On January 9th, 1893 General Orders No. 17 established the “Cavalry and Light Artillery School” at Fort Riley, Kansas. The establishment of this school was significant because over the years the school would undergo changes that would eventually lead to the formation of the Cavalry School. This newly established school would be a place of instruction for Cavalry, Light Artillery, Signal Corps and a Hospital Corps. The school served mainly to teach practical skills such as “drill and practice” for the combined arms of cavalry and artillery. Theoretical course work was taught as well, but it was not the focus of the school.¹

The school operated in this manner until 1907 when it was seen that changes needed to be made with the method of instruction.

In July of 1907 Brigadier General Edward S. Godfrey proposed administrative and organizational changes to the Cavalry and Light Artillery School. Part of these proposed changes included changing the name from the Cavalry and Light Artillery School to the Mounted Service School (M.S.S.). It was decided that the school should be virtually separated from the post. A position for an Assistant Commandant was created who was to be in charge of the school with the Commandant supervising. The curriculum however did not change much and practical instruction was still a normal part of the day to day learning.²

The Mounted Service School began putting more emphasis on subjects relating to the horse and practical field work with it. One of the other major changes made during this year was that the start of the school year was to begin on September 1st. Changing the start of the year allowed for a better work schedule that could accommodate both indoors and outdoors training and riding.³

The Mounted Service School was organized into three sub-schools, Equitation, Farriers and Horseshoers, Bakers and Cooks. Each of the sub-schools had an officer in charge of it with the Commandant overseeing all of the sub-schools.⁴

Both the Farriers and Horseshoers school and the Bakers and Cooks school were four month courses that allowed both officers and enlisted men. The School of Equitation at the M.S.S. was different because it was only open to officers. For these officers the school offered three courses, the first year, second year and a shorter Field Officers’ Course that was offered twice a year.

The first year course was meant for those that had some experience in the saddle and at least two years of commissioned service.⁵ The reason for this was typically a student was in the saddle for about 5 hours a day totaling around 1,126 hours during the school year. It also emphasized care of the horse along with proper techniques for riding, training and swordsmanship. “Officers are taught the proper military seat, the use of the aids, how to jump, ride across country, follow the hounds, take care of their equipments, and to train young colts. They are given both theoretical and practical instruction in the anatomy, conformation, medical care, feeding and grooming of the horse (including proper care of his mane and tail and trimming the fetlock) and his stable management.”⁶

The second year course was a more advanced course of instruction that was made up of those that finished the first year, however only 10 troopers could attend the advanced
the advanced course. During this course the troopers attending were given the chance to play polo and attend horse shows. “These horse shows serve the purpose of showing breeders the type of horse desired by our army, and give the people an opportunity to see some of the results attained at the M.S.S. in training and riding horses.”7

The second year troopers were given advanced lessons and lectures on riding. Those that did finish the second year also were among the few that would be recommended to attend the French cavalry school at Samur, which other well known personalities at the MSS had also attended, such as Guy V. Henry who would later be Commandant of the Cavalry School.8

During World War I the School only operated to train enlisted specialists.9 The Mounted Service School lasted until just after the First World War ended when, beginning in 1919, the War Department made the decision that all arms of the army should have a service school. Because of this decision, the Mounted Service School became the Cavalry School.10

With the creation of the Cavalry School, the focus became the training of officers and enlisted men in the tactics and use of the horse. All of the courses of instruction included the four different departments of the Cavalry School. These departments taught tactics, cavalry weapons, general instruction and horsemanship,11 (Cav Journal July 1921) Over the course of the 1920-1921 year about 225 cavalymen came to receive instruction at the school, the majority of them belonging to the basic class with approximately 140 troopers attending. During these years Colonel George H. Cameron served as the Commandant of the school with Colonel H.S. Hawkins serving as the Assistant Commandant.

In the early 1920s, when the Cavalry School began, the course of instruction changed from what had been offered by the M.S.S. The Cavalry School offered four different courses rather than the three course offered by the M.S.S. Within each of these four courses there were four departments that each offered their own expertise specifically tailored to each class. The basic course offered the most well rounded course of instruction in order to train the proper Cavalryman.

General instruction normally consisted of teaching the troopers the basics of what it took to be a cavalry officer. Many of the areas covered were administrative lessons on the mess, military law, military customs, etc. Along with these lessons, cavalymen were also expected to attend classes on map reading, training methods and proper leadership.

During the horsemanship course a trooper was expected to spend two to four hours a day on either equitation or on the training of a horse. Along with their time in the saddle, troopers would also carry out many of their lessons while armed with saber and pistol while mounted. Some of the other horsemanship lessons dealt with mounted tactics and maneuvering. It was not uncommon for troopers to spend a good portion of their day at the Cavalry School in the saddle, but this was rarely seen as a problem because it was remarked that the diverse terrain that Fort Riley offered was a joy to ride. There were hills, wooded areas and open terrain to ride over or through. There were even riding classes for the women at the fort. The culture of Riley revolved around the horse.

The horses used at the Cavalry School were split up into three groups, jumpers, schooled and remounts. Jumpers were meant to teach the troopers jumping and cross-country riding. The schooled horses, on the other hand

![Saber Practice](image-url)
Jumping Practice

were trained so that they could be used to teach the proper techniques of equitation. The remounts would be evaluated for their abilities and if a horse showed a particular aptitude for either being a jumper or schooled horse then they would be used as such.  

Part of the horsemanship training for the basic course during this time (1921) had two horses assigned to each officer at the Cavalry School, one horse that had already been trained and one horse that was not yet trained. The trained horses were rotated so that the officers could get used to working with the different tendencies that each horse had, and because of it become a better rider. The untrained horse would stay with the officer, who would teach this horse, permanently.

“When the training of the horses was fairly well advanced, a number of exhibition rides by the different Basic Class platoons were staged in the school riding hall. Some of this work was competitive and considerable friendly rivalry between platoons resulted. As spring opened and the weather became mild, more time was spent riding outdoors, and, commencing about the first of April, practically all the riding was done outside over the reservation.”

The tactics courses covered the why and how a cavalryman should act in the field. “The Cavalry School does not teach that mounted action is alone effective, neither does it teach that dismounted action must always be used; but it teaches that one must always remember that the cavalry has a mobility far greater than any other arm and an effectiveness either mounted or dismounted and that this dual capacity makes it possible to use a wide latitude in the employment of its weapons.”

Unlike the course of instruction in the Mounted Service School, where troopers were only taught the use of pistol and saber, the Cavalry School added a number of weapons to the course instruction. The course in Cavalry weapons meant that the cavalryman would need to be familiar with not only the traditional pistol and saber, but also state of the art rifles. They needed to know how to employ the weapons in the field and proper use.

The focus of each of these lessons shifted depending on the course that was being taken. The level of instruction in that particular field would be more intensive in the Field Officers course rather than the Basic Course.

Soldiers at the Cavalry School spent their recreation time even on horse back. With polo, fox hunting and even riding with their families spent as recreation.

Interior of the Riding Hall
Traditionally graduation week, or June week as it was known, would include various forms of mounted competition. Jumping, swordsmanship and horseshoeing judging were some of the events held. During the 1927 year there were 18 events held during June week. Probably the most well known and talked about was the night ride event.

The night ride was an exercise that had horse and rider travelling all night from station to station. The ride could cover approximately 50 miles depending on the course for the year. During this ride the troopers encountered planned problems that they had to solve. The goal of the competition was to navigate the course and arrive at each station as close to the specified time as possible with a penalty for being early or late. The total time for the course depended on the length. For the 1928 night ride the course was allotted 7 hours and 9 minutes.

It should not go without mention that during the 1920s and 30s the United States Olympic Equestrian teams would train at Fort Riley for their competitions. The U.S. team saw great success in the 1932 Olympic Games and they had hoped to repeat this success in the 1936 Olympics in Berlin. The team that traveled to Berlin had two riders that had already competed in the 1932 games, Major Hiram Tuttle and Captain Isaac Kitts.

The only event that the U.S. placed in during the 1936 games was the Individual Three Day event. Of the three day event team (Captain Carl W.A. Raguse, Captain John M. Willems and Captain Earl F. Thomson) only Captain Thomson on Jenny Camp would take home the silver.

At the beginning of World War II, the high command of the army decided that the horse cavalry could not be utilized in modern warfare. So between 1941 and 1946, the horse cavalry was in the process of being phased out. The Cavalry School’s service was over on November 1, 1946 when the decision was made that the horse cavalry could not keep up with the needs of the modern army.

“Competent critics have declared that the U.S. Cavalry School, during the period between the great wars was the finest school of its kind in existence. Only the Saumur Cavalry School in France and the Tor di Quinto Cavalry School in Italy could be compared with it.”

The idea of this article was to give the reader a basic understanding of how the Cavalry School came to be and how the education of a trooper was presented. It was difficult to go into details because of the rich history the Cavalry provided. It cannot be presented better though than through a quote from the Rasp, the annual yearbook of the M.S.S. and Cavalry School.

“The part that cavalry must play in war is so vital, so indispensable to the army, and its role is so varied, that no true cavalryman can fail to find in it a life study of absorbing and delightful interest. All great soldiers, past and present, speak of its glorious and indispensable services. Its association with horses gives it a charm and spirit that cannot be surpassed in any other arm or any other service.”

Notes

2 Fort Riley: Its Historic Past. 28.
5 Ibid., 437.
6 Ibid., 438.
7 Ibid., 439.
8 Ibid., 439.
10 Fort Riley: Its Historic Past. 28.
13 Ibid., 88.
15 Ibid., 311.
Cavalry Aviators Continue ‘Stable Call’ Tradition

From Department of Defense
Courtesy of the DVIDS

NANGARHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – In the days of the mounted cavalry trooper, the “stable call” was the sound of a bugle signalling cavalrymen to tend to their horses. In today’s cavalry, the traditions remain the same, but the stable call has altered its significance. Troopers of Task Force Shooter, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, gathered Jan. 14 to honor these cavalry traditions at Jalalabad Army Airfield.

In the atmosphere of team-building and camaraderie, the squadron conducted several warrant officer promotions, awarded certificates to newly designated pilots-in-command, awarded the Broken Spur, said a farewell to one of its officers, broke-in Stetsons, and recognized several contractors working with the unit.

“I’d like to start off tonight by recognizing five contractors who have been a great asset to the squadron,” said U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 4 James Riley of Fulton, Miss., recognizing five civilian contractors who deployed with the unit and work alongside Army maintainers to keep the squadron’s aircraft safe and mission ready. “We look forward to having them with us for the rest of the deployment.”

The second event of the evening was awarding pilot-in-command certificates. The pilot-in-command is the pilot ultimately responsible for the aircraft’s operation and safety during flight.

“In light of these demonstrated qualities,” said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Christopher Downey, TF Shooter commander from Philadelphia, reading the certificate, “he is therefore charged to safely and diligently discharge his responsibilities as an aircraft commander and is hereby given the title and authority of pilot-in-command.”

Newly designated pilots-in-command awarded certificates were: U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Stefan Blaisingame of Seattle, an AH-64D Apache pilot; U.S. Army Capt. Kyle Rogers of Erie, Pa., also an Apache pilot; U.S. Army Capt. William Hanna of West Des Moines, Iowa, a UH-60 Black Hawk pilot; U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Nicholas Daniels of St. Johnsbury, Vt., a CH-47 Chinook pilot; U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 3 Mark Chamberlin of St. Augustine, Fla., a Chinook pilot; and U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Matthew Blazewicz of Hollidaysburg, Pa., also a Chinook pilot.

The most anticipated event of the night was the awarding of the Broken Spur.

“The history of the Broken Spur has a long and distinguished lineage, dating back at least until mid-July of 2010,” said U.S. Army Maj. Mark Herold, squadron executive officer and a native of Waterloo, Iowa.

The Broken Spur is literally a tethered spur, broken in half and attached to a necklace and awarded to the squadron member who has distinguished himself or herself for the most ridiculous and humorous error in judgement. The Broken Spur is to be proudly displayed in the recipient’s place of business, and the person awarded the Broken Spur will recount the infamous details of their impaired cognitive abilities when requested.

After opening the forum to new nominations and through much debate, a unanimous vote selected U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 3 Joseph Carr as the recipient of the Broken Spur.

After the Broken Spur was awarded, three pilots were promoted to the rank of Chief Warrant Officer 3. The three pilots were: Mark Leach of Daleville, Ala., an OH-58D Kiowa pilot; Andrew Erp of Watertown, S.D., also a Kiowa pilot; and Mark Chamberlin of St. Augustine, Fla., a CH-47 Chinook pilot.

In the midst of congratulating new pilots-in-command and recently promoted pilots, there
was also a farewell. The squadron said farewell to U.S. Army 1st Lt. Jeffery Shadwick, an OH-58D Kiowa pilot from Campbell Hall, N.Y.

“Coming to us early from flight school while the troop was still at [High Altitude Mountainous Environmental Training], Shadwick, with little platoon leader experience, figured out what needed to be done, and got the job done,” said his troop commander, U.S. Army Capt. Scott Wohlford of Watertown, N.Y. “He will be greatly missed but we look forward to him doing great things with his next unit.”

Shadwick will be going to another base to become a flight platoon leader.

“I couldn’t have hoped for a better place to start my career as an aviator then Task Force Shooter,” said Shadwick. “These stable calls are one of my favorite cavalry traditions where we can all get together and celebrate all the achievements and occurrences in our organization.”

To end the gathering, troopers conducted the time-honored cavalry tradition of breaking in their Stetsons. The following cavalry troopers broke in their Stetsons: U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 3 Richard Ernst of Islip, N.Y.; U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Brian Cammack of West Bend, Wis., and U.S. Army Spec. Ben Shipp of Roundup, Mont., and the entire MEDEVAC platoon, C Company, 3rd General Support Aviation Battalion, 10th Aviation Regiment, 10th CAB.

Famous Cavalry Mounts: Traveller
Reprinted from Cavalry Journal
Sept.-Oct. 1935

Traveller

At the annual Lewisburg fair in 1859, Jeff Davis, a grey two-year-old colt of Grey Eagle stock, was awarded the premium, and again the following year Jeff Davis walked out of the ring with the blue ribbon attached. Jeff Davis was raised on a farm near Blue Sulphur Springs in Greenbrier County, Virginia, (now West Virginia) and at an early age gave promise of developing into a handsome horse. His rapid, springy walk, high spirit, bold carriage, and muscular strength were the marvel of all who saw him. This horse, that nature had so richly endowed, was destined to play a leading role in a drama where courage and strength of man and beast were the prime requisites.

As a four year old this grey horse left the farm for the battlefield. A Major Thomas L. Brown of the Confederate Army had acquired him for $175.00. Faith ordained that the raw recruit, who had yet to acquire a full mouth, should attract the attention of the Idol of the South. General Lee’s admiration of Jeff Davis was so outspoken that the Major Brown begged him to accept the horse as a gift. Whether this was the preliminary of a horse trade is of no consequence, the fact remains that in February 1862, Jeff Davis became the property of General Robert E. Lee for the sum of $200.00.

Upon arrival at his home, Jeff Davis was rechristened. Henceforth he became known as Traveller, spelled with an extra “l” in good
English style. He became the constant companion of his new master through the three years of war and the five years of peace that followed. It is not necessary to delve very deeply between the lines to realize that this great horse soon became an inspiration to the Army of Northern Virginia. Lee and Traveller were symbolic of courage, strength, and victory.

Traveller was no docile Dobbin; his spirit was never dampened and only held in control by a master’s hand. At the Second Battle of Manassas, Traveller became frightened by a bursting shell and dragged General Lee (who was dismounted and was holding him by the bridle rein) against a stump, breaking both of the General’s hands. In the campaign that ensued, despite the fact that Lee rode in an ambulance, Traveller proceeded ahead, ever ready to do his part on the battlefield. On another occasion Traveller is credited with saving his master’s life by rearing and allowing a shell to pass under the girth instead of through the General’s body. After the war the noises of the blacksmith shop would cause this war horse to rear and plunge.

A more than human friendship existed between Lee and Traveller. The understanding between the two warriors is exemplified by the story of how Traveller on freeing himself from a hitching post started to run away when some boys and men attempted to catch him. His flight was arrested by a shrill whistle from his master, a repetition of which brought the grey horse back to receive that ever welcome pat on the neck. On being questioned, Lee remarked that he did not see how any man could ride a horse for any length of time without a perfect understanding being established between the two.

To properly know and understand Traveller, we must go to Lee who in his own words states: “If I were an artist like you, I would draw a true picture of Traveller, representing his fine proportions, muscular figure, deep chest, short back, strong haunches, flat legs, small head, broad forehead, delicate ears, quick eye, small feet, and black mane and tail. Such a picture would inspire a poet whose genius could then depict his worth, and describe his endurance of toil, hunger, thirst, heat, cold, and the dangers and suffering through which he passed. He could debate upon his sagacity and affection and his invariable response to every wish of the rider. But I am no artist and can only say he is a Confederate grey.” We can only add to this description that Traveller stood sixteen hands.

Traveller followed Lee’s hearse to the grave but did not survive his master long. A short time after Lee’s death the old war horse, apparently as strong and vigorous and sound as the day he entered the service, stepped on a nail while grazing. He developed lockjaw, died and was buried in the grounds of Washington and Lee University, not far from where the body of his master lies.—Major Charles C. Smith, Cavalry.

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**Military Career of General Hawkins—An Inspiration to all Cavalrymen**

Reprinted from *The Cavalry Journal*  Jan.-Feb. 1937

The cavalry service lost from its active rolls one of its most inspiring leaders when Brigadier General Hamilton S. Hawkins retired for age last fall. An ardent and accomplished cavalryman, he has exerted a far-reaching influence on our development of tactics, weapons and every phase of cavalry training.

It was a great day for the cavalry arm when General Hawkins was assigned to the command of the 1st Cavalry Division in 1934. There he devoted himself to the training of the division, practicing and testing new tactical doctrines which might prove of value to cavalry. After supervising the training of the various division units for more than two years, he terminated his distinguished career by assembling the division in 1936 and conducting its maneuver as a single cohesive unit, demonstrating the effectiveness and the great mobility of this formidable force, and affording the first opportunity to test our modern cavalry equipment in the field operations of a division.

General Hawkins was born September 25, 1872, son of the late General H. S. Hawkins, U.S. Army. He graduated from the United States Military Academy June 12, 1894, and was assigned to the 4th Cavalry.

His first station was Fort Walla Walla, Washington, where he served for three years. In May and June, 1897, he marched with two
troops of the 4th Cavalry some 800 miles to Fort Yellowstone, Wyoming, where he served until January, 1899. He was married in November, 1897. Then he went to West Point as instructor in mathematics and served there until June, 1899, when he was relieved to join his regiment in the Philippine Islands.

During the Philippine insurrection, he commanded Troop E, 4th Cavalry, and participated in some twenty different engagements being twice cited for gallantry in action.

Promoted to Captain in March, 1901, he left the Philippines in July, 1901, to join the newly formed 13th Cavalry at Fort Meade, South Dakota.

Returning to the United States in October, 1913, he was assigned to the 3d Cavalry and commanded Troop B of that regiment at Fort Sam Houston and at Fort Brown, Texas, until the winter of 1915 and 1916, when, after a refresher course in equitation at the Mounted Service School at Fort Riley, Kansas, he was detailed to purchase horses and mules for the Punitive Expedition in Mexico.

During the Mexican border trouble, he served in the field and in pursuit of raiding bandits, receiving the commendations of his superiors and the respect of his subordinates. At this time his troop was awarded first place in the regiment at the annual competition inspection by the brigade commander, General James Parker.

During this period, Captain Hawkins established a reputation as an excellent horseman, an expert in the use of arms, a leader of men, a student of tactics, and an enthusiastic cavalry officer. He had been tested in garrison, in campaign and in actual combat against the enemy.

In June, 1916, he was sent to rejoin the 4th Cavalry at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. He then commanded Troop H, 4th Cavalry, which was the troop he had first joined as a 2d lieutenant. Thus his first troop became his last, as he was promoted to the grade of major a few months afterwards.

Then came the Great War. He was at the time a major of cavalry commanding a squadron in Hawaii, and in that capacity received the high commendation of his regimental commander, General M. R. Brett. When the National Army was formed, Major Hawkins was appointed colonel of infantry and sent to Camp Funston, Kansas, where General Leonard Wood put him in charge of the training schools of the 89th Division. He continued in his work until January, 1918, when he was ordered to Fort Sam Houston, Texas, as an instructor in the Brigade and Field Officers’ School for National Guard officers. General Thomas B. Dugan, commandant of the school, held a very severe attitude, and this duty was difficult and trying, yet most of the National Guard officers came to Colonel Hawkins after the course was finished and thanked him in the warmest terms for what he had done for them.
He was then detailed on the General Staff—much to his disappointment, because he wanted a regiment—and was ordered to Washington. In June of 1918 he went to France and upon arrival went to the General Staff School at Langres. At the end of August, 1918, he was attached to the 2d Division, where he served as an observer and did duty in assisting G-3 during the Saint Mihiel offensive. During the entire night of the advance—September 12th—he was at the front helping to clear the trails of returning wounded and of empty machine gun ammunition carts in order to get up to the front lines much needed ammunition.

He went up to the front line held by General Ely’s brigade at Thiécourt and, upon returning, gave valuable information to the division commander which helped to dispel rumors to the effect that the Germans were advancing and General Ely falling back.

After this offensive, Colonel Hawkins was ordered to the 35th Division as chief of staff. He joined while it was on the march, just eight days prior to its being launched into battle—the Meuse-Argonne offensive. Colonel Hawkins received only high praise for his work with this division the outstanding facts of his service being as follows:

1. The plan of battle proposed by him for the division was accepted, and the first day, September 26th, it brilliantly carried the famous Vauquois Hill, which had been impregnable to the French for a long time; also the equally difficult Bois de Rossignol, fifteen hundred meters in rear of Vauquois. The advance continued beyond Cheppy, and the maps and report of General Pershing show that the division captured more ground than any other division in the Army that day. After five days’ fighting, the division entered Exermont and was farther forward than any other American unit.

2. Late in the afternoon of the second day of the fighting, after our troops had met with serious losses and had been able to advance only a short distance over an open and exposed plain, a fresh, concerted attack was organized, about 5:30 PM, and carried forward with great success, but darkness intervened in the pursuit and our inexperienced troops and troop leaders got mixed and confused. The third day, this confusion increased, and, due to this disorganization, the division was unable to continue the advance. Under orders from corps headquarters, Colonel Hawkins was sent forward to straighten out these difficulties, and another officer, Colonel Jens Bugge (since deceased), was detailed as acting chief staff. Colonel Hawkins went forward mounted, with a squad and Captain Sands of the 2d Cavalry. He performed his mission with gallantry and skill. The horse of one of his mounted orderlies was killed. Both orderlies disappeared. They were probably killed.

3. Early in the morning of the third day the division was ordered to attack again. Colonel Hawkins once more went forward and found that the attack had been started but that everything was at a standstill. He came upon one regiment lying down in an exposed position, moved it forward and, under his direction, it reached Exermont. Later in the day the division commander placed Colonel Hawkins in command of one of the brigades to replace an officer who was ill and worn out. With the assistance of the gallant Brigade Adjutant, Major Dwight F. Davis, subsequently Secretary of War, Colonel Hawkins proceeded to reorganize units, appoint new leaders and bring order to confusion. He established the brigade on Baulny Ridge and the next day repulsed counter attacks of such severe character that false reports obtained circulation in rear to the effect that the division was in retreat. The arrival of Colonel Hawkins inspired the disorganized units with
new confidence, and the members of the brigade staff were open in their praise of the work of organization accomplished by him. Owing to these efforts, the brigade staff was able to withdraw quietly and in excellent order when it was replaced, on October 1st, by the 1st Division. After marching the brigade back to reequip and receive replacements, he returned it to its proper commander and resumed his duties as Chief of Staff of the division.

(4) On the first afternoon after the fighting was over for the day, the division commander, General Traub, went to the front to make a personal reconnaissance. During this time General Liggett, the corps commander, visited division headquarters and asked for the location of the front lines. Due to inexperienced personnel, this information was not immediately available. While waiting for information, it was learned that the division artillery was having difficulty in getting guns to the front over certain inadequate crossings prepared by the engineers. With General Liggett’s permission, Colonel Hawkins went forward and ascertained the facts which were subsequently of great value.

As a result of Colonel Hawkins’ work during the war, he was highly commended by both of his division commanders, Generals Dugan and Traub, and was recommended by both to be promoted to the grade of brigadier general and to receive the DSM. He received two citations, one for gallantry in action and the other for conspicuously efficient service as Chief of Staff, 35th Division. Moreover, his name was placed on the Initial General Staff Eligible List, composed only of those officers who, by actual experience in command of troops or on staff duty, demonstrated exceptional ability and qualifications during the war.

After the war Colonel Hawkins for a short time commanded the 1st Cavalry at Douglas, Arizona, and then went to Fort Riley, Kansas, as assistant commandant of the Cavalry School. The post commander is the commandant of the school, but normally the de facto head of the school proper is the assistant commandant. He served in this capacity four years. He revised or rewrote practically all the cavalry textbooks—on tactics, drill regulations, and methods of instruction—the old ones having become obsolete as a result of the war. He devised new methods of pistol and saber instruction, and caused the instruction of horsemanship to lend itself practically to modern cavalry needs. As a member of the Cavalry board he devised several improvements in equipment, including the new modified McClellan saddle, etc.

Subsequently, as Colonel of the 3d Cavalry, he commanded the post of Fort Myer, near Washington, D.C., for more than three years, and during this time, under constant observation of officers, civilians and foreign officials of high rank, he received many compliments expressed in the highest terms upon the training and appearance of his command.

When the term of office of the Chief of Cavalry expired in 1924, Colonel Hawkins was strongly recommended for that office by many prominent officers.

In 1926, Colonel Hawkins was sent to the Philippine Islands as chief of staff of the Philippine Division. He served there until his relief in 1928. Both division commanders under whom he served, recommended him highly for promotion.

He was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General on September 4, 1928, and served as Commander of the 14th Infantry Brigade with headquarters at Fort Omaha, Nebraska, until September, 1929, when he was placed in command of the 1st Cavalry Brigade at Fort Clark, Texas. In that capacity he commanded the brigade in several very interesting maneuvers. In the summer of 1933, he temporarily commanded the 16th Infantry Brigade and Wyoming CCC District.

On April 1st, 1934, General Hawkins was assigned by the War Department as commanding general of the 1st Cavalry Division with headquarters at Fort Bliss, Texas. In that capacity and as post commander he remained stationed at Fort Bliss until July, 1936, when he left on leave of absence previous to his retirement for age on October 1st of that year.

During his seven years’ service in the 1st Cavalry Division, three different commanding generals of the Eighth Corps Area recommended him enthusiastically for promotion to the grade of major general; but his approaching retirement prevented his receiving that honor.
By 1915 the Front Royal Remount Depot was in operation and the post procedure was to quarantine

Front Royal Depot Housing

Improving the Cavalry Horse

The first major change in the Front Royal Remount Depot occurred on June 5, 1920, when the Sixty-Six Congress passed a new law. This law allowed for the purchase of purebred stallions that were then loaned to American farmers and ranchers for the purpose of breeding suitable horses for military service. The Secretary of War made annual reports to Congress on the program’s expenses and successes. A Remount Board consisting of both military and civilians was organized to make recommendations on maintaining these operations. This program also allowed for purchase, donation or loan of horses to the Cavalry program.

US Cavalry Remount program, in 1921 began loaning purebred stallions to agents in America hoping to improve the quality of riding horse stock. During peak times as many as 100 purebred stallions per year were processed through Front Royal Depot. The 1930 “Quartermaster Review” stated that during the 1929 breeding season Virginia had 37 stallions standing for the public. The stallions in Virginia averaged 45 mares each and produce approximately 1000 horses. The Quartermaster Corp would purchase the acceptable geldings at age four. The others suitable horses would be sold into the hunter or polo markets in the East. These Remount stallions would remain with the agents for five years.

Birth of the Front Royal Remount Depot

Quartermaster General J.B. Aleshire (1856-1925) writes in the 1911 War Department Annual Report, “The purpose of this purchase was to establish a remount depot. The construction of necessary buildings to provide stabling and other acquisitions is now under consideration.”

An added comment stated that, “This purchase was not to exceed $200,000 and was to be used for assembling, grazing and training of horses purchased for the mounted service.”

Construction started in 1912 with three sets of buildings for officer quarters, ten sets for enlisted quarters, six stables, grain elevators, shops, an infirmary and veterinarian hospital. The post was initially staffed with six officers and 70 enlisted men, but hired civilians during periods of peak activity.

This facility, known as the Front Royal Remount Depot (FRRD), became the center for the Eastern US procurement and distribution of horses and mules for the Quartermaster Corps.

A recent article in the September 2010 Cavalry Journal was published to develop the history of the US Remount program and locate the missing stallion records. In December 2010 I had the privilege of visiting Front Royal Depot and Warren Heritage Society in Front Royal, VA. The purpose of this trip was to explore the depot facility, record pictures of the grounds, horse cemetery, and research the Depot’s records at the Warren Heritage Society.

The year 2011 marks the Front Royal Depot Centennial as this site was commissioned by Congress on March 13, 1911. The long history of the Front Royal Depot, a home for remount horses, really started in 1909, however, two years earlier when the government took options on 5000 acres in the vicinity of Front Royal, VA. This historical location commonly known as Chester Gap, is located in the Blue Ridge Mountains, and was used by both Northern and Southern forces throughout the Civil War.

US Cavalry Remount Program
The Centennial Year for Front Royal Depot
Then and Now
By Earl Parker, PhD
Therefore, beginning 1943 and throughout the war years, surplus Remount horses and mules were placed on the open market. Depot sites held auctions where volume buyers then shipped their purchases in boxcars to many locations across America.

After the Allied success in the WW II against Nazi Germany, the American military discovered that Hitler was breeding a super horse along with his super race by confiscating the best horses from each country they invaded. The Spanish Riding School’s Lipizzaner’s mares, foals and young stallions had already been captured and placed at a stud farm in Hostau, Czechoslovakia, close to the German border.

In April 1945 the Russians approached Germany from the East and the Americans under General Patton’s army approached from the West. The Hostau German officers and veterinarians, caught between these two forces, surrendered to the American forces and cooperated with Second Cavalry, 42nd Squadron of Patton’s army. On April 28, 1945, Col. Charles Reed not only captured approximately 400 horses but also released Allied POWs who were taking care of the horses.

As a result of this “Spoils of War” capture in October 1945, the Quartermaster Corp selected 152 horses and sent them to America for the Remount Program. These horses, primarily of Thoroughbred, Arabian, and Lipizzaner’s, were transported on Liberty ship, Stephen F. Austin, to Virginia and then by rail to Front Royal Depot.

Two imported horses from this group a Polish Arabian, Witez II, and a German thoroughbred, Nordlicht stood out. The Polish horse gained great acclaim and sold at auction to a Californian breeder for $8,100. His offspring later won prestigious awards in the show ring. The Thoroughbred had won the 1944 German Derby. Colonel Fred Hamilton, Chief of US Remount program, remarked, “The German thoroughbred was the fineness stallion of all the US Remount horses.” He brought a price of $20,300 at auction at FRRD.
The End of an Era

On July 26, 1945 the official name of the Front Royal Remount Depot changed to Aleshire Quartermaster Remount Depot after the Quartermaster General who first recommended this facility to the Army. Four years later, on October 31, 1949, the Department of Agriculture (DOA) closed all horse operations and the US Remount Service became history. DOA sold at auction or returned to the original owners the remainder of the horses. Estimates show the total Remount Breeding Program which had operated for 26 years used over 2000 different stallions and produced over 200,000 foals.

Aleshire Remount Depot changed owners several times before its closure. First the War Department transferred it to the Department of Agriculture (DOA) on July 1, 1948 which changed it to a beef cattle research station. Five months later November 1, 1948 the DOA declared that the Aleshire Remount Depot would no longer be a horse depot and continued to use the facility for cattle research until 1974.

The ownership of the Front Royal/Aleshire Remount acreage was divided in 1974 when Smithsonian Conservation Research Center acquired 3200 acres as an extension of the National Zoological Park in Washington, DC. The Conservation Research Center (CRC) at Front Royal started a breeding center for endangered animals and birds. Today several species are being bred for genetic diversity of endangered animals. This world wide effort provides source animals for reintroduction into the wilds.

In some ways Front Royal Depot has come full circle. The near extinct Przewalski wild horse of Mongolia and China is one of the benefactors of this breeding program, and because of it, several Przewalski horse centers are located at zoos and wildlife farms throughout the world. Today, a small herd is even kept in Front Royal by Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute (SCBII). This primitive horse, closely related to our domestic horse, stands about 13 hands and weighs between 550 and 750 pounds. Thanks to these worldwide efforts, approximately 400 Przewalski horses have been reintroduced into these countries. Information on the Przewalski horses can be viewed through the Smithsonian web site.

Also in 1974 the US Customs detector dog training service took possession of 300 acres for their programs and in 1976 the Northern Virginia 4-H Education Center acquired 229 acres for a permanent facility. Today these facilities are the current owners of the former Front Royal Remount Depot. Each organization has web sites where one can learn more.

While in Virginia I had the privilege of talking to a gentleman who grew up on the Front Royal Remount Depot. His father was one of the enlisted men and was responsible for a team of Remount prospects. This gentleman, approximately ten years old at the time, has a vivid memory of watching the German horses as they walked from the railroad cars to the Remount depot. He observed that many of them were rank and in very poor condition from the 21-day Atlantic crossing.

A cemetery at the former Front Royal Depot site contains the remains of nineteen horses. Many of these participated in either the Olympics or other events like Champion Hunters. Several were famous race horses, another a Rough Rider participant, as well as a Kentucky Derby runner-up, a Steeplechase champion, and Jeff and Kidron, two horses owned by General John J. Pershing. Kidron carried General Pershing in the Bastille Day parade down the Champs d’Elysee after the Armistice was signed. Jeff led the 1919 New

Observation Stand
The U.S. Cavalry
Reprinted courtesy of the Western Horseman
By W.D. Smithers

Only those who served a few years or more in the old U.S. Horse Cavalry really know that the horses which made up each of the 12 troops of a regiment were more than just ordinary horses. All the horses which were purchased by the government buyers and sent to the remounts were not qualified to make a Cavalry charger; some were classified as Cavalry mounts at the remount, sent to a troop, but there proven that they could not make it. Some horses, like some men, were not the type to take their place in the Cavalry.

Each horse received by a troop was given its training by expert, well-experienced men who had served many years in the Cavalry. These men knew and loved horses. They were kind to them and did not expect the new horse to learn its lessons too soon. The teachers showed much patience with a horse which had all the physical qualifications of a good Cavalry mount. If it failed to pass the training tests, there was disappointment for the instructor, but it could not be a part of a troop unless it was qualified. The horse in a troop was as important as the soldier, often more important.

The troop commander, generally a Captain, with a First or Second Lieutenant as his assistant, the First Sergeant, and the Stable Sergeant always kept a watch on every man and horse of their troop. Unless a man was kind to his mount, learned its habits and ways, and took the proper care of it, that soldier was not wanted in their troop. Nearly all the men tried to make their troop the best one of the regiment, both as to soldiers and mounts.

Prior to the Mexican Border Trouble days of 1916, the horses at the remounts were given more training and tryouts before they were sent to the troops. When they increased the number of regiments of Cavalry all along the U.S. and Mexico border, as well as those which were in Mexico with General Pershing, the remounts had to fill the requisitions for new mounts before they gave the horses their training.

During this period, this writer was at two of the remounts—the old Fort Sam Houston Remount and the new one at Leon Springs, near San Antonio, Texas. Entire trainloads of horses

Front Royal Depot Cemetery

York City Armistice parade down Fifth Avenue. These burial sites are located on Race Track Hill, a former track used for exercising the horses. I visited the cemetery on a bright, clear day and the surrounding Blue Ridge Mountains could be seen for miles. I left this place with sad feelings for the end of an era but good thoughts about the legacy they provided for our future.

-A bibliography is available for any statement used in this article. Please email eparker4@alumni.unc.edu with your information or concerns.
Earl Parker, PhD.

Headstone: Wainwright’s Charger 1925-1938
The age of the horse in the U.S. Cavalry was slowly coming to a close as units began to mechanize.

and mules would arrive day and night. It seemed that most of the trains arrived during the night, but we were always there to meet the train and unload it at once. The horses and mules had been purchased by remount buyers at various ranch areas. In those days many ranches raised horses to sell to the Army. Some of the buyers were officers of the Remount Service, but some were civilians who were experienced horse buyers.

The horses were unloaded into a large corral to be classified into two large groups. Those suitable in size to make Artillery horses were put into one pasture and the others into the pasture for Cavalry mounts. The mules were also separated as either pack train or wagon train mules. Each animal was given a careful examination by the efficient Army veterinarians. Those that showed any ailments, cuts, or bruises were put into hospital pens for prompt attention.

When the horses and mules were loaded onto the train that brought them to the remount, they became a member of the U.S. Army. If or not they qualified, they were all issued a serial number, which was branded with a hot iron on their left front hoof—a C for Cavalry, an A for Artillery, and mules with a P for pack or W for wagon train.

When the horses were received by a troop, they were again branded on the left front hoof with a troop number from 1 to 65. The soldiers knew their horse’s troop number, but its record showed both numbers; when a horse died, only the serial number was shown on the reports that were sent through channels. Records of horses were kept the same as the soldiers. Each soldier also had a name for his horse.

The animals did not feel the burning of the numbers on their hoofs, but when the U.S. hot branding iron was placed on their left shoulders, they felt that. Those that could not meet all the requirements of the Army were branded on the neck with an I.C. for inspected and condemned. These animals were later auctioned off at public sales. The condemned animals were good horses and mules, but they had some faults which made them unsuitable for Army life. A Service Record was started for each horse and mule at the time he was branded and that record went wherever he went.

The type of horse that made a good Cavalry mount was a compactly build one, weighing about 1,000 pounds and standing about 14-2 to 15-2 hands. A 4-year-old usually made a good Cavalry horse. With those qualifications and the expert training, discipline, and good food that the Army gave him, he was made into a good mount, providing he did not have a disposition which even the Army could not change. A horse that was too nervous or sensitive to noises could not make a good Cavalry horse, unless it could be cured of all those faults, since in the Cavalry there was plenty of noise, especially the many bugle calls.

It was remarkable how the horses understood the different bugle calls. It was often said that some of the horses knew them better than their riders. Anyone who has seen a regiment of Cavalry in review with their mounted band playing those marches knows that the horses enjoyed the music, showing it by their steps and the way they held their heads and being so alert. A troop bugler, when not on duty, would ride off alone, out of hearing from the camp, to practice some of the calls. He would have to hold back his horse to keep it from carrying out some of the calls which he would blow in practice.

Cavalry would average 6 to 6½ mile per hour in marches of about 30 to 35 miles a day, and could maintain that average indefinitely,
Moving fast and often, they generally outran their supply lines, forcing them to live off the land, but they paid for what they could get from the natives. Much of the feed for the horses was bought by the officers and enlisted men with their own money, some was purchased by receipts which were paid off by the American Consul at Chihuahua City, and, later, Mexican money was turned over to the troop commanders, so that they could buy corn and fodder for the horses, and beef and beans for the men.

Had it not been for the ability of the soldiers in caring for their mounts, the number of casualties would have been much larger. Often the long, hard rides were made by over-straining the endurance and the ability of the horses, with one day’s rest out of each seven. On longer days’ distances, the average was about 5 miles per hour. At the start of the Pershing Expedition into Mexico, the 7th and 10th Cavalry in one day traveled over rough, mountainous country 68 miles in 13 hours. Later, when a part of the 7th Cavalry in command of Colonel George A. Dodd, who was 63, was on a hot trail of Villa’s Army, it marched about 400 miles in 14 days—with only one day of rest. This was about 28½ miles a day, but most of the march was made during the nights. They were in hostile country, where even their civilian scouts did not know the region, had outrun their supplies in the pack trains, and they had to live off the land. Instead of oats the Cavalry horses were used to getting daily, they learned to eat corn that soldiers were able to purchase from friendly Mexicans, and the grass that they were able to find. Still, when they overtook the Villa bandits, a charge was made which routed the bandits. Our losses were five men slightly wounded, although 30 bandits were killed, an unknown number wounded, and 13 of their horses, with 23 mules, captured.

The Pershing Expedition was a severe test for the Cavalry horses and the troopers. During the 10 months they were in Mexico, they traveled the roughest and most mountainous regions in Mexico. Days were very hot, but the nights were extremely cold at those high altitudes.

A trooper and his mount.

but the mounts held up to the breaking point. A few were exhausted on the rides and were unsaddled and left to recover by themselves; a few had to be put out of their misery. Some of the casualties were at night, at the end of the exhausting march, while they were on the picket line. They always held their place in the column although they were worn out. The loss of a horse was like the loss of a man to a troop. An example of the troop losses can be understood from a report of one of the provisional squadrons. The squadron was a part of the 11th Cavalry during about a two-week period in
which it had traveled some 691 miles in Mexico. The reported losses were 32 horses and 6 mules out of nearly 300 animals.

Had it not been for the hours that the men spent rubbing down and caring for their mounts after the long rides, the number of losses among the horses would have been much greater. Many times the men were very tired and needed rest, but they took care of their horses first. Each man, in his saddlebags, carried shoes, curry comb, and brush for his horse. At every stop the troop made, the men would examine each hoof. If the shoe was loose, it would be re-nailed. If lost, the mount would be re-shod.

The weight carried by a Cavalry horse averaged a little more than 200 pounds. This figured with an average of 150 pounds for the man. Constant relief was given to the horse by the soldier’s dismounting and walking part of the march ahead of the horse. This was a relief to the soldier, too. The speeds of the gaits of Cavalry were: walks at 4 miles per hour; the trot at 9 miles per hour, but where the country was reasonably level, it was found that when the trot was at about 7 miles per hour, it tired the horses less than the constant walk; and the speed of the gallop was 12 miles per hour.

Horses served as good soldiers for the United States during the 167 years from 1775 to 1942 in which they were used in the Cavalry. It was in March, 1942, that all U.S. Cavalry regiments were ordered to turn in their horses. The regiments were then motorized, but were allowed to retain their old regiment numbers and troop letters. It was some of the old Cavalry outfits which made the splendid records against the Japs in the South Pacific during World War II.

There is now a movement to erect a national monument to the U.S. Cavalry horse. It should be done, as they deserve the full credit which they earned both as good soldiers and good horses.

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