

*On one occasion, however, great excitement prevailed in the camp (Merchants Hotel). The time was around midnight, soon after relief of sentries. It was one of those cool, still nights, when sounds carry loud, in fact, seem magnified. Suddenly an explosion, like the roar of a 12-pounder rent the air. The cadence of the heavy sleepers ceased forthwith, and the night sounds of the camp changed as if by magic into the clatter of bayonets, as side-arms were hurriedly buckled on. All stood ready for the order. Into this state of suspense crept the word that a deputy sheriff, with his ancient 44-Colt, had shot a dog.

Returning from Madison on October 12, the Guards were met at the depot by a brass band, by the City Commission, in a body, and platoons of the Police and Fire Departments. The streets were lined with people, and the march up-town was almost a continuous ovation.

On January 17-18, 1918, the Guards were on duty at and in the vicinity of the armory, as a result of rumors that enemies were going to dynamite the armory. They were relieved on the 19th by soldiers from Camp Johnston.

The battalion of Duval County Home Guards participated in every patriotic parade held here during the war, and it always received a spontaneous outburst of applause in appreciation of its service to the community. It was invariably complimented by the officers of Camp Johnston for its military perfection. The ladies of the city presented the battalion with a stand of elegant silk flags, the ceremonies taking place in Confederate park December 16, 1917, in the presence of several thousand spectators, following which the battalion was reviewed by the commander and other high officers of Camp Johnston. The Rotary Club gave the Home Guards an elaborate and long-remembered banquet at the armory; this endorsement by this important civic club typified the feeling of Jacksonville for the home militia.

The Guards kept well recruited until after the armistice, when interest naturally began to wane. The emergency that brought it into existence having passed, the organization of Duval County Home Guards was officially disbanded in March, 1921.