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In This Issue

The U.S. Cavalry Part 3
Civil War West of the Mississippi: Marmaduke's First Raid
Lieutenant Colonel Edwin P. Ramsey, USA-Ret.
From the Library: Ronald Reagan

A Note from Fort Carson
In Memory of General Donn Albert Starry
Christmas with the Ninth Cavalry
Specials at the Sutler's Store
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Contents

1.......The U.S. Cavalry Part 3
6.......Civil War West of the Mississippi: Marmaduke's First Raid
9.......Lieutenant Colonel Edwin P. Ramsey, USA-Ret.
14.....From the Library: Ronald Reagan
16.....A Note from Fort Carson
17.....In Memory of General Donn Albert Starry
17.....Christmas with the Ninth Cavalry
20.....Specials at the Sutler's Store

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U.S. Cavalry Association
P.O. Box 2325
Fort Riley, Kansas 66442-0325
785-784-5797

www.uscavalry.org
Email: cavalry@flinthills.com

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There was one man with the troop who often was very important. Even the C.O. relied on him for advice before he made some decisions. This man was called the civilian scout, or also known as the Cavalry or Government Scout. He wore no uniform; his horse and equipment were not of Army issue. His horse, stock saddle, rifle, and six-shooter were what he used in ranch life before he became a scout.

Scouts were selected by troop commanders for their bravery, knowledge of the country, the enemy, and the language of the enemy. These men were geniuses in cutting sign (tracking). This is an art you learn as you grow up; so the learning the scouts got while they grew up was of much help to the Cavalry. Much hard riding was saved by the troop when the scout knew which way the enemy went. Their sharp eyes could see where a horse had passed—something the average man could not see. Those almost invisible signs would be followed until soon the trail, in softer soil, would be plainly visible to everyone.

Having a civilian scout did not mean that the troop was not efficient without one—the troop C.O., the two Lieutenants, the top Sergeant, and other oldtimers of the outfit were men of years of Cavalry life, and they could have taken care of the troop anywhere. When an outfit was moved to a new territory, a new scout would be selected, one who was an expert in that region. The scouts were with a troop to make it better.

When the Pershing Expedition went into Mexico in 1916, it took some Apache Indian scouts from New Mexico and Arizona with it. These men were natural born trackers and possessed many instincts native only to an Indian. They were of much assistance to the Cavalry. Also joining the expedition as scouts and guides were a number of Americans who were living in Mexico—ranchmen, mining men, and professional men, including a doctor. Some
of the Mormons joined from their settlement in the State of Chihuahua and were a big help. They held a personal hatred of Villa and his men, as the Mormon settlement had been raided and some of the settlers killed.

When Brig. Gen. John J. Pershing made that fast, hard 125-mile ride from Culberson’s Ranch in New Mexico across the State of Chihuahua with the 7th and 10th Cavalry, the Mormon scouts were a great help since they knew that part of Mexico. Gen. Black Jack Pershing was in a hurry to get into Mexico and he proved to all the young troopers that he was still a Cavalryman at the age of 56. On the second day of that trip they traveled 68 miles in 13 hours. This was in desert and mountainous country where an accurate knowledge of the best way to go and the location of water was essential. The destination of this fast ride was Casa Grande and nearby Colonia Dublan. The Mormon Colony was in that area and the guides knew the region well.

From the expedition headquarters at Dublan, Gen. Pershing lost no time in getting the troops onto the trail of the bandits. The second day after their arrival, the 7th was on the trail and the first to get into action with the bandits at Guerrero.

The scouts who were with the troops in the Big Bend district of west Texas during that period in which there were so many raids on ranches were men who lived in that area; some had been Texas Rangers or Government River Riders, mounted Custom and Immigration Guards. The Government River Raiders preceded the Immigration Border Patrol, which was formed in 1924. Much could be told of all those men, and they proved themselves worthy to be among the troops of the regiments which made much semi-early American history.

Troop M, 8th Cavalry, was stationed at

"Brig. Gen. John J. Pershing at 56 making one of the crossings of several rivers in Mexico during the 125-mile expeditions with the 7th and 10th Cavalry."

"The 7th Cavalry on the long march into Mexico with Gen. Pershing in 1916 made a picturesque sight as it rode over the hills."
Ruidosa, Tex., in the Big Bend in 1919. There were several ranches in this area which had been raided by the Mexican bandits from across the Rio Grande, who took saddle horses and cattle. On March 24, the bandits made off with 25 head of cattle from the Nunez Ranch. Capt. Kloepfer, Troop M commander, was notified and he and his troops took up the trail which led to the Rio Grande. It was about 4 p.m. when the Cavalry crossed the river and followed the bandits into Mexico, where they surprised the Mexicans just making camp for the night. When the shooting was over, six of the bandits would never again steal cattle, and Troop M had more souvenirs for its collection. The troopers also had an opportunity to show that they were good cowpunchers. They rounded up the stolen cattle, only 24 of the 25, as one had been butchered just before the troopers broke into the bandits' camp. They also brought back the meat.

On the return trail a terrific rain, hail, and lightning storm broke loose, but the self-made trail drivers held the herd together and by daylight had crossed the Rio Grande into Texas. The ranchman was deeply grateful to the troopers for the return of 24 of his cattle. He made the troop accept the meat, but really had

"Troopers of the 5th Cavalry crossed the Devil's River at a walk, since it was warmer than riding in the frosty mornings."

"Troop G, 8th Cavalry, along with Troop A, sought revenge on the Mexican bandits who raided the Nevill ranch."
no difficulty getting it to accept the fresh ration.

Just a year prior to this, on the night of March 25, 1918, about 29 bandits raided the Ed Nevill Ranch, which was in the upper corner of the Big Bend. Nevill had only reached the ranch a couple of hours earlier, after a hard 35-mile ride from Van Horn. He and his 18-year-old son, Glenn, were in the front room and an American-Mexican hand was in the kitchen with his wife and two children when the bandits surrounded the house.

Some of the bandits who were behind the chicken house fired into the house. The Nevills returned shots, but soon saw that it was hopeless to stay in the house, so they decided to make a dash to a deep ditch near the building. Ed made it safely to the ditch, but his rifle was shot out of his hand and his hat was knocked off. Glenn was killed as he stepped out of the house. The ranch hand escaped, although his wife was struck by bullets while in the house. The children were unhurt.

Ed waited a short while in the ditch for Glenn, then worked his way up the ditch and wandered around through the brush. There was no more shooting, but he could hear some of the bandits talking while trying to track him. Finally the bandits gave up and left.

The ranch hand, when he got out of the house, kept going about six miles to where he met a patrol of Cavalry in command of Lt. Gaines of Troop G, 8th Cavalry. When Gaines reported to Capt. Anderson, the troop commander, at a camp at Evett’s Ranch, Anderson phoned Col. Langhorne, who ordered the troop to get on the bandits’ trail and get them. Langhorne also sent Troop A under command of Capt. Tate at Marfa over the Candelaria rim to join with Troop G as it came down the Rio Grande route.

The bandits, in order to confuse the troops, did not try to slip back into Mexico at a point near Nevill’s ranch, but made a big swing along the American side. The plan did not work, however, as the scouts picked up their trail and the two troops were able to follow them across the Rio Grande between Candelaria and Pillares.

"Troop M, 8th Cavalry, encamped at Ruidosa on the Rio Grande in the Big Bend country, with Mexico in the background."
The bandits by now, of course, knew that the troops were hot on their trail and would cross into Mexico after them. Reinforced by some of their henchmen from the villages of Pillares and backed up by some Carranzistas soldiers who were in that area, they intended to give the troop a surprise fight when they got into Mexico. They also planned an ambush for them.

The two troop commanders had other plans for the bandits. Revenge for the slaying of Glenn Nevill was on the mind of every man in the troops as they crossed the Rio Grande. After Glenn had been shot, he had been literally beaten to death with rocks and clubs and his head mutilated. The troops planned to stay in Mexico until they got the bandits. A 50-mule pack train had been sent with the troops and it was loaded with supplies for a long stay.

The Cavalrymen acted as though they were heading for the ambush, then a sudden charge was launched which routed the Mexicans. The bandits scattered, some to the hills and some to the houses of the Pillares villages—the troopers right behind them, killing some hiding in the houses. The known dead were 33 bandits, but the number of wounded which got away was not known. We lost one man, a Pvt. Albert of Troop A. Some of the horses which were stolen from the Nevills, along with the loot from the house and some of Glenn's clothes, including his leggings, were recovered.

During that two-year period, the 8th Cavalry was involved in many events along the 200 or more miles of border in their district which kept them in good fighting shape. Their district commander, Col. Langhorne, did not hesitate to send the troops across the Rio Grande after bandits who had made a raid on the Texas side. He did not wait to get authority from the Southern Department or Washington. He was always ready for action and kept in touch with his troop commanders by telephone over the lines run by the Signal Corps to each of the troops.

The bandit situation in Mexico began to improve as far as the Cavalry was concerned in the latter part of 1919-20, since the bandits now knew that they could not sneak into the U.S., make a raid, and hide out after they crossed back over the Rio Grande. Many of the old bandits had been killed by the Texas Rangers, and the mounted U.S. Custom and Immigration River Guards by that time, but new ones drifted into this part of Mexico from other sections. From facts which the new bandits picked up from the survivors of some of those invasions that the Cavalry had made without diplomatic sanction, the newcomers soon decided not to make further raids. They did go into another venture which created problems for other branches of the U.S. government for about 10 years, however. These ventures were not the problems of the Cavalry.

The Volstead Act or prohibition, from 1920 to 1933, created big demand in the inland cities of the U.S. for the liquors which could be obtained in Mexico and induced many of these new bandits to become smugglers. There were many shooting battles between the U.S. enforcement officers and the smugglers, but by that time most of the Cavalry outfits were being taken off the outposts.
Although the December 7, 1862, Battle of Prairie Grove, Arkansas, was a tactical draw, the Confederates withdrew from the battlefield that night, opening up northwestern Arkansas to Union occupation.

In order to slow any Union advance, the Confederate commander in Arkansas, Major General Thomas C. Hindman, proposed conducting a raid against the Union line of communication and logistic base in southwest Missouri. With approval of Trans-Mississippi Department commander, Major General Theophilus H. Holmes, Hindman, on December 30, ordered Brigadier General John S. Marmaduke to march immediately. His mission was to “strike the enemy in rear or flank” in order to force the withdrawal of the Union forces then moving toward the Arkansas River. Marmaduke planned to at least threaten the supply depot at Springfield and create the impression that his force was large enough to take and hold the country between Springfield and Rolla. His force left Lewisburg on December 31 with mostly mounted troops: the brigade of Colonel Joseph O. Shelby (1,600) and the Missouri battalion of Colonel Emmett MacDonald (270). Colonel J. C. Porter, commanding White’s cavalry brigade (700), was ordered to march from Pocohantis, joining the rest of the force at Hartville on January 9.

We have Colonel Shelby’s uniquely eloquent formal report of his brigade’s participation in the raid. It begins: “The day was auspicious; a bright sun had tempered the keen air to pleasantness, and cheered the mounted soldiers with the hope of a gay and gallant trip. The first two days’ march was long and comfortable; the third the rain commenced, cold and chilling, and continued without intermission for three days, the grand mountains standing bare against the dull and somber sky, their heads heavy with the storm of centuries. The men suffered much, but keeping the bright goal of Missouri constantly in sight, spurred on and on quite merrily.”

On the way to Yellville, Shelby surprised about 100 jayhawkers, lawless bands of loyalists and deserters, and killed and captured a large number of them. On January 7, MacDonald attacked and destroyed Fort Lawrence and its contents, driving off a force of about 300. Shelby, under orders of Marmaduke, advanced on the town of Ozark. He reported: “Upon arriving in close proximately of Ozark, and not being satisfied as to its evacuation, I dismounted the half of each regiment composing the brigade, formed them as infantry, and, feeling my way along slowly and cautiously, with numerous skirmishers, I soon found that the nest was there and it was warm, but the birds had flown and nothing remained to do but apply the torch to the fort and barracks.”

With reports that Springfield was lightly held, although strongly fortified, Marmaduke decided to move directly and attack it, sending a
courier to Colonel Porter to join him there in support. Shelby wrote, “The sun came up the morning of the 8th like a ball of fire, and the day was gloomy and chill; but Springfield loomed up in the distance like a beautiful panorama, and the men, catching the inspiration of the scene, forgot all their trial and hardships, and were eager for the rough, red fray.” Shelby prepared to attack, dismounting the greater part his brigade to fight as infantry. By 10 a.m., MacDonald had joined him from Fort Lawrence, but the courier had never found Porter’s command.

Brigadier General Egbert B. Brown, commanding the Southwest District of Missouri, in command at Springfield, had received reports of Marmaduke’s advance and set about strengthening his post. Although located in the town, there were four forts comprising a defensive complex. Two 12-pounders and a 6-pounder were mounted on wheels as temporary carriages and rolled into Fort No. 4, an artillery lieutenant and enlisted men forming crews for them. The backbone of Brown’s force was the 18th Iowa Volunteer Infantry of 378 men. In addition, he armed and equipped over 300 convalescents, as well as almost 100 recently discharged convalescents, all formed into a quaintly named “Quinine Brigade.” Early the morning of the 8th, 200-300 men of the Enrolled Missouri Militia of three cavalry regiments reported for duty and the 400 troops that had “flown the nest” in Ozark arrived. Finally, a number of citizens of the town volunteered and were armed. By noon, Brown expected to have about 2,000 men under arms.

At about 10 a.m., Marmaduke’s force advanced in line of battle, Shelby’s dismounted brigade on the right and MacDonald’s command, dismounted except one company, on Shelby’s left. On the Union side, detachments of the 3rd, 4th, and 14th Missouri State Militia Cavalry regiments were formed left of Fort No. 4 and ordered to charge the Confederate right. Several houses were ordered burned in order to prevent their use by the attackers and clear fields of fire for the defenders in Fort No. 4.

Shelby described the start of the battle: “Major Elliott and Lieutenant Gregg were on the right flank, watching and skirmishing with the enemy there, and over the level earth squadrons of horse swept gaily and fantastically. Twas a bright and beautiful scene. There lay the quiet town, robed in dull, gray hue of winter, its domes and spires stretching their skeleton hands to heaven, as if in prayer against the coming strife, and, drawing nearer and nearer, long black lines came gleaming on, while the sun shone out like a golden bar, uncurling it hair on earth and sky, stream and mountain, and lent the thrilling picture a sterner and fiercer light.”

For an hour the fighting here went on, and though the artillery in the fort took them under fire, Shelby’s dismounted troops, supported by three artillery pieces, proved to be overwhelming and drove the Missouri cavalry back toward Fort No. 1. Withdrawing 300 yards, the militia cavalry rallied and attacked again, supported by five companies of the 18th Iowa Volunteers. However, the Confederates had gained possession of a brick college building and sharpshooters were able to check the Union advance. The afternoon was spent in charges and countercharges by both sides. At one point, General Brown, conspicuous in action, was severely wounded in the shoulder. Nightfall brought the end of fighting except for artillery fire. As Shelby reported, “Night came down with weary, brooding wings, and laid her dark brow across the cloudy sky, and threw her sable mantle over the fort and wall and house and men, checking the bloody strife, and calming the furious passions that had been at war all day.” Shelby gathered his troops around the brick building captured earlier. He summed up the day: “My brigade suffered seriously in the attack on Springfield, but it covered itself all over with glory, and won imperishable laurels... The mission had been accomplished...and we, after making a
circuit of the town with floating banners and waving pennons, left it alone in its glory, because all had been done that could be done.” The last phrase was an accurate assessment. In fact Brown had done a masterful job of defending his base, his replacement succinctly reporting on January 9, “I believe the enemy have decamped. We whipped them yesterday.”

Shelby was up to his eloquent standards in memorializing his losses: “When the warfare of the world is over, when time strikes records with eternity, and mortality is paling beyond the sunset shore, and billows of dissolution are white with the wrecks of the universe, these deathless spirits will rise beautiful from their urns of death and chambers of decay, and join the noble band of Southern martyrs that have fallen ‘with their backs to the field and their feet to the foe.’”

The morning of the 9th, Marmaduke decided not to renew his attack on Springfield, recognizing that the garrison would be reinforced and that his troops were tiring from the march and battle. He started to move toward Rolla and destroyed two forts at Sand Spring and Marshfield along the Rolla Road. Porter’s brigade finally joined him after destroying forts at Hartville and the fortifications at Hazlewood, capturing about 30 militia. By now, as Marmaduke concluded, Union forces were moving to close in on him. In fact, Brigadier General John M. Schofield, commanding the Army of the Frontier, had given orders to elements of his command to do just that and his forces were responding.

Marmaduke decided it was time to head back to Arkansas. On the way to Hartsville, Porter, reversing course and now in the lead, encountered a strong force of Union infantry on its way to Springfield. After several hours of skirmishing, Porter’s brigade pulled back for the night. Approaching Hartville the morning of the 11th, the town at first seemed deserted, but Union troops who lay in ambush in the brush, opened a heavy fire on Porter, and forced him to retreat. Reinforced by Shelby’s brigade, the Confederates engaged the Union troops for several hours of hard fighting. Finally, the Union troops fell back grudgingly. In the action that day, Colonel Porter was fatally wounded and one of his lieutenant colonels killed. All but four of Shelby’s captains were killed. While leading a charge against an artillery position, Colonel MacDonald was killed by a spray of canister. Marmaduke’s losses had been 12 dead, 96 wounded, and 3 missing. Federal casualties were 7 dead, 64 wounded, five taken prisoner, and 2 missing.

At midnight, a Confederate aide galloped in to report to Marmaduke that enemy cavalry were coming from the west and infantry were coming from the southwest. It was time for him to move south as rapidly as possible. The retreat was one of acute suffering. A raging storm on January 19 lasted ten hours and left ice and huge snowdrifts. Many of the wounded dropped out. The raiders finally reached the White River and crossed at Batesville. Two hundred horses had been abandoned on the roadside to die. Many troops had frostbite so severely that amputations were necessary. Shelby’s report stated, “During the march from Hartsville to Batesville, the men suffered much, and some in my brigade are badly frozen, yet the cause demanded sacrifice, and it was made.” Marmaduke’s overall loss had been 55 killed, 203 wounded, and 29 missing.

Although the Union could be proud of General Brown’s successful defense of Springfield and most of its materiel, Marmaduke had achieved much. He had caused the Union forces headed deeper into Arkansas to retrace their steps. He had destroyed a number of forts and captured and paroled 300 Union troops. In addition, of course, battle casualties on the Union side had been comparable to those of the Confederates. Marmaduke’s raid had been the first such use of independent cavalry west of the Mississippi. It would not be the last.
"I brought my arm down and yelled to my men to charge. Bent nearly prone across the horses’ necks, we flung ourselves at the Japanese advance, pistols firing full into their startled faces. A few returned our fire, but most fled in confusion, some wading back into the river, others running madly for the swamps. To them we must have seemed a vision from another century, wild-eyed horses pounding headlong; cheering, whooping men firing from the saddles."

This meeting engagement on Bataan at the village of Morong, led by then First Lieutenant Edwin P. Ramsey on 16 January 1942, was to be the last horse-mounted charge by a U.S. Army cavalry unit. Surviving early days of defeat and disaster, Ramsey was destined to have one of the most challenging and interesting wartime careers of the Pacific Theater during World War II. His four years of combat, mostly spent behind Japanese lines, reads like a pulp fiction novel or a Hollywood screenplay. An illustrative example of an interwar generation of hard-charging Cavalry officers who worked hard and played hard, Ramsey rose to the occasion after the Japanese invasion of the Philippines began in December 1941. Refusing to surrender on Bataan in April 1942, he led tens of thousands of guerrillas on Luzon in one of the most successful resistance campaigns of the war against ruthless Imperial Japanese Army occupation forces. His remarkable career encompassed the end of several storied American military institutions, including the Philippine Scouts and the Army’s horse cavalry, while helping to lay the doctrinal foundation of an Army branch not born until after the war, the U.S. Army Special Forces.

Edwin Price Ramsey was born in Carlyle, Illinois, on 9 May 1917, but spent his formative years growing up in Kansas. Visits to an uncle’s farm awakened a love for horses and riding and gave him direction in life. Like so many others during the Great Depression, Ramsey’s family experienced significant economic hardship, an existence further exacerbated by the tragic death of his father. Deeply concerned about his aimlessness, his mother suggested that the teenaged Ramsey enroll in the Oklahoma Military Academy (OMA) in Claremore, Oklahoma. Popularly known at the time as the “West Point of the Southwest,” OMA, by 1936, was a state-sponsored institution with a highly rated and respected senior level Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) program, one of only three junior colleges in the nation to have a branch-specific cavalry program. OMA also had one of the best intercollegiate polo squads in the nation, the
“Flying Cadets,” with legendary local humorist and resident Will Rogers being one of the collegiate team’s biggest supporters.

In a timeless military school rite of passage, the young Ramsey was to be sorely tested at OMA by the “rabbit” system and overzealous upperclassmen armed with wooden paddles. Fighting back against bullies and the inevitable hazing of the day, Cadet Ramsey earned the respect of his peers and superiors alike by refusing to inform upon others. Learning to properly ride and care for horses, he became a superb horseman and a skilled member of the OMA varsity polo team. “Polo was the game I was made for,” according to Ramsey. It also served as the perfect venue for training would-be cavalry officers in the finer arts of decision making, teamwork, and aggressive leadership. This ancient sport had an undeniable hold upon the officer corps of the interwar Army, but polo was a dangerous mistress indeed, with players at times killed or crippled.

Graduating from OMA in 1938 as a second lieutenant in the Cavalry Reserve, Ramsey was thoroughly imbued with the cavalry ethos, being the “elite of the service, [with] mobility, shock, and speed we knew that we were better than anyone we had to be better to get in ahead of everyone else, the discipline to do our job, and the brains to get out alive.” After graduation from OMA, polo continued to be a passion of Ramsey’s and influenced his decision to enroll in the University of Oklahoma Law School, since the university had an active polo squad. However, the near death of his adventurous sister in a plane crash prompted an early withdrawal from law school to care for her.

With global war already a reality, and deeply concerned about appeasement in Europe, Ramsey volunteered for active duty service. In 1940, the day of the horse had not yet ended in the Cavalry. Assigned to 2d Squadron, 11th Cavalry Regiment (Horse), in February 1941, he was stationed at Camp Moreno, California, a mountain and cold weather training site near the border with Mexico. With his considerable horsemanship skills, Ramsey was assigned duties as a remount officer, training both raw mounts and draftees who were beginning to flesh out the skeleton of the woefully under-strength Regular Army cavalry regiments of the day. Many vestiges of the Old Army remained. “We wore riding breeches and high boots, and our round campaign hats were tilted at a meaningful rake across one eye, the strap stretched beneath the chin. I was twenty-three years old, proud and invincible,” remembered Ramsey.

Less than enthused with the cold weather of Camp Moreno, Ramsey jumped when volunteers were requested for the 26th Cavalry Regiment (Philippine Scouts) in the then Commonwealth of the Philippines, commonly known at the time as the “Country Club of the Army.” Another plus for Ramsey was the fact that the 26th Regiment also had one of the finest polo teams in the Army.

The 26th Cavalry Regiment was, in many respects, the elite unit of one of the most unique institutions of the interwar Army, the Philippine Scouts. Formed in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War, the Philippine Scouts were authorized by the Army’s Philippine Department in 1901 and proved to be extremely effective during pacification operations throughout the islands, utilizing their knowledge of the native language and local geography. Organized into company-sized units with Filipino enlisted personnel and U.S. Army officers, the Scouts were tough and reliable, with two earning the Medal of Honor.

After World War I, Philippine Scouts were the mainstay of the islands’ meager defenses against both internal and external threats. Many Scouts served lengthy enlistments, and it was common for Scouts to serve in the same company or troop for thirty years. Formed in 1922, the 26th Cavalry, whose motto was Our Strength is in Loyalty, was one of the remaining horse cavalry regiments in the Army in 1941. Organized into two squadrons of three troops each, with service and machine gun troops, the 26th was smaller than horse cavalry regiments stateside, and did not possess scout cars and motorized assets, including four-ton semitrailers or large trucks for long-range transport of mounts and men. The 26th was relatively well-equipped in small arms, with troopers armed with the modern semi-automatic M1 Garand rifle, the M1928A1 Thompson submachinegun, and the M1911A1 pistol.
Reporting for duty at Fort Stotsenburg, north of Manila near Clark Field in the foothills of the Zambales Mountains, Lieutenant Ramsey was assigned to Troop G, 2d Squadron. In addition to Ramsey, the small troop consisted of a captain, one sergeant, a corporal, and twenty-five privates. It was a rather enjoyable colonial army life on the small post in the summer of 1941. With comfortable quarters, friendly native servants, and dress uniforms required for dinner, it was more akin to “Gunga Din” than the twentieth century.

A serious threat, however, hung over the islands—the nearby Empire of Japan. With war in Asia now in its tenth year, indications abounded of a possible strike by Japan to take the Philippines. By 1941, reconnaissance overflights, espionage, and aggressive moves elsewhere in Asia had convinced senior American military leaders to take precautionary measures in the islands. These included sending dependents home, mobilizing the nascent Philippine Army, and shipping additional air and ground reinforcements westward to bolster anemic island defenses. Retired General Douglas MacArthur was recalled to active duty and given command of the new United States Army Forces in the Far East (USAFFE). From the Philippines, MacArthur informed the War Department that “Military forces maintained here by the United States are entirely inadequate little more than token symbols.”

Inadequate or not, by the fall of 1941, USAFFE and the 26th Cavalry Regiment were training hard and preparing for an uncertain future. Regimental officers were now fully engaged with exacting drills and maneuvers during the day, followed by Tagalog classes in the evening. Forces assigned to the islands had a daunting task of defending some 7,000 islands and 11,000 miles of coastline with 22,000 troops, with 12,000 of those crack Philippine Scouts.

Appropriately enough, there was to be time for a final pre-war polo match at Fort Stotsenburg on 7 December 1941 between the Manila Polo Club and the regiment, with Ramsey playing on the four-man home squad. With North Luzon Force Commander Major General Jonathan M. “Skinny” Wainwright as umpire, Ramsey rode well in a losing cause. After a memorable post-match party, Ramsey began World War II on Sunday morning, 8 December with a considerable hangover. Confusion abounded that first morning of war. Nevertheless, Colonel Clinton A. Pierce, the regimental commander, had the presence of mind to immediately move the 26th from its garrison to preplanned dispersed battlefield positions. Avoiding the chaos of the Japanese air attack on Clark Field, Ramsey and his platoon moved across Luzon to the east and took up positions at Baler Bay.

Two days later the Japanese 14th Army, led by General Masaharu Homma, began landing at Lingayen Gulf and drove south towards Manila. In a classic cavalry delaying mission, the 26th Cavalry Regiment attempted to slow the Japanese advance, giving time for American and Filipino forces to sidestep into the Bataan Peninsula. South of the invasion beaches, the regimental S-3 recalled that “It

"First Lieutenant Ramsey is shown here in this 1941 photograph atop his mount Brynn Awrynn while serving with the 26th Cavalry (Philippine Scouts). In addition to serving as a cavalry trooper in the 26th, Ramsey played on the regimental polo team, considered one of the best in the Army in the 1930s and the early 1940s. (Courtesy of Lieutenant Colonel Edwin P. Ramsey)"
was a wonderful thing, to watch soldiers who'd never before seen a gun fired in anger, calmly choosing their positions, adjusting their rifle slings, and proceeding to pick off Japs as though they were silhouette targets on the rifle range."

By the time the last bridge had been blown over the Layac River leading into Bataan, the 26th Cavalry was roughly down to half strength, with only one composite squadron remaining with "men haggard and showing signs of malnutrition horses that were left could scarcely walk." With a defensive line now established across the peninsula, Ramsey and the regiment were ordered to the west coast of Bataan to support Wainwright's I Corps and the Philippine Army's 1st Division. Volunteering to remain and guide a replacing troop, Ramsey, on his mount Bryn Awryn, entered Army history on 16 January 1942 when he led the last horse-mounted cavalry charge in U.S. Army History. Ordered to take point by Wainwright, who recognized Ramsey from December's polo match, he rode north on reconnaissance, leading a horse mounted column. At the small village of Morong, Ramsey's platoon charged into an advance element of Japanese Colonel Yunosuke Watanabe's 122d Infantry Regiment and succeeded in driving the infantry back until the composite E-F Troop arrived. Ramsey joked years later that he had violated one of the three basic principles of soldiering—"never volunteer."

After the charge, Ramsey was awarded the Purple Heart and Silver Star for gallantry in action. Wounded and jaundiced, he was evacuated to a jungle hospital but rejoined the 26th before American and Filipino forces on Bataan surrendered on 9 April. By that time, the regiment was fighting on foot, since all horses and mules, including Bryn Awryn, had been used to feed the starving "Battling Bastards of Bataan." Refusing to surrender, Ramsey and Captain Joe Barker walked north out of the peninsula, carrying little more than their side arms. Uncertain about their future, or legal status, the assumption by both was that they would be dead in ninety days or less.

As officers now in search of a command, the two were able to eventually link up with Colonel Thorp, a USAFFE staff officer sent north by MacArthur to organize resistance against the Japanese before the fall of Bataan. Luzon had been divided into four areas of operations, with Barker and Ramsey given Manila north to Lingayen Golf. This command was designated the East Central Luzon Area Force. The cavalry tenets of shock, mobility, surprise, and a borrowed copy of Mao Tse-Tung's work on guerrilla warfare guided the "war criminals" as they began their efforts. Challenges were plentiful. Intelligence gathering was the first priority as underground, auxiliary, and guerilla forces had to be established in East Central Luzon. Getting information out of the islands was a challenge, but this improved considerably after contact was made with the Allied Intelligence Bureau. Ramsey's "first real contact with the outside world had come from MacArthur personally," with Ramsey, instructed via radio message, to remain on Luzon and continue his efforts. By 1943, Ramsey, now promoted, had assumed command of the force after the capture of Barker in Manila. Moving up to number two on the Japanese counter-intelligence kill or capture list, with a price of $200,000 on his head, Ramsey forged an effective resistance force with more than 38,000 men and women under his command.

Service with the guerrilla forces on Luzon was fraught with danger. Ramsey fought both Communist Huks and Japanese troops, escaped an assassination attempt, underwent an emergency appendectomy without anesthesia, and organized resistance efforts in Manila. By the fall of 1944, an estimated 250,000 resistance fighters, organized into eleven major groups, were conducting effective combat operations against the Japanese occupation troops.

With the landings on Leyte Island on 20 October 1944, MacArthur and the United States finally "returned" to the Philippines. The information provided by the guerrilla forces, such as those led by Ramsey, was vital to MacArthur's return. On 9 January 1945, U.S. forces invaded Luzon. Army official histories credit an "abundance of information" on Japanese strength, dispositions, capabilities, and intentions on Luzon to the "veritable hotbed of guerilla resistance" at the time. Finally linking up with the U.S. Sixth Army, the East Central Luzon Area Force provided additional support to conventional forces moving south towards Manila.
On 13 June 1945, MacArthur presented the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) to then Major Ramsey for “extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an armed enemy while serving with the Philippine Guerilla Forces, East Central Luzon Guerilla Area, in action against enemy forces from 21 April 1942 to 30 April 1945, in the Philippine Islands.” Also honored with the DSC at the same ceremony were surviving fellow American guerilla leaders Bernard L. Anderson, Robert Lapham, Ray Hunt, and others. Promoted to lieutenant colonel, Ramsey, clearly ill and suffering from malaria, amoebic dysentery, anemia, acute malnutrition, and a state of general collapse, was ordered back to the States three days later by MacArthur. It would take almost a year in a stateside hospital for a complete recovery. Medically retired from the Army, Ramsey would go on to complete his law degree at the University of Oklahoma and have a successful business career with Hughes Aircraft in Manila, Hong Kong, and Tokyo.

Deserved recognition and honors followed over the years. The Republic of the Philippines awarded him the Philippine Medal of Honor, the Distinguished Conduct Star, Distinguished Service Star, and Wounded Personnel medal. His wartime unconventional warfare (UW) experiences, with those of fellow guerilla leaders Russell W. Volckmann, Lapham, Donald D. Blackburn, and Wendell Fertig, helped to establish the doctrinal and organizational structure of the U.S. Army Special Forces in 1952. The commanding general of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, recognized Ramsey’s wartime UW accomplishments with the award of the Special Forces Tab and Green Beret during a guest speaker visit to Fort Bragg in 2001.

One of the last living Philippine guerilla leaders from World War II, the “Grand Old Man” of the cavalry remains delightfully active at age ninety-four, and is now retired in Los Angeles, California. Ramsey can often be seen at the U.S. Cavalry Association Annual Bivouac and was recently inducted into the Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame in 2010. He had to give up polo in 1964 after a near-fatal fall, but his last charge mount, Bryn Awryn, is remembered now in the annual Army vs. Marine polo match, with the best playing pony award named in his honor. Appropriately enough, both man and mount will always be remembered for their accomplishments on both the polo field and battlefield.

About the Author

Bob Seals is a retired Special Forces officer employed by General Dynamics Information Technology in the Battle Command Exercise Division of the U.S. Army Special Operations Battle Command Training Center at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He is a graduate of the Norwich University School of Graduate Studies Master of Arts in Military History program. Current duties include service as a stable sergeant in North Carolina for his horsey wife and son, who is a rising young polocrosse player. He is proud to count among his friends Ed and Raqui Ramsey.
I want to take a few pages in the Journal to showcase some of the items in the U.S. Cavalry Association Memorial Library. All of the readers of the Cavalry Journal that are members support the U.S. Cavalry Association Memorial Library through your membership dues. We also receive support from individuals who donate books, documents and artifacts relating to the cavalry. Because of this we are able to respond to questions from a wide variety of people, including the old horse cavalymen and their families, researchers and those who just have a question about a particular piece of cavalry history. Over the years we have obtained some interesting items in our collection including some pictures of Ronald Reagan and his connection with the United States Cavalry Association.

The first item I’d like to show is a copy of the correspondence between General James H. Polk, who at the time was the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, and Ronald Reagan. President Reagan in a previous letter had been invited to serve as Chairman of the Honorary Trustees of the U.S. Horse Cavalry Association. I am sorry for the delay in responding.

Thank you, particularly, for inviting me to accept your invitation. In doing so, however, I must note the advice of counsel that it would be inappropriate for the Office of the President of the United States to be associated with any direct fundraising by the Association. Nonetheless, I would be proud to serve not only as Chairman, but also as a Charter Member.

Thanks, also, for your kind thoughts about the job we are attempting to do. I am appreciative of your support.

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

General James H. Polk, USA, Ret.
Chairman, Board of Trustees
U.S. Horse Cavalry Association
P.O. Box 6253
Ft. Bliss, Texas 79906
Eventually, it was decided that for his service as Honorary Chairman, the U.S. Cavalry Association would present a print of “On to Mexico” by Joe Grandee to President Reagan. In our files we have a five page summary of a meeting between General Polk, Colonel Spurrier and President Reagan at which time the print was presented to President Reagan at the White House. The summary contains the topics of conversation, which focused on the cavalry, and an account of meeting the President. During this meeting Colonel Spurrier asked the president if his aide would fill out a form recapping the president’s service as a cavalryman. Both a photo of the meeting and part of the form are shown below.

This is by no means everything in the Reagan collection. There are some documents relating to his service in the cavalry as well as a photo of President Reagan that is thought to have been taken in 1937, during his first year of service.
At the recent Bivouac/Cavalry Competition in Fort Reno, Oklahoma, it didn't matter where our troopers placed, it was a team effort and I was PROUD of all of them. CSM Kurak and I felt Paul and the team deserved an award for the hours in training and dedication they have given the Mountain Post. Ordinary soldiers doing extraordinary acts; this is the case with all of our troopers from all the posts. Everyone at Fort Reno was awesome, and I was so impressed by each team and learned from all of them. Great job, Fort Riley on your Grand Champion; Fort Hood for your Maj. Howze Award; and Fort Irwin on the Gen. Pulaski Outstanding Unit Award. I'm looking forward to next year. I am sure the awards will change hands again, as we started our training and our new horses the week after we returned from this year's competition.

Steadfast and Loyal

SFC Shawn Farnsworth
NCOIC Fort Carson Mounted Color Guard

"SGT John Slatton received the Meritorious Service Medal for achievement for winning the General Bolte Cup."

Paul Scholtz received the Commander's Award for Public Service for 30 years of voluntary work with the Fort Carson MCG and the Army.

"The soldiers in the team photo received an Army Commendation Medal for their hard work and dedication in preparation and execution of the events at the National Cavalry Competition."

A Note from Fort Carson
The afternoon of December 24 an order reached us to move out at once to head off Big Foot—an Indian chief—and his band, who had escaped from our troops, and, it was supposed, would join the hostiles in the Bad Lands; and this we were to prevent. So at 2 P.M. the “general” sounded—a signal which meant to strike our tents and pack our mules and wagons. The latter were to follow us, escorted by one troop. Soon “boots and saddles” rang out, when horses were saddled, line formed, and then, with three troops and with two Hotchkiss guns of the First Artillery, under Lieutenant Hayden, we commenced our march of fifty miles, expecting to reach our goal before daylight. Only a half-hundred miles! It does not seem far on paper, but on the back of a trotting horse on a cold winter’s night it is not to be laughed at. On we dashed through the agency, buoyed by the hearty cheers and “A merry Christmas!” given us by the comrades we were leaving behind to revel by the camp-fires, while we rode on by moonlight to meet the foe. Every heart went out in sympathy with us, every one waved his hat and cheered as we rode out on the plains—perhaps to glory, perchance to death. Proud and gallant the troopers looked, more as if going on parade than like men riding forth, it might be, to meet a soldiers death. It made one’s heart beat quicker...

Little did we think at that time that within less than one week some of the gallant men we were leaving behind would be killed by the very band we sought, while we should be saved. After riding for two hours, alternately at a trot and a walk, a short halt was made for the men to make coffee and to give the horses a feed. Then the march was continued, and on and on we sped, that cold, moonlight Christmas eve.

The United States, the Army and the U.S. Cavalry Association lost a great citizen and soldier when General Starry passed away in August. He was passionate about family, books, horses, soldiers and soldiering.

He graduated from West Point in the Class of 1948 and served the Army in uniform for forty years. At the beginning of his career, he had the good fortune to serve in Germany in the 63rd Tank Battalion commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Creighton Abrams. It was the beginning of a long personal and professional relationship that reached a high point when General Abrams assigned General Starry to command the Armor Center. The rest of his career saw promotions and service that included appointment as V Corps commander in Germany and commander of the Training and Doctrine Command. These assignments had a doctrinal impact on the Army still being felt. General Starry also served two tours of duty in Vietnam, one that included command of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment.

After retirement from the Army, General Starry continued to serve the country on the Defense and Army Science Boards and by mentoring young officers. He was a proud member of the U.S. Cavalry Association and served as Chairman of the Board during critical years as the Association adapted to the increasing loss of its veterans of the pre-World War II Horse Cavalry.

Christmas with the Ninth Cavalry
from A Frontier Army Christmas
by Lori A. Cox-Paul and Dr. James W. Wengert

The afternoon of December 24 an order reached us to move out at once to head off Big Foot—an Indian chief—and his band, who had escaped from our troops, and, it was supposed, would join the hostiles in the Bad Lands; and this we were to prevent. So at 2 P.M. the “general” sounded—a signal which meant to strike our tents and pack our mules and wagons. The latter were to follow us, escorted by one troop. Soon “boots and saddles” rang out, when horses were saddled, line formed, and then, with three troops and with two Hotchkiss guns of the First Artillery, under Lieutenant Hayden, we commenced our march of fifty miles, expecting to reach our goal before daylight. Only a half-hundred miles! It does not seem far on paper, but on the back of a trotting horse on a cold winter’s night it is not to be laughed at. On we dashed through the agency, buoyed by the hearty cheers and “A merry Christmas!” given us by the comrades we were leaving behind to revel by the camp-fires, while we rode on by moonlight to meet the foe. Every heart went out in sympathy with us, every one waved his hat and cheered as we rode out on the plains—perhaps to glory, perchance to death. Proud and gallant the troopers looked, more as if going on parade than like men riding forth, it might be, to meet a soldiers death. It made one’s heart beat quicker...

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The words, “Peace on earth, good will toward men,” rang in our ears as we pushed on with hostile intent toward the red man. The night was beautiful with the clear moon, but so cold that water froze solid in our canteens, notwithstanding the constant shaking. Crossing a narrow bridge, a pack-mule was shoved off by its crowded comrades, and falling on the ice of Wounded Knee Creek, broke a hole, smashed a box of hard-tack, but gathered himself together, and ambled off, smiling serenely at having received no damage to his body.

Here we passed abandoned ranches, the owners driven off by threats or fear of the Indians; here we were at the scene of the ghost-dances, where the Indians were taught that the Messiah would appear, rid the country of the white man, and bring plenty to the Indian; that the common cotton ghost shirt worn was bullet-proof; while in every other possible way the medicine men worked upon the fanaticism of the deluded creature. We saw at a distance stray cattle, whose spectral appearance almost led us to believe in ghosts, if not in ghost shirts, and an examination was made to see whether or not they were Indians waiting on their ponies to attack us.

To cross White River we had to take a plunge from solid ice to mid-channel water, and then rode to Cottonwood Springs, at the base of the position of the Indians in the Bad Lands. We reached this place at 4 A.M., and threw ourselves on the ground for rest, knowing that to obtain wood and water for breakfast Christmas morning we should have to march eight miles. And this is the way the Ninth Cavalry squadron spent Christmas eve of 1890.
Cut out the page and send to the U.S. Cavalry Association

THE UNITED STATES CAVALRY ASSOCIATION

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