

# **History of the Halleck Rifles, California Militia 1862-1866**

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

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HALLECK RIFLES

Halleck Rifles, Fifth Brigade

Reference: Dead Office File, Row 3, File 6

Location: Weaverville, Trinity County

Mustered in October 7, 1862

Mustered out August 25, 1866

Commanding Officers

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Commission</u>
John R. Rothenbucher, Captain (Resigned Feb. 23, 1863)	Oct. 7, 1862	Oct. 13, 1862
Edward Neblett, First Lieut.	Oct. 7, 1862	Oct. 13, 1862
Cornelius McGowan, Captain	July 12, 1863	July 27, 1863
Oliver H. Norcross, First Lieut.	Oct. 5, 1863	Oct. 12, 1863

Activities:

On August 26, 1858, Governor Weller received the following information from the citizens of Trinity County:\*

"We respectfully represent that the Indians inhabiting the County have assumed a hostile position toward our citizens, and have already perpetrated numerous outrages. In this particular locality the Indians have in the past four or five years killed some fifteen or twenty citizens, besides causing much loss of property and greatly impeding the commerce which has grown up between this county and Humboldt. These outrages call for immediate redress, and we deem it of the most vital importance to our coast trade, and well being generally, that these Indians should be driven from their present hiding place and if not exterminated, at least driven to some place where there is no such opportunities to do mischief."

Governor Weller sent Adjutant General William Kibbe to the northern counties to take charge of the situation. He secured a company of United States Cavalry, under the command of Captain Underwood, and the citizens of the county formed a volunteer militia company commanded by Captain J. G. Messic. These companies had by the first part of 1859, gathered up all hostile Indians and placed them on the Federal Reservation under strict guard.\*\*

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\*Petition to Governor Weller, August 25, 1858, State Archives, State Capitol.

\*\*Letters from General Kibbe to Governor Weller, State Archives, State Capitol.

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HALLECK RIFLES (Continued)

National Guard Company D, Fourth Brigade  
 Activities: (Continued) (on file Adjutant General's Office)  
 Location: Sacramento, Sacramento County

In order to maintain the peace that the soldiers had secured for them, the towns in Trinity County took steps to form their own volunteer military companies. In Weaverville, Trinity County, on October 7, 1862, the citizens organized the Halleck Rifles, a volunteer military unit, commanded by Captain Rothenbucker. This company had a twofold purpose, first to check any Indian depredation in the county, and secondly to prevent any display by the Secessionists during the War of the Rebellion. The Halleck Rifles were composed of forty-five of the most loyal Union men to be found in Trinity County, and were well equipped and splendidly drilled. In February of 1863, the company lost the services of Captain Rothenbucker who resigned to join the regular United States Army for service in the Civil War, but the unit obtained Captain McGowan, a capable officer to replace him.

Incompleteness of the files prevents giving a full history of this company, but upon the recommendation of Adjutant General George S. Evans, the Halleck Rifles was mustered out of the service of the State of California, August 25, 1866.

W. E. Deering, First Lieut.	Feb. 7, 1866	Feb. 10, 1866
Fred Dasonville, Captain (Re-elected June 27, 1866)		
Charles Auer, First Lieut.	June 27, 1866	Aug. 25, 1866

Activities:

National Guard Company D, numbering ninety-one men was organized in Sacramento and mustered as a unit of the State Militia on October 7, 1862. At that time the condition of the State of California was considered alarming in view of its geographical isolation and the probability that the State would be called into active service during the Civil War. This company was not assigned to active duty, and the members became restless. Many of them sought a discharge on the expiration of their term of enlistment in order to enter the service of the United States as volunteers. Company D suffered greatly because of this condition, and its membership dwindled to sixty-six in June 1863, and thirty-six in September 1864.

On April 2, 1866, the State Legislature passed an act that completely reorganized the State Militia. The Military force was not to exceed eighty companies in all. A Board of Location and Organization was formed, consisting of the Commander-in-Chief,