



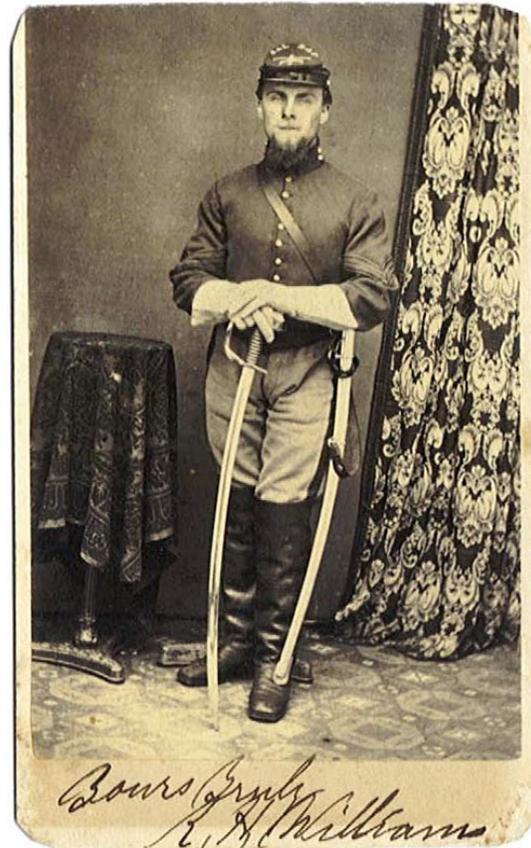
The Mystery Photographer

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In the fall of 1862, a hundred Californians, motivated by their desire to fight for the Union, set sail for New England to muster in with the 2nd Massachusetts Cavalry at Camp Meigs in Readville, Massachusetts. They became known as the Cal Hundred and were closely followed by 400 more goldenstaters, known as the Cal Battalion.

The arrival of these two groups in Boston caused a great deal of fanfare, but the attention given to the newcomers did not sit well with the local volunteers. Blending the two factions into a unified regiment did not come about easily at first, partly because the rough-and-ready Californians regarded the Massachusetts men as little more than an assortment of clerks and tailors. The Californians' native pride manifested itself in the insignia placed atop their headgear. For a short time, the words "Cal 100", "California Bat" and "Cal Cav Bat" accompanied the regulation cavalry



crossed sabers on their caps. Wisely, the 2nd Mass Colonel, a Boston bred officer named Charles R. Lowell, sought to



minimize the regional tensions and issued a general order on May 23, 1863 requiring the removal of all non-regulation insignia from the men's caps.

Before doing so, many of the Californians visited a local photographer. Crisp uniforms, new leather belt rigs and clean gauntlets were the attire of the day, always accompanied by the distinctive headgear. But who was the mystery photographer? Unfortunately none of the surviving CDVs bear backmarks or any other clue to the identity or location of the studio. The only hints are the unique paisley curtain always seen at the photograph's right, the patterned carpet and the occasionally seen table on which the soldier sometimes rested his cap or revolver for the image.

Another small piece fell into the puzzle when a ¼ plate ambrotype surfaced. It depicts an infantry soldier from another regiment, apparently taken

by the same photographer. Clearly visible in the soldier's ambrotype (below) is the mystery photographer's drapery and carpet. The subject was Pvt. Isaac Carry of the 44th Mass Infantry, freshly outfitted with new Enfield accoutrements that had recently been issued to members of his regiment. The 44th Mass also trained at Camp Meigs, in August of 1862, but they departed for duty months before the arrival of the Cal Hundred. Clearly our mystery photographer did not change his props often. Who could he be?

For further information and more images of the Californians in the Civil War, see <http://2mass.omnica.com/>.

California troopers images (author's collection unless otherwise noted): first page, from left: Pvt. Jacob Walther, Co. E, died at Frederick, Md (Wayne Sherman); Captain Charles Eigenbrodt, Co. E. KIA at Halltown, Virginia (Sutter's Fort State Historical Park); unidentified trooper from Co. M (Rick Carlile). Bottom: Orderly Sergeant Robert H. Williams, Co. F, survived the war. Above, left: Californian, Pvt. Joseph H. Burke, Co. M, captured by Mosby, died at Andersonville Above: Pvt. Isaac Carry, 44th Massachusetts Infantry.

