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Pages from the Past
What One Horse Did
By Frank M. Heath
Reprint from The Cavalry Journal July 1930

One of the avowed reasons for my undertaking a trip through every State in the Union was to prove by actual test the capabilities of a good horse. And I placed the time-barring major accidents for the completion of our trip within a limit that I believed would bring out new actual proven facts that would mean an addition to the science (or records) of horse husbandry.

The proposed undertaking as announced on departing from the Mile Stone in Washington, D.C., on April 1, 1925, was “to hit some part of every State in the Union and return to Washington on or before July 1, 1927, riding one horse.”

I tried to make it plain that by “riding” I did not mean that I must stick in the saddle all the time, especially as I anticipated packing my one horse more or less. It turned out that I did pack her to more than one hundred pounds dead weight for many hundreds of miles at a stretch and probably averaged seventy pounds all the way. I had no other animal with me at any time except for 350 miles—Miles City Montana, to Mammoth, Wyoming and that horse I did not ride. She carried camp equipment, feed and my rations. My only objects were to recuperate my health, to win for a good horse a place in Heaven—Horse Heaven—and to add a little to that education acquitted in the school of hard knocks. By “a good horse” I let it be understood that I meant a representative good horse, of the saddle-road type.

Fortunately I had not far to go from Washington D.C. to find what I termed “a good horse.” I obtained Gypsy Queen, a solid dark bay, south of Warrenton, Virginia. She was foaled and reared near Sperryville in the Virginia foot-hills with their limestone, blue grass and moderately rugged winters.

She came from the progeny of some of those good old Southern horses of the saddle-road type. She cost me $110.00. She was ten years old, stood fifteen hands and weighed about 950 pounds. She is fairly up on legs, has a short back and a good middle. Her best gait on our trip was just a good walk. She has three distinct trots, including a “fox trot” besides what I term a “jog” or long, easy swinging trot. The latter is her best gait other than the walk. She is not good at a canter, which I did not consider a great disadvantage. I would seldom canter a horse on such a trip. She can run a fair clip in a pinch. She has two walks, a quick snappy one which she assumes “in society,” being very proud, and a long, strong stride she takes automatically on the road. She has black markings, including a black stripe down her back and good hoofs. She has hazel eyes, a slightly Roman nose, indicating grit, a strong jaw and wonderful teeth.

When I got Queen, she had her tongue cut about one-third off by some kind of bit. Her mouth was split fully one-half inch beyond its natural size. She was “trading stock.” She evidently would resent cruel treatment which made me like her the more. I believed she would respond to kindness and firmness. She did.

I had a lot to do before starting. Laying out my route roughly, was no small job. I planned to hit as neatly as possible the hot places in cold seasons and vice versa. I knew I could not hit all the Northeastern States and cross the Rockies before the northern winter set in, and have my horse fit to go on. That is why I planned “the loop” the first season (see map). Then came estimates
of the time it should take us to make each leg, at a rate I believed a “good horse” could stand and keep going. This was by no means a matter of how far a horse can travel in one day, a week or a month. One can draw on a horse’s stamina for that. It was a case of replacement under untold handicaps. For many years I have had no patience with the general belief that a horse has no resistance against such changes as our undertaking, living off the country as I proposed to do, required.

The choosing of equipment caused me some study. I knew that every pound of dead weight meant a reduction of miles in a given time, but I had to learn to what a vast extent this applied on a sustained trip. I chose a McClellan army saddle as the best I knew, or yet knew of, for the purpose. We started out with saddle bags containing very light grooming kit, one front, one hind shoe, nails (took a chance on borrowing tools), some credentials and cards and schedules and shaving kit. I had two army rain coats. The reason for this was to use the extra when very cold, at the same time it would serve as bedding. Later I often found this second rain coat came in handy in protecting Queen’s loins from the cold rain. I fastened it to the back of the saddle by means of a long string passed through both sleeves and with a kind of crupper to go under her tail. Of course, we could not both use the extra coat at the same time but sometimes I thought Queen had it coming to her. We started with two army blankets. One of these was used under the saddle in the army way. (In addition to this I had fastened securely under the saddle one-half of a common collar sweat pad on each side, taking care not to crowd the backbone.) The other blanket, together with a lined duck horse blanket, a shelter half, an extra shirt, an extra pair of khaki breeches and blouse, a change of underclothing, socks and a towel, were rolled in a poncho and fastened to the cantle of the saddle. Here I departed from the army regulation, by using long whang leather strings. In tying the roll I use a single bow knot. Then I throw a half hitch over the loop and tie on a rain coat; another half hitch and another rain coat. Thus I can remove one without loosening the whole.

On the pommel of the saddle I arranged a kind of hook on either side by means of a heavy wire. Suspended from these were a nose bag on the right in which I sometimes carried an emergency feed and on the left an old-fashioned army haversack containing a mess kit and miscellaneous articles which I divided at times into the nose into compartments, one for a little sack of coffee, one for each of several items indispensable in preparing a camp meal. This was fastened to the saddle back of the left stirrup by two snaps. I found this a great convenience and well worth its weight. On the opposite side I had a small cooking pot, a small frying pan, etc., tied in a gunny sack. Later I used in place of it a regular pouch also fastened on with snaps. I carried no fire arms. I had shipped many things on ahead to be picked up as needed; for instance, a lot of stuff to Spokane, Washington, to be used later in the desert.

We started out under a handicap, Queen having just recovered from a severe cold as a result of a hard tryout I gave her in late February on our way home, and the sudden change of climate and altitude. Later I tried always to avoid such a combination.

As per plan we were at the Mile Stone back of the White House at noon April 1, 1925. There were present, beside a few newspaper reporters and photographers, Colonel Sterrett, then chief of the Remount Division of the Army; Major Scott, assistant chief; Major A.A. Cederwald, executive officer, now editor of The Remount, a couple of globe-trotters and others. The officers, especially, wished us luck. But they seemed greatly to doubt our ever completing the trip. That night we stayed at our place near Silver Spring, Md.

Next morning out on the country road away from the noise and strange sights Queen seemed rather listless. The principal reason was not hard to solve. In coming through Silver Spring I had been surprised to find we had a full hundred pounds dead weight by the scale. I made up my mind right
then that the longer I persisted in the mistaken notion that I could carry all the conveniences of civilization on a horse and expect her to keep going the less chance we had.

A friend of ours had invited us to stop to dinner as we passed. As I devoured his chicken I arranged with him to deliver most of our pack in Baltimore next day. I dispensed with the horse blanket, extra suit, saddle bags and contents less grooming kit and “cupboard” utensils. Storm rubbers I threw away. We were rid of about forty pounds. *Queen* tripped it off as though relieved of the proverbial brick house. Too soon we would have to take it all in again and much more. The discarded equipment went into a Parcel Post package, and from that time on I kept it going, changing the articles from time to time.

Right from the start we had a very hard time in finding shelter for *Queen*. Nearly all the barns were turned into garages. The very first night from home I led *Queen* from one prospect to another for over an hour, then fed improper feed (carried hay loose two blocks) in a narrow stall with no bedding.

On April 13 we pulled into New York City. We had not had too much trouble with the traffic, until passing under the Elevated at 66th and Columbus Avenue. A train rushed over. That was too much for *Queen*, a country girl. She ran over a block with myself and pack in the dense traffic. But she was not hit, nor was she once touched by a car on the entire trip, though I estimated we met or were passed by 162,352 cars—estimated conservatively from counting one day’s traffic, of hardly average number. We had some close shaves, but *Queen* was alert and nimble. In fact she was and is high strung.

Before we reached New York we nearly met out Waterloo in the way of hard and rough-surfaced roads. In trying to keep the “shoulder,” *Queen* often would be half on, half off the rough edge. This and crushed rock and gravel so wore the outside of the left front rubber pad that she got to rolling on that foot. I did not discover this quite in time to prevent some strain on muscles, ligaments and joints. Though she was never laid up with it, that leg had to be taken care of the rest of the trip. A horse of poorer mettle, or one too fractious to be easily handled should have quit right there. We were fortunate in finding an expert shoer. We gave her an extension shoe in order properly to distribute the weight on the foot, thus relieving the undue strain. That was the only special shoe I have ever made. I had her reshod, all told, twenty-two times on the trip, besides resetting a shoe a few times myself when I could get the tools. Shoering was one of our major problems. Too many “blacksmiths” who have no knowledge of a horse’s anatomy are shoeing horses. One job by such a one nearly proved disastrous. I learned to inquire ahead for either an old army shoer or an honest-to-goodness race-horse man and, so, got by. Those who do not know how are usually the last to loan either shop or tools. I discarded the pad south of the Great Lakes, when we were over the worst pavements.

On April 26, we rode into Longwood Riding Academy, Boston, at 11:30 P.M. We had spent five hours and ridden nearly across western Boston in quest of a stall. We had ridden that day only forty-five miles, all but seventeen of which were on hard pavement. But, as I estimated, I had taken out of her an amount equal to eighty miles of normal natural travel. I had some idea then, and have since been fully convinced, that if one expects to keep a horse going he must consider what the *conditions* are taking out of his horse more carefully than the miles traveled. Especially is this true when it comes to the horse’s underpinning. With this in view I have traveled twenty miles and saved horse flesh. As a basis for deduction I learned from close and long observation to estimate it this way: one mile of pavement takes out of a horse more than two miles of good dirt. One mile of road that is rough and inflexible, is still worse. One mile of strange city traffic reduces a horse as much as three miles of good dirt road in the country—there is the nervous strain. A mile of average gravel road takes more out of a horse than one and a half miles of good dirt. And I find that when I over strain my horse by continuing too long upon unnaturally hard or rough and inflexible footing I must pay for just
plain over-fatigue under natural conditions.

As we proceeded northward up the Atlantic Coast we faced for several days a cold wind off the ocean. Queen missed her winter coat of long hair. Several nights when we had not a warm stable I divided up the blankets with her. Still her cold returned.

It is well known that it is not safe to move a horse about too much in the spring. I began to wonder if, for some reason, a horse does not put out more vitality, especially as to protein in throwing out his new coat, than we realize.

I also had a lot of trouble in finding the proper feed locally. A few times the best I could do was a direct change from oats to corn and against my better judgment fed nearly a full feed. In such a case whether we feed too much, and so damage the horse, or whether the safer policy of cutting the ration is followed there is a great loss of vitality. You know that, so did I. Still it takes a lot to make us heed it. Several times I was fortunate in not meeting utter disaster. I in part retrieved my error by letting Queen miss a feed and then “sweeping her out” with a large bran mash containing a little salt, about a dram of nux vomica, and half an ounce of ginger.

On April 30, we pulled into Portsmouth, N.H. in a cold rain. We crossed the river into Kittery, Maine, and got a signature from the town clerk.

Up hill, down dale, we reached Concord. Near Lake Sunapee we passed the remains of last winter’s snow drift. Over the Green Mountains to Rutland and on to the U.S. Morgan Horse Farm near Middlebury, Vt. But here we are near the limit of our space and scarcely started yet. Please follow the map.

We spent Nov. 20, 1925 to Apr. 12, 1926, in winter quarters at Princeton, Ill., after making the loop. We lost nearly three months in Montana on account of a fractured knee (my knee) as a result of a kick from my pack horse—formerly mentioned. This threw us off our schedule and caused a change of route. We crossed Eastern Washington and Oregon in the early winter of 1926-27 often facing severe snow storms. We celebrated New Year’s, 1927, in Alturas, California. At Needles, California, flowers were in bloom. Near Flagstaff, Arizona, we took refuge from a blizzard in an old root cellar of a deserted ranch.

We crossed the Navajo and many other Indian reservations. For a distance of 473 miles we never saw a railroad. Many times we had two days’ journey between human habitations. Feed we paced or went without a spear of grass—often more than twenty-four hours without water. I usually started across those stretches with one army canteen of water. Once on reaching a certain water hole I’d been told about I found the banks strewn with animals that had drunk and died. We “checked it out” until we reached civilization.

Space does not admit of complete details of feeding, one of our major problems. I fed about everything a horse ever ate, including bread and molasses. About Alturas the only grain was rolled barley. I found I could with impunity feed nine pounds per day as against twelve pounds of oats. When I again came to corn I did not repeat my former mistake of putting sympathy in place of prudence. Where the only roughage was a few nibbles of hard dry bear grass or a bite of sage brush or shad scale I found I could with impunity feed an extra feed of oats at midnight—if I could get them. Failing oats I found four pounds of bran and one and a fourth pounds of good shelled or cracked corn to be a good substitute for four pounds of oats—if I could procure them.

Weeks at a time we were never under shelter of any kind. Once I took refuge from a storm in a cave from which I first removed some prehistoric human bones, giving them
“Christian burial” in a niche. Queen was less fortunate. She could not get in so stood tied to a rock. There were long stretches where the ground was white with alkali that, but for lard, tallow and tar, would have eaten the feet off queen.

Caught behind the Mississippi River flood. Weeks of lost time and dodging about. Caught in the Texas Tick Quarantine and a tedious back track of over eighty miles to a Federal dipping station, besides four days wait in the disease infested post-flood area.

The most dangerous of these diseases was charbon (anthrax) of which horses, mules and cattle were dropping dead all across the post-flood area. This disease can be taken from drinking the impure water, gnawing the roots of the short grass, in which bacteria lie twenty years, or from the bite of the dreaded charbon fly. After I learned this I kept Queen off the infected grass, gave her only well water, and fought the flies, kept her toned up on nux vomica, kept her vitality up—and thanked Heaven when we were out of it.

Another danger is locally known as “foot evil” (not foot and mouth disease). A parasite or microscopic animal finds an opening about the coronary band. Infection follows. The hoof comes off. Often the horse dies. I avoided this by avoiding places where the sun was excluded, keeping the feet clean and daubing the top of hoofs with zinc ointment. Then hundreds of miles in a stock car in compliance with the law (this railroad travel was not counted in our mileage), to Natchez, thirty miles east of where we were quarantined. This thirty miles is the only break in this “Longest Horseback Trail”—unless we count ferries. North around the tick area, thence south to Florida, which we entered in the hottest season, August 2, 1927.

Then the long grind northward across Dixie, and at the Mile Stone again, November 4, 1927. Major Scott, then Acting Chief of the Remount, was there with other army officers and identified Gypsy Queen as the mare I had left that spot with on April 1, 1925. Gypsy Queen had traveled on her own feet under saddle, 11,356 miles.* She had gained seventy-five pounds.

You are wondering what happened meanwhile to the strained leg. Where cold water was plentiful I used it: Stood her in it, showered with it, applied it, when she was standing, with burlap wrapped loosely as a bandage. Burlap admits the air. I kept the fever out of the feet with water, mud packing; stood her in cow dung—when obtainable.

For over 1,000 miles where water was not plentiful at all times traveled her in an elastic (knit) bandage and cotton, and a good “brace” or lotion. I would wrap the sheet of medical cotton from the pastern to the knee. Then giving the bandage two wraps in the pastern I brought it up pressing the surplus cotton into the groove between the cannon bone and the flexor tendon. I wound the bandage reasonably tight, fastening it below the knee with two safety pins. I tightened this several times a day. At noon I would air the leg. At night—after airing—I would sop the hair full of the “brace,” put on an old cotton, wrap an old bandage loosely and soak the cotton by pouring it full of the brace. Thus I kept her going without undue pain and virtually cured the strain under saddle. I don’t say she is quite as sound as though never strained but she delivered the goods and showed no signs of soreness afterward until we again hit the pavement nearing home.

When it came to long, hot stretches under pack I had trouble with Queen’s back. I tried everything. Finally at Shreveport, La., I got a Felt-Less pad. Its all simple when you think of it. This pad is made of cool instead of hot material. In the hottest season and the hottest parts, I cured the back. The miles I gave were actual miles. Aside from this, I estimate I had taken out of Gypsy Queen on account of unnatural, hard and rough footing alone more than 47,000 miles of good old turf would take. Hundreds of miles where she balled up with snow we count as a natural occurrence. She never once lost her feet even when on unavoidable frosty, slick pavement. We forded some bad streams. We averaged roughly twelve miles a day for the 948 days out.

Continued on page 12
Generals in Gray
Lives of the Confederate Commanders
By Ezra J. Warner

Richard Montgomery Gano, born in Bourbon County, Kentucky, June 17, 1830, was educated at Bacon College, Harrodsburg, Kentucky; Bethany College, Virginia; and Louisville University Medical School. Thereafter he practiced medicine in Bourbon County for eight years. Removing to Tarrant County, Texas, in 1859, he saw service against Indians, and was a member of the legislature. He entered the Confederate Army as commander of a squadron on John Hunt Morgan’s command, and participated in the Kentucky invasion of 1862 and in the Tullahoma campaign as a colonel of the 7th Kentucky Cavalry. He was also for a time in command of Morgan’s division. Later transferred to the Trans-Mississippi Department with rank of colonel, Gano was assigned to Indian Territory in command of a brigade of cavalry and artillery. After distinguishing himself in the Camden campaign against Steele, in which he was wounded, he was first assigned to duty as brigadier general Kirby Smith, later receiving official appointment from President Davis to rank from March 17, 1865. After the war General Gano returned to Texas and entered the ministry of the Christian Church, which he served faithfully for more than forty-five years. Active in the affairs of the United Confederate Veterans until the last, he died in Dallas, March 27, 1913, and is buried there. (150) (150) Data from Texas State Historical Association.

Generals in Blue
Lives of the Union Commanders
By Ezra J. Warner

Julius Stahel, whose Hungarian surname was Szamvald, was born in Szeged, Hungary, on November 5, 1825. After attending school in Szeged and Budapest he entered the Austrian army as a private and rose to lieutenant, but in the struggle for Hungarian independence he cast his lot with the revolutionary cause and, after the movement was suppressed with the aid of Prussia in 1849, fled the country. He lived in London and Berlin as a teacher and journalist before he came to America in 1859. For the next two years he was employed by a German-language weekly in New York City. In 1861 he and Louis Blenker recruited the 8th New York (1st German Rifles), becoming lieutenant colonel and colonel respectively; at the first battle of Manassas (Bull Run) the regiment aided in covering the fleeing Union forces from that celebrated debacle. (628) On August 11, 1861, Stahel succeeded Blenker as colonel, and on November 12 was advanced to brigadier general. He fought under John C. Fremont in the Shenandoah in the spring of 1862, opposing Stonewall Jackson. At Second Manassas he commanded the 1st Division of Franz Sigel’s corps after wounding of General Robert C. Schneck and then was in reserve under Schneck and Sigel until he was assigned to command of the cavalry in the Washington defenses in the spring of 1863. When he was promoted to major general of volunteers on March 17, 1863 (for reason obscure to most military observers), he ranked immediately after General Philip Sheridan.

Continued on page 12
Cavalry Organization

Riding The Major Howze Mobility Exercise
With A Blackhorse Veteran
By US Army Sgt. 1st Class Roman C. Hacker
11th Armored Cavalry Regiment Horse Detachment

On the evening of May 4th, 1918 General John “Blackjack” Pershing received a report that several of Pancho Villa’s Lieutenants were at a farm near Cusi called Ojos Azules. Pershing ordered Major Robert Howze to gather his men and march 30 miles onto Ojos Azules. Within a couple of hours, Howze had six Troops formed and made the night march through the Sierra Madre Mountains. At 0545 the next morning, the cavalry could see the Vallista’s fires, but the Vallista guards saw Howze and his troops first and opened fire. The 11th Cavalry conducted their charge and at the end of the 20 minute battle made it through bearing a single horse-casualty.

Howze’s march and mounted charge during the Mexican Punitive Expedition would later be used to pattern the Major Howze Mobility Exercise. Current members of the 11th Armored Cavalry Horse Detachment executed this exercise on September 18th at Fort Reno, Oklahoma during the annual National Cavalry Competition (NCC), preserving the tradition of the Cavalry.

This year the 11th ACR Horse Detachment participated in the NCC with an 11th ACR veteran, Mr. Paul Scholtz. Scholtz entered military service in July 1969 and attended training in Field Artillery at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma. He was ordered to go to Vietnam in April, 1970 during the Cambodian incursion. Scholtz served in the 1st Squadron Howitzer Battery and according to Mr. Scholtz he “fused tons of ammo and cut lots of powder.” The colors of 1st Squadron were sent home in October 1970, and men were reassigned to other units at the close of the incursion. Scholtz left Vietnam in May of 1971. Having achieved the rank of sergeant, Scholtz remained on duty until he received an honorable discharge in July of 1976. Scholtz believed he rode with the 11th ACR for the last time until 44 years later when he joined the Horse Detachment at the NCC.

The Major Howze Mobility exercise takes place after the first full day of the NCC Competition, which leaves the horses somewhat expended after Military Horsemanship and the Mounted Pistol Competition. Nearly all the horses ridden by active duty horse detachments were in exceptional physical condition to take on the five-mile trot over unknown territory, guided only by a rudimentary map. The objective of the Howze exercise is to cover the distance at an acceptable pace to ensure the horses have the energy to engage and neutralize the enemy at the conclusion of the ride.

Scholtz explains that he was in amazement when Sgt. 1st Class Roman Hacker turned to him and said, “Sergeant, take command and lead the charge,” as they came upon 8 saber targets at 150 meters. Scholtz found himself taking a deep breath and gathering the reins before calling out, “Draw sabers! Forward, ho! Trot, ho! At a gallop, Charge!”

All the horses pinned their ears, and the troopers leaned forward with their sabers aimed towards their chosen targets. The points struck home, and the targets came down with a crunch. It was over in less than a minute. With the order called to rally, everyone fell in, they reported to the judge and sabers were returned to their scabbards. The mission was completed but not the work.

The horses being hot, sweaty and excited needed to cool down gradually and return to a calm state. Weapons and equipment needed to be serviced, and scores tallied. The honor continued when the Horse Detachment won first place for the Major Howze Mobility Exercise. “Blue ribbons for everyone, even this battered chaplain,” said Scholtz.

“The formation struck out at a long trot, encountering obstacles, dim trails, vague directions, and the muggy heat of Oklahoma,” comments Scholtz of the Horse Deatchment.

Continued on page 14
In mid-summer 1964, the 1st Cavalry Squadron had its headquarters located northwest of the capital city of Saigon, along National Highway 1 at the ranger training center at Trung Lap.

Trung Lap is situated on the edge of a large, heavily wooded expanse of ground, extending approximately 20 kilometers to the north and 15-20 kilometers to the east. Known as the Ho Bo Woods, it was controlled by the Viet Cong. The Army of Vietnam’s 5th Division, with responsibility for the area, simply refused to conduct operations in the Ho Bo. And as was learned a year or so later, the area was honeycombed with tunnels, many extending for kilometers. The tunnels had been started prior to 1954, during the time when the French army was fighting in the area, and had been extended and improved since that time. These tunnels were a source of concealment, hospitalization, and arms manufacturing for the Viet Cong forces operating throughout the area. For further information about the tunnels, see The Tunnels of Cu Chi by Tom Mangold and John Penycote

The Ranger Training Center, with American advisors, trained South Vietnamese ranger units which had received new recruits, and along with M-113 units from the 1st Cavalry Squadron, conducted training exercises in the area on the edge of the Ho Bo. The friendly units frequently were fired upon by Viet Cong from what were termed “spider holes”, which actually were air vents and exits from the tunnels. At that time, Vietnamese forces did not go down inside the holes, preferring to simply toss grenades into them. Later in the war, remarkably brave U. S. soldiers calling themselves Tunnel Rats, would venture down and search the extensive underground passage ways.

The advisor to the Vietnamese 1st Cavalry Squadron was an American major who, for the past several months, had been spending time with three M-113 troops which were independently operating throughout the vast rice fields northwest of Saigon and along the Cambodian border. The troops had been extremely successful in locating and destroying Viet Cong units, and were the only significant source of danger to the Viet Cong forces throughout the Vietnamese Army’s III Corps area which surrounded the capital city.

One troop of M-113s was kept at the training center in Trung Lap to provide armored training for the new ranger battalions, while the other two troops continued to operate in the rice fields north and west of Saigon. The cavalry troop assisting with training, accompanied by a Vietnamese ranger company, would depart Trung Lap, enter the Ho Bo and proceed through the heavily wooded area. Approximately 2 kilometers into the woods, a clearing had been created by Vietnamese lumber cutters, and this clearing was used for maneuvers with the ground unit simulating attacks against the enemy. The clearing was approximately 300 meters deep and 200 meters wide, allowing space for the friendly forces to practice infantry and vehicular support in the attack. This activity had been going on for the better part of 6 weeks, when it was decided to expand the scope of the training by bringing a second troop of cavalry to participate and increasing the ranger unit to a battalion.

Each cavalry troop had an American captain advisor and each ranger battalion had an American captain, a non-commissioned officer and an American radio operator. Due to the size of the activity on the day of this training operation, the cavalry squadron senior advisor elected to participate, riding with one of the troop commanders on his M–113.

The Bravo Troop commander was significantly taller than all his fellow Vietnamese, and at some time in his association with American advisors, had been introduced to the lore of the American cowboy. He seemed always to have a “dime
novel" of the old West, and wore a hat with the wide brim tied up on both sides, forming his concept of a cowboy hat. He referred to almost everyone as “Pardner”. His men idolized him, and referred to him as “Le Cowboy” His was by far the best led unit in the squadron. Whenever something strange or unusual would occur, he would always comment wryly,"Cest Le Guerre en Le Indochine" (So goes the war in Indochina.) The major rode with him on his M-113 that day.

As the units ventured into the Ho Bo Woods, the ranger infantry accompanied the M-113s, served as additional protection for the large vehicles as they proceeded through the heavily wooded area. Sporadic contact was being made with an elusive enemy, and light small arms fire was exchanged. Snipers were brought down from their perches in the trees, and the occasional spider hole was encountered. A Viet Cong would open the camouflaged lid, shoot at a soldier and quickly pop back inside the hole. The level of contact with the enemy was not unusual, and served to provide the training needed for the dismounted ranger forces. The cavalry troops proceeded in a column of platoons and after about an hour of slow progress, the trees started to thin as the force approached the large cleared area.

The leading cavalry troop, with the senior advisor, proceeded into the clearing in a wedge formation. The troop commander’s vehicle and one platoon formed the point of the wedge, with the two other platoons forming the sides. In the troop commander’s vehicle as was the case for all the M-113s, the gunner manning the .50 caliber machine gun stood behind a curved metal shield of 3/8 inch steel. The troop commander stood to the gunner’s right with his legs inside the open-topped vehicle, and the senior advisor stood directly behind the troop commander. As the formation penetrated into the clearing approximately 200 yards, a bright flash of light and loud explosion encompassed the front of the vehicle. The gunner stood momentarily holding the machine gun spades, but quickly fell to the floor, headless. A recoiless rifle round had penetrated the shield, hit the gunner, and sprayed steel fragments across the top of the vehicle.

Heavy machine gun fire was being received and other anti-tank rounds were striking vehicles in the formation. The fire was coming from the wood line to the front. The troop commander ordered the platoons behind him to attack to the flanks with the plan of surrounding the force firing from the front. It became immediately evident that the enemy force was situated in the wood line in a large horseshoe formation, preventing any penetration to the sides. All the men in the vehicles were firing their weapons, and the accompanying ranger forces were similarly attempting to overcome the enemy fire. As the losses to the dismounted forces mounted, the ranger leaders informed the cavalry units that they were going to fall back towards the base camp. The cavalry troops provided covering fire to the extent possible, and continued to attempt to force themselves into the wooded area. The Bravo troop commander’s M-113 took two recoilless rifle hits almost simultaneously, so the surviving crew mounted another undamaged vehicle. Within 30 minutes, seven M-113s could be seen burning. Six of them belonged to Bravo troop—half the unit destroyed! Crews of the hit M-113s were attempting to dismount the .50 caliber guns and seeking whatever cover that would permit them to return fire while surviving the enemy heavy volume of fire.

The troop commanders were in radio contact with the squadron commander and his staff, requesting artillery fire. As time went on, it became obvious that artillery was not going to be provided, but the senior advisor’s
efforts to obtain helicopter support resulted in two platoons of armed helicopters attempting to attack the wood line. The senior advisor could see an anti-aircraft .51 caliber machine gun being fired on the right flank, and it was being attacked by the gunships. In the early days of the Vietnam experience, the helicopter gunships were not very sophisticated, having an M-37 light machine gun strapped to each skid. The pilots directed the fire by pointing the nose of the aircraft, although some of the pilots had used grease pencil on the front windscreen to mark the approximate point of impact of the machine gun rounds.

![Anit-tank "battalion" at home base, on parade following successful ambush of Vietnamese 1st Armored Cavalry Squadron. HoBo Woods, June, 1964. Picture taken at the secret base of COSVN.](image)

The destroyed vehicles were left in the field. The evening was spent reliving the "contact" as such things were called in those times, and trying to decide if anything else could have successfully been done. The wounded were flown out and the dead were held-over until daylight for evacuation by truck.

It was clear that a heavily-armed force had prepared a killing ground. It could only have been done by a Viet Cong Main Force unit operating under the guidance of COSVN (Central Office for South Vietnam). That headquarters, then and later after the arrival of U.S. units, controlled all the major combat operations in South Vietnam. The headquarters was believed to have been in the deep woods along the Cambodian-Vietnam border, but despite numerous very large efforts to locate and destroy it throughout the war, the headquarters was never located.

The following morning, the remainder of the squadron, with the commander accompanying the force, re-entered the Ho Bo and carefully approached the site. The Viet Cong fighting positions were examined, and it became obvious why the friendly fires were having virtually no affect. Each fighting position held two soldiers, was 5 feet wide, 3 feet from front to back and 4 feet deep. Dirt from the evacuation was packed in front of the hole, and the two VC occupants fired by peering around the sides of the packed earth.
The bottom two feet of the hole was cut back into the ground in the direction of fire, and was large enough so each occupant could duck completely underground thus protected during air, ground or even artillery fire. Needless to say, no weapons or dead Viet Cong remained. A labor force was assigned to significantly sized Viet Cong combat forces, and was charged with carrying ammunition, digging the holes, moving dead and wounded out of the area, and picking up all spent brass to be reloaded in the underground tunnels. Blood trails remained, but no other sign of Viet Cong was found.

Two Viet Cong unit officers, examining a vehicle destroyed by their unit. June, 1964.

To provide some closure on this sad story, the squadron was withdrawn back to the Armored Training Center for training of men and extensive re-issuance of vehicles and weapons.

The major was withdrawn from the squadron and tasked by the III Corps Senior Advisor to devise a way to prevent the Viet Cong from stopping traffic along Highway 13. The VC were using the population from the several small villages along the highway to served as laborers to cut the roadway. The solution involved keeping the VC off-balance by conducting penetrations deep into the triple canopy to set ambushes. The VC had shown throughout the war that it took them several months to find a way to react to any new tactical initiative. The major with 4 Chinese Nungs, conducted long-range patrols and ambush operations deep into the area known as War Zone C and War Zone D. Substantially this was all the area west and east of Highway 13, north to the next major province. This small group ambushed a party of Viet Cong under the triple-canopy jungle at the break of dawn one morning in mid-December. After the contact, a plastic briefcase was removed from one of the Viet Cong. In the briefcase, the major found six enlarged photographs. Three of the photographs had obviously been taken just before dark on the day of the attack against the cavalry squadron in the Ho Bo! The photographs are reproduced on these pages. Needless to say, the major was dumbfounded to come across these, many kilometers away and over four months after the contact in the Ho Bo. The photos were being used for propaganda purposes, and being transported from COSVN to units in the field by the liaison team. Other photographs in the packet and reproduced here were of the force used for the attack. That force was determined by South Vietnamese intelligence personnel to have been a specially formed anti-tank unit. The pictures were undoubtedly taken at the headquarters of COSVN. Another photograph shows several individuals standing in triumphant poses on top one of the destroyed M-113s. The female on top has been identified as Tran Thi Gung, a highly decorated heroine of the Viet Cong. You may read more about her in a small book written by news correspondent Morley Safer, entitled Flashbacks, On Returning To Vietnam. The VC carrying the pouch was a courier enroute to the experimental rubber plantation at Lai Khe. It was run by a Belgian citizen and had

At top left is Tran Thi, commander of the anti-tank battalion. Shown with her subordinate commanders after the Battle of the HoBo Woods. June, 1964.
political protection. During this period of the war, Lai Khe was used by the Viet Cong as a “safe house”. Later, the plantation area was used by the U.S. 1st Infantry Division for its headquarters.

After many months of spectacular success by the 1st Armored Cavalry Squadron, the Viet Cong had finally devised the means of stopping it. That devastating loss presaged several other large Viet Cong attacks in the ensuing weeks, and signaled the need for American units to be brought to Vietnam, which began in February 1965.

On the final evening with the squadron, toasts were offered to the dead and wounded, and a meal was shared. As the major said his goodbyes, he saw the Cowboy across the room, sitting on the floor alone, head in his hands, elbows on his knees, crying inconsolably. ~To be continued

Generals in Blue continued from page 6
In the spring of 1864 General Stahel led a division of cavalry under General David Hunter, again in the Shenandoah and in West Virginia, in course of which both men were virtually forced out of the active theater war. However, at the battle of Piedmont on June 5, 1864, he was greatly distinguished in action which subsequently (in 1893) led to the award of the Congressional medal. Thereafter, he served on court-martial duty until he resigned his commission on February 8, 1865. After the war he served for years in the consular service in Japan and China. Upon returning to the United States, he became connected with Equitable Insurance Company of New York. A lifelong bachelor in died in a New York hotel on December 4, 1912, at the age of eighty-seven and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

Stahel commanded the regiment and Louis Blenker the 1st Brigade of Dixon Mile’s 5th Division, which was in reserve at Centreville. The extravagant claims made for the Germans in saving Washington are dismissed by Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, I, 194: “It [the division] had some skirmishing during the day and while covering the retreat if the army.” But see Vasvary, Lincoln’s Hungarian Heroes.
serving as a Buffalo Soldier, despite the arduous duties and long days in the field, Williams learned the reading, writing, and mathematics skills needed to later become an Ordnance Sergeant.

The 9th Cavalry was raised in Louisiana and sent to west Texas in the summer of 1867. Sergeants were appointed from the ranks. Within a year, Williams was promoted to First Sergeant of Company F. In 1871, following his first reenlistment, he was transferred to Company K to serve as First Sergeant. The 9th Cavalry served in west Texas until 1875, scattered out in a string of small posts protecting the mail and stage route between San Antonio and El Paso, Texas. In 1875, the 9th Cavalry transferred to New Mexico, where Williams reenlisted again in 1876 and was reassigned as First Sergeant of Company I.

While in New Mexico, the 9th Cavalry was embroiled in the Victoria War of 1879-1880 and a sequel known as Nana's Raid in 1881. Chief Victorio and his Warm Springs Apaches took to the hills, raiding farms and ranches rather than submitting to life on the reservation. It took a year to run Victorio to ground, but even after his death and the capture of most of his band, an old warrior named Nana escaped and, with about 40 others, continued raiding. A detachment of 22 troopers, including Williams, caught up with Nana on August 16, 1881. A running battle ensued, ending with a determined stand by the Apaches. During the fight, Williams repeatedly led flanking attacks. At one point, he personally rallied the detachment and brought it back into the fight. When the outnumbered cavalry was forced to withdraw, Williams and his lieutenant stood up to draw the enemy's fire enabling the unit to rescue three cut-off troopers. In 1896, he was awarded a Medal of Honor for his conspicuous gallantry that day.

Williams continued to serve in the 9th Cavalry until 1886, when his application for
ordnance sergeant was approved. Ordnance sergeants had to have at least eight years of service and a minimum of four years as a noncommissioned officer; they were also required to pass a physical examination as well as an examination by a board of officers. Williams was probably the first African-American ordnance sergeant. Williams reported to Fort Buford, North Dakota, where he served as ordnance sergeant until the post closed in 1895. When Fort Buford closed, he reported for duty at Fort Stevens, Oregon, at the mouth of the Columbia River. Fort Stevens was un-garrisoned at the time. During this period, the Corps of Engineers was in the process of building the West Battery to mount four of the latest ten-inch seacoast defense guns. As the Fort's caretaker, Williams was responsible for 22 large cannon, a magazine with 1,200 shots and shells, and the new guns, themselves.

Ordnance Sergeant Williams retired in 1898 after 32 years of service. Possibly retiring because of ill health, he died on August 23, 1899, at age 52 and was buried in the Vancouver Barracks Cemetery. The old Buffalo Soldier and Ordnance Sergeant is a shining example of service to country, bravery, endurance, self-improvement, and leadership.

Cavalry Competition in the Major Howze Mobility Exercise.”

“This old soldier was hardly qualified to ride with the Blackhorse Horse Detachment in this excellent tactical exercise, but the young troopers were a huge encouragement and allowed me to play a key role,” explains Scholtz. “The 11th ACR is still by far the finest unit in the United States Army, and the Horse Detachment represents their legacy in a most outstanding way.”

In recent years Scholtz was asked to initiate Pack Animal Transportation Instruction at Ft. Carson, Colorado for the 10th Special Forces Group in 2003. He conducted pack transportation instruction at Fort Carson, Fort Riley, and here. Teaching Pack Training to SF groups is as close as he could come to aiding the global war on terrorism.

Sergeant Lance Wyckoff states that “This wasn’t the first time the 11th ACR won the Howze exercise at the NCC, but it was the most memorable.” Wyckoff said of the experience, “Seeing the Horse Detachment set off in a formation across the country-side to the stampede of beating hoofs, clashing steel, and the howls of cavalry troopers bearing down on the enemy was truly a sight to behold. Being able to do all of this while partnered with a veteran of our unit’s past, riding by our side, are the stories and people that make the history of our Regiment something to remember and honor.” As Scholtz has a habit of saying, loudly and with a large presence, “It’s outstanding to ride with the Blackhorse once again. Allons!”

Riding The Major Howze
Continued from page 7

“The unit’s camaraderie, discipline, willingness and expertise are outstanding. No navigational errors occurred, the horses held up wonderfully, no major mishaps, human or equine, surfaced and the objective was closed upon in exceptional time.”

Scholtz expresses his gratitude for being invited to participate in the event, “It has been an absolute honor to assist the 11th ACR Horse Detachment for several years with horses and weapons, but the highest honor ever was when Sgt. 1st Class Hacker asked this 66 year old cancer patient (agent orange from Republic of Vietnam) who has had both hips replaced with titanium joints and enjoyed eight major surgeries to ride with the Blackhorse again, this time at the National...
It was the First Dragoons (dragoons rode horses into battle and dismounted to fight as Infantry) which in 1852 identified the favorable location for a military post, near the geographic center of the US, to protect settlers and commerce along the overland pioneer trails, the Oregon Trail, the Santa Fe Trail, the Smoky Hill Trail, and the network of trails between the other frontier forts of the Department of the West, administered out of Jefferson Barracks in St Louis, MO. Named Camp Center, it was changed to Fort Riley within a year, to honor MG B.C. Riley who had in 1827 led the first military escort along the Santa Fe Trail.

And what is a battle to the death, without a Word from the Lord, without the comfort of religious/spiritual ministry by a clergyman representing the faith(s) of the combat soldiers? The Episcopalian church provided over half of the Army Chaplains prior to the American Civil War, and the first Chaplain to experience “The Life of Riley” was an Episcopalian. (There were only thirty Chaplains in the US Army prior to “the late unpleasantness.”) Local limestone was quarried to build Quarters number 123, which were designated as the Chaplains Quarters; the first wedding conducted there in 1855 was that of First Lieutenant J.E.B. Stuart, later Commander of Confederate Cavalry. His personality produced the post-wide and all-volunteer drive which completely paid the cost of building the Post Chapel.

Army Regulations stipulated that as part of chapel services the Chaplain would deliver “a short practical sermon suited to the habits and understanding of soldiers.” (Cleanliness is next to Godliness, and for some Chaplains, brevity is next to impossible, even today.) For soldiers, NCOs and officers, chapel attendance was mandatory and soldiers were marched in formation to and from the chapel services. Chaplains (almost all were Captains) were paid $60 per month, plus quarters, rations, and stove-fuel. Chaplains were/are expected to help soldiers and soldier-families to solve personal problems. Visiting the sick, injured, “shut-ins” and the hospitalized, pastoral visitation of the persons confined in the guardhouse and personnel in the barracks, took much of the Chaplains’ time and energy. Today’s Chaplains conduct weddings, christenings, baptisms, communions, catechesis, Christian Education, and so on—all of which were required of frontier Army Chaplains.

In addition, school-rooms often were attached to chapels, and Chaplains were responsible to Superintend and also teach in, not only the religious “Sunday Schools” (whose basic curriculum was the Bible), but also the public schools for children living on post. Ft Riley’s first Chaplain established an educational library, free to all personnel. These two factors alone were very significant in raising the educational, moral/ethical levels of the “Western” (English-speaking) world and specifically in America among the defenders of her freedoms. Education also provided an alternative to drinking, gambling, and fighting, those ageless staples of soldiers’ lives. Ft Riley’s first Chaplain was assigned to assist the Post Surgeon in providing medical care. Today, that close relationship between physical healers (medical personnel) and spiritual care-givers (Chaplains), continues; the “Pastor” is indeed “the physician of the
soul.” Mind, body, and soul are so interconnected that effective healing of one leg of this three-legged-stool usually requires intervention in the other two dimensions of human life as well. Historically, Army Chaplains provided as part of their normal duties most of the care and support which today is called “social work.” Today, Army Community Services (ACS) and Social Work Services (SWS) provide much family care, spousal activities and support to soldier-families—but without the “spiritual/religious” component.

Chaplains of the three major faith groups (as recognized by Congress and DOD, that is, Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish) from the Revolutionary beginnings of this nation have cooperated in caring for the needy. Recall “The Four Chaplains” (one Jewish rabbi, one Roman Catholic priest, and two Protestant pastors) who went down with the USS Dorchester in arctic waters in WW II, after having given their life jackets to other soldiers on that torpedoed ship; arms locked together in solidarity, each Chaplain praying according to his own faith, in his own way according to the dictates of his own freely-chosen religion. Likewise, when the frontier Army experienced an influx of Irish immigrants who were primarily Roman Catholic, Riley’s post Chaplain recruited a Catholic priest to minister on-post to the needs and convictions of that group of soldiers. Personally, some of my best co-laborers were Chaplains of other distinctive faith groups, as we co-operated together to help our soldiers, yet without compromising our own faith and/or the standards of our own denominations. Today our mantra, “Cooperation without Compromise” is a perennial “fruit” from that ministry “root” grown in the Revolutionary and frontier Chaplains’ “Life of Riley.”

Music and singing were prominent parts of frontier-Kansas chapel-life. The “song service” was the primary element of Sunday schools and of worship services. Non-ordained people in the congregations actively led in these chapel activities. Cantatas, festivals, recitals, chorales, caroling, performances by piano and/or organ, by bands, quintets and quartets, by choruses, banjos and harmonicas added life and interest to the dreary frontier soldier’s life. Led by lay-people, formal public debates were conducted in the chapel on the issues of the day, helping to sharpen the thinking of the soldiery, thus making them better people, better able to defend their homeland. (Mental agility is a key component of successful military leadership, since no war plan is effective once the first shots are fired and the fog of war engulfs every operation.)

Army Chaplains have always been called upon to be a “Jack of all trades,” to perform non-church duties, called “extra duties as assigned.” At least one Chaplain was appointed to manage the post bakery; another was required to be a fire-fighter, perhaps thereby sharpening his skills in preaching hell fire. Many were detailed as “Morale, Welfare and Recreation” officers, responsible for sports and athletic activities to keep the young men busy in healthy activities. Baseball and high-wheel bicycle racing were popular new sports promoted by Chaplains and Commanders alike, to channel soldiers’ energy, focus, and activities in positive directions and hopefully to improve soldiers’ conduct. Today an entire Army-wide Directorate is devoted to this same exact cause, and good Chaplains continue to cooperate in these programs of leisure travel and outdoor activities. This is one aspect of the Old Temperance Movement: to provide healthy alternatives to “demon rum” and “John Barleycorn”—and it still is a good approach to the problem of chemical use/addiction. And, for a person’s effort above and beyond the call of duty, it was “back in the day” and is still today, easy for people who “have an ax to grind,” to lodge with senior officers, baseless complaints against Chaplains, some of which result in career damage. It is just an on-going cost of doing military ministry. Not everyone loved Jesus (as witness His crucifixion), and not everyone will always love His emissaries.

In 1882, Henry V. Plummer, the first black Chaplain in the US Army, was appointed as
Chaplain for the Buffalo Soldiers of the 9th Cavalry Regiment stationed on Ft Riley. An ex-slave, an emancipated field hand in Maryland, Chaplain Plummer worked in a Post Office until he had saved enough money to pay for his college education from Howard University, where he graduated with honors. His Commissioning was a ground-breaking moment for the Chaplaincy, but also for the Army as a whole, although it was not until an order from our then-Commander in Chief, President Harry (“Give ‘Em Heck”) Truman about the time of the Korean War, that the Army was officially desegregated. But today’s Army’s intentional effort to make the officer corps and the Chaplaincy reflect the ethnic, racial, religious, and gender make-up of the nation’s troops, is another “fruit” springing from the frontier Chaplaincy’s “root.”

Source consulted: Boots and Bibles, now out of print and mostly unavailable.

*Series may continue if enough people respond positively to the Editor.

This scribbler “touches quill to paper” strictly for himself, not representing DOD, the Army, the Chaplaincy, his own denomination, the USCA, nor any other authorities either living or dead, whose views (official and otherwise) might be contrary to sentiments expressed herein. If you think this is well written, it was probably plagiarized, not original; if poorly written, it probably originated with this writer. Serving God and Country from 1969 until his second retirement in 2013, this scribe was the oldest soldier on active duty in the US Army, and is a former enlisted medic (Vietnam, 5 January 1970 to 9 February 1971, with the 3d Squadron 4th US Cavalry Regiment), former NCO, but has reverted to his former attainments as “M’lady Marilyn’s Consort,” as “Grampaw” to eight truly grand grand-kids, and as caregiver to cows contentedly living “Way out West in Kansas.”

2015 Dues!!

It’s that time of year again to send in your membership dues if you haven’t already. If you don’t pay your dues, this may be the last issue of the Cavalry Journal that you will receive. You can use the form in this journal or call 785-784-5797 to renew your membership. If you are all paid up, then you will keep receiving the Cavalry Journal. It is because of the support of our members that we are able to keep the spirit of the cavalry alive!
President's Tack Room

As I reflect on 2014, it has been an exciting year for the U.S. Cavalry Association. First and foremost, the Association is going to move its headquarters to Fort Reno, OK, a frontier fort and remount post that played a big part in our cavalry history. There we will have the opportunity to build exposure and membership in the organization. The building we will occupy on this historical post is an 1876 officer’s quarters with five thousand square feet of space, and renovation plans are in progress. Thanks to generous donations by our members, we are progressing in meeting the goal of raising $100,000 for the renovation and move of our headquarters to Fort Reno. If you have not done so, please consider making a donation, small or large, to help us meet our goal.

Going hand in hand with the move of our headquarters is having a permanent home for our annual Bivouac and National Cavalry Competition at Fort Reno. Make a note on your calendar that the dates for the 2015 Bivouac/NCC are September 23-27. Details will be coming in the Crossed Sabers in the spring.

Our new headquarters will have space for a Cavalry Museum, and we are asking you to dig in your closets for artifacts that we could display. Visitors to Fort Reno will enjoy seeing cavalry history come to life through these artifacts.

At the general membership meeting in September, Jimmy Johnston, a long-time member and supporter of the Association, was elected to the Board of Directors. We welcome him to the Board.

Notes from the Editor

~Memberships make great Christmas presents for your friends and family!

~Check out our awesome NEW items in Sutler's Store.

~Always keep in mind that we will take any cavalry artifacts. Donations can consist of saddles, uniforms, sabers, and any equipment that you would like to have preserved. The US Cavalry Memorial Research Library would like to add your family's story to our archives.

~Linda and Natalie want to wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season.

Keep the Guidons flying!

Horse Feathers

Could Be . . .

A recruit was being given an intelligence test in the army.

"What would happen if one of your ears was cut off by a bayonet?" asked the examiner.

"I couldn't hear so well."

"What would happen if your other ear was cut off?"

"I couldn't see."

"What do you mean?"

"My hat would fall down over my eyes."
Christmas Specials at Sutler's Store

"Stainless Steel Flask"   $15.00

"Stainless Steel Travel Mug"  $15.00

"License Plate Frame"   $18.00
Available in Chrome or Black

"Cavalry Indian War Sword"   A quality reenactment piece  $89.00

"Military Fighting Vehicle T-shirt"  $12.95

"Challenge Coins"
FRONT   BACK  $10.00
Christmas Specials at Sutler's Store

“Camo Folding Knife” $15.00
US Cavalry imprinted

“OLD BILL STATUE” $128.95
10" X 4.75 X 12.25"

"New US Cavalry Polo in Gray" $27.50

"New U.S. Cavalry Polo in Black" $27.50

"New US Cavalry Baseball Cap" Black $9.95

"Cavalry Stetson Hat" With Cord $169
Cut out the page and send to the U.S. Cavalry Association

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Credit Card # __________________________
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