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The United States Cavalry Association
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The aim and purpose of the Association shall be to preserve the history, traditions, uniforms, and equipment of the United States Cavalry, including mounted support units; to sponsor the U.S. Cavalry Association’s Museum and Memorial Research Library for educational purposes; and to preserve the literature used by the United States Cavalry throughout its history.

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The Cavalry Journal is dedicated to the memory of all Cavalrymen.

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Following the Civil War in 1865, Americans from both the Northern and Southern states, along with immigrants from Europe and other countries, began a massive migration west of the Mississippi River into centuries-old Indian hunting grounds. This especially affected Indians in the area west of the Missouri River to the Rocky Mountains whose livelihood was dependent on the massive buffalo herds which provided food, clothing, tools, and shelter. Naturally, they resisted this invasion.

One of the areas in 1867 that saw frequent and deadly clashes was the triangular area marked by Fort Sedgwick in northeast Colorado, Fort McPherson in southwest Nebraska, and Fort Wallace in west central Kansas near the border with Colorado. The opposing forces included about 300 7th Cavalry troopers under the command of Lieutenant Colonel George Custer and an unknown, but apparently large, number of Cheyenne and Sioux Indians who were spread throughout and beyond that triangle.

Custer's mission, commencing on 1 June when his command departed Fort Hays, Kansas, was to find and chastise the elusive Indians who had been attacking settlers, stage coach stations, and railroad track-laying crews. [Ed. Fort Hays is about 125 miles east of Fort Wallace, both on the Smoky Hill River]. Custer proceeded northwest toward Fort McPherson as the month-old trail indicated the Indians might be in the vicinity of the Republican River [Ed. This river flows eastward through southwest Nebraska, about halfway between Fort McPherson and Fort Wallace].

The month of June and the early part of July were spent pursuing Indians who always remained at a distance from Custer's command except when attacking small detachments of soldiers and attempting to steal his horses. During this same period, additional hostile Indians were attacking stage coach stations along the Smoky Hill Trail near Fort Wallace [Ed. Reference the March 2016 The Cavalry Journal article "Bugler Charles Clarke"].

On 29 June 1867, 2nd Lieutenant Lyman Kidder, with new orders from Major General Sherman for Custer, departed Fort Sedgwick with ten soldiers and a friendly Sioux Indian scout to find and deliver the orders to Custer. They had to be constantly watching for hostile Indians.

Over the years, many have wondered if Kidder was experienced enough to lead such a mission?

Kidder, as a civilian, was commissioned in the 2nd Cavalry on 18 May 1867 and reported for duty on 16 June at Fort Sedgwick. However, he had previous military and Indian fighting experience. From November 1961 – May 1863, as a soldier he fought against Confederates in Kentucky and Tennessee. In May 1863, he was appointed a first lieutenant in the Minnesota Mounted Rangers by that state's governor and fought against the Sioux. He was discharged on 28 November 1863. After a 9-month break from the military, Kidder enlisted and served as a First Sergeant until his discharge in May 1866. Additionally, most of the men with him were experienced soldiers.

Kidder's detachment followed the Sedgwick/Wallace military road and found what they thought were Custer's tracks. On possibly 2 July, near where Beaver Creek crosses the military road and south of the junction of the North and South forks of the Republican River (northeast of what is now Goodland, Kansas), the detachment was attacked and massacred by an overwhelming number of Cheyenne and Sioux Indians.
On 12 July 1867, soldiers from Custer’s command discovered the massacre site and the horribly mutilated remains of Kidder and his men which they buried in a mass grave at the battle site.

When the remains were recovered in late February 1868, Kidder’s remains were identified by the collar of his undershirt which was still around his neck. The shirt had been made by his mother. He was reburied by his family in St. Paul, Minnesota. The ten soldiers and the Indian scout were buried in a mass grave at Fort Wallace. When Fort Wallace was closed, their remains were reburied in a mass grave at Fort Leavenworth, where they remain.

Discovering the Remains of Lieutenant Kidder and His Men
Drawing by T. R. Davis, from Harper's Weekly, August 17, 1867


The Afghan Saddle
By Trooper Gary Polsinelli

[Ed. About 18 months ago, after becoming the editor of this Journal, I began seeking pictures of an Afghan saddle that U.S. special operations personnel might have ridden while assisting the Afghan Northern Alliance defeat the Taliban in the fall of 2001. Unfortunately, my search was unsuccessful. Then Trooper Gary Polsinelli, the Cavalry Journal’s Copy Editor, told me about his Afghan saddles and wrote the following article. Pictures from that combat show some U.S. special operations members riding what appear to be Afghan saddles like the one Gary shows in his article. While this article is not about the U.S. Cavalry, I am sharing it as it shows what U.S. special operators might have to do to create a saddle if they have to ride horses or mules in an environment not suitable for wheeled vehicles. Please see the “USMC Animal Packers Training” article in this issue of The Cavalry Journal.] [Ed. Horse Soldiers: The Extraordinary Story of a Band of US Soldiers Who Rode to Victory in Afghanistan, by Doug Stanton, tells the story of these 21st century U.S. “Cavalrymen.”]

U.S. Special Operations Soldiers with Afghan Northern Alliance Forces
sgtmacsbar.com/CCTPhotos/Gallery24horse_soldiers/horsesoldier01.jpg
About twelve years ago, while travelling on business, I had the opportunity to make an extended visit to Afghanistan. One of the highlights of my trip was attending a Buzkashi match. The game was exciting, and learning the rules was easy as there did not seem to be any.

The object of the game was to take the headless carcass of a calf or goat from a circle at one end of the field, ride around a pole at the other end, and return the carcass to a circle next to the one where you got it, all while about a hundred mounted men try to beat you up. The game was fun to watch—rowdy play/rowdy fans.

I thought the tack, horses, and clothing were exceptionally interesting, but bringing a horse home with me was not a realistic option. I did manage to bring home some clothing and tack. I also purchased two saddles, both just bare leather and rawhide-covered wooden trees. One was so small that I did not take the time to do any rigging for it, and it is still just a decoration.

The other saddle was a bit larger, and I wanted to ride in it, so I worked on devising and making some rigging for it. There are holes in the bars, apparently for stirrup leathers, but I did not trust the strength of the wood completely, so I made stirrup rigging that runs over the seat.

Using rope was much easier than trying to explain to a leatherworker what I wanted, and I did see rope used for stirrup rigging up close on at least one saddle in Afghanistan. Also, I wanted to personally do as much work on the project as I could, and I don't have the proper tools for sewing large leather projects. The braided rope breastplate runs behind the cantle and is held in place by the stirrup rigging and a strap that runs over the withers. The running end of the breastplate ties off to a ring on the near side. This method did not require any physical alteration of the saddle itself.

Adjusting the stirrups properly was a tedious process because of the way they are simply knotted at the bottom end. Locking the knots in place with extra lacing is necessary to prevent the knots from loosening while riding.

It was no trouble to braid a neck loop, and to sew some Afghan bangles onto a brow band. The bridle I used for a base was a plain braided and waxed headstall with an English-style jointed egg-butt snaffle. The Afghans also used snaffles, but the rings seemed to be quite small. Their bridles were simple headstalls made of sturdy leather with some ornamentation added. The Afghans use a strap over the nose, but a buckle under the chin did not seem to be in common use (as with an English-style cavesson).

Finally, I had a six-inch wide leather surcingle made at a local shop. It runs completely around the horse and saddle, and holds a pad on the seat. The seat pad is necessary because the seat has no padding whatsoever and is studded with ornamental nail heads. The saddle pads used in Afghanistan seemed to be small carpets, both between the horse and the saddle and
between the saddle and rider. Unfortunately, I was not able to find any carpets of this type to purchase and bring home, so I had to improvise with some rough-woven blankets instead.

Riding in the saddle was not particularly comfortable at first. The stirrups felt right, but the ride was hard on my seat at the trot and canter. Just before deciding to put the saddle away for good, I realized that it may help if I shortened the stirrups somewhat. This took some weight off my seat and transferred it to my feet, and allowed me to move more effectively with the horse at the trot and canter. My Afghan saddle is good for an enjoyable and secure ride at any gait and in any terrain.

The saddle is completely rigid, and sits high on the horse like a McClellan saddle. The stirrups swing freely. Obviously, there are no knee rolls, but the high pommel compensates for that—along with the ability to push the feet forward and lean on the cantle when going downhill. Overall, it has a feel similar to a McClellan saddle—which is not surprising considering the McClellan’s eastern European/central Asian roots.

Experiencing the horse culture of Afghanistan was a real pleasure—as was rooting through a few bazaars for the tack I brought home with me. It gave great satisfaction to get the saddle rigged up and use it once I got back home—and the rigging work was as much fun as riding in the saddle when completed!

Fiddler’s Green in Prose
The Cavalry Journal, January 1925

*** So when the cavalrymen die, their souls ride away with full pack and arms down the long dusty Road to the Next World. But two miles before the fork where the road turns north to Heaven and south to Hell, they ride off the road and dismount. They lead off to the right and past them march the infantry, and the artillerymen [Ed. who] drive their guns and caissons past, marching on to the fork of the Road to the Next World.

But the dead troopers lead away from the road to the green fields with trees and streams where by the river are pitched row on row of tents. Up on the hill is Headquarters and there are the marquees of the dead old cavalry officers—they too halted here, for they stayed with their own rather than swagger about Heaven or sweat through Hell. They ride with staff and orderlies, flags and escort, Murat and Seidlitz, Forrest, Ziethen and Stuart, and many more, or sit about the tables in the shade, over maps and glasses, as they did in the years when they fought and rode in the world.

Along the picket lines under the trees, the dead troopers feed and groom, each man his own horse that he loved and rode in life. Now “Recall” blows, and “Mess Call”: mess is served by celestial cooks and for K.P. and stable police the angels do miracles. The darkening sky shows its jewelry of stars and troopers rest about the fires, lying on warm grass, with pipe and mug for every man. All together, man-at-arms and squire, cuirassier, lancer, hussar and dragoon; Briton and Frank, Cossack, Roman, Greek, Yank and Reb—all races and every uniform, at peace by the white and brown tents, the horses resting at the lines; the sergeants cease from troubling, the officers too are at rest; cavalrymen all, dreaming out eternity in the last Camp.

And afar through the day and night, from the distant Road to the Next World, comes the muffled tramp of the infantry and the rumbling of guns (and of late there has been the clangor of tanks and from overhead the hum of planes) marching on the South Fork of the Road to the Next World.

C. S. C.
Citation

*For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving with the 3d Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division during combat operations against an armed enemy at Unsan, Korea, from November 1-2, 1950. On November 1, as Chinese Communist Forces viciously attacked friendly elements, Chaplain Kapaun calmly walked through withering enemy fire in order to provide comfort and medical aid to his comrades and rescue friendly wounded from no-man's land. Though the Americans successfully repelled the assault, they found themselves surrounded by the enemy. Facing annihilation, the able-bodied men were ordered to evacuate. However, Chaplain Kapaun, fully aware of his certain capture, elected to stay behind with the wounded. After the enemy succeeded in breaking through the defense in the early morning hours of November 2, Chaplain Kapaun continually made rounds, as hand-to-hand combat ensued. As Chinese Communist Forces approached the American position, Chaplain Kapaun noticed an injured Chinese officer amongst the wounded and convinced him to negotiate the safe surrender of the American Forces. Shortly after his capture, Chaplain Kapaun, with complete disregard for his personal safety and unwavering resolve, bravely pushed aside an enemy soldier preparing to execute Sergeant First Class Herbert A. Miller. Not only did Chaplain Kapaun's gallantry save the life of Sergeant Miller, but also his unparalleled courage and leadership inspired all those present, including those who might have otherwise fled in panic, to remain and fight the enemy until captured. Chaplain Kapaun's extraordinary heroism and selflessness, above and beyond the call of duty, are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, the 3d Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, the 1st Cavalry Division, and the United States Army.

President Obama, in the name of Congress, authorized by Act of Congress, March 3, 1863, presented the Medal of Honor to Kapaun's nephew at the White House on April 11, 2013.

**After he was captured, Kapaun and other prisoners were marched for several days northward toward prisoner-of-war camps. During the march Kapaun led by example in caring for injured Soldiers, refusing to take a break from carrying the stretchers of the wounded while encouraging others to do their part.

Once inside the dismal prison camps, Kapaun risked his life by sneaking around the camp after dark, foraging for food, caring for the sick, and encouraging his fellow Soldiers to sustain their
faith and their humanity. On at least one occasion, he was brutally punished for his disobedience, being forced to sit outside in subzero weather without any garments. When the Chinese instituted a mandatory re-education program, Kapaun patiently and politely rejected every theory put forth by the instructors. Later, Kapaun openly flouted his captors by conducting a sunrise service on Easter morning, 1951.

When Kapaun began to suffer from the physical toll of his captivity, the Chinese transferred him to a filthy, unheated hospital where he died alone. As he was being carried to the hospital, he asked God's forgiveness for his captors, and made his fellow prisoners promise to keep their faith. Chaplain Kapaun died in captivity on May 23, 1951.

Chaplain Emil J. Kapaun repeatedly risked his own life to save the lives of hundreds of fellow Americans. His extraordinary courage, faith and leadership inspired thousands of prisoners to survive hellish conditions, resist enemy indoctrination, and retain their faith in God and country. His actions reflect the utmost credit upon him, the 1st Cavalry Division, and the United States Army.

*Congressional Medal of Honor Society
**U.S. Army Medal of Honor Files

In 1879, the Army introduced the solid brass Model 1879 (M1879) trumpet for use by the Cavalry and Infantry.

The Infantry M1879 had a 4-1/2 inch diameter bell and was about 16 inches in length with the mouth piece. It does have a similar appearance to the M1892 Field Trumpet [Ed. See March 2017 The Cavalry Journal]. It was in the Key of F.

Infantry M1879 Trumpet

The Cavalry M1879 was the Infantry M1879 with the addition of a detachable “C” crook which made it Key of C. The length of the Cavalry M1879, with mouth piece, was almost 19 inches.

Cavalry M1879 Trumpet

M1879 Trumpet detachable “C” Crook

Pictures of the M1879 Trumpet are from the author’s collection.
On 3 April 2017, Sergeant First Class Dominador “Dan” Figuracion, a former Cavalryman in Troop F, 26th U.S. Cavalry (Philippine Scouts), mounted his horse for the final time and rode to Fiddler’s Green where he joined his fellow Scouts and Cavalrymen who awaited him there.

SFC Figuracion, at age 98, was the last surviving 26th Cavalry trooper who rode in the last horse-mounted cavalry charge of the U.S. Army [Ed. The Cavalry Journal, March 2017, “75th Anniversary The Last Horse-Mounted Charge of the U.S. Cavalry”].

Dan survived the Bataan Death March, was a former prisoner of war (POW), a decorated veteran of World War II and Vietnam, and was honorably retired from the U.S. Army.

Dan was active in the Philippine Scouts Heritage Society and a strong mentor to those striving to keep alive and share with the world the legacy of the Philippine Scouts.

Dan’s grandson, Ricardo Molina, a member of the 26th Cavalry Ceremonial Mounted Unit, honored his grandfather and the 26th U.S. Cavalry Regiment (PS) by walking the more than five miles of the 2017 Rose Parade on January 2nd.
Malin Craig, was born on 5 August 1875 in Saint Joseph, Missouri. He attended Georgetown University before entering the class of 1898 at the United States Military Academy. He was a classmate of Fox Conner and Guy V. Henry, Jr. [Ed. Conner and Henry later retired as major generals.] On 26 April 1898, he graduated number thirty-three of fifty-nine classmates and was commissioned in the Infantry. On 23 June 1898, he transferred to the Cavalry.

During the Spanish-American War—immediately after his graduation—he served in the 6th Cavalry during the Santiago campaign. He then transferred to the 4th Cavalry at Fort Yellowstone, Wyoming, then administered by the army; it is now known as “Yellowstone National Park.”

After taking part in the China Relief Expedition, he came back to the Philippines, where he was aide to Gen. Thomas H. Barry and later to Gen. J. Franklin Bell. He attended the Infantry and Cavalry School from 1903 to 1904 and the Staff College from 1904 to 1905. He served in the 1st and 10th Cavalry regiments before graduating from the War College in 1910.

From 1910 to 1912, Craig had duty with the General Staff as an instructor at the War College, then served again with the 1st Cavalry Regiment before becoming Chief of Staff of the Maneuver Division in San Antonio, Texas. Next, he became an assistant to the Chief of Staff of the Western Division in San Francisco, California. During 1916 and 1917, he was an instructor at the Army Service Schools at Fort Leavenworth. After this he was sent to the Adjutant General’s Office in Washington.

A captain when the First World War started for the United States on 6 April 1917, Craig was promoted to major in May 1917 with temporary promotions to lieutenant colonel in August 1917 and colonel in March 1918. During this time, he served in the American Expeditionary Force as Chief of Staff, Fourth Infantry Division and as Chief of Staff of the First Army Corps with promotion to brigadier general (National Army) in July 1918. When the war ended, he then served as Chief of Staff, Third Army, American Forces in Germany. For his World War service Craig received the Distinguished Service Medal. His citation read “General Craig served in turn as Chief of Staff of a division, a corps, and an Army, in each of which capacities he exhibited great ability. His personal influence, aggressiveness, and untiring efforts were repeatedly displayed in the operations of the 1st Corps in the vicinity of Chateau-Thierry, on the Oureq, and the Vesle during the St. Mihiel and Argonne-Meuse offensives.”

On 15 August 1919, Craig reverted to his permanent rank of Major. When he was promoted to colonel on 1 July 1920 he took command of the District of Arizona. In April 1921, he was promoted to brigadier general (U.S. Army) and served as commandant of the Cavalry School at Fort Riley, from 1 September 1921 until 30 June 1923.

From 24 July 1924 to 21 March 1926, Craig, with the authorized temporary rank of major
general, served as the Chief of Cavalry. With his promotion to major general (U.S. Army) in 1926, he served in numerous positions from 1926 to 1935 including U.S. Army War College Commandant, U.S. Army Assistant Chief of Staff, and Commanding General Ninth Corps Area.

On 2 October 1935, General Craig succeeded General Douglas MacArthur as the Army Chief of Staff with temporary four-star (full general) rank. When Craig retired on 31 August 1939 at his permanent rank of major general, he had served forty-one years on active duty. He received his second Distinguished Service Medal. His World War and post-World War service had given him the knowledge and experience needed to strongly address to Congress the need to strengthen the capability of the Army to wage war if necessary.

On 1 September 1939, German attacked Poland!

Craig was recalled to active duty on 26 September 1941, at his permanent rank, to head the War Department’s Personnel Board. This board was to identify and select individuals for direct commissions. He died on 25 July 1945 while on active duty, was posthumously awarded his third Distinguished Service Medal, and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery without military honors per his request.

References:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malin_Craig

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Oldest Living Horse Cavalry Officer?
By Lieutenant Colonel Andrew L. Geisler (U.S. Army, Retired)

[Ed. USCA President Bill Tempero received the following letter from LTC Geisler and is sharing it with you. Trooper Geisler is now a member of the U.S. Cavalry Association.]

To: Bill Tempero:

THANK YOU, Bill, for providing me with your copy of “Voices of the Sandhills” and the 2016 copy of “The Cavalry Journal.”

I knew General Patton, he was a major in command of troops of the Third Cavalry at Fort Myer, Virginia, and I was a private in F Troop. He took us on a trip (by horseback) in the Spring of 1935 to Fredericksburg area where we re-enacted the Civil War battle of Cannonsburg, I believe, and then rode back to Fort Myer.

The article, “George Patton & the Cavalry Journal” [Ed. March 2016, The Cavalry Journal] was well written and interesting, but I knew another side of him. Also Dr. Franklin Ferris Russell, the Attorney General of Eritrea, and I established a law school and taught law to Eritreans and Ethiopians. Dr. Russell served with Patton at the Mexican border and, he told me, Patton was the only person who fired his weapon (and killed a Mexican).

Thanks again for providing me some horse cavalry news. I may be the oldest surviving horse cavalry officer alive—at 101 years of age!

Andy Geisler

MEMBER
American Judicature Society
U.S. Supreme Court Bar
Military and U.S. Tax Courts

LTC USA (Ret)

Cavalryman & Officer during period 1934 to 1958
Counselor, teacher, aide to commanders and military courts
Prosecution and defense counsel experience
Legal Counsel for U.S. Army at Fort Lewis, WA 1946-1947
Legal Counsel for U.S. Army Security Agency, Arlington Hall Station in Virginia
And Asmara, Eritrea 1947-1957 as Post Judge Advocate
And as US Foreign Claims Commissioner for East Africa
Judicial magistrate (Special Justice) Arlington County, VA 1962-1974
Counsel, Assistant Director and Executive Director of Legal Aid Society of Washington, D.C. 1959-1973
TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif., 19 October 2012 - The War on Terror is not always fought in the urban setting where food, supplies and ammunition can be provided through normal logistical means. Fighting the enemy takes Marines into regions where common modes of transportation, such as armored vehicles or aircraft, cannot reach. As the Marine Corps tries to solve the challenges of getting provisions to Marines in hard to reach battle spaces, they do not always look toward technology but rather apply solutions that were effective in the past.

The Animal Packers Course started as a concept course at the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, Bridgeport, Calif., in 1983. The course is still taught today after nearly 30 years, but the United States had been using this technique since the early 1980s. “It's been around since both World Wars and the last time they were utilized was in Korea,” said Sgt. Justin Head, staff noncommissioned officer in charge, Animal Packers Program. “It's been around for thousands of years. It's something that's worked for countless militaries.”

The 16-day course teaches Marines how to use animals in the region they find themselves in as a logistical tool to transport weapons, ammunition, food, supplies or wounded Marines through areas vehicles cannot reach. “After coming through the course and learning the basic
fundamentals they can pack any kind of animal, from llama, camel, anything," Head said. “If you’re going to fight compartmentalized conventional war in the mountains, you’ve got to utilize animals. If you don’t, you’re not going to be able to get your logistics, your ammo, basically the five B’s, to your Marines.”

The beginning of the course works to introduce the Marines to the basics. They use mules for their training and learn about their anatomy and familiarize themselves with the animals. This step is particularly important to the Marines who have little or no experience with these large creatures. “For most Marines, they've never been around livestock and this is something completely new or foreign to them,” Head said. “We teach handling and catching, basically get the Marines comfortable being around those large animals.”

Even Marines already familiar with handling pack animals find that there’s something to be gained from the course. “I’ve had horses growing up,” said Lance Cpl. Luke W. Martin, team leader, 1st Platoon, Company L, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, and recent graduate of the course. “The course definitely increased my skills.”

The mobility and versatility the pack animals provide help in war overseas, both as a logistical asset and a safety precaution. “You get a train of mules going and they can get across terrain that trucks can't go through,” Martin said. “You don’t run the risk of hitting an improvised explosive device like if you’re on a road because you can go off-road the entire time.”

The MCMWTC not only offers the Animal Packers Course to Marines but also to service members across the branches.

The lessons learned during the Animal Packers Course are used by Marines currently deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. “We’ve had quite a few Marines that have gone through the course and deployed to Afghanistan,” said Head. “They've sent us emails and pictures saying, ‘Hey, we utilized this, packed this here.’”

Marines training resupply techniques with pack saddles (americanspecialops.com photo)

“As Marines, we are always adapting and overcoming, trying to think outside the box and doing more with less,” Head said. “This is definitely one of those skills.”
During World War I, the Newport News, Virginia, port was the biggest supplier of war horses for British Army

Three months after the first shots of World War I rang out in August 1914, the withering brutality of the fighting in Europe reached across the Atlantic and began reshaping Hampton Roads with an unforeseen power.

Though the United States would not enter the Great War for 2 1/2 years, the people of Newport News saw the first sign of an increasingly crucial connection in late November. But it wasn't a surge in building at their famous shipyard or the troop mobilization that many observers expected. Instead, it came as a flood of horses and mules — hundreds of thousands of them transported by rail from across the country in an epic British effort to resupply the badly mauled equine force of its struggling armies.

Herded into a giant complex of pens and stables erected between 30th and 34th streets near the downtown piers, the seemingly endless stream of animals brought hundreds of ships and
thousands of jobs to the James River port was, by the end of 1914, overtaking the city’s nationally important coal and grain exports in value.

In just two months, the British Remount Station shipped more than 10,500 horses worth nearly $2.6 million — a figure equal to more than $60 million in 2014 dollars. In 1915, another 170,000 horses and mules worth almost $1 billion today followed in a supply chain that reached as far as Egypt. By the fighting’s end, the number of animals transported from the sprawling compound approached 500,000 — or nearly $3 billion today — making the port by far the biggest and most important supplier of American war horses for the British army.

So essential did it become to the battlefields in France and Belgium that German-paid saboteurs attacked the herds in a futile attempt to staunch the flow.

"The sheer numbers are just incredible," says historian John V. Quarstein, author of the 1998 book World War I on the Peninsula. “And this was just the beginning of an immense transformation in which the war changed Newport News and Hampton Roads forever.”

**Endless need**

Like the huge armies of soldiers they served, the horses and mules of the Great War were mangled by the conflict’s unprecedented violence — and within a few months Britain recognized that its dwindling domestic stock was not nearly large enough to replace its losses. "Our home resources … are exhausted," the chief remount officer reported just months after the war started. And despite attempts to employ such mechanized substitutes as the American-built Holt artillery tractor, the shortage spelled disaster for an army that still moved, fed and supplied itself largely through animal power.

Even after the machine gun and rapid-fire cannon made the cavalry charge obsolete, horses and mules still provided the primary means of transporting war material from the railheads to the front — then carrying the dead and wounded back to the hospitals in the rear.

A single 5-ton Whitworth gun like one on display at the Virginia War Museum required a team of 12 animals to make its way through the mud — and there were thousands of artillery pieces deployed along the Western Front.

"Horses were employed on a scale which could never have been dreamed of," said Capt. Sidney Galtrey, author of the 1918 study The Horse and the War. "Without a constant supply of good horses, the British army would have been virtually immobile."

That indispensable role made them targets, too, says Robert Koenig, author of The Fourth Horseman, a 2006 book that explores the use of the World War I horse, the British remount effort in the United States, and the attempts of saboteurs to throttle the herds at Newport News.

The Germans were especially keen on aiming at horses. "Equine casualties were especially high during battles of attrition, such as the 1916 Battle of Verdun," he explained. "In one day in March, 7,000 horses were killed by long-range shelling on both sides, including 97 killed by a single shot from a French naval gun."

Despite that grim toll, combat casualties accounted for only a quarter of all the horses and mules that died. Many more drowned in the ever-present mud after collapsing from exhaustion, Koenig says, while thousands of others perished from exposure and starvation.

When North Carolina veterinarian F.C. Herndon returned to Newport News after accompanying a February 1916 shipment of 777 horses to Europe, he reported in the American Journal of Veterinary Medicine that the average life of the animals at the front "is just a little over 10 days." "It was a meat grinder, and many of the horses the British started with in August were dead within the year," Quarstein said. "So the need was huge. It was never-ending. And with the war not six months old what are they doing? — coming to the United States to look for horses."

**Epic scale**

Though headquarterd in Canada, the British Remount Commission operated primarily in the United States, from which it drew the vast majority of its animals. Many of them were shipped through a vast complex of corrals constructed by British contractor Guyton & Harrington Co. near
One of the depot's animal handlers struggles to lead three mules from a pen toward an inspection chute. (Courtesy of the Library of Virginia)
So prevalent was the disease that even healthy horses were confined for observation before shipping, while those that became ill were scrupulously treated and moved through a series of contagious disease, pneumonia, and convalescent pens before being approved for transport, wrote Gregg in the 1917 veterinary journal.

The depot operated a large veterinary hospital, too, where hundreds of the worst cases were bedded and blanketed in long rows of stalls for more intensive treatment — or confined for recovery after undergoing surgery.

"Mistakes were unavoidable in the early rush as the horses had to be got quickly to meet the pressing demands in France," Gregg noted. But by avoiding overcrowding, attending rigidly to issues of isolation, disinfection and sanitation and adding liberally to the depot's veterinary and nursing staff, the depot not only met the challenge of handling an unprecedented number of animals but also kept them healthy at a rate that far exceeded peacetime standards, he reported.

Dozens of additional veterinarians accompanied the animals as the shipments got underway, not to mention hundreds of onboard feeders, cleaners and handlers drawn largely from the city's black population. At the depot itself, the veterinary staff worked alongside an even larger corps of workers, including farriers and stablemen as well as loaders and wranglers.

Hundreds more found jobs with such businesses as Waterfront Lumber, which played a major role in building and repairing the depot pens as well as converting British cargo ships into animal transport vessels. "Once a big British transport ship arrived, members of the British Remount Commission chose the horses and mules who appeared to be in the best condition," Koenig says. "They would point to a horse in the corral or pasture area, and 'chigger boys' — cowboys, really — would rope the animal and lead it to another pen, where the vets and commission members scrutinized each horse for signs of disease. The healthy animals were channeled into a wooden viaduct to the wharf, where another commissioner stood at the gate to count the horses, each of which was fitted with a halter.

"The nervous animals were then led up sloping wooden chutes onto the steamer's main deck."

**Secret threats**

So immense, successful and profitable was this effort that, according to the Jan. 20, 1915, Daily Press, many other "envious" cities on the Atlantic coast — including Norfolk — began offering the shippers inducements to relocate the business.

By late February, when the volume and value of the horses began breaking all records, a special investigation conducted by the newspaper uncovered evidence of a plot in which a city councilman had solicited bribes from the Norfolk Chamber of Commerce in exchange for planting false reports about public health problems, animal cruelty, and price gouging. But the threat ended with the councilman's conviction and resignation as well as the news — just two months later — that Newport News had also become the primary British port for the transport of mules, with more than 40,000 animals to be diverted there from New Orleans.

In March 1915 alone, more than 16,000 horses worth $3.8 million left from the C&O piers, shattering every export record. And the head of one of Britain's most prominent horse shippers only saw room for more. "Mr. Harling is reported to have said that the facilities for handling the horse export trade, the facilities for caring for the horses before they were loaded and the entire equipment of the yards surpassed any port in the United States," the Daily Press reported after an April inspection tour. "Business is brisker along the waterfront at this time than ever before."

Among the hundreds of new faces drawn by the surging enterprise, however, were two Baltimore dock workers who posed a potentially greater threat than any competing city. Recruited and supplied with serum by German agents — including a Virginia-born German-American physician — the men slipped into the depot under the cover of darkness sometime in late 1915 and attempted to infect the herds with anthrax and a pneumonia-like bacterium.
"Killing American horses and mules had become a strategic priority," Koenig says. "The German sabotage campaign has the distinction of being the first systematic use of germs as a tool of modern warfare."

Still, so primitive and ineffective were the clandestine attacks that no one suspected they'd been carried out until after the war ended. By that time the stream of American horses and mules flowing from Newport News had proved indispensable in giving the British an advantage the Germans could not counter. "If in March 1918, the equine force of Germany had been on the same scale, and as efficient, as the British equine force, the Germans would unquestionably have broken through," British Field Marshall Sir Douglas Haig said. "And (that would have) inflicted a defeat so great that recovery might have been impossible."

Used by permission of the Newport News Daily Press. Published November 30, 2016.
[Ed. Thank you Trooper Niven Baird for providing this article.]

History of the Fort Concho Cavalry
By Trooper Bob Bluthardt

Members of the Fort Concho National Historic Landmark Cavalry on Parade
The Fort Concho Cavalry, created in 1984 as a project of the Rotary Club of West San Angelo, TX, was the second step in the long-range plan of the Fort Concho National Historic Landmark to create a diverse living history program to represent the Fort’s soldiers and civilians.

The Fort Concho Infantry became the first program in 1982, portraying Company F, 16th Infantry Regiment, U.S. Army, that was posted at Fort Concho in the 1880s. The organizers of the Cavalry program chose Company D, 4th Cavalry Regiment, U.S. Army, of the early 1870s and Colonel Ranald Mackenzie’s era in Texas.

A local dentist, Dr. Pat Makins, who was president of the Rotary Club, guided the process that saw the creation and equipping of a six-man Cavalry squad by 1985.

In the coming years Fort Concho National Historic Landmark also created a Buffalo Soldier unit, a wagon unit, added artillery, and a ladies program. In recent years, the staff created two vintage baseball programs as well as a youth military heritage program.

The Fort Concho Cavalry travelled to many events across Texas in the late 1980s and 1990s, including the 1991 Cotton Bowl Parade, several Texas Sesquicentennial events in 1986, and in recent years the National Cavalry Competitions. The Fort’s Cavalry, along with the other units, joined several state programs for the Governor’s Inauguration Parade in 2015 in Austin.

In San Angelo, the unit rides every year in the Rodeo and Veterans’ Day Parades, plus many events in the surrounding smaller communities.

Like many living history programs, the unit does not boast as many riders as in years past, but it has managed to stay active for over thirty years.

In several stages, from 2003 to 2006, Fort Concho erected a living history stable with eighteen interior stalls with storage and classroom space. This facility has hosted a National Cavalry Competition in 2010 and Regional Cavalry Competitions in 2016 and 2017. It has also played host to the famed Clydesdales on two visits. The annual Stock Show and Rodeo Trail Ride ends at the Fort Concho facility each year.

For more information about the Fort Concho Cavalry contact Bob Bluthardt at 325-234-0316 or Ron Perry at 325-234-0493. Or e-mail at director@fortconcho.com. The recruiting office is always open! USCA members are also welcome to visit and use the facilities when passing through the territory.

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**Book Review**

**Marsmen in Burma**

John Randolph, 1946

**Reviewed by: Captain Benjamin A. Thomas**, Armor, 1st Squadron 124th Cavalry, Texas Army National Guard

John Randolph’s Marsmen in Burma chronicles the MARS Task Force, one of two American Long-Range Penetration units that saw service in the China-Burma-India (CBI) theater during the Second World War. Written in 1946 by a veteran of the unit, it is a nearly contemporaneous account of what remains a largely unknown theater of the war. The account is engaging, frequently entertaining, and is another reminder of “the greatest generation’s” flexibility, grit, and sacrifice in accomplishing a long range, behind enemy lines mission.

Marsmen in Burma is likely not a reader’s first choice when looking for his or her next professional development opportunity.
Except for a few motion pictures ("Merrill's Marauders" and "The Bridge Over the River Kwai"), the ubiquitous Defeat Into Victory by Field Marshal Slim, and perhaps anecdotal knowledge of "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell or the American Volunteer Group (i.e., the Flying Tigers), the activities and events in the CBI remain largely unknown to the layperson.

With an abundance of literature and film devoted to the Pacific and European Theaters of Operation, this book opens a window to another significant American contribution in the war with ripples felt in the Army to this day.

Marsmen in Burma is a unit history of the MARS Task Force and its participation in opening the Burma Road during 1944-1945. Formed on 26 July 1944 as the 5332nd Brigade (Provisional), the MARS Task Force consisted of three units: the 1st Chinese Regiment (Separate), the 124th Cavalry Regiment, and the 475th Infantry Regiment. However the 5332nd could not employ the 1st Chinese Regiment in any tactical operation, so the efforts of the MARS Task Force rested upon the shoulders of the 124th Cavalry Regiment and the 475th Infantry Regiment. Each of these units came to the task force with a unique history and experiences in the war to date.

The 475th Infantry Regiment traced its lineage to the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), code named GALAHAD. More colloquially known as "Merrill's Marauders," the 5307th disbanded on 10 August 1944 about a week after the fall of the Myitkyina airfield, its culminating operation. The remnants of the Marauders, about 200 combat effective soldiers, were supplemented with replacements (the New GALAHAD men), and incorporated into the newly born 475th Infantry Regiment, activated on 5 August 1944. This unit became the nucleus of the MARS Task Force, headquartered at Camp Landis, named for the first Marauder to lose his life in the CBI.

The 124th Cavalry Regiment, a Texas National Guard unit originally organized in March 1929, mobilized for active federal service on 18 November 1940 and spent the next 3 ½ years participating in the Louisiana Maneuvers and patrolling the United States / Mexico border on horseback. In April 1944, when the 124th Cavalry Regiment received orders to prepare for overseas movement, it was the last mounted horse cavalry unit in the U.S. Army. The troopers receipted their horses to the Fort Riley Quartermaster on 10 June 1944 expecting to draw new mounts in theater. Embarking from Los Angeles, the 124th Cavalry Regiment reached India by way of Australia on 26 August, where they discovered that they would no longer be a mounted unit.

Receiving the designation 124th Cavalry Regiment (Special) these troopers reorganized to fight dismounted, and turned in saddles and other cavalry equipment brought from the States.

As a Long-Range Penetration unit, the MARS Task Force mission was to open the Burma Road and lines of supply to China to keep that nation in the fight against Japan. This was a "behind the lines" mission, and the task force carried its equipment on each soldier's back, or that of a mule. The mules necessitated proficient packmasters in each troop, and evening bivouac sites near water, which the task force purified for human consumption through boiling or the use of halizone tablets. Sustainment operations for the MARS Task Force came in the form of aerial resupply that occurred every three days, weather dependent. This operation did not differ significantly from how units conduct it today. The receiving unit selected a suitable drop zone and marked it. Radio communication between ground and air ensured any adjustments necessary. Grain drops for the mules were particularly dangerous. This was a "free drop" and the 50-pound feed bags fell without parachutes.

Randolph organized Marsmen in Burma into three main sections. Part I (The MARS Task Force) covers the history of the units involved in detail, and the formation and training of the Brigade. Part II (Trekking Through Burma) covers the movement from Camp Landis to the vicinity of Namphakka, in which the unit traveled 279 miles in 31 days crossing mountain ranges as high as 7,800 feet above sea level. Part III (Fighting at the Burma Road) addresses the fighting against Japanese resistance in order to open the Burma Road to China, and focuses on the Battle of Loi Kang for the 475th Infantry Regiment and the
Battle of Knight’s Hill for the 124th Cavalry Regiment.

There are two interesting historical features which make Marsmen in Burma worth reading – the story of First Lieutenant Jack Knight (the only Medal of Honor winner in the CBI for ground operations, and member of the Ranger Hall of Fame), and the fact that the units in question still exist today and carry on their respective proud traditions of service.

The 475th Infantry Regiment was the predecessor to today’s 75th Ranger Regiment, whose contemporary history is well known. The distinctive unit insignia for the 75th retains elements of the design of that of the MARS Task Force.

The 124th Cavalry Regiment continues to serve the State of Texas as one of the premier Infantry Brigade Combat Team cavalry squadrons in the United States Army. Every year, on 2 February, troopers from the regiment gather around the state and commemorate the Battle of Knight’s Hill where Jack Knight lost his life while commanding F Troop. His first sergeant was his younger brother Curtis, who received the Silver Star for actions during the same battle.

Marsmen in Burma is a thoroughly engaging read that is much more colorful than the traditional unit history. Yet it retains a realism of troopers and soldiers just going about their duty during wartime. Weather from across the spectrum of both good and bad makes an appearance, along with mud that brought about a unique terrain feature called the Shweli Slide. Ultimately, though, Randolph achieves his aim stated in the forward: “If you must have head-hunting natives mounted on man-eating tigers behind every banyan tree to enjoy a story about Burma, this is not for you... But if you want the thrill of living vicariously the unforgettable, amazing, but true-to-life experiences we had, read our story.”

Marsmen in Burma is not currently in print, but is available by contacting the webmaster of the 124th Cavalry Association at www.marsmen.org. For even more information on the 124th Cavalry Regiment from 1940-1945, the documentary “The Last Horse Soldiers” is available on YouTube.

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Movie Review

"Never Surrender" (DVD) 2016
The Ed Ramsey Story
Executive Producers: Raquel R. Ramsey and Steven C. Barber
Narrator: Josh Brolin
Reviewed by: Trooper Sam Young

Ed Ramsey is one of the U.S. Army’s mostly forgotten dynamic warrior-leaders of World War II. If you have read The Doomed Horse Soldiers of Bataan or The Twilight Riders—stories of the 26th U.S. Cavalry (Philippine Scouts)—then you know he led the last horse-mounted charge of the U.S. Cavalry. Additionally, if you have read Lieutenant Ramsey’s War you know his exploits leading Filipino guerilla forces as they fought against the Japanese occupation forces. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross by General Douglas MacArthur for his actions.

This movie describes how he was molded to be a courageous and take-charge officer in the face of the hell of war. It is his life story, from beginning to end, as told by his family and friends (American, Filipino, and Japanese), schoolmates, fellow soldiers, business associates, and others.

Ramsey, born 9 May 1917 in Carlyle, Illinois, grew up in El Dorado and Wichita, Kansas. He and his older sister, Nadine, were very close. She was ambitious, smart, and wanted to be a pilot. His mother had been a teacher but became a dermatologist and business owner to be able to afford to send her children to college. His father, whom he loved and admired, worked in the oil fields which took him away from home most of the time. Around 1929, when Ed was 12, his father’s mental state began to change, and he suspected his wife of cheating on him which lead to fighting and him pulling a shotgun on her. He was arrested and jailed where he committed suicide.

Ed, without his father to be his role model, had pain and suffering. He became defiant and was close to becoming a juvenile delinquent. He hung out with bootleggers and developed a passion for moonshine and women. By age 16 he was a tough guy, able to take care of himself in a fight, and earning extra money teaching young
men how to foxtrot. He was an expert dancer which attracted girls and women.

Like every loving mother, Ed’s sought a way to channel his development away from the evil temptations that surrounded his life. Knowing Ed loved horses, she enrolled him in the Oklahoma Military Academy (OMA) which had Cavalry and through which he could develop his character foundation and his love of horses. Per Ed, he “snapped it up in a hurry.” The military discipline at OMA gave Ed the opportunity to be someone. He learned he was a natural leader, as he was not controlling, could handle any situation, and that people looked up to him for direction. And, he got to ride horses! Ed discovered polo and that it fit his character. Polo is fast, furious, aggressive, dangerous, risky, and exciting. It required teamwork between the horse and rider while developing a special bond between the horse and rider. He became an expert polo player. And he learned that as a cavalryman his horse was his “battle buddy.” When he graduated from OMA he was commissioned a second lieutenant of Cavalry in the Army Reserve.

Ed’s leadership in combat was nothing but amazing. After the war he pursued a career in civilian industry where his leadership was again displayed.. He was compassionate and forgiving. He demonstrated his compassion for the Filipino soldiers who served alongside U.S. soldiers during the war by persistently and successfully fighting for them to receive their promised benefits from the U.S. Government. His success in the business world was international and reflected his forgiveness as his career included living with his family and working in Japan for five years where he made many friends among the Japanese people which demonstrated his forgiving characteristic. And, he was the father to his children that he did not experience himself.

I could go further about Ed’s life, but I will leave it for you to see the movie from which I believe you will be equally amazed at the life of this man. I recommend “Never Surrender” as it covers the life of a remarkable man.

[Ed. The “Never Surrender” DVD is available from USCA for $19.95 + shipping. Please call 405-422-6330 to order.]

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**Editor’s Notes**

By Trooper Sam Young

With this issue you are receiving a “mixed bag” of topics, which has made it fun and educational for me and hopefully for you. This issue completes my second year as editor of The Cavalry Journal. I pray for at least triple that many more years as its editor.

I continue to seek stories and book reviews for future Journals. Thanks to all of you who have sent potential articles! I would also like to receive pictures to help “complete the story.” And I am still looking for “letters to the Editor.”

Please send your letters and articles to me at journaleditor@uscavalry.org or to my home address: Samuel Young, 712 Englewood Street, Lansing, KS 66043. I can also be reached at 913-702-4880.

One of the challenges facing this editor is identifying pictures to publish with articles—for example, the picture of the mounted bugler on page 4 of the March 2017 Cavalry Journal. The source identified it as a 1st Cavalry Division bugler at Fort Bliss. Most of the time the same picture has no identification. Recently I found it identified as a 10th Cavalry bugler at Fort Riley, which I believe is correct as, with a clearer picture, the bugler and trooper appear to be Buffalo Soldiers.
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“When we go into battle, I will be the first one to set foot on the field, and I will be the last to step off. And I will leave no one behind. Dead or alive, we will come home together. So help me God.” LtCol Hal Moore, Commander, 1st Battalion 7th Cavalry Regiment, Vietnam, 1965, Battle of Ia Drang

Lieutenant General Hal Moore
February 13, 1922 – February 10, 2017

Distinguished Service Cross