
Forest Rifles, Company C  
Mountain Volunteers  
Mountaineers, Battalion of  
Native Cavalry Battalion  
Placer County Mountaineers  
Sacramento Rangers  
San Jose Volunteers  
Santa Cruz Volunteers  
Sierra Grays  
Tuolumne Rangers  
Volcano Blues  
Washington Rifles  
Washington Territory Infan.,  
1st Regiment, Co. K (old)

Organization, Calif. Volunteers

1st Regiment Infantry (Co. C)  
4th Regiment Infantry (part)  
2d Regiment Massachusetts Cav.  
(Companies A, E, F, L. and M)  
2d Regiment Massachusetts Cav.  
(Company A)  
1st Regiment Infantry (Co. A, part)  
2d Regiment Cav. (Co. F, part)  
4th Regiment Infantry (Co. B, part)  
1st Battalion Mountaineers  
1st Battalion Native Cavalry  
5th Regiment Infantry (part)  
2d Regiment Cavalry (Co. F)  
1st Regiment Infantry (Co. D)  
2d Regiment Cavalry (Co. L)  
1st Regiment Infantry (Co. F)  
2d Regiment Cavalry (Co. E)  
4th Regiment Infantry (Co. D, part)  
1st Regiment Infantry (Co. E)  
  
6th Regiment Infantry (Co. A)