



Lt. Horace B. Welch

Co. F California Battalion
 2nd Massachusetts Cavalry
 Co. C 5th Massachusetts Cavalry
 (Colored)

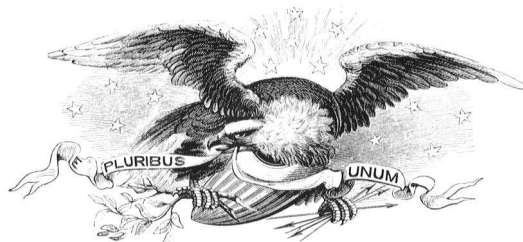
Civil War Service Chronology

1863	<p>Mar 19 Enlists with Cal Battalion, Co. D (later Co. F of 2nd Mass Cav) Age: 31</p> <p>Mar 21 Battalion departs San Francisco. Co. D remains to finish filling of ranks</p> <p>Apr 24 Welch & Co. D depart San Francisco on the S. S. Sonora</p> <p>May 16 Arrive at NYC. Find the Cal Hundred & Cal Bat already in Virginia</p> <p>Jun 06 Musters into service as 2nd Lieutenant.</p> <p>Jul - Aug Detached service in Lowell, Massachusetts on recruiting duty</p> <p>Sep 16 Co F relocated to Muddy Branch (without Welch)</p> <p>Oct 26 Lt. Welch rejoins Company with 100 recruits</p>
1864	<p>Jan 26 Fighting at Ellis Ford, Virginia</p> <p>Jan 31 Transferred to Company M (the guidon company)</p> <p>Feb 03 Mustered out of 2nd Mass Cav for promotion to 5th Mass Cav</p> <p>Feb 08 Receives commission as Captain, 5th Mass Cav (colored)</p> <p>May 13 Duty at City Point as Infantry</p> <p>Jun 16 Commences siege of Petersburg</p> <p>Jun 30 Duty at Lookout Point</p>
1865	<p>Mar 10 Ordered into the field near Richmond, VA.</p> <p>Apr 08 Welch commands squadron that enters Richmond, VA.</p> <p>Jun 16 Regiment ordered to Texas. Duty at Clarksville until October.</p> <p>Oct 31 Musters out in Texas.</p>



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Horace Welch got a late start with his military service, compared to his comrades in the California Battalion. He was 31 years old at the time he joined Capt. David A. DeMerritt's company in San Francisco as a 2nd Lieutenant. But this last company of the Cal Battalion did not fill out its ranks as readily as the previous companies had done. The earlier enlistees of the Cal Battalion, including some members of his company had sailed for the East a month before Welch. The balance of the company departed San Francisco on April 24, 1863.

By the time he arrived in Massachusetts, his fellow Californians, along with the rest of the Second Massachusetts Cavalry, had already left for the seat of war. Once again, Welch found himself playing catch up.

At some point during this period, Lt. Welch was issued a Model 1840 Cavalry Officer's saber. The upper brass mount of the scabbard was inscribed "*H.B. Welch, 2d Mass. Cavalry.*"

Welch was soon detached for recruiting duty in Lowell, Massachusetts. He finally rejoined Co. F in October, 1863 with 100 fresh recruits for the regiment. By this point, Co. F had been detached for picket duty at Muddy Branch, Maryland and the catch up exercise continued. Lieutenant Welch still was not to see the frontline action for which he enlisted.

The 2nd Mass Cavalry was on scouting duty in the Shenandoah Valley. Here, the Californians became well acquainted with

Confederate cavalry and guerillas such as Colonel John Mosby.

In February 1864 Welch transferred, along with several other members of the 2nd Mass. to the newly-forming 5th Massachusetts Cavalry, a colored regiment. Fast promotion was a big motivation for a white officer to transfer to a black unit and not surprisingly, Welch was quickly promoted to captain of Company C of the 5th Mass. The opening period of service for the black cavalry regiment found them at Point Lookout for nine months of prisoner duty.

Finally, they were to see combat on June 16, 1864 as they took part in the opening action at Petersburg. It cost the regiment the lives of nine men.

The 5th Mass remained with Grant during the siege of Petersburg and were ordered to stay close to the Richmond, Virginia hills when Robert E. Lee bolted from the Petersburg trenches.

After Appomattox, Captain Welch led a triumphant squadron of black cavalymen into Richmond, Virginia on April 8, 1865.

Although he was not alongside his California brethren to witness the war's final scenes, the Confederate surrender was the ultimate cause for which he had enlisted.

With the Confederacy vanquished, a new threat to the country was perceived by Washington. The French were in Mexico.

The 5th Mass. Cavalry was part of the massive troop build-up along the Texas border in 1865. They were ordered to that state and served in Clarksville until they were mustered out in October 1865.



The following biographical information on Welch was provided by contributor Larry Rogers.

Horace Barbour Welch was born in Canaan, Grafton Co., New Hampshire July 23, 1831. He went in to business with his brother Lyman in Canaan in 1851 making "felloes" (A wheels circular rim, or a part of the rim, into which the outer ends of the spokes are inserted). How, when or why he came to Sacramento, California still needs more research. However, the California State Census of 1852 does show Welch, age 21, as a miner in El Dorado Co. By 1859, judging from 2 articles in local newspapers, he was soon involved in local community activities. On 6 January 1859 he was installed as Third Patron of the "Cadets of Temperance", children to young to join the Sons of Temperance Movement. On 22 July 1859 he was nominated as Assistant Engineer for the Alert Hook and Ladder Co., No. 2 in Sacramento.

The 1860 U.S. Census shows him living in a lodging house in Sacramento, occupation, Clerk.

He is listed in the Record of California Men in the War of Rebellion as having enlisted as a Sergeant in Company F, 2nd California Cavalry, known as the "Sacramento Rangers", August 29, 1861, Captained by David DeMerritt. He is shown there as being discharged in San Francisco, July 20, 1862 for an unknown disability. Welch soon followed Captain DeMerritt, George and William Manning and Samuel Backus, all having resigned from the 2nd Cal. Cav.. He enlisted as 2nd Lt., Company F, 2nd Mass. Cav., May 21, 1863. George Manning would assume the Captancy of Company M; William Manning became 1st Lt. of Company L; Samuel Backus as a Private in Co. L, all in the 2nd Mass. Cav.

By War Department Special Order #53, February 3, 1864, Welch was discharged from the 2nd Mass. Cav, for promotion and became Captain of Company C, 5th Mass. Cav. (Colored). He and his men were mustered out October 17, 1865 at Clarksville, Texas and

returned to Massachusetts where they were discharged the following month. As in his coming to California, so too his return to California still needs further research. He is shown as arriving at San Francisco February 10th 1866 aboard the Pacific Mail Steamer Costa Rica

He and David DeMerritt are shown as Charter Members of Sumner Post No. 3 G.A.R. organized May 26, 1867.

He appears in the 1870 U.S. Census as living in Sacramento with his wife, Jennie, age 24, occupation Salesman.

The 1879 McKenny City directory for Sacramento indicates that Welch is a "traveling solicitor" for Waterhouse & Lester, dealers in wagon lumber, buggy, carriage & wagon wheels, & every article belonging to the carriage or wagon making business.

The 1880 U.S. Census shows him still in Sacramento, occupation Hardwood Agent, a widow as his wife, Jennie, had died March 3, 1872.

Again , a gap still to be researched, until September 17, 1882 when he dies at age 51. He is buried along side his wife in the Old City Cemetery, Sacramento, California.

Sources

History of Canaan, Grafton Co. New Hampshire, W.A. Wallace, pages 300, 453, 644
Record of California Men In The War Of The Rebellion
Sacramento Bee 6 January 1859
Sacramento Daily Review 22 July 1859
U.S. Census 1860,1870 & 1880
McKenny City directory, Sacramento 1879
An Illustrated History of Sacramento Co., Winfield Davis, 1890.