Raid Through West Virginia Mountains

Although Confederate Major General Thomas L. Rosser, commanding Confederate cavalry in the Shenandoah Valley, had been defeated along with the rest of General Jubal Early’s command in the Valley during 1864, he made two successful raids into West Virginia before returning to the Petersburg defensive lines. This is one trooper’s 1894 memoir of one of the raids, printed in “The Confederate Veteran” magazine.

It was known that the Federals situated at Beverly, West Va., could easily be captured if taken by surprise, and General Rosser, encamped at Swoope’s depot, undertook it. His brigade was composed of the 7th, 11th and 12th cavalry regiments, and also White’s Battalion, known formerly as Turner Ashby’s Cavalry. Rosser was appointed Commander after the battle at Gettysburg. He ordered an inspection of all our horses, and finding there were not enough able horses in our brigade, he sent to other commands for volunteers. Some North Carolinians, and maybe some South Carolinians, joined us until we were 300 strong. Our camp was twelve miles from Stanton [sic], in Augusta County. On the 12th of January, ’65, we took up our march going westward. The snow was six inches deep on the start, and we camped at the head of “Cowpasture valley” the first night. On the 12th we continued westward, through the mountains. That night, we camped at McDowell [sic], in Highland Country, on ground where Stonewall Jackson fought in ’62. The 14th being Sunday, we remained in camp. That evening, while on dress parade, Gen. Rosser made a speech, explaining what he wished us to do and that we might have all the spoils. Monday morning we passed through Monterey, and on to the small village of Hightown, where each man filled his surcingle with hay. That night we camped on the east side of the Alleghenies. Oh! How it did rain and freeze! We had trouble getting three fires started, but with hay for pine and split rails for kindling, we succeeded. We had a ration of flour but no cooking utensils, but overcame that by spreading out gum blankets and pouring on the flour, the rain being sufficient to make dough, then taking the dough and pressing it on a fence rail before the fire to bake, with broad rails to cover it to keep off the rain. We enjoyed the supper. We then stretched out before the fire for the night.

The following morning was clear and bright, but a cold wind was blowing. We arrived on top of the Allegheny Mountains after hard travel, but found it more difficult to descend, as the snow was deeper and had melted in places and
frozen into great sheets of ice. After descending the Alleghenies and arriving at Cheat Mountain, we halted and fed our horses. The snow here was two feet and a half deep, and we met with the same difficulty in descending it as the Alleghenies. Arriving at the foot, we still had Tiger Mountain to cross. When on top of that and in descending it, the hardest hail storm I ever saw came pelting down upon us. Our horses stopped and turned around, causing a complete stand-still for some Minutes. When in the little valley, we stopped at a farm house close to the roadside and fed our horses. It was now between sundown and dark, and as soon as our horses had eaten we resumed our march, although we had nothing to eat. Before reaching Beverly, we left the public road and traveled by paths, and were so strung out that our line was perhaps a mile long. Finally, coming to an open space, we were halted until all the command came up, when we again moved in order to within a short distance of the Federal camp. Their houses were of logs and in rows, with narrow alleys between. It was now about 5 o’clock in the morning. We dismounted and tied our horses --- no number fours were allowed. We fell in line on foot, the command being whispered along the line. When within fifty yards of the south end of their quarters, and when sufficient men had passed the last row of houses, making the number about equal for each alley, the command was given in loud tones, “left flank, charge!”

One Hundred Miles from Staunton to Beverly

The yell that we instantly set up echoed from mountain to mountain in the still, dark night, and made the Yankees think that five thousand Johnnies were at their doors. In less than twenty-five minutes, they were our prisoners, and they numbered five hundred and ten. Now came the feast sure enough and we had plenty to eat and plenty to drink. After our hunger was satisfied, we found that there were five stores in Beverly belonging to the Federals, and we opened store for a while. We sold hats, caps, boots, shoes and clothing at a “very low profit.” That forenoon we moved the prisoners on about two miles west of Beverly, and remained there the rest of that day and night. On the 18th we started for home, but returned by a different route, and camped one night at Warm Springs, in Bath County. When we arrived at our own camp with our prisoners, we turned them over to that part of the command that are left in camp, for we were nearly worn out.
On January 15, General Robert E. Lee submitted a report to Secretary of War James A Seddon stating, “General Early reports that Rosser, at the head of 300 men, surprised and captured the garrison at Beverly, Randolph County, on the 11th instant, killing and wounding a considerable number and taking 580 prisoners. His loss slight. R. E. Lee”

From our BioCav Files:
Guy V. Henry, Jr.

Born January, 28th, 1875 at Fort Robinson, Nebraska, Guy Vernor Henry, Jr. would become a well known and respected member of the U.S. Cavalry. Henry’s career would go on to span multiple wars and achievements such as the head of the Cavalry and becoming an Olympic medalist.

The military was a great influence on him early in his life. Both his father, Guy Vernor Henry, and grandfather, William Seaton Henry, attended West Point. Henry followed in both of their footsteps and graduated from West Point in 1898. Following his graduation from West Point Henry served in the Philippines as a Major of U.S. Volunteers during the Spanish American War. Henry received the Silver Star during his service in the Philippines. In 1903 Guy V. Henry, Jr. helped to establish the Mounted Service School which would later become more famously known as the Cavalry School.

Shortly after helping to establish the Mounted Service School, Henry attended the French Cavalry School at Saumar from 1906 to 1907. The lessons learned with the French Cavalry would go toward his method of teaching new riders. In 1911 Henry was given a unique opportunity to lead a team for competition for the 1912 Olympic Games that were being held in Stockholm, Sweden. As preparation for the Olympics Henry’s team participated in the 1911 Olympia International Show in London in order to test the waters for the American team and to get a better understanding of how the European rules worked and how the European teams competed.
The following passage taken from Henry’s autobiography, “The Guy V. Henry, Jr. Papers” gives a glimpse into the ordeal of traveling to the 1912 Olympics. “This ship was chartered by the Olympic Committee, and all American participants in the Games were aboard her. This made the trip interesting, as training continued throughout, each sport doing its best to keep participants in good physical condition. The track and field men exercised around the deck; the bicyclists, on stationary bicycles with brakes on them; the swimmers, in canvas tanks with belts whereby the coach could put proper resistance against the swimmer; the shooters, at targets on the stern of the ship. We exercised our horses by leading them for about an hour, twice a day, on a small track around one of the hatches. The horses got stale and sick of being led around this small track. My horse, Chiswell, showed his resentment one day by just touching Lt. Graham’s nose with a full length kick. A fraction of an inch more, and it would have been a dead Lt. Graham. As it was, he simply suffered a broken nose. When the grooms became seasick, the officers and some of the wives, including Mrs. Henry, had to assist in caring for the horses and in their daily exercise. The trip lasted about fifteen days.”

Henry and two members of his team (John Montgomery and Benjamin Lear) took the bronze medal in the 1912 Olympic Games in the Three Day Event. This event is split into a three day competition where horse and rider must compete together for every event. The first day is a dressage test, the second is a steeplechase and cross country race and the third day is a jumping competition. Following his Olympic success Henry would later become an equestrian judge at two more Olympic Games.

The years following the Olympics found Henry instructing new cadets at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point from 1916-1918. In the following years Henry returned to the Midwest where he served as Assistant Commandant at the Cavalry School from 1923-1924. He spent several years in the Philippines from 1924-1927. Henry became Chief of the Cavalry in 1930 and held the position until 1934. By this point in his career he had attained the rank of Brigadier General. He then returned to the Cavalry School once more in his career to serve as the commandant from 1935 until his retirement in 1939. Henry retired with the rank of Major General.

After a remarkable career with the U.S. Cavalry, Guy V. Henry, Jr. passed away on November 29th, 1967. He was buried in Arlington National Cemetery next to his wife Mary Ingraham Rogers Henry who also passed away in 1967.

South of the Border

By Lieutenant Roy W. Cole, Jr., Cavalry
Reprinted from the Cavalry Journal March-April 1940

In 1914, When General Pershing marched his columns into Mexico to put an end to Villas’ riding, the story of events may have brought to mind another punitive expedition south of the border many years ago. Today, with our cavalry largely concentrated along the Rio Grande for training purposes, dust clouds from many hoofs once more dim
southwestern skies. Concentrations in 1873 were for more serious matters, and among the most interesting to a cavalryman was that of the 4th U.S. Cavalry at Fort Clark, Texas, which was followed by its historic raid to Rey Molino, Mexico.

For many years prior to the raid, the 4th Cavalry had been almost constantly in the field. In fact, the Indian campaigns of the regiment against the Comanches and Kiowas played an important part in the opening of the South Plains to settlement. It was equipped with the latest and most efficient weapons and accoutrements available. The rigid discipline and high morale of the regiment was equalled by the excellence of its personnel. These men, largely recruited from veterans of the Civil War, gave ample evidence of their high degree of experience and training. On War Department records of the day, the 4th Cavalry was rated as the best regiment in the mounted service, a reputation largely won for it by its commander, Colonel Ranald Slidell Mackenzie.

Like so many of his contemporaries, Mackenzie was a seasoned professional soldier. “Graduating from West Point as he did,” writes General Grant, “during the second year of the war, he won his way up to the command of a corps before its close. This he did by his own ability and without influence. I regarded Mackenzie as the most promising young officer in the Army.” He was brevetted for gallantry in action through every grade from second lieutenant to major general, being appointed a Corps commander at the age of twenty-four! His reputation for absolute fearlessness swift decision, and for a just, stern though impartial discipline made him a truly great cavalry leader whose career is worthy of study. After Appomattox, Mackenzie reverted to his rank of colonel in the Regular Army, and in 1869, when twenty-nine years old, was given the command of the 4th Cavalry.

Under his forceful leadership, the regiment’s established reputation was enhanced. Whenever murder, fire and thievery struck the frontier, there marched Mackenzie’s columns in swift, inexorable pursuit and ultimate punishment.

April 1, 1873, wearied by a difficult month’s march from Fort Richardson, Texas, the regiment had just arrived at Fort Clark to take over the post from the 9th Cavalry. For eleven pleasant days the troopers and their jaded mounts rested. When the Secretary of War, General Belknap, and General Sheridan arrived for the yearly inspection of the regiment, all had recuperated enough to be in condition for any enterprise—even for such a desperate undertaking as was, unbeknown to them, in store.
Prior to this time and for several months before the regiment received orders to relieve the 9th Cavalry on the Rio Grande, the Indians and Mexicans had been raiding across the river in ever-increasing bands. Ranchmen and homesteaders alike lost their all to the marauding invaders who crossed the international boundary into Texas with seeming impunity. The settlers, incensed by the depredations, did their utmost to persuade General Merritt, commanding the 9th Cavalry, to stop the outrages. Also, they were endeavoring, by means of a joint commission of representatives of the Mexican Government, to collect damages for the loss of their homes and livestock. The situation was already critical, and the inactivity of General Merritt coupled with the apparent lack of success of the negotiations served to heap fuel on the fire. Therefore, as had been the case for years and was so to be until his retirement in 1884 (physical disability resulting from his arduous life and the effects of his eight wounds), Mackenzie was the man for the task.

At Fort Clark, after the usual compliments and inspections were completed, a mysterious conference was held by the Secretary of War, General Sheridan, and Colonel Mackenzie. According to Lieutenant Robert G. Carter, the Regimental Adjutant of the regiment in whom Mackenzie confided the details of the meeting, General Sheridan came to the point in his customary abrupt manner without further ceremony.

“Mackenzie, you have been ordered down here to relieve Merritt and the 9th because I want something done to stop these conditions of banditry that exist across the river. You can accomplish this in your own manner, but I want you to get the situation under control and then to keep it that way. Only remember this, when you do start to act, let it be a campaign of complete destruction. I believe you understand what I mean.”

Mackenzie thought a moment then said, “General Sheridan, under whose orders and upon what authority will I be acting?”

Reading between the general’s excited words, he realized that such an expedition as General Sheridan obviously wanted would necessitate his taking his whole command into Mexico. Permission for such an undertaking, though implied, had not been definitely granted.

Pounding on the table, and gesticulating in his most decisive manner, Sheridan roared, “Damn the orders, damn the authority! Go ahead on your own initiative and on your own plan, and your authority shall be General Grant and myself. With us behind you in whatever you do to clean up this mess, you can rest assured of the fullest support. You must assume the risk, and we will assume the responsibility, should any result!”

Here indeed was a peculiar situation, and a less forceful man than Mackenzie might well have had his misgivings. The armed invasion of a friendly country was an event whose political consequences, quite possibly, might mean the end of his military career. However, with President Grant giving the expedition his unofficial blessings, the possible results to be obtained were worth the risk involved—providing the outcome was successful!

Prior to leaving Fort Clark, General Sheridan once more impressed on Mackenzie the necessity for the complete and unmitigated success of any
undertaking, and preparations were initiated with the greatest care.

In his own mind, Mackenzie had long ago decided that to accomplish the desired result, the destruction of the Indian villages along the Rey Molino Creek in Mexico must be his objective. Characteristic thoroughness marked all the preliminary work. Scouts were sent to Howard’s Well, the scene of the latest attacks, and the broad trail of the stolen cattle heard was followed to the suspected camps, fifty-eight miles over the border. These camps, all in a close area, were inhabited by bands of Kickapoos, Pottawattomies, and Mescalero and Lipan Apaches who had taken refuge in Mexico and were using the security of their position as a base for raids into Texas.

The terrain between Fort Clark and the Indian settlement southwest of the post was an uninhabited, almost waterless waste of mountains and desert. On the rough maps of the day, it was called the “Terreno Diconocido,” and no trails or routes through it were definitely known. Yet to the man who led the first large body of troops across the trackless wastes of the Llano Estacado, this was a small obstacle. A thorough reconnaissance was made by the enlisted scouts and by certain of the settlers. Great care was taken to have this work done in such a manner as not to arouse the suspicions of the Mexicans in the vicinity, as it was believed that they would convey their knowledge to certain of their compatriots affiliated with the Indians in the disposal of their loot. All information possible was secured which might aid in the success of the expedition. In brief, as a result of these reconnaissance agencies, Mackenzie planned to make a forced, night march to the main Indian settlement, attack at dawn, destroy the village completely, and march directly back to the United States before any Mexican forces could gather and provoke a clash. Secrecy was of the utmost importance, as once the Indians suspected such an unprecedented invasion, they would scatter to the mountains and nullify any attempt to end decisively their outrages.

Before crossing the border, the object of the expedition was known but to Colonel Mackenzie and to his adjutant, and every effort was made to maintain that secrecy. Supplies of food and ammunition were requisitioned in small quantities and stored against the day of departure, horses were shod, and the saddlery and pack equipment adjusted with the greatest care. To allay suspicions, the several troops of the regiment were sent to their grazing grounds along Turkey Creek and Piedras Pintos for the ostensible purpose of recuperating the horses. Once in their camps, the men were subjected to a rigorous training schedule in which their musketry, mounted and dismounted formation, and their general field technique were reviewed and perfected. Much to the amazement of all, sabers were ground to a razor edge. As the regiment, according to Captain Carter, had never burdened itself with that weapon in an ordinary Indian campaign, this act was the cause of much speculation among officers and men.

The morale of the regiment was at its highest, although the suspense and curiosity of all concerned had become almost unbearable, when at two o’clock on the morning of May 17, 1873, Mackenzie issued orders for the scattered troops to assemble at a designated point of the Las Moras. By two o’clock in the afternoon of the same day, the entire column, which consisted
of six troops (“A”, “B”, “C”, “E”, “I”, “M”) of the Fourth Cavalry plus a detachment of Seminole Indian scouts commanded by Lieutenant John L. Bullis, some four hundred men in all, marched along the Las Moras to its Junction with the Rio Grande where the expedition was to cross the river. Just before dark, a halt was made and Mackenzie assembled his command to explain the objects of the raid, its probable results, and the risks to be undergone incident to the invasion of Mexican soil. Capture might well mean the unlucky trooper’s being shot against a wall if the Mexican troops caught him, and infinitely worse if the Indians were the captors.

Nothing was said about the authority (or better, the lack of it!) on which the expedition was being conducted. All officers of the command believed implicitly that Mackenzie was acting under the direction of the Secretary of War as his conference with him had left that impression. Mackenzie himself believed that he would be court-martialed for what might prove to be a too free interpretation of General Sheridan’s suggestion. Yet feeling certain that General Grant would sustain him, he was willing to assume the risk. Years later, when questioned upon the legality of the matter and the possibility of any man refusing to obey his command to cross onto Mexican soil, he replied, “Any officer or man who refused to follow me across the river, I would have shot!” Mackenzie’s father had hanged the son of the Secretary of the Navy for mutiny on his ship, and there is small reason to believe that the son was any less resolute than the father. Suffice to say, that at eight-thirty in the evening of May 17th, the regiment to a man followed its intrepid leader across the Rio Grande.

The careful reconnaissance and planning that Mackenzie had made now proved its worth. Led by scouts who had been familiarizing themselves with the terrain for the past month, the column began its fifty-eight mile march to the Indian encampment. It was essential that the regiment be in position to attack at dawn, so no time was wasted once the column had forded the river.

The night was warm and balmy, and a moon half obscured by haze and an ever-rising cloud of dust, dimly lighted the rolling desert. Under the best conditions a night march is a difficult matter, yet over rough trails and across completely unknown country, such an undertaking assumed tremendous proportions. The ignorance of the troopers of the terrain was such that as far as the rate of march was concerned, march discipline was more of an expression than an actuality. The gait was constantly changing from a fast walk, to a slow trot, to a “pushing trot” and often a slow gallop. The heavy dust so laid upon the column that it was with the greatest difficulty that the rear units could be kept closed up. Every arroya or bend of the trail would string the column out, resulting in a mad gallop later to maintain contact with the preceding unit. Nobody seemed to want to be left behind.

About midnight, it was realized that the pack train with its rations could not maintain the killing pace. Two alternatives presented themselves—to let the mule train attempt to follow the column under the protection of a small detachment, or to cut the heavy loads loose and thus enable the lightened animals to keep up with the column. The mule train alone would prove to be
an easy prey to any roving band of brigands who might discover it, so it was decided to put the men on short rations and to cut the loads. After some delay, occasioned by the men filling their pockets with food, this was accomplished, and the column hurried on into the desert.

The desire for sleep soon became almost overpowering to the weary troopers. Conversation had long since ceased, and only the thud of hoofs and the clanking of accoutrements, punctuated by an infrequent curse, broke the stillness of the seemingly endless night.

Sunrise found the grim column still some few miles from its objective. The delay caused by the pack train added to the difficulties of the march over the unknown country had proved to be the unpredictable element which tempers all operations of war. Yet the high morale of the entire force, brought to peak by the knowledge that the enemy was close by and coupled with relief that the long night was over, prompted suggestions that the raiders push on at a gallop! This Colonel Mackenzie refused to do, as he dared not arrive at the scene of battle with his horses exhausted when the very life of his command depended upon its continued mobility. Neither did he know the exact location of the enemy camp.

At four-thirty, the dry creekbed of the Rey Molino’ crossed the trail, and while the regiment halted and prepared for battle, Colonel Mackenzie made a brief reconnaissance. From his vantage point in the edge of the chaparral, he could see the outlines of the Indian encampments, nearly a mile distant. The intervening terrain was ideal, being a broad open plain, thinly covered with prickly pear bushes and sloping gently into the camps. A mounted attack was clearly indicated, and orders were given to “cut out” the pack animals and for the regiment to tighten cinchas. All extra ammunition was issued to the troopers who carried it in the pockets of their blouses instead of in their saddlebags according to the usual custom (had General Custer followed this example, it would have saved him considerable embarrassment on the Little Big Horn some years later when the Sioux captured all his led horses with the extra ammunition safely packed in the saddlebags!).

On Mackenzie’s signal, the regiment debouched from the chaparral in column of troops and advanced down the slope at a rapid trot. The formation of the attack was the charge in column of platoons at one hundred yards with platoons “as foragers.” The leading platoon was to deliver its fire by volley as it reached the village, then wheeling to the right, charge back up the village again. Each succeeding platoon, save those designated to pursue and saber the scattering enemy, was to do likewise, wheeling alternately by platoons to the left and right, and, riding through the village in reverse, rejoin the tail of the column and continue the attack.

Like most surprise attacks against an unprepared enemy, the charge was a complete success. Save for isolated groups who fought fiercely in defense of their families, as the troops came in one end of the village, the hostiles went out the other. Some twenty-five were killed and the village fired. Because of the lateness of the hour, a large number of the warriors had already left the village on their daily
hunting trips, so the troops met with less resistance than had been expected. Two hundred horses were rounded up, together with fifty women and children to be held as hostages to induce the Indians to return to their reservations in Texas where they could be kept under proper surveillance.

Rejecting all suggestions to push on and destroy other camps in the vicinity or to separate his command to pursue the scattered hostile groups, Mackenzie gave orders to assemble and water. The wounded were cared for, horse litters constructed, and captured ponies assigned to the prisoners to ride. At one o’clock on the afternoon of the 18th of May, under a burning sun, the retrograde movement across the river began.

The trail of the raiding cavalry had long since been discovered, and the news of the raid communicated by swift riding charros from Piedras Niegras to the upper fords of the Rio Grande. Mackenzie’s most disturbing thoughts were given form when it was learned while passing through the Mexican village of Rey Molino that volunteers were gathering up to intercept the march. Worst of all, the intense heat coupled with the exertions of the past twenty-four hours had rendered the condition of the men and horses an extremely precarious one. Only the muddy water holes left by the recent rains made it possible to continue. Small wonder then, that there existed a decided undercurrent of anxiety as the weary command faced the prospects of another night march.

Fearing an ambush at every twist of the interminable trail, the regiment pushed on, advance guards and selected scouts leading the way, Seminoles on the flanks, while the sullen prisoners under heavy guard brought up the rear. A large portion of the men had not slept for three nights, and the task of the officers and file-closers became increasingly difficult as the night wore on. Towards dawn, troopers and prisoners alike began to fall off their horses, and had to be lashed into their saddles in order to keep the column moving. The nerves of all were worn raw from the exertion, the long night, and the danger of a surprise attack. Colonel Mackenzie rode up and down the length of his column exhorting the men to keep their spirits up, and by his unflagging energy and determination, made his men march when all might well have fallen by the roadside. It was a long, long night and only the spirit of a fine regiment made the ordeal bearable.

Morning came, and with it the welcome sight of the turbulent Rio Grande. One can but imagine the emotions the weary troopers experienced as they set foot on American soil.

Camp was pitched at once on the Texas bank close by the river, and the saddles were stripped from the jaded animals for the first time in forty-nine hours! The Regimental Trains as previously arranged, were awaiting with plenty of rations and forage for men and mounts, yet few indeed bothered with food. Sleep was their crying need, and even the appearance of a large and threatening band of Mexicans and Indians of the far bank of the river did not disturb their rest. Outguards protecting the bivouac invited the rabble to come across the river, yet none heeded the invitation.

Summing up, the 4th Cavalry covered one hundred and sixty miles in just thirty-two marching hours. In addition to this splendid record, they fought a battle, destroyed a hostile camp that had been a menace to the settlers for
years, recovered a large number of stolen animals, and brought back fifty hostages which eventually led to the Indians returning to their reservations in the United States. The concentration for the raid started at 2:30 pm, May 17th, and at four in the morning of the 19th, the troops were back on Texas soil. The governor of the state convened the legislature in special session which voted the “grateful thanks of the people of Texas for the gallant conduct of Colonel Mackenzie and the 4th U.S. Cavalry.” General Grant telegraphed his hearty congratulations, and all fears about the legality of the proceedings were forgotten, “Nothing succeeds like success.”

“Airman marches, low-crawls and sweats her way into history: Part one

By

Staff Sgt. Michael Longoria

From Department of Defense
Courtesy of DVIDS

BAGHDAD - A Brooklyn, N.Y., native was the first female airman to ever complete the U.S. Army’s 18-hour Spur Ride.

Senior Airman Courtney Beard joined the “Order of the Spur” after completing a series of physical and mental tests held by the III Corps, Task Force Phantom, on Victory Base Complex, Iraq.

“There were countless people who dropped out but I made it through all 18 hours,” said Beard, an intelligence analyst with the 467th Expeditionary Intelligence Squadron here. “This is an accomplishment that I will remember for many years to come.”

The “Order of the Spur” is a Cavalry tradition within the Army but the order is open to any Service member that serves with U.S. Cavalry units. Upon successful completion of the Spur Ride, new spur holders are welcomed with a formal induction ceremony.

In addition to the Spur Ride certificate, Airmen Beard was also presented a III Corps belt buckle by U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Timothy P. Livengood, III Corps Special Troops Battalion.

“Airmen Beard embodied the warrior spirit and displayed the drive and desire to not only push her teammates but also had the resolve to continue at a point where she believed she had no more to give herself,” said 1st Sgt. Brian McCutcheon, United States Forces - Iraq, A Company first sergeant.

Beard explained the hardest part was staying motivated until the end and nothing about the Spur Ride was easy.

“I will not look back on this experience now that it is done and have the guts to call any of it easy because it absolutely was not,” she said. “I took each thing one at a time. I made sure to stay in the moment and not concentrate on how many hours were left.”

Beard’s hard work and dedication to completing a task come as no surprise to her current supervisor.

“She showed that the Air Force is well beyond the days of just riding a
bike and that we are training just like our brother and sister services,” said Tech. Sgt. Natasha Carman, Full Motion Video Operations NCO in charge for United States Forces - Iraq’s Collection, Management and Dissemination team. “Airman Beard dominated the Spur Ride, representing the Air Force well and proving that we are fit-to-fight.”

It all began… Shortly after her arrival on Camp Slayer from McGuire Air Force Base, N.J., Beard was sightseeing around the base with a few of her co-workers.

As they drove past the Flintstone Palace, she noticed a group of soldiers marching with rucksacks on their backs. They were in the midst of a Spur Ride and it grabbed the young airman’s attention. She instantly made it a goal of hers and announced it to everyone in the vehicle.

“I’m going to do the Spur Ride before I leave Iraq,” Beard said.

Her statement was met with laughter and disbelief. Comments like ‘that’s why you’re in the Air Force’ and ‘you’re going to spend your days sitting at a desk instead’ were made but fell on deaf ears because Beard had already made her decision.

“They surely didn’t stop me from doing what my stubborn mind had already set its self to do,” she said. “I am definitely the type of person that sets her mind on accomplishing a goal and doesn’t stop until that goal is 100 percent complete.”

Her thoughts quickly switched to how she would prepare for the Spur Ride. Vigorous exercise? Marching?

“I thought of various ways to prepare but, the answer was, there is no way to truly prepare for something like the Spur Ride,” Beard said.

Not much time had gone by before her chance to tackle this daunting task was knocking at her doorstep.

Beard spent the day and night before stressing out about the big day. She double and triple checked all of her gear to make sure she had everything. She even laid out her uniform, glasses and breakfast, consisting of Gatorade, power bar and banana.

“I was nervous beyond belief, but it felt comforting to have complete control of at least the beginning portion of the Spur Ride,” she said.

Editor’s Note: This is part one of a three part series about Beard and her Spur Ride experience.

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**The Horse in the Recent War**

*By Captain Eric Hardy*

*From Armored Cavalry Journal July-August 1947*

Improvised U.S. Cavalry passing through an Italian town.

In one of his interesting articles in “The Horse” just before the end of the war, Lieutenant Colonel Engel, writing upon balance and the rider, noted that it
was a great disappointment to those Army officers who had spent their whole life in the study of the horse to find that the U.S. high command had no use for cavalry in this great war. That in essence is true, but it should not be overlooked that despite the growing habit of calling the recent war a mechanical war, as if it were won by tanks and atom bombs alone, the history of the war from its early stages in 1939 to the culmination in 1945 saw very wide and considerable use of the war horse, and not all this was the work of the Russian cavalry. I came home from the war to find many civilians astonished to hear that even camels pulled the Russian guns during the defense of Sevastopol, that reindeer pulled the ammunition and ambulance sledges for the Finnish and Russian armies during the siege of Murmansk, that oxen pulled the heavy infantry transport of the French Army, and an official Allied Elephant Force operated against the Japs (who had such a force of their own) in the Burmese jungles. Horses ended up still the most practical and economic method of scouting, holding, and patrolling mountainous country in the wilder less civilized parts of the theaters of campaign.

On maneuvers it is very easy for military authorities to show the advantages of the fast reconnaissance tank, the jeep and the armored car over the cavalry horse, and of the light or heavy truck over the horse transport for the infantry platoon. But in the wild hills whence battle often races before engineers have time to construct roads or railways unwanted in peacetime-as the German sweep toward the Caucasus before their defeat at Stalingrad saved the Near East-you just have not got mechanical transport ad lib, and all you can commandeer from the local population are a few chromium-plated taxicabs which are little use off the hard road. Is every war to be fought in the vicinity of industrial towns with their plants to produce the vehicles? Horses can be gathered quickly in most countries; mechanical vehicles in large amounts in very few. The mechanical strength that won the British battle of Alamein was the result of a long and anxious “build-up” by the immense sea route around the Cape of Good Hope. The broad, flat desert of North Africa gave the tanks room to maneuver: the high hills of many parts of the world – northwest India, Syria, north Italy, the Balkans, the Rockies- are full of death traps to armored vehicles travelling along narrow, winding ravines, unable to assail the steep precipitous hills in the hands of the enemy.

The highly mechanized German Army was as realistic and thorough as most German things: it conserved its most vital powers. It used a million horses for its Infantry transport-each German Infantry Platoon was equipped with on horse-drawn wagon for supplies, compared with the British infantry platoon’s 15 cwt. Ford or Morris truck. Truly in the retreat after the Ardennes push, those German infantry horses had a grueling time, and most of their drivers were compelled to trudge to the river beds in the snow-covered country left by the blizzard, and flog their horses and wagons knee-deep through icy water, for the rocky stream bed was then the only firm ground in the country. Their mechanical transport was bogged down. Earlier, in their invasion of Poland in 1939, the Germans used 200,000 horses to follow the armored spearheads. In those long supply lines to the German Armies battling with futile effort in
Russia, peasant transport horses from all over Central Europe toiled, died, to be torn ravenously asunder by the starving slave workers and the suppressed nations, for meat. At the fall of Paris the victorious German troops rode in on horseback.

What of the riding horse? British yeomanry mounted cavalry served in Palestine in the early part of the war, for the Palestine Police Force mounted division had long found the horse patrol the most successful method of covering the great, lonely mountain ranges of central Palestine. The Syrian campaign against the Vichy French, who were permitting German planes to use their airfields, was conducted with a large number of mounted cavalry on both sides. French cavalry are very tough, and although they fought against us in Syria, they fought against the Germans in North Africa with their fast riding Spahis. Arab cavalry from Transjordan also took part in the Syrian campaign. Cavalry patrolled the haunts of pro-Nazi tribes along the Afghan frontier of India. Japanese officers appeared in Malaya in the early Japanese push after Pearl Harbor mounted on small, wiry Oriental horses, for the Japanese invading infantry platoon travelled light and had no room for mechanical spares and petrol for mechanical forces. And the horse is the only transport I know that will travel light, feeding off the local land.

It will be remembered that one of the war trophies of the Allies was Rommel’s white Arab stallion, which British troops captured at the German remount depot in Schleswig Holstein. It was the horse procured specially for Rommel to ride into Cairo, only the battle of El Alamein changed those plans. It was a fast little white eight-year-old horse.

The main use of mounted horses in the war, by the Russians and the United Nations, was as scouts, on the Eastern European front for infiltration, in the mountains where low gear motor transport was slow or impossible, and in winter when mechanical transport bogged down too quickly in mud or snow. In the mud of the campaign in the mountains of North Italy the mule proved itself over and over again at an advantage over mechanical transport. Mule transport again had its value in the jungles of Burma, where only native tracks existed, and not even a jeep could negotiate many of these in dry weather, let alone in the monsoon. So the Royal Indian Army Service Corps had its special mule training regiment, often with imported Argentine mules, which were trained for the Burma campaign by leading them down a slippery slide, and then water was poured over this to make the foothold more precarious, and when used to that they negotiated it with a pack. They were trained to the ordeals of dive-bombing by merely standing under the typical fair ground swinging model airplane-roundabout, which circled and swooped harmlessly over their heads until they gained confidence.

Here is an actual battle report, in summary, of a task accomplished by General Kirichenko’s Kuban Cossack cavalry corps, in a combined operation with General Tanaschishin’s tanks against the southern German Army Group, effecting a successful breakthrough. There were three phases to this operation. First, the cavalry were moved up to a position behind the infantry who were making assault. Immediately following the assault, they were hurled into the breach. Their final
phase was the traditional “operation in depth into the enemy’s lines.

Security necessitated utmost precaution against enemy reconnaissance and intelligence guessing their first phase; so the divisions moved up in secret and fanned out in widespread fingers that would not close to their attacking point until contact with the enemy and their presence became known. So all day long the cavalry hid their horses in the fields of tall maize that stood ripe upon the rolling steppes, while the infantry fought to clear a way for them. German reconnaissance planes actually flew over the fields without detecting the Cossacks standing holding the heads of their horses to avoid the animals taking fright, or neighing, or attracting attention. The blue-capped Cossacks were reported to have thrust their caps into the animals’ mouths to prevent their whinnying with alarm as the German planes circled over the steppes and swooped low over the fields. They kept their horses like that until sundown, when the infantry began to break through.

At zero hour German intelligence was still ignorant of the presence of the cavalry, so the first reconnaissance was given to a tank unit under Captain Novikov. Colonel Karapetyan commanded the leading cavalry regiment in advance through a narrow gap specially laid in the Russian artillery fire. Captain Kuznetsov led the first Cossack squadron in light battle order – no cloaks, hoods or tunics. They went right through the gap without detection by the Germans, who were listening for tanks in the night! When the first German-held village was reached, the Russian tank captain merely lined up his tanks, “revved” up their engines, and the roar gave the German troops such an impression of a force of tanks advancing against them that uncontrolled fire broke out. Thereupon in the confusion, the Cossack cavalry dismounted, approached silently and took the village by the first assault.

In that night advance the Cossacks penetrated 22 miles into the enemy lines – because horse transport at night is silent and unseen. The Cavalry corps followed. Ever since the summer campaign of 1943 Soviet cavalry commanders had become past masters in the art of maneuvering for encirclements by flanking drives. That was the plan followed in this instance. “Encircle, divide, destroy” – how old the theory, how modern its usage! The three Cossack cavalry divisions were given the relative tasks to chase, to destroy and to complete the annihilation. So soon as Captain Tutarinov’s division, which had the first task, cut this lane through the German force, Russian cavalry and tanks straddled the road, enemy communications were disrupted, and every German unit for sixty miles around was left to do what every German unit is most loath to do – act on its own devices. Having got their fuel, ammunition and dumps, the Russians had the German fighting units by their throats. The Cossacks had the task of

Soviet tank and cavalry forces 1943
attacking the flanks and the rear of the enemy in this battle, and in the first phase they cut off and destroyed the bases of three German infantry divisions and one tank division.

From an animal lover’s point of view, however, one hopes that, firstly, there will be no other war, and, secondly, if human nature fails again, then the horse will be exposed to as little danger and suffering as possible. The recent war was at least some improvement upon the wretched position in the First World War when 5,000 horses an hour were being killed in the battle of the Somme.

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**Famous Cavalry Mounts:**

**Baldy**

*From The Famous Cavalry Horses Files*

Baldy, who carried General George G. Meade in many battles of the Civil War from September, 1861, until the spring of 1864, most certainly won his right to the hall of fame through a remarkable war record, receiving numerous wounds from which he recovered and lived to follow his master to the grave.

He had seen war service before General Meade rode him. In the first battle of Bull Run he was wounded twice under Major General David Hunter, who turned him over to the quartermaster to recover. In September of that year General Meade purchased this light bay horse with white face and feet immediately naming him Baldy.

Famous Cavalry Mounts: Baldy

*Baldy* from The Famous Cavalry Horses Files

Baldy’s war record will well stand comparison with those of other famous war horses. While in battle he experienced many narrow escapes from death. Besides receiving wounds at the first battle of Bull Run while being ridden by General Hunter, he was repeatedly in the thick of the fight with his new master. He was with General Meade at the battle of Drainesville; he participated in two of the seven days’ fighting near Richmond in the summer of 1862; he smelled the fire of battle at Groveton; he carried his master at the second battle of Bull Run, at South Mountain, at Antietam, at Fredericksburg, at Chancellorsville, and at Gettysburg.

His most serious wounds were received at the first and second battles of Bull Run, at Antietam and at Gettysburg. He was shot in the flank at the second battle of Bull Run. At Antietam he received a deep bullet wound in the neck and was left on the battlefield as dead, but, when the Federals next advanced,
Baldy was discovered quietly grazing near the place where he had been shot. It was at Gettysburg that he received even a more dangerous wound. While carrying General Meade at the head of the First Corps in their charge across the field of battle, a bullet entered his body between the ribs and lodged there. He was unable to again perform any duty until after Appomattox.

Baldy also had his lucky days. On one occasion while this favorite steed was convalescing, General Meade rode a public horse. On that day this substitute mount was killed by a ball which passed through its neck.

Through two and one-half years of association in the perils of battle General Meade became strongly attached to Baldy. After the battle of Gettysburg, he could not be induced to part with his gallant mount. However, during the preparations of the Army of the Potomac for their last campaign, he finally decided to send Baldy to pasture. At the end of the war, General Meade hurried to Philadelphia, where he renewed the old friendship with his faithful charger, now fully recovered. For many years the two were inseparable companions, and, when General Meade died in 1872, the battle-scarred war horse followed the hearse to the last resting place. Baldy died ten years later, and his head and two fore hoofs are now cherished relics of the George G. Meade Post, Grand Army of the Republic, in Philadelphia.

Baldy as he can be seen today.

Soldiers March Through Barstow to Veterans Home
By
Sgt. Giancarlo Casem

BARSTOW, Calif.—More than 200 soldiers from the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment visited veterans at the Veterans Home of California here, Jan. 7.

The soldiers, stationed at nearby Fort Irwin, started off the new year by participating in the 14th Annual Foot March to the Veterans Home. The soldiers marched through the streets of downtown Barstow to the Veterans Home.

“I think everything with our Veterans here in town is important because I just see Barstow as a very pro-military town,” said Barstow City Council Member Tim Silva. “Me personally, I’m very appreciative of the freedoms me and my family can enjoy
because of our military.”

The event allowed the soldiers the opportunity to visit the Veterans and let them know that they are not forgotten. For residents and families of those at the home, the event wraps up the holiday season and starts of a new year at the home on a high note.

“It’s nice, I like it. My dad was a veteran so I used to do this a lot,” said Pvt. Jonathan Werner, G Troop, 2nd Squadron, 11th ACR. Werner, a native of Quincy, Ill., spent lunch chatting with an Air Force Veteran who shared his experiences in Vietnam. He said the experience is just part of being a Soldier. “This is what I joined for; to serve my country. I do what I can for everybody’s freedom.”

The event also provided a way for soldiers to give donations to the Home’s Morale, Welfare and Recreation fund. The Home received a $2,304 donation into that fund. The Blackhorse soldiers held formation at the Barstow Amtrak Station and marched east through a portion of downtown Barstow on Main St. before heading south on Barstow Road, up the hill to the Veterans Home. The formation was led by Col. Antonio Aguto, Jr., and Command Sgt. Maj. Martin Wilcox, the Regimental commander and command sergeant major.

“Thank you for allowing us to honor you today; it is truly an honor for us. It does us good to be here eating lunch with you,” Aguto said as he addressed the Home’s veterans, staff and his soldiers. “Being in the Army is all about the stories. It’s all about the stories that we share, it’s all about the stories that we create, and it’s all about the stories that make up ourselves. Veterans, please share your stories.”

As the formation of soldiers walked the streets of Barstow, they were greeted by passers-by and onlookers. Barstow residents waved flags and cheered on the marching soldiers.

“Oh, I love it. I’ve been coming here for close to seven years now and every time I hear about the march, I want to be here,” said Rob Voss, a Veteran who served with the 1st Infantry Division in Vietnam. “It’s a big morale boost. You don’t have to be in the Army to enjoy soldiers marching up and doing their cadence calls.”

As a city council member and the son of a veteran, Silva said he took a little bit of pride in seeing his fellow Barstow citizens come out and support the Regiment.

“I watch it every year. My staff and I step out of our office and watch it every year on Barstow Road,” he said. “It feels great. I’d like to see more of us just stand out and take a break as (the soldiers) are marching down Main Street and Barstow Road. Hopefully we can see that in the future. But the ones that do come out, it’s a good thing to see.”

As the formation marched closer to the Home’s driveway, its residents came out and greeted the Blackhorse Troopers with smiles and waving flags.

“It’s always a great thing to see,” said Don Baxter, a Veteran living at the Home. “It’s good for us to see the Soldiers as they march up, it makes us feel proud.”

For the next march, the 11th ACR plans to return the march to a two-day event with the march starting at Fort Irwin. Due to past deployments and rotational training commitments, the march was cut down to a three-mile march.

During the lunch, Rocky Chavez, the Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs for California, wished the Regiment a
happy birthday on its upcoming 110th birthday later in February. He also pledged a promise to the Blackhorse Veterans present.

“There are 2 million veterans in California, every year 30,000 (Veterans) return to the state of California having served the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and the Coast Guard,” said Chavez, himself a former Marine.

“These young people coming back want to live the American dream for which they have fought for. I dedicate to you (Soldiers) the 2,400 employees of the California Department of Veterans Affairs. If you decide to stay in California, (they) will be there to serve you to ensure you have the opportunity for an education, jobs and to meet your health care needs. We know that the best citizens of a free country are those who have served.”

The Dragoons go to War

From

History of the First U.S. Cavalry, 1833-1906

The headquarters of the regiment were established in Fort Tejon, California, in December, 1856, with Companies H and I. At this time, Companies B, D, G and K were at Camp Moore, N.M.; C at Fort Yamhill, Oregon; E at Fort Walla Walla, Was.; F at San Diego, Cal.; and A enroute to Benica Barracks, California.

From this time until 1861 scoutings and skirmishes with the Indians were almost incessant, and portions of the regiment were almost always found where the fighting was going on. Four companies were present with Chandler’s expedition against the Navajos and Apaches in March and April, 1856. In 1856 two companies took part in numerous Indian skirmishes in Oregon and Washington; one was with Wright’s expedition to the Walla Walla country in April, and to the Yakima country in June; later in the year it was out with Colonel Steptoe.

In May, 1858, Companies C, E and H formed part of Steptoe’s expedition northward to the British line, which on the 17th of May, met a force of about 800 Spokane and other hostile Indians and was driven back.

In August of the same year Companies C, E, H and I were with Wright’s column, which administered a severe thrashing, September 1, to the Indians who had fought Steptoe.

Company D was in the field in Arizona in 1858, and in Oregon in 1859.

Colonel Fauntleroy resigned May 13, 1861, and was succeeded by Colonel B. S. Beall. By Act of August 3 of this year the designation of the regiment was changed to “First Regiment of Cavalry.”

During the months of November and December the regiment, excepting Companies D and G, was transferred from the Pacific coast to Washington, D.C., arriving at Camp Sprague, near that city, by the end of January, 1862.

At this time Companies D and G were at Camp Christoval, N.M. They had abandoned and destroyed Forts Breckenridge and Buchanan and had
taken station at Fort Craig. In January, 1862, they were General Canby’s escort. Company D was engaged in a skirmish with the rebels near Fort Craig, February 19, 1862, and the two companies took part in the battle of Valverde, February 21. Company D took part in the engagements at Pigeon’s Ranch, March 30; Albequerque, April 25; and Peralto, April 27, 1862.

In June, 1863, the two companies were broken up, the officers and noncommissioned officers being transferred to Carlisle Barracks, where the companies were reorganized, joining the regiment at Camp Buford, Md., in October, 1863.

Colonel Beall was retired February 15, 1862, and was succeeded by Colonel George A. H. Blake, Major Wm. N. Grier of the Second succeeding him as lieutenant colonel of the First.

The regiment, now under the command of Colonel Grier, was attached to the 2nd Brigade, Cavalry Reserve, Army of the Potomac, Colonel Blake commanding the brigade.

During the Civil War, the First Cavalry Regiment earned seventeen campaign streamers for it colors: Peninsula, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Wilderness, Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor, Petersburg, Shenandoah, Appomattox, New Mexico 1862, Virginia 1862, Virginia 1863, Virginia 1864, Virginia 1865, Maryland 1863.
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