

History of the Grass Valley Union Guard California Militia/National Guard of California 1863-1872

This history was completed in 1940 by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in conjunction with the California National Guard and the California State Library.

Digitized by the History Office, Camp San Luis Obispo, 16 January 2015

GRASS VALLEY UNION GUARD

Grass Valley Union Guard, Company A,* Unattached Infantry, Fourth Brigade

Reference: Dead Office File, Row 3, File 4

Location: Grass Valley, Nevada County

Mustered in February 11, 1863

Mustered out June 1, 1872

Commanding Officers

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Commission</u>
E. W. Roberts, Captain	Feb. 11, 1863	Feb. 23, 1863
James H. Wilcox, First Lieut.	Feb. 11, 1863	Feb. 23, 1863
<hr/>		
E. W. Roberts, Captain (Re-elected 1864)		
John J. Doty, First Lieut.	Feb. 10, 1864	Mar. 1, 1864
<hr/>		
John J. Doty, Captain	Feb. 8, 1865	Feb. 16, 1865
J. M. Days, First Lieut.	Feb. 8, 1865	Feb. 16, 1865
<hr/>		
E. W. Roberts, Captain	Aug. 5, 1865	Nov. 6, 1865
John D. Meek, First Lieut.	Feb. 21, 1866	Mar. 9, 1866
<hr/>		
E. W. Roberts, Captain (Re-elected 1867)		
J. M. Days, First Lieut.	Feb. 13, 1867	Mar. 5, 1867
<hr/>		
William Rule, Captain	Feb. 10, 1869	Feb. 18, 1869
John D. Meek, First Lieut.	Feb. 10, 1869	Feb. 18, 1869
<hr/>		
William Rule, Captain (Re-elected 1871)		
J. M. Days, First Lieut.	April 1, 1871	April 10, 1871

Activities:

Early in the year of 1863 when the third call for volunteers for the War of the Rebellion was made, many new militia companies were organized throughout the State. Grass Valley, Nevada County, was inhabited with residents who were so filled with patriotism, that sixty-one of the men signed a petition setting forth that said "memoralists" were desirous of forming and organizing a volunteer military company and presented the same to David Beldon, County Judge on January 30, 1863. Judge Beldon appointed E. W. Roberts as the proper person to open the book for the enrolling of volunteers, also authorizing him to give notice for the organization meeting of February 11, 1863. The book for enrollment was open until the day of organization at the office of Mr. Roberts on Mill Street. The meeting scheduled to be held in

-oOo-

*Designated as Company A, Fifth Infantry, Muster Roll of March 25, 1865.

GRASS VALLEY UNION GUARD (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

Hamilton Hall on Wednesday, February eleventh, and the election polls were to be open from "7 $\frac{1}{2}$ until 9 o'clock P.M.". The legal notices for this volunteer company were published in the Grass Valley National. At the meeting thus held the newly organized company became known as the Grass Valley Union Guard, Mr. Day, moved that the presiding officer appoint a committee of five to report a list of names from which to select the officers. This motion was carried and the list was submitted for the members to act upon. The result of the Election placed E. W. Roberts in the command as Captain and James H. Wilcox as First Lieutenant. Captain Roberts was continuously in the service of his command from the date of organization until February 1869, with the exception of the few months from April to August of 1865, when the command devolved upon William Rule, who remained the Captain until the corps was mustered out. J. J. Doty, First Lieutenant, was elected Captain in February 1865, but was forced to resign a few months later as he was going East and a special election was held in October at which time former Captain Roberts was again elected to that post.

The Grass Valley Union Guard, unattached, of the Fourth Brigade was reorganized by Captain Roberts, August 4, 1866, when all the State militia companies were reorganized into the National Guard, and the unit became designated as the Grass Valley Union Guard, Company A, Fifth Infantry of the Fourth Brigade. During this period, the membership of the Guard was so large that additional slips containing names were attached to the muster rolls. At one time 111 names were accredited to the corps.

The company was well armed and uniformed during the latter part of its existence. The first uniforms issued in 1864 were tailor made to fit, but later ready made garments were issued and Captain Rule reported in May 1871, that the uniforms received in 1864 were becoming quite shabby, especially the ready made ones which were moth eaten and worn out. On June 11, 1863, shortly after the company was organized, the Captain informed Adjutant-General Kibbe that it was absolutely necessary to have arms to preserve tranquility as the "enemies" of public peace in Grass Valley were fully armed and ready for any desperate deed. The military organization was a necessity, and feeble as it was without weapons, it had been of incalculable benefit upon the public sentiment of the vicinity. Arms were issued but no ammunition, so on August 5, 1863, the Captain telegraphed General Kibbe for cartridges, as a riot was apprehended to take place at the polls on Election Day. During 1863 and 1864 the arms and accoutrements which had been received August 13, 1863, were distributed to the men for safe keeping in order to prevent the apprehended danger of

Activities: (Continued)

insurrection and seizure of the armory with its arms by the Rebels in the vicinity. Captain Roberts also received 100 rifle muskets and equipment on November 26, 1866, for his company. Invoice of Ordnance and Ordnance Stores dated February 17, 1872, at the mustering out of the company remarks that "all arms and equipment were in good condition, but the uniforms which had seen eight years' service were hardly fit for any kind of duty, and not fit for a dress parade." A notation is made of the few articles that had been unaccounted for and checked off, and a memorandum of the property so listed totaled \$25.38. This small amount of deficiency after nine years' service showed that the losses were those of usual and ordinary use and wear. The armory of the corps was a brick building which was considered fire proof, and later after the organization of the Howell Zouaves to save expenses, the building for a while was occupied by both companies. The guard had their own company colors, drummers, and fifers.

Many of the monthly reports of target practice had "remarks" which gave an insight into some of the activities of the Grass Valley Union Guard and a few gave notations on the personal life of the members. Reports show the corps participated in the Fourth of July and Admission Day Parades and fired the salutes in honor of the occasions. In reporting on target practice it was noted that some of the members were excused for business reasons, others, who worked in the mines went to the parade ground not in uniform, where they fired their three shots each, and continued on to their place of employment, or stopped on their way home from work to take part. During the last two or three years of the life of the company the majority of the members were well drilled. Many of the older ones were exceptionally trained in "Casey Tactics", but not in "Upton Tactics", in fact, they objected to perfecting themselves in the latter, believing that as soon as they became proficient in the same that the drill would be changed again.

The October 1866 Report noted that, "The First Lieutenant (John D. Meek) was absent without leave! (on wedding tour.)" Captain Roberts and Lieutenant Day were both members of the State Legislature and were necessarily absent from their command during the latter part of 1867 and early 1868, while the Legislative body was in session which left Second Lieutenant Rule to carry on the regular routine work of the company. The Lieutenant reported during this time "That snow and rain storms were so heavy it prevented many of the members from attending the meetings."

GRASS VALLEY UNION GUARD (Continued)

Activities: (Continued)

Captain Roberts and his staff of commissioned and non-commissioned officers attended the Camp of Military Instruction which was held at Camp Stanford in the vicinity of Oakland from the twenty-first to the thirtieth of May. The uniform consisted of dark blue cloth caps, dark colored frock coats and dark colored breeches. The guard being a newly organized company of the year 1863, received great assistance in their training when many of the members attended the Encampment which was held at Camp Kibbe near Sacramento on September 19, 1863, for ten days. The uniform for the men at this time consisted of dark blue blouses and breeches.

As previously stated the company was active in routine drills, parades, target practices and encampments. Although there are no definite records to give the dates, it can be assumed that the corps participated in many other affairs, such as the Fifth Infantry Brigade Encampment.

On April 2, 1866, a Military Law was approved to provide Exemption Certificates for all officers, non-commissioned officers, musicians and privates of the National Guard who had fully complied with all military duties required in the Act and had served seven years consecutively in the guard. This Certificate exempted the men from the payment of poll tax, road tax, and head tax of every description, and exemption from service on any 'posse comitatus'. Horses, arms, equipment, military stores and uniforms of all officers, non-commissioned officers, musicians and privates, used for military purposes by the National Guard were exempted from execution."* This Act was amended in 1868 by adding to the list of exemptions enumerated in the Act of 1866, "exemption from jury duty".** Former Captain William Rule, communicated with Brigadier General Foote giving lists of names of men who were entitled to the Exemption Certificates.

-oOo-

*All uniforms and accoutrements used by the officers and privates, after seven years were exempted from further use by the Militia.

**Adjutant General Report 1870-1871, Military Exempt Certificates, Page 22.

Jackson Dragoons, Company C, First Cavalry Battalion, Second Brigade
Reference: Dead Office File, Row 6, File 5

Activities: (Continued)
San Francisco, San Francisco County
Mustered in March 16, 1863

On August 17, 1871, Captain Rule reported that there was not the same enthusiasm among the members as was evidenced during the War, and it was evident that the company was losing "ground". Therefore, it was not surprising to find that the Board of Location and Organization deemed it advisable to disband the corps during the year of 1872, when many companies were honorably mustered out of the service. The Grass Valley Union Guard, Company A of the Fifth Infantry, Fourth Brigade was detached from the Regiment to which they had been assigned and formally mustered out as an unattached company on June 1, 1872, by John F. Sheehan, Mustering Officer.

M. Miles, Captain	June 10, 1864	June 22, 1864
Patrick O'Brien, Captain	Mar. 7, 1865	Mar. 14, 1865
M. Miles, Captain (Re-elected)		
Patrick O'Brien, Captain (Re-elected)		
M. Miles, Captain (Re-elected)		
Patrick O'Brien, Captain (Re-elected)		
Patrick O'Brien, Captain (Re-elected)		
Patrick O'Brien, Captain (Re-elected)		
Patrick O'Brien, Captain (Re-elected)		
John P. Rafferty, First Lieut.	Mar. 7, 1867	April 8, 1867
John P. Rafferty, Captain	Sept. 21, 1868	Sept. 25, 1868
Joseph O'Conner, First Lieut.	Sept. 21, 1868	Sept. 25, 1868
John P. Rafferty, Captain (Re-elected Jan. 7, 1869)		
Hugh Dougherty, First Lieut.	Jan. 7, 1869	Jan. 30, 1869
Michael Greany, Captain	Jan. 12, 1871	Jan. 20, 1871
Hugh Dougherty, First Lieut. (Re-elected Jan. 12, 1871)		
Michael Greany, Captain (Re-elected Jan. 10, 1873)		
Edward McPhillips, First Lieut.	Jan. 10, 1873	Jan. 22, 1873
Michael Greany, Captain (Re-elected Jan. 7, 1875)		
Edward McPhillips, First Lieut. (Re-elected Jan. 7, 1875)		