

REPORT OF INSPECTION OF NATIONAL GUARD.

SAN FRANCISCO, September 16, 1891.

Brig.-Gen. C. C. ALLEN, Adjutant-General, Sacramento, California:

SIR: I have the honor to submit the following report of my inspection and observation, as contemplated in Special Orders, No. 144, Adjutant-General's Office, 1890, and to append herewith a consolidated return of the organization and strength of the National Guard of California. As at present authorized by law, it consists of 300 officers and 4,000 men, including two light batteries and one troop of cavalry. There were four camps of instruction (at every one of which I was present) held in the State this summer, viz.: The Second Brigade on the 5th, and the Sixth and Eighth Regiments on the 18th of July, and the First Artillery on the 9th of August, at Santa Cruz; and that of the First Brigade at Santa Monica on the 15th of August. Each encampment lasted eight days. Santa Cruz is a small seaport town of six thousand inhabitants, and the terminus of two lines of railroad from San Francisco, whereby ample facilities are afforded for the prompt mobilization of troops. The camp ground lies about three quarters of a mile north of the town, contains an area of one thousand acres, with a background of thick timber running parallel to the line of tents on which the camps rested.

The Second Brigade, commanded by Brig.-Gen. John H. Dickinson, began work in earnest on Monday, the 6th of July. The First, Second, Third, and Fifth Regiments, commanded by their Colonels, William P. Sullivan, William Macdonald, Thomas F. Barry, and D. B. Fairbanks, appeared in strong force, and Sime's Light Battery and Blumenberg's Horse were fully up to the standard. Camp Markham, so called in honor of the chief executive, was properly laid out, and so far as the nature of the ground would permit, in accordance with Army Regulations. The tents were of good quality and proper dimensions, and were pitched before the arrival of the brigade by a detachment sent for that object a few days ahead of the troops. The food furnished to the command was good, the Army ration being substantially the basis, amplified by what additions the individual and individual companies might purchase out of their own purse. Messes were by companies, the cooks hired, and in a few instances detailed.

Proper contracts were entered into by the appropriate staff officers for the supplies, which were excellent in quality and satisfactory.

The general police of the camp was exceedingly good. The police of the tents was not so good; many of them were found in a very untidy condition, although the majority of them were as neat and orderly as those of our regular troops when in camp. The "personal equation" of company officers, and especially Captains, in this particular was very noticeable, and its influence was manifest even to the culinary department and sinks. Pits for the use of latrines were dug at a convenient distance from the ends of company streets, and fresh earth was usually every day thrown into the pits, yet there were a few seen that

were very offensive and sadly neglected. Near the kitchens other pits were dug for the reception of garbage.

The rank and file of the Second Brigade comprises a large number of young men, apparently minors, who are deficient in soldierly appearance and sadly in need of setting-up drill. Such material very much detracts from what would be otherwise fine looking regiments. The majority of the arms are of ancient manufacture and correspondingly worthless, and as a rule were poorly taken care of, owing to the negligence of Captains, who should give more of their personal attention to this important matter. The equipments are fair; in many instances the belts and cartridge boxes needed oil and blacking. The clothing is similar in color and general character to that issued to regular troops, though not always of as good quality. The clothing seldom fitted the men, there being apparently but two sizes, the short and the tall. Blouses and dress coats ought to be made to fit more neatly about the neck. One regiment of this brigade usually appeared at dress parade in white helmets, while the others wore the regulation black. Uniformity should prevail.

Target practice was attended with great enthusiasm on the part of both officers and men at Shell Mound range, which is situated across the bay from San Francisco. The range is limited to two hundred yards, at which it is estimated 50 per cent of the strength of each company will score 80 per cent.

The regimental and company records were fairly kept.

The sanitary condition of the camp was excellent, and the health of the command unusually good, but few men, comparatively, having been admitted to the hospital.

The battalion drills of one or two were defective in alignments, exact distance between companies. Many movements were admirably executed, a few very perceptibly ragged, but all with spirit and effectiveness. In general the guides were badly posted and poorly instructed. There was too much inattention and talking in the ranks. Many Captains flourished their swords in a most unmilitary manner in dressing and giving orders to their men, instead of holding them at a carry; and many were ignorant of, or failed to grasp, the commands given by the Colonels, and gave their orders in a low, hesitating tone. There were many honorable exceptions to this by Captains who had evidently studied their tactics to good purpose, for their companies moved promptly and correctly. The battalion skirmish drill of one regiment was excellent; that of the others merely passable. I witnessed two brigade drills, but they were of the simplest formations, and did not afford a criterion by which to judge the tactical ability of the General commanding. Two brigade reviews, one for General Dimond and the other for General Allen, were really fine spectacles, and well rendered, the marching, alignments, distances, and military bearing of the men deserving and eliciting high encomiums. At first, guard duty was performed in a very defective manner. There was a general want of alertness on the part of sentinels and of knowledge of details on the side of the Officers of the Day, Officers of the Guard, and non-commissioned officers. The men walked their posts in a slouchy way, and carried their arms every way but the right one. Social conversations were not infrequent on posts. There was, however, an earnestness of purpose manifested on the part of officers and men which resulted in successful and creditable tours of duty before

the encampment closed. As a rule, where they fell short on guard duty, it was due to ignorance and want of experience.

The men were well behaved, quiet, respectful, and anxious to learn. I saw no cases of drunkenness, insubordination, nor any serious offenses against military discipline. Slight lapses of familiarity between officers and men of their commands were frequently noticed, and the equality and fraternity of every-day life too much indulged in. Many officers were careless in returning salutes, and many enlisted men were very remiss in saluting their superior officers.

I have but words of praise for the light battery, troop of cavalry, and signal detachment on account of the proficiency displayed in their several departments.

The principal event at camp on the 11th was a sham battle. The problem in minor tactics to be illustrated was the capture and defense of Camp Markham. The attacking party consisted of the Second Regiment, supported by the light battery and cavalry, under command of Colonel Macdonald, and the defense comprised the Third, First, and Fifth Regiments of Infantry, in command of Colonel Barry. Thirty rounds of blank cartridges were issued to every man, and at 6:30 P. M. the battle began in earnest and progressed very spiritedly until darkness put a stop to hostilities. No definite instructions were given to the opposing forces other than that they were to select the strongest positions to protect themselves and attack the main column. The positions were well chosen and the attacks well planned and delivered. The camp was ably defended, and the volley firing of the several regiments was well executed, impressive, and very realistic of actual combat. Much valuable time has been devoted in this encampment to drills, for which the armories are intended, which could be more profitably employed in the solution of problems in minor tactics and modern warfare.

The Sixth and Eighth Regiments, commanded, respectively, by Colonels Eugene Lehe and Park Henshaw, went into camp on the 18th of July on the site lately occupied by the Second Brigade. Colonel Lehe, in virtue of his rank, commanded Camp Allen, so called in honor of C. C. Allen, Adjutant-General of the State. The command averaged 600 officers and men. The rank and file of this brigade is excellent, the men being selected from the best and most intelligent citizens in the towns and country in which the regiments are located. The military bearing of the men was remarkably fine and in harmony with the high order of intelligence and superior social standing. The Sixth possessed a great advantage in having for its Adjutant a retired army officer who was indefatigable in his zeal for its welfare. The beneficial results of his tireless energy were very obvious in drills, guard duty, military etiquette, and internal economy of companies. The Eighth enjoyed the novelty of being united for the first time since its organization with another regiment in camp. The rapid progress of this regiment in battalion and skirmish drill, and in the accurate and intelligent performance of guard duty, was very marked, and the earnestness manifested by officers and men to know and do their duty correctly and well was really admirable.

In general, the battalion movements of this command were creditably executed, although in many cases there was observed a great lack of promptness in the formations. Officers and non-commissioned officers

were slow in getting to their places, completely ignoring the fact that celerity and precision are quite compatible. There was too much gazing about and talking in the ranks, and many Captains pushed and pulled their men into line when dressing them—a most unmilitary proceeding.

There is much carelessness exhibited by both officers and men in saluting. This recognition of authority should have been scrupulously observed.

Skirmish drill was only mediocre at the start, but the end of the week showed an efficiently drilled body of skirmishers.

Guard duty was zealously, intelligently, and in several instances correctly performed.

The First Artillery, Col. J. W. Guthrie commanding, began its annual encampment on the 8th of August at Camp Murray, Santa Cruz, and aggregated 360 officers and men. The material of which this marching regiment is composed is not of the very best. The ranks in many companies appeared to have been largely composed of puny, narrow-chested boys, totally deficient in robust manhood and erect military bearing.

In guard duty, skirmish drill, and military courtesy, a decided improvement was gained over last year's rating. Sentinels performed their task cheerfully and with a commendable degree of accuracy. There was good work done in battalion and skirmish drills, subject, however, to the following exceptions: Distances were at fault, lines broken, in some instances the men were huddled together in a heap or scattered with large intervening gaps, generally the step was too short, and little or no attempt was made at correcting errors by the file closers. A few Captains appeared to have been perfectly at a loss what to do when certain movements were ordered, and therefore gave their order in a vacillating manner, trusting their companies would get into position in some shape, hardly knowing what to do with themselves.

The excellent behavior of this command and the almost universal obedience to orders manifested, in spite of great facilities for their infringement, was remarkable and gratifying. They showed a degree of self-respect worthy of high praise. Officers and men performed their duty with alacrity, and to the best of their ability.

The First Brigade, consisting of the Seventh and Ninth Regiments, commanded, respectively, by Cols. W. G. Schreiber and E. B. Spileman, and numbering nearly 600 men, went into camp on the 15th of August at Santa Monica. Camp Johnson, so called in honor of the Brigadier-General commanding, is situated on Ocean Avenue, on the northern boundary of the city, and within a stone's throw of the ocean, the broad expanse of the Pacific being within complete view. The camp was tastefully and properly laid out.

The personnel of the Ninth Regiment is above par in military appearance, education, and social standing. An intense military spirit actuates this fine regiment, and a deep enthusiasm for whatever pertains to the honorable profession of arms seems to pervade both officers and men. The encampment was largely devoted to reviews and parades, which, so far as my observation extended, were highly satisfactory in execution, and far surpassed in excellence many witnessed by me in other encampments. While I do not consider that the efficiency of troops should be measured by their ability to stand, march, and wheel with steadiness and precision, yet if troops are in condition to make a creditable show-

ing on these ceremonious occasions, a similar standard of excellence will likely prevail in more important and urgent duties.

The hygiene of the camp was all that could be desired, and the police of the same was excellent.

Guard duty was done with spirit and accuracy, and in accordance with Kennon's Manual. The sentinels walked their posts in quick time and in soldierly manner, no lounging and moping and holding the rifle at any possible angle as frequently noticed in other encampments.

At the beginning the drill of the Seventh was poor, but a vast improvement was noticed towards the end of the week. Colonel Schreiber is a zealous and painstaking officer and an able tactician. I have never seen better drilled companies than those of the Ninth Regiment. The manual of arms, firing, company movements, and bayonet exercise were excellently executed, and it was a real pleasure to witness the nice exactitude with which every detail was executed. The battalion drill of this regiment was merely passable, evidently the fault of the Captains and guides and the lack of practical work in the field. In deploying close column right in front from line of battle the chief of the first division did not always seem to know whether he should march nine or ninety yards to the front, thereby causing the second division to follow him indefinitely, and the third, after obliquing to the rear, to take the double time to regain lost ground. In like manner, in deploying from close column into line, many Captains frequently kept at the head of their companies until they had marched away from their place in line, instead of halting after having advanced two yards after the command "march" from the chief of division on their right.

In walking about camp, I noticed too much familiarity between officers and men, and a slackness of military bearing when off duty; privates, non-commissioned officers, and officers lounging in and around officers' tents; much carelessness in saluting when passing or addressing officers, and many other little things; betraying a want of a correct appreciation of the relative duties of different grades, and an ignorance of the value of the seemingly trifling formalities embraced in the term military etiquette.

The remarks referring to the clothing, arms, etc., of the Second Brigade may be applied in a measure to this brigade, and to the troops of the other encampments.

Considering the results achieved in the four encampments herein cursorily reviewed, as embraced in one division, I do not believe there is another State organization its superior in the essential features of a military body. The National Guard of the State will compare favorably with the oldest and best organized guards in the Eastern and Middle States. California can put in the field in thirty days 30,000 fairly armed, equipped, and drilled men, who after a couple of months' service would be as steady and efficient as regulars, and could be depended upon to render a good account of themselves. In forty-eight hours' notice 4,000 men can be concentrated with dispatch at any threatened point within the limits of the Commonwealth, and in the security which this fact imparts to personal property and public institutions, lies the reward of the taxpayer who maintains this absolutely essential force.

I earnestly trust the time may soon come when the merchants and business men of California will rise above mere mercenary interests,

and permit, as a duty, the attendance of their employés at the annual encampments, which consumes comparatively little time, and which in an emergency might prove their own salvation, in the protection of the special business in which they are engaged, besides bringing to the service an intelligent and effective class of young men who could always be relied upon for the protection of life and property should occasion require.

I heartily recommend that an officer of the Inspector-General's Department of the Army be detailed to inspect at such times as he may see fit the records, arms, clothing, and equipment of the National Guard of the several States, and that he be required to submit a report of the condition and strength of the guard yearly to the Adjutant-General of the Army, and pertinent extracts from said report to the Adjutants-General of the different States.

The War Department should have, independent of the volition of Governors, its representative in every camp of instruction held yearly in the several States of the Union.

The term of enlistment in both regular and national guard service should be reduced to three years.

I recommend that the militia of the State be organized into one division of three brigades, viz.: The First Brigade in San Francisco and vicinity, Second Brigade in Stockton, Sacramento, and adjacent territory, and the Third Brigade at Los Angeles, San Diego, and surrounding country. There are at present too many Brigadier-Generals and merely ornamental staff officers. Only officers who do the work should have the rank. A multiplicity of military titles without commensurate occupation lowers the dignity of the service and detracts from the value of rank in the National Guard.

All the regiments should be fully equipped with leggins, campaign hats, and woven belts for field service of the pattern now in use in the regular army.

The length of the encampments should be two weeks, or at least ten days, for, under the present system, no sooner have the men settled down to earnest work than they are called upon to get ready to go home.

The range for target practice ought to be extended to 600 yards, so as to embrace the 200, 500, and 600-yard ranges, and the promiscuous practicing at the butts of officers and men should be discouraged.

I invite the attention of the Colonels to the great importance of "setting-up" drill, and recommend a stricter compliance with tactics in this connection.

The practice of electing company officers is a bad one, and tends to the destruction of military discipline. The custom should be abolished, and the nomination of officers left to the chief executive of the State, who will issue commissions only after the aspirants have passed a satisfactory examination before a competent board of officers.

The great desideratum of the regular service is an efficient body of non-commissioned officers; the want is also keenly felt in the National Guard. Colonels of regiments should hold once a week a school for commissioned officers, and strictly require their Captains to hold the same for their non-commissioned officers.

The time has come for a stronger and closer union between the Federal Government and the National Guard of the country. To promote and

foster this relation and increase the efficiency of the guard, I recommend that the Captains and First Lieutenants of the skeleton companies of the Army be detailed as Adjutants of the different regiments of the National Guard, so that every militia regiment will have a regular army officer for its Adjutant, which detail will last four years. As a further step towards this more intimate union, I recommend that the central government completely arm, clothe, and equip the guard in every State in the Union, and that the said States defray the cost of transporting the troops to and from the summer encampments, subsisting them while in camp, and in addition pay the soldier a fair day's wages, allowing the officers the pay of the grade actually held by them as prescribed for the Army.

I cannot close this report without expressing my most sincere thanks for the kind and friendly manner in which I was received, as the representative of the Army, in these encampments, and for the generous hospitality with which I was so cordially entertained.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN J. O'CONNELL,
Captain First U. S. Infantry.