The Cavalry Journal
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The introduction of gunpowder created a revolution in the art of war which has developed for the military student some interesting and curious facts. Before then, physical strength and endurance were absolute requisites of an accomplished soldier. The great captains of those days, upon every available opportunity, practiced their men in such athletic sports as would make them most proficient with the weapons they used. The Roman soldiers during the long period of their military supremacy had for their principal weapon a short heavy sword, with which they rushed into a hand to hand conflict with the enemy. Their athletic training and disciplined valor carried victory with them for hundreds of years and maintained their supremacy in arms, until luxury and dissipation rendered them easy victims to their more hardy conquerors from the North. Ancient traditions are clung to most persistently in the selection of military weapons. In modern Cavalry armament, we find the sabre and lance, a modification of the ancient sword and spear, adhered to with a pertinacity for which it is difficult to account on rational grounds. Let us fancy two soldiers in the mounted service, equally brave, one thoroughly trained to handle the sabre and the other an accomplished revolver shot. Station them one hundred yards apart and let them advance toward each other at any gait, with hostile intent. Can any one for an instant expect but one result — that the man with the sabre shall certainly be destroyed before he can arrive within striking distance of his enemy! Suppose we made the number a thousand; is there any ground to suppose the result would differ materially in illustration the superiority of the revolver over the sabre?

To exemplify this in another form; let us suppose, that a sabre cut over the head, or a thrust through the body, is equal to a wound from a revolver bullet: and for the sake of argument we will allow the man with the sabre to arrive within ten feet of his enemy with the revolver; we will assume that ten seconds are required for a "sabreur" to successfully carve one man and get within striking distance, about three and a half or four feet, of another. We know that it is a very ordinary feat for a good revolver shot, mounted, to fire five shots in five seconds and hit a mark the size of a man, every time, at a distance of ten feet, and this with his horse at a full run. The reverence with which we cling to arms ancient might make a wise soldier laugh, were its effect not so pernicious, as sometimes, to make a good soldier weep. Our recent civil war developed some excellent Cavalry officers on both sides, and in the opinion of many competent judges, General Custer was second to none. For some time previous to 1876 he commanded the Seventh Cavalry in various Indian campaigns. Being full of energy and ambition, it is reasonable to suppose he trained his troopers with all the judgment and skill derived from his extensive experience. The sabre was the recognized Cavalry weapon, and at that time, our Cavalry officers gave little or no attention to mounted fire. In 1876 we find a portion of this Cavalry, under General Custer, numbering about three hundred of his best troops, engaged with hostile Sioux and Cheyennes.

These Indian warriors had been brought up on horseback and trained from boyhood to use firearms mounted. The battle took place upon an open and gently undulating country near the Little Big Horn River, and not a single white man was left to clear the mystery which shrouded the details of the engagement. About two years subsequent to this event, the writer became well acquainted with some of the Sioux and Cheyennes engaged in this fight against the Seventh Cavalry, and after much difficulty they were induced to describe the details of the action. Three of these Indians at different times gave their versions of the battle, and their accounts did not vary in material points. They said the Indians charged upon the Cavalry, firing their rifles and pistols, and that the action lasted about half an hour. Thirty-five or forty Indians were killed, and they believed most of the casualties were due to the Indians shooting one another, as they attacked the Cavalry on both flanks at the same time.

They said that the Cavalry horses were so terrified by the yells, shooting and appearance of the warriors that the soldiers had all they could do to keep their seats, that many of them
were thrown, and that they did little execution among the savages. It must be remembered that up to this time our Cavalry had received little or no training with the revolver, and that the Indians outnumbered the Cavalry, three or four to one. Had the latter known how to handle their revolvers, they would have sent many times their own number to the happy hunting ground.

Toward the close of our late unpleasantness the central part of Missouri was infested by a body of men claiming to belong to the Southern Army, under a leader named Bill Anderson. These men had for their sole armament from four to six revolvers each and were mounted upon the best horses the country afforded. For about a week they were camped in a pasture near the house where the writer, then a boy, lived, and we had a number of opportunities to observe their occupation. They spent several hours each day at mounted pistol practice, putting their horses at full run and shooting at trees or fence posts. Some of them would, at times, vary this practice by taking the bridle reins in their teeth and firing a revolver from each hand. As we remember, their shooting was excellent. A few months later, a body of Cavalry, variously estimated at from 200 to 250, were landed by the railroad at Centralia, MO to operate against Bill Anderson and his men. The country around this railroad station is an almost perfectly level prairie. This Cavalry had proceeded but two or three miles from their landing place when they encountered the enemy. Anderson formed a skirmish line and charged, some of his men taking the bridle reins in their teeth and a revolver in each hand. The affair was soon ended. Of the 200 or 250 men only ten escaped with their lives; the others were laid out over the prairie for a distance of several miles. Anderson lost only five or six men.

So far as we can learn, little progress had been made by the Cavalry of European-armies in mounted revolver shooting, owing to the fact that they lack a knowledge of the art and that they have too much respect for ancient traditions. The military establishment of our country had reached a much higher state of efficiency in the use of firearms than that of any other nation.

This is due to the liberal appropriations of Congress for target practice, the knowledge and skill of our officers in revolver and rifle shooting, and the facility with which they impart this most valuable of all military accomplishments to the enlisted men.

For many centuries the theory and practice amongst civilized nations had been to train Cavalry to act by the collective shock; that is, to develop no individuality, but to have them ride boot to boot, in a solid mass with drawn sabers and with an irresistible force, so as to overwhelm all in front of them. With the individuality now to be found in the foot soldier of an ordinary skirmish line, such a mass of Cavalry would be destroyed, or rendered useless before they could arrive within two hundred yards of the objective point. The mounted Cavalry soldier should be trained to the highest degree of individual excellence in the management of his horse and revolver; he should be armed with a carbine and at least two revolvers, and have the useless, clanking and antiquated sabre consigned to some spot from which there could be no resurrection. The Cavalryman should practice with the revolver till he could fire five shots in four seconds, and be able to hit, two out of three times, an object the size of a man, at a distance of ten yards, with horse at a full run. To one not familiar with revolver shooting this may seem a difficult thing to do, and it may appear to require too high a standard of excellence from the average Cavalry soldier, but it must be remembered that revolver shooting is like many other physical accomplishments; it is learned much more rapidly when the instructing is carried on according to some correct system. The exercises of the recruit, while he is learning to ride and handle his horse, should be varied by at least two hours’ work each day, devoted to handling and snapping his revolver on foot, so that the correct execution of these exercises may become mechanical; in other words, the recruit should be trained to bring his pistol to bear upon an object and hit it without any perceptible time being spent in taking aim and pulling the trigger. Ours is an age of specialists, and it is seldom that one is found who can reach the highest degree of excellence in more than one mechanical art. When this skill is once attained in using a revolver, there is ever a good demand for its services, and the confidence and courage which its possession is certain to give to our Cavalry soldier will make him brave and self-reliant to an extent which will render him on the field of battle more than a match for five times his number of the best Cavalry the old world has ever seen.
The decisive hours of the Civil War are generally considered to be those of the afternoon of July 3, 1863, when Pickett's column moved through the long grass, while 1,500 miles away flags of truce hung limp in the heat along the ramparts of Vicksburg. This is accurate if the war be thought of in the light of European precedent, and only untrue when we remember that for the Union mere victory was equal to defeat. It should not be forgotten that a soldier's work is incomplete until he has decisively influenced the political situation, and the double victory of 1863 did not achieve this result. A year after Gettysburg and Vicksburg—a year that had seen the Chattanooga battles and the better half of the titanic Atlanta campaign piled on the summit of these triumphs—the Democrats were seeking political control in the North by denouncing the war as a failure. It seemed to many intelligent men, among them Thurlow Weed, Salmon P. Chase and Lincoln himself, not unlikely that the Democrats would convince the country they were right and make a peace that left two nations.

The "decisive" battles of the Civil War thus decided nothing but that the Confederates could not win in the field. They might still gain their essential point by default. The task that faced the North at the opening of 1864 was infinitely more difficult than anything it had yet accomplished. It was required not only to achieve military victory (though this was an indispensable preliminary) but to achieve it in a manner that involved the extinction of Southern morale and the prevention of that guerilla conflict which most European observers considered as certain to follow the operations of the field armies.

In this sense both Vicksburg and Gettysburg were indecisive. They damaged, but did not slay the Confederate spirit. If Pemberton had been less a ninny, the one would not have been lost; if Lee had not made one of his rare errors, if Stuart had not been absent and Longstreet sulky, the other might have been won. The Southerners reasonably felt that a comparatively minor change in the conditions of either conflict would have reversed the results. They went on fighting in the expectation that the law of averages would provide both changes in another combat. The battles that broke their hearts as well as their heads did not come till later; and these were named Chickamauga, Yellow Tavern, Cedar Creek, Five Forks.

The first was Thomas' battle and affected the western theater of war alone. But the other three have four elements in common. Each took place in that Eastern piedmont on which the attention of the people on both sides of the strife was riveted, and thus yielded the maximum moral effect; each was the crowning act of a campaign; in each, cavalry, the special and favorite arm of the South, was deeply engaged; and in all, the Union commander was Philip Henry Sheridan.

With Sheridan there triumphed in these battles not only the Union army. There triumphed also an entirely new, purely American doctrine of war, of the use of the mounted arm—an idea that had been struggling dizzily for expression since Richard M. Johnson's Kentucky riflemen made razor-strops of the skin from Tecumseh's legs after the Battle of the Thames. It was a doctrine that could not possibly have been framed south of the Potomac, in spite of the fact that the Confederacy entered the war with an aristocracy habituated to the saddle and with considerably more than its proportionate share of the cavalry officers of the old army.

In fact, it was a doctrine that could hardly have been born in the mind of a cavalryman at all. For cavalry officers, North and South, were so imbued with the history and tradition of all meaning. They continued to think in terms of the days when the infantryman's gun was ineffective beyond a hundred yards and could be fired at most, twice while the cavalryman was crossing that distance. They thought of Murat and regarded the charge of the gallant six hundred as an example of courage and not as one of stupidity.
The Northern cavalry service had clearly failed as a Napoleonic arm when the Mine Run campaign closed out 1863, with its demonstration that the most serious part of the war was still to be fought. The reaction of an ordinary commander to this failure was that cavalry, having become an arm useless for heavy fighting, should be turned into a kind of military police force, charged with convoying trains and doing picket duty for the rest of the army. This had been Hooker’s reaction after Chancellorsville, and Meade inherited it from him. It took something more than an ordinary commander; it took, I say, a commander on the edge of genius, to throw all received ideas out the window and start afresh from the concept that a cavalryman was only an infantryman with four detachable legs.

This was Sheridan. He pronounced a bill of divorce between the cavalryman and his horse, a thing unheard of since true cavalry was born and the Goths came riding across the steppes.

The basic doctrine was not altogether novel, and perhaps not even independently original with Sheridan. John Buford, for one, had held the idea and might have pushed it farther had he not been debarred by death from becoming more than a subordinate commander whose originality was limited to the tactical field. It was Sheridan’s special merit that his precise and orderly brain evolved a harmonious and logical structure from the various elements he found already existing. It was his special accomplishment that through his treatment of cavalry, not as a separate arm with peculiar disabilities, but as a kind of fast-moving foot soldier, he achieved the only pure offensive to be found in the Civil War.

For Lee, a master of the tactical attack, always developed his successes out of the strategic defense, against enemies moving in, with lengthened communications, across ground he intimately knew. In both the battles he fought during advances he was beaten. Grant and Sherman, who might have possessed parts of the same brain under two different skulls, exactly reversed Lee by acting on the strategic attack but tactical defense. They aimed to place armies in positions where the enemy must hit out at them. Both failed (Cold Harbor, Kenesaw Mountain) when they violated this principle. Thomas was strictly a counter-puncher, waiting for an enemy advance, which he parried with one hand while knocking out his opponent with the other. Only Stonewall Jackson approached Sheridan; and there is more than a verbal coincidence in the fact that Stonewall’s men were known as “the foot cavalry” while Sheridan’s were cavalry who fought on foot.

At the time of the great winter conference of 1863-1864 on military affairs, with Lincoln and the army leaders present, nobody was thinking of getting a man of genius or a new doctrine of cavalry. It occurred to nobody that defeat of its mounted arm might have a ruinous effect on the morale of the Confederacy; though for both political and military reasons everybody seems to have agreed that they could not afford to have Stuart riding circles around the Army of the Potomac any more. In other words, the views of the conference were negative. The decisive campaign of the war was approaching, and it was important to get something more than a minimum yield from the human and mechanical power the Union cavalry possessed.

The best way to do this was a change in command. For Pleasonton, then commanding the cavalry corps, had been given a thorough trial and he was simply not good enough. But who would be better? The three divisional commanders in the corps were Buford, Gregg and Kilpatrick. Kilpatrick was a hard fighter but a still harder rider. The men knew him as “Kill-cavalry,” for he normally arrived at the scene of action with horses blown and panting, men dropping from the saddle with weariness. Gregg was just the sort of mercurial leader Grant most distrusted—perhaps the worst when things went wrong. Custer and Wesley Merritt were too junior. Grant asked for old General Franklin, whose talents he held in a incomprehensible respect, but the others frowned him down and there was a silence till General Halleck cut the knot with the suggestion, “How would Sheridan do?”

“The very man!” cried Grant, and that night a telegram was dispatched for Sheridan.

Continued in the next
Cavalry Journal
The Road to Khe Sanh
by
Trooper Niven Baird

Khe Sanh, Vietnam lays in the northwestern corner of the country, approximately eight miles from the Laotian border, and is connected to the remainder of South Vietnam by National Highway 9. The combat base there was the most isolated position occupied by American forces during that protracted war. During the period January to July 1968, two reinforced Marine regiments withstood siege conducted by an estimated two divisions of Peoples Army of Vietnam (PAVN), more commonly known as the NVA. General Giap, leader of all PAVN forces, clearly hoped to create another Dien Bien Phu, which had resulted in French forces surrendering at that North Vietnam combat base in 1954. The Marines, however, reinforced by other Army units, managed to accomplish an orderly withdrawal on July 9, 1968, and Khe Sanh lay vacant, subject to the whims of North Vietnamese forces.

In the summer of 1969, it was determined that forces led by the Army’s 1st Brigade, 5th Mechanized Division, would venture out to Khe Sanh to provide a presence in that isolated corner of South Vietnam. The route west from Quang Tri Province passed next to Marine Firebase Vandegrift, the last manned outpost along Route 9. After that, it was all Indian Country. The small command group, taken from the headquarters of the 1st Brigade, led a force consisting of two marine battalions, part of an army tank battalion, three companies of an army infantry battalion and two companies of an army mechanized infantry battalion. In the vanguard was a troop of armored cavalry, preceded by a tank company which, it was felt, could best survive the mines which all were certain would have been placed along the roadway of Highway 9. Situation reports were radioed to the command group from the leading elements every 30 minutes. The U.S. forces were certain that the NVA would strike against the column moving into the territory it claimed as its own.

The tactical road march progressed smoothly, without even so much as snipers to harass the column. In late morning of the second day, the leading tank company reported that one of its M-60 tanks was having mechanical problems, and would require assistance from the maintenance platoon. The tank was pulled off the roadway, and was left with a small security force while the problem was being addressed. About 30 minutes before night fall, the tank crew reported that the tank could not be repaired until the next day. Instructions were given to combat lock the tank (machine guns withdrawn from the mounts and placed inside the tank, and the hatches locked), and trip-wire flares were placed around the tank. The 4.2” mortars from the main body registered on the tank in the event NVA approached during the night. Shortly after midnight, the flares lit up the sky, and the mortar tubes sent their rounds down to protect the tank.

The tank, maintenance and security crews returned to the tank early the next morning, and reported clear evidence that NVA forces had attempted to damage the tank, and sustained casualties from the mortar barrage as a result. Work on the tank continued until shortly after noon when maintenance reported that repairs would not be possible without proper shop equipment and tools. A short “pow-wow” was held at the headquarters, resulting in an order radioed back to the rear base to have a helicopter bring a very large quantity of C-4 explosives to the site. This was done, and the C-4 was packed in the turret of the tank and in the gun tube. The machine guns and the crews were withdrawn and the explosives were detonated. The very heavy turret was seen flying into the air and landing off to the side. The tank then burned for several hours and was declared a combat loss.

One can only wonder what went through the NVA minds as they watched all this from their places of concealment? We can imagine one saying to the others, “That’s all we were trying to do! How can we win a war against these crazy people?”
Wounded Knee: A Look at the Record
by
Brigadier General E.D. Scott, Retired
Reprinted from the Cavalry Journal, January-February 1939
Part One

Prior to the Civil War the territory of the great Sioux nation extended from the Platte to the Canadian border, and from the Mississippi on the east to the Rocky Mountains on the west. Settlers poured into the eastern part of this region; a bloody war broke out which ended in the Indians being driven to the west of the Missouri.

The Union Pacific built along the southern border of their lands; gold and silver was found in what is now southern Montana, and the nearest route thereto lay across the Sioux country from the railroads settlements in what is now Wyoming. The miners and settlers took that route, the Indians resented the encroachment, and the '50's and '60's were marked by more than fifty hostile demonstrations and much bloodshed.

In 1868 a new treaty was entered into with the Sioux, replacing that of 1851 which had fixed their limits as above described, and this moved their western limit to the east of the Big Horn Mountains, thus clearing the routes to Montana. It also guaranteed to the Sioux the country east of the Big Horns as a hunting country in perpetuity. But gold was discovered in the Black Hills and 1874 and 1875 saw another rush of settlers into the heart of the Sioux country that the Government seemed unable to prevent. In 1876 a great part of the Sioux went on the warpath, the trouble culminating in the slaughter of most of the 7th Cavalry in the Battle of the Little Big Horn, in Montana. Another treaty limited the Sioux to what is now South Dakota west of the Mississippi, and ceded to the Government the major part of the Black Hills region, which was then formally opened to settlers.

In 1877 another treaty threw open to settlement the whole region between the Big Cheyenne and White Rivers, and north of the Black Hills to the North Dakota line, reducing the Indian country by half. This was more generally resented by the Indians than anything that had gone before. It not only took away their best lands, but split them in two groups separated by sixty miles of white man's land. Moreover, it was never admitted that the Indians who participated in making this treaty had authority to do so from the tribes. The Indians were slow to vacate their lands, the settlers cautious about moving in to occupy them.

The wholesale reductions of the Indians' lands were no doubt an injustice to them and occasioned many hardships. But there is another side to the picture. The day of the buffalo was over; deer, elk, and antelope were few. In other words, meat, the principal diet of the Indians, could no longer be had by hunting. And with the game went the materials for clothing, bedding, tepees. These needs would have to be met by farming and stock raising, and the lands still left were vastly more than necessary for the purpose. The government had not been slow to recognize that the Indian must be trained to be self-supporting under a new habit of life, and the later treaties had provided for the sustenance of the Indians while they were becoming adjusted. The policy of aid was very comprehensive; lands were allotted, brood cattle, horses, and sheep supplied, farming machinery, seed grain, and the like. Farmer instructors were scattered about freely. That the policy had in time a measurable success is shown by the fact that in 1910 half the Indians in South Dakota were taxpayers.

But the transition period was a hard one. The agencies were few and far between and the Indian bands were widely scattered. In a quite eloquent statement of grievances a chief said that ninety miles was too far to go for rations. One must agree with him! Issues of clothing and bedding were quite inadequate for the climate. The Sioux actually had a farmer tradition—vegetables and corn—but that was in their old home of Minnesota and eastern Dakota, not on the 3,000-foot tableland they now occupied.

But their principal grievance was in connection with rations. Beef was supplied on the hoof; the Indians were wasteful; the days after issue were days of feasting followed by famine before the next issue. Sometimes beeses were
issued to carry over for the winter; a 1,000-pound beef in November became a 600-pound beef by February—if he lived that long. The entrails of animals were always a dainty to the Indian palate, but the thought of it was repugnant to some of the authorities in Washington—a formal order was issued forbidding their use as food, and directing that they be destroyed by fire. The agents and their Indian Police did what they could to enforce what must have seemed to their charges the most whimsical of requirements. There was plenty of opportunity for graft among agents, contractors, and traders, and no doubt that it existed, the Indian being the loser. The government sought to insure justice to the Indians by having an Army officer present to witness issues, in each case to make a written report. Some of them are remarkable indictments of conditions; few are indorsements. Some state (1890), that the issue witnessed amounted to about half that of the Army ration. The years 1889 and 1890 were very dry and crops failed in consequence. But late in the fall of the latter year, the Congress had failed to make the allotment of funds for feeding the Indians that should have been available on July 1st. That meant months of semi-starvation, and the Indians could hardly be blamed for eating ponies and farm stock—or even for helping themselves to a few from the settlers herds. That second summer of drought and suffering must have built up in Indian psychology a condition fertile for trouble—just such a condition as found expression in the French Revolution.

The missionaries had long been active among the Indians and doubtless the latter had discussed at length the Messiah who came to earth to bring peace and goodwill to all men—friend of the poor and downtrodden. And then, out in the Rockies, there arose a Medicine Man, one of their own race, who proclaimed the coming of an Indian Messiah who would send the white man back whence he came, and restore the buffalo to the range and the Indians to their ancestral homes and customs. The news spread to the east and the idea took hold on the Indian imagination. Dancing was a form of worship common to all Indians—as to primitive peoples the world over—and a new dance was devised to honor the new Messiah. It was called by the whites, “The Ghost Dance.” Its practice spread all over the Sioux country and caused grave apprehension to the authorities. All Indian dances are religious and for a purpose—to bring rain, to cure an epidemic, to insure good crops, to insure successful war, and so on. And every Indian has his mind on the object of the dance—quite obsessed by it, he may dance till he drops. But before that he may develop a spiritual exaltation that renders him dangerous should anyone slip him the idea of a short cut to the objective by sudden and violent action against some person or persons. Herein lay the danger, and the authorities sought to thwart it by forbidding the dance. Of course the order could not be enforced, except in the vicinity of the Agencies, where the Indian Police had some authority. It was ignored by the bands scattered over an immense territory. Some Indian agents and Army officers thought and said that the craze would soon wear itself out, but they were a minority.

On October 29, 1890, Mr. P.P. Palmer, Indian Agent at the Cheyenne River Agency, reported to the Indian Bureau on the activities of two minor chiefs, Big Foot and Hump, and again on November 10. Both reports were to the effect that these Indians were selling their cattle and buying Winchesters and ammunition with the proceeds, were doing much Ghost dancing, and that his police were powerless. Later the agent at Pine Ridge Agency, Mr. Royer, made a similar report as to his Indians, saying they “are dancing in the snow,” and asked military assistance. About November 2 a petition signed by 102 Sioux Indians, setting forth their grievances, was forwarded to the “Great White Father.” And from then on the wires to Washington were hot with alarming reports.

General Nelson A. Miles was then in command of the Division of the Missouri, his headquarters at Chicago. The Division comprised the Department of the Dakotas (General Ruger) at St. Paul, and the Department of the Platte (General Brooke) at Omaha. The latter comprised the Sioux country.

The Pine Ridge Indian Agency was, and is, about 20 miles north of Rushville, Nebraska. It is a few miles north of the southern line of South Dakota. About 90 miles east by northeast is the Rosebud Indian Agency. Each is the administrative seat of a large reservation of the same name, which were the principal scenes of the Indian troubles of 1890. Pine Ridge Reservation has an average elevation of 3,000
feet above sea level. Its main topographical feature is an east-west ridge from 3,000 to 3,500 feet elevation along its center, from which several small streams flow north, northwest, and west into the White River. The latter rises in Nebraska, flows north about 40 miles west of Pine Ridge Agency, and northeast and east to the Missouri. It is a considerable stream with occasional practicable crossings. West of it are the Bad Lands, thirty miles from east to west, more than a hundred from south to north. At their western base is the south fork of the Cheyenne, roughly paralleling the White. Beyond that, less rugged country rises gradually into the Black Hills.

The Bad Lands were the nearest and about the only refuge for disaffected or criminal Indians, and the policy of the Government was to keep all Indians east of the White River, whose crossings could be easily watched. Pursuit of Indians in the Bad Lands was unlikely to be successful. The country is exceedingly rugged.

The reservation terrain is in general rolling, with many sharp ridges; grassy, with scrub pine on the ridges and brush in the ravines. The streams are generally small, with mud bottoms and soft banks, passable only in places. Roads were merely dirt trails, following the lines of least resistance.

When disaffection began in the fall of 1890 troops were disposed with a view to protecting the agencies and preventing the Indians leaving their reservations. Reinforcements were sent from other Departments; Nebraska and South Dakota placed their militia where they could best protect their own settlements. Among the reinforcements were the 7th Cavalry (less 4 troops), and Light Battery E, 1st Artillery. These arrived by rail at Rushville, and on the night of November 25-26 marched to Pine Ridge Agency, where part of the 9th Cavalry and 2nd Infantry had preceded them.

Early in December the battery received six 1.65-inch Hotchkiss guns (2-pounders) with packs, mules, etc., and under the direction of Lt. Harry L. Hawthorne, quickly prepared itself for service with the cavalry.

On December 14 an attempt to arrest Sitting Bull near Standing Rock Agency on the Missouri resulted in a fight in which he was killed with several of his followers and an equal number of Indian Police. One of his followers, the Big Foot referred to above, immediately moved away from there, with his band, bag and baggage. Hump’s band joined him. He was located about December 22, and surrendered to General Sumner. But that night he quietly slipped away again. It was believed that he was heading for the Bad Lands. The 9th Cavalry and one platoon of Battery E, 1st Artillery (Lt. John L. Hayden) was sent from Pine Ridge Agency to the mouth of the Wounded Knee Creek to watch the crossings of the White River, and Major Whitside, 7th Cavalry, was sent with Troops A, B, I, and K, one platoon of Battery E, 1st Artillery (Lt. Harry L. Hawthorne) and Troop A, Indian Scouts, to the crossing of Wounded Knee Creek about fourteen miles northeast of Pine Ridge Agency. He established camp with heavy tentage a few hundred yards south of the crossing, and sent Indian scouts to search the country to the north and east.

On December 28 this detachment was sitting about waiting for dinner when an Indian scout, Little Bat, came in with the information that Big Foot’s band was on the march west, on the Porcupine Creek, off to the northeast. The command mounted and marched at once. A rapid march of about seven miles brought the band into view. Its wagon and pack train halted at once, the warriors formed line and moved towards the troops as though to attack. Their advance was at a walk, as half the Indians were on foot, alternating in the line with the mounted ones.

Major Whitside dismounted and formed line on a low crest. Lt. Hawthorne wished to place his guns on a knoll nearby whence he could command the cavalry position, the approaching Indians, and their trains, but he was overruled; Major Whitside required him to place them in front of the center of his line of cavalrmen.

When the Indians had come within hailing distance, Major Whitside went forward a little with another officer and an interpreter. The Indian line halted and several approached the Major, one of them stating he was Big Foot’s representative. The Major refused to deal with a representative, and insisted on Big Foot appearing. It seems that warrior was sick and in a wagon. He was brought, and in answer to the Major’s demand as to whether he meant war or surrender, he said the latter. Meantime a party
of mounted Indians started around the flank of the cavalry, and the Major demanded that he recall them, which he did. More talk ensued as to the arrangements for the march back, and Big Foot sent for his trains. While they were coming up some of the Indians left their line and crowded around the guns—something new in their experience, and with which they seemed delighted. Perhaps those guns had something to do with the friendly and reasonable spirit displayed. But the Indians were probably quite willing to be captured—they were without food of any sort, and a fight with superior numbers of soldiers did not promise to secure any.

Indians on the reservation habitually wore ordinary civilian clothing; these Indians were stripped to breech clouts and leggings, were painted, and carried Winchester rifles with plenty of ammunition. Major Whitside would have liked to disarm them on the spot but this might have brought on a fight. He did well to induce the Indians to march back with him to his camp on Wounded Knee.

The march was uneventful. Indian scouts and part of the cavalry led, the Indians with their trains followed, the rest of the cavalry and guns brought up the rear. The Indians seemed in high good humor, talked and laughed, smoked cigarettes. They were assigned an area near the cavalry camp, counted—120 men, 230 women and children—rations were issued to them, and they proceeded to settle down in camp. They had few of the conventional tepees; most of their shelter was in the form of wickiups, a few light stakes covered with brush or pieces of old canvas. The area, as shown on the maps made at the time was kidney-shaped, about 200 yards long and 100 wide. It must have been very crowded. They turned their ponies about 150 in number, loose to the west, but they were held in herd by a military guard during the night. The Indians said they did not have enough shelter, and some Sibley tents were given them, but when the camp was searched the following morning there was no indication that they had been used. A wall tent was set up at the end of the line of Scouts’ tents for Big Foot, who was really sick with pneumonia. The surgeon, John van R. Hoff, gave him professional services in the night and the following morning.

Major Whitside had sent word from the scene of the surrender to Colonel Forsythe, commanding the 7th Cavalry, at Pine Ridge Agency, and that officer marched with the remainder of his command, Troops C, D, E, and G, and the remainder of Light Battery E, 1st Artillery, to the camp. The approach was made after dark and in such manner as not to advise or alarm the Indians. Between nine and midnight the operation was completed. Captain Capron had his battery together on a small knoll only 200 yards from the center of the camp area, and overlooking it.

Captain Myles Moylan, Troop A, was charged with the guard of the Indians, Troop I being added to his command. He established a line of sentinel posts, twenty in all, along the east, west, and south sides of the Indian camp area. The posts on the south side were across the ravine that limited the area in that direction. There was constant patrolling of the line during the night, and in the early morning the posts were reinforced by the men of the other reliefs. Security on the north side was provided by the camp and pocket-line guards.

There had been no snow that winter; the weather had been still and cold, but clear; the moon was at the full on December 25. The sky may have been overcast, but even then visibility would have been good for some distance, making the guard duty relatively easy.

Wounded Knee Creek, at the scene of the battle, is small, and at the time had ice an inch thick. It's direction is northwesterly. The principal trail or road from Pine Ridge Agency to Rosebud comes in from the southwest, crossing it, and then takes a more easterly direction. Near the crossing stood the trader’s store, post office, and a few other buildings, and about 300 yards downstream, the church. A road passing the latter continues to the mouth of the stream. About 300 yards south of the crossing “Fast Horse Road” comes into the Agency Road from the northwest. The Agency Road divides a short distance south of this junction, descends by coulees into a ravine and out again, reuniting on the other side.

Between the Agency Road and the stream the terrain is flat and not very high above the level of the latter. West of the road the terrain rises quickly into ridges and spurs from the ridge two to three miles west that is the divide between Wounded Knee and the White Clay creeks. The ravine above referred to heads about two miles west of the road, runs almost
due east, has numerous lateral branches, especially on the north side, and all contained much brush and scrub trees. A characteristic of the prairie coulee or ravines is their sudden beginning by a vertical drop of one or several feet, directly from the prairie. Such places were made-to-order rifle pits, and were so used by the Indians.

The creek itself had a border of fair-sized trees and brush; and hills in general carried a thinly scattered growth of scrub pine and cedar.

The ravine figured so prominently in the events of December 29, in all testimony relating thereto, and in all tales told, that it will be simply referred to in this narrative as “the ravine”—no chance of mistaken identity.

The plan for the disarmament was to assemble the bucks in the open space—scarcely a hundred yards square—between their camp and that of the cavalry, and there induce them to give up their arms peaceably. To convince them of the futility of any resistance, Troops B and K were formed up dismounted across the north side of the space; Troop G was formed up mounted, east of the space and little more than a hundred yards from it; on the south the sentinel line was in position across the ravine, with Troop A, Indian Scouts, in line, mounted, behind them, and Troops C and D still farther back, in line, mounted. West of the Indian camp the sentinel line was still in position, while about two hundred yards to the northwest, on a small knoll, the four guns of Capron’s battery were in position, flanked by Troop E, mounted on the right and one-third of Troops A and I on the left, also mounted.

All of these troops were in full view from the Indian camp, and within three hundred yards. What the Indians thought of it all will never be known; perhaps among them were some bright enough to see that if trouble started a breakthrough was not wholly impossible, fear of killing comrades across the circle might make the fire of the soldiers desultory and ineffective. Certainly the squaws worked hard and persistently up to the time the firing began, to saddle the ponies and load the pack ponies, travois and wagons—they expected to go somewhere, and soon.

The men of the guard were in a very precarious position should any fighting begin, and this was reflected in their losses: Troop A, five killed and five wounded; Troop I, four killed and six wounded.

Paralleling the south side of the cavalry camp was a line of Sibleys, the camp of Troop A, Indian Scouts. At the west end of this was the wall tent, erected by the troops for the use of Big Foot.

Just south of this tent Colonel Forsythe, Major Whitside and one or two others gathered, with two interpreters. The Indians, all in sheets or blankets, came from their camp and formed an irregular quarter-circle before them, facing east and north. The bucks so assembled numbered 106. The missing 14 were probably in camp, and would account for the firing there during and after the melee. They could hardly have escaped through the cordon of sentinels during the night. This was about eight o’clock on the morning of December 29, 1890.

Colonel Forsythe talked to the Indians at some length, through an interpreter, explaining to them that they must surrender their arms. They talked this over among themselves but appeared to arrive at no decision. At last twenty were tolled off to go into the camp and bring their arms. Some went part way but circled back and mingled with the crowd; most of them went to the camp, returning with two broken carbines, and said these were all the arms they had. They could not have been under the impression that only government arms were meant, for more carbines were found in the camp when it was searched.

Colonel Forsythe and Major Whitside talked the situation over, decided nothing could be accomplished this way, and had Big Foot brought out of his tent to talk to his people. He was supported by an Indian and the hospital steward. Big Foot talked with his bucks and finally stated that they had no arms, that the latter had been destroyed on the Cheyenne, where they had been some days before. The Chief was very sick; his mind may have been wandering; his bucks were obdurate and perhaps thinking of his leadership as being about at an end anyway—any answer was good enough.

Bucks were constantly passing between the council and the camp and seemed to be exciting the squaws, which may have had some connection with their efforts to get the pony herd ready for the road. It was decided to stop this circulation and to search the camp. Troop B deployed from its right on a line facing east and
about half-way between the Indians and their camp; Troop K passed to the east of the gathering and deployed on the south in similar position, facing north. The men were at intervals of two yards, and there was a gap of about twenty yards between the troops. Curiously, Surgeon John van R. Hoff gave the only detailed description of this movement, and he noted that in Troop K there was an “involuntary” closing in to the left, but the men on the right maintained the frontage with wider intervals.

Captain Wallace (K) took six or eight men and began at the southeast end to search the camp; Captain Varnum (B) took a similar party and began to search from the north end. The squaws did all they could to hide weapons—in their clothing, under them as they sat on the ground; one was too sick to move, but a new Winchester was taken from under her. One of the parties took only firearms, the other took bows and arrows, knives, hatchets as well. Captain Wallace picked up a stone warclub and carried it during the search. It was found near his body after the fight and was the foundation for the story that he was killed by it. He was killed by a bullet through the stomach. Part of the arms were carried to the battery position by men sent by Captain Moylan from the “One-third A & I” shown on the map, part were carried to a wagon near the cavalry camp, placed there for the purpose by Lt. Guy Preston. He had received 29, mostly old—some of them carbines from the Custer fight—when the firing broke out.

All this must have taken up a lot of time; it is curious that no question of time was asked by the Board in its investigation, and no mention made by witnesses except as to the eight o’clock formation, and as to the attack on Troops C and D two miles west of the battlefield, at eleven o’clock. Colonel Forsythe in his formal report written December 31, states that the fighting began at 9:15, “twenty minutes hot fight,” and forty minutes “skirmishing.” This refers to the fighting about the camp only.

It was now decided to search the bucks, many of whom had by this time settled down on the ground. Major Whitside and Captain Varnum began passing them between them, one at a time. Search of the first three or four yielded one Winchester and many cartridges. The Major directed that the latter be collected; someone handed Captain Varnum an old hat; he and his first sergeant held it while it was filled; the Captain turned his head away and called to one of his men to bring a grain sack. Then, as he stated, “* * they all seemed to rise with a purpose of passing through to be searched, when I saw five or six bucks throw off their blankets and bring up their rifles. I turned to Major Whitside saying, ‘By God, they have broken,’ and the Indians faced my troop and began firing.” Major Whitside states, “One shot was fired by an Indian, instantly followed by a volley from the others, who had jumped to their feet and thrown off their blankets.” On the hillside across the ravine to the south, Lt. Charles W. Taylor, commanding the Indian Scouts, was watching the scene from distance of about 200 yards. “A buck threw off his blanket and fired a rifle, apparently at the group where General Forsythe was standing. Other shots were fired and the Indians threw off their blankets. Then there was a lull for a second or two, and the soldiers began firing.”

Surgeon John van R. Hoff was near Big Foot. “At this moment a shot was fired while I was walking toward General Forsythe, with my back toward the Indians. I turned instantly and saw these Indians breaking from their center apparently in the direction of the gap between B and K Troops, firing continuous volleys as they advanced.”

Lt. James D. Mann, Troops K, assisted Captain Wallace in the search of the camp. The next day he was mortally wounded in a brush with Indians, and on his death bed dictated to his brother his story of the fight. Surely full credence should be given it. The following is an extract:

“In front of me were four bucks—three armed with rifles and one with bow and arrows. I drew my revolver and stepped through the line to my place with my detachment. The Indians raised their weapons over their heads as if in votive offering, then brought them down to bear on us, the one with the bow and arrow aiming directly at me. They seemed to wait an instant. The Medicine Man threw a handful of dust into the air, put on his war bonnet, and then I heard a gun fired near him. This seemed to be the signal they were waiting for, and the fire immediately began. I ordered my men to fire and the reports were almost simultaneous.”

Lt. Mann was on the opposite side of the Indian mass from the group about Colonel
Forsythe, and when the first shot was fired the Indians were already—in part at least—faced toward the troops between them and the camp.

The Medicine Man had been haranguing the Indians for some time and dancing. The interpreters said he was stirring them up, telling them they were proof against the bullets of the white men, that their own bullets would go true to the mark. One close-by witness describes the tenseness that grew up, “the dusky faces of the interpreters were ash gray.” There can be no doubt whatever that the firing was begun by the Indians, nor can there be any doubt that it was wholly unexpected by the troops.

One of the party with Colonel Forsythe was Father Francis M. J. Craft, a Catholic missionary priest, who had been ten years with the Indians of the Northwest. He happened to be at Pine Ridge Agency on a tour of visits to Catholic missions and schools, knew Big Foot and his band well, and went over to Wounded Knee in hope of being helpful. “Malicious whites on and near all Agencies, during the present excitement, have by misrepresenting the intentions of the Army, caused such a state of alarm and suspicion among the Indians as to make it possible for the least excitement of misunderstanding to precipitate serious trouble.”

His description of events is pretty much like that of others, and he reasoned with some of the Indians himself, noting among them some of the worst characters in the Sioux reservation. When some Indians raised their rifles he spoke to them, but “no one seemed to listen”; one, said to be a son of Big Foot, fired, and others followed his example.

Father Craft was severely wounded almost immediately—stabbed in the back by an Indian.

One of the interpreters, P. F. Wells, a half-breed, was also attacked by an Indian with a knife. He knocked the Indian over with his rifle and then shot him, but not before he had lost the end of his nose by the knife. The other interpreter, Ward, was also attacked by an Indian with a knife, and was unable to use his gun. They grappled and went down, the Indian on top. A soldier killed the Indian with his revolver.

Wounded Indians who continued firing were, of course, dispatched; those who ceased firing were cared for. One such asked an interpreter just after the melee ended, the identity of a body lying near. Being told it was that of the Medicine Man he spoke as though to the corpse—“If I could be taken to you I would stab you.” Then to the interpreter, “He is our murderer; only for him inciting our other young men we would all have been alive and happy.” His statement was taken later in the hospital and embodied in the proceedings of the Board.

An old squaw said, “The treacherous ones are of Big Foot’s band; we of Hump’s band honestly wanted peace.”

Apparently the Indians made the mistake of trying to shoot it out with the soldiers—they could have dashed through that thin line and reached their camp before the soldiers could have gotten in a second shot. It was less than fifty yards. Had there been no firing and the Indians simply made a dash for their camp and the shelter of the ravine beyond, probably not a soldier would have fired a shot—there would have been not time for orders and they had none. In the space of a minute the Indians could have been in some sort of cover, ready to fight. Perhaps they were too sure of their repeating rifles; perhaps they were firmly imbued with what their medicine man had been telling them for an hour or more—that the white soldiers’ bullets could not harm them. Whatever it was they paid dearly—their heaviest losses were right there.

Continued in the next
Cavalry Journal
The Phillips Military Saddle

by

Colonel Albert E. Phillips

Reprinted from the Cavalry Journal, March-April 1939

The Phillips Military Saddle was fully described in my article published in the May-June, 1935, issue of THE CAVALRY JOURNAL under the caption “The Phillips Cross Country Saddle,” as it was then called. As this new saddle was designed as a modern forward-seat saddle, I shall discuss in this article, among other points, the saddle in its relation to the “forward seat.”

Knowing full well the aversion to a change in riding methods, it was with some reluctance that I acceded to the requests of many of our accomplished horsemen to design a saddle which would enable the American Officer to easily acquire that “form” and seat so essential in military riding—namely, the modern forward seat.

For several years our riding instructors, too, had asked for a saddle that would make it possible for the students to easily assume the type of seat they were being taught, as many were the faults found in existing type of saddles: some were too short; others were too flat; some were too wide where the rider’s legs passed over the seat; or the throat was convex when it should be concave. And the truth of the matter was, there were grounds for these complaints.

It has only been for the past few years that we have really begun to appreciate the many advantages of the “forward seat.” The Italians were the first to adopt the forward-seat position for the rider, it differing from the French position in that in the latter there is a tendency toward riding with the weight somewhat to the rear and to keeping the horse closely collected and flexed. However, as Cavalry became more mobile, the French also gradually moved the seat forward.

The modern “forward seat” is readily attainable, and naturally a rider is assisted in assuming it with a saddle especially designed for it. Some may ask: Why the “forward seat?” The answer is briefly: The “forward seat” is both technically and scientifically correct for all types of military riding, from ordinary marching to cross-country work, and it is the most secure position for the rider and the easiest for the horse. For high school work, however, and for polo, other “seats” perhaps may be found more desirable, depending upon the whim of the rider.

Let us bear in mind that the horse carries approximately five-ninths (5/9) of his own weight upon his forehand and that this natural balance should be disturbed as little as possible. In military riding, the first consideration of a “seat” should be one which places the rider in a position favorable to the horse. By so doing, the rider will be compensated by getting out of the horse all that it is capable of giving with the least effort. And the horse is capable of giving his utmost when a preponderance of the rider’s weight is carried forward of the horse’s center of motion, so that the horse’s loins and propelling members (hindquarters) will be free and unhampered! But in addition to the rider’s weight being correctly positioned, it is important that the horse be permitted to travel much as in nature, with a normal or fairly low carriage of head for all cross-country work where speed and ability to negotiate obstacles are required. The same principle applies to ordinary marching. By these methods we tend to maintain the natural balance of the horse. Just how far forward the rider’s weight should be carried depends entirely, of course, upon the gait of the horse.

Lt. Colonel Harry D. Chamberlin, one of the Army’s most distinguished horsemen, in discussing the “forward seat,” states:

“One of the greatest errors which prevents the rider’s assuming a correct forward seat, and which leads to the grotesque positions often seen, results from two things; first, saddle seats are frequently too short for the riders; and, second, the rider endeavors to push his crotch and buttocks too far forward in the saddle. The crotch should be in the throat or deepest part of the saddle, and the fleshy part of the buttocks should be kept well to rear, but due to the rider’s constant forward inclination of the body from the hips there should be practically no weight on the cantle. Assuming a proper seat on the other hand necessities a properly made saddle with the
throat or deepest part of the seat a little in front of the center. The forward seat is easy to acquire, although one unaccustomed to it will first become tired in the loins. After having acquired it through practice, however, both the rider and his horse will outlast the man who leans backward, and the horse which carries the rider’s weight on his loin.”

The “forward seat” is uncomfortable to assume with a saddle not designed for it; that is, with a saddle that slopes downward towards the cantle. The majority of saddles we have are of this latter type—with the low point of the seat in rear of the central part of it and the stirrup loops too far toward the rear; and to make matters worse, most of these saddles are placed so far forward upon the horse as to raise the pommel higher than the cantle. With a saddle not designed for the “forward seat” and with pommel higher than cantle, it is practically impossible to even assume the forward-seat position, let alone riding it with any degree of comfort.

Nor is comfortable riding assured by the use of a forward-seat saddle if it is improperly positioned; for even with a forward-seat saddle, if it is placed upon the horse in a too forward position, with the pommel higher than the cantle, the rider will be riding the cantle and reaching for his stirrups and to that extent be uncomfortable, as the stirrups of forward-seat saddles are necessarily positioned farther forward. But with a correctly designed forward-seat saddle, properly positioned upon the horse, that is, with the bearing of the saddle approximately level, the rider can quickly adopt the forward-seat position and thus ride with ease and comfort, grace and security, and in balance with the horse.

(Note: Before deciding upon the location of the stirrup loops, I contacted the service boards and also several of our able riders, and all were in agreement that the front edge of the stirrup loops should be placed three inches from the front edge of the saddle.)

Let us now discuss briefly the “low point” of the seat of the saddle. The majority of military riding saddles were so constructed as to have the low point in the central part of the seat, but in some cases this low point has inadvertently been moved backward or forward, depending upon how the saddle was broken in. It is obvious that if the pommel is raised, as occurs when the saddle is placed too far forward, the low point will be in rear of the center of the seat.

Many riders place their saddles too far forward. A glance at the illustrations in our CAVALRY JOURNAL and other riding magazines will bear out this statement. In discussing this matter with an officer, he stated that he had been instructed to place his saddle as far forward as he could put it. I am sure that what his instructor meant to convey was that the saddle should be placed well forward. There is a proper place for a saddle. If it is placed too far forward, its bearing will be under the pommel and cantle, resulting in possible injuries to the horse at these points of support. A saddle too far forward will also interfere with the movements of the horse’s shoulder blades and possibly bruise the broad, back muscle over the withers and its connections with the shoulder blades, as well as cause injuries to his loin. Although it has been stressed that the saddle should be well forward, its bearing must be on a level, even though it necessitates moving the saddle slightly rearward. The Phillips Military Saddles now being produced will have the low point approximately one inch forward of the center of the seat. Some other minor improvements in the saddle are being made as a result of the recent six-month’s durability test.

The Phillips Military Saddle and its accessories were officially approved for adoption by the War Department January 25, 1937, and designated Model 1936. However, this saddle was actually produced in 1934 under the name of the Phillips Cross-Country Saddle, official photographs of same being taken November 6, 1934. After completing this saddle I assisted in the design of a training saddle, M. 1935, and a field saddle, M. 1935. These three saddles were submitted to both the Cavalry Board and the Field Artillery Board for test and, after having undergone very strenuous test, the Phillips Military Saddle was recommended for adoption by both boards. Recently the 1st Cavalry Division Board also tested the Phillips Military Saddle and likewise recommended its adoption, thus gaining the unanimous approval of the three leading testing agencies for this saddle.

The Phillips Military Saddle Equipped for the Field: In a previous article I mentioned the many advantages for both rider and horse of
having one saddle only for daily riding and for the field; but the greatest value of the Phillips Military Saddle, as I see it, is as a field saddle, for it is in the field where the horse must be given fullest consideration. The elimination of extended side bars, which unduly bear upon the horse’s loins, is of primary importance. We have all seen many horses disabled by extended side bars of field saddles. We have likewise seen many horses disabled by saddles which have narrow pommel arches, and by saddles which have uncomfortable seats. Such injuries are caused by poorly designed saddles. But many injuries, too, are caused by faulty saddling and riding. No matter how perfectly a saddle may be designed, if it is not properly positioned upon the horse and correctly ridden, injuries will occur. In the design of the Phillips Military Saddle, every projection of other saddles which rubbed either rider or horse was eliminated. I wish to emphasize one important point in riding this saddle in the field: Forward-seat saddles are designed to facilitate easy riding, whether in a “forward seat” or an upright position, assuming of course that the saddle is on a level bearing surface. However, a forward-seat saddle will be somewhat awkward and perhaps uncomfortable for the rider who in the field habitually rides the cantle, and especially so if the pommel is higher than the cantle, as in that case he will be reaching for the stirrups.

In addition to meeting the demands of the three testing boards, we have met the expectations of the Army’s leading horsemen, many of whom have written in highest praise of the merits of this saddle. In conclusion, may I quote Major Wm. B. Bradford of the Cavalry Division and former Olympic Team Captain, who wrote: “The saddle was used during both the Provisional Cavalry Division Manuevers at Balmorhea and the Third Army Manuevers in the vicinity of Fort Bliss. It has also been ridden for polo, hacking and jumping, and has given satisfaction in every phase of its use. I think it is a splendid piece of work that is sure to win approbation of the horsemen of the Army.”—It is my ardent hope that the Phillips Military Saddle will prove a satisfaction likewise to each and all of our Army riders.
One of the items housed in the U.S. Cavalry Association’s library is a restored Model 1909 Ambulance. The horse-drawn ambulance was one of the last models used by the Army.

This particular model was especially seen during the Spanish-American War. The United States declared war against Spain on April 21, 1898, following the sinking of the Battleship Maine in the Havana harbor the previous February. The U.S. supported the efforts of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines for independence from Spanish rule. It was the first overseas war fought by the United States, with campaigns in Cuba and the Philippines. Dismounted cavalry troopers, along with Theodore Roosevelt’s Rough Riders, are especially known for their charge at Kettle Hill. The war ended in December 1898, establishing the independence of Cuba and ceding Puerto Rico and Guam to the United States.
Randy Steffen writes in *The Horse Soldier: 1776-1943*, that this model of horse drawn ambulances were built in large numbers during the late 1890s and early 1900s for use in the United States, Cuba, and the Philippines both during and after the Spanish-American War. The ambulances were often attached to cavalry units as they were close to the front lines and came with a ready supply of horses.

A month before the official beginning of the war, the Army had no reserve of wagons or ambulances. Quartermaster Support of the Army (Center of Military History) notes that the wagons and ambulances were in the hands of the regular troops and carried with them into the field when mobilization began. The ambulances totaled 96. The majority of the Army’s horses belonged to the cavalry, and then the artillery. A retrenchment policy following the Civil War had left a very small amount of field transportation. In addition, Congressional appropriations limited the purchase of draft animals to 5,000 in 1889, and that limitation was continued in succeeding appropriations bills.

When the war began, Col. Crosby Miller, who was in charge of the procurement of wagons and animals for the Quartermaster General, estimated the Army’s need at 5,000 wagons. Most manufacturers struggled to meet demands.

**MODEL 1909 SPECS**

- **Front wheels**: 37 inches in diameter, 16 spokes.
- **Rear Wheels**: 51 inches in diameter, 16 spokes, rested on platform springs.
- **Tailgate**: 17 tall by 57 wide (inches).
- **Cover**: Tan canvas with Red Cross on white background.
- **Drawn by**: Four to six horses.
- **Interior**: Could carry up to four stretchers.

The drawdown in wagons and ambulances had led to a decrease in ready supplies needed to make them. Ultimately, the Army procured 4,620 wagons, but not all were delivered before the war ended. Production of ambulances was even trickier. Only two companies manufactured Army ambulances, and the demand was met so slowly that the required 3 ambulances to a regiment and 27 to a division was seldom fully met.

Very few of the wagons and ambulances actually made it overseas. *Quartermaster Support of the Army* noted that the Quartermaster Department failed to provide enough transports to take wagons to the troops in the Cuban Expedition, which in turn limited ground capability and mobility during campaigns. There were significant challenges to building and then transporting wagons and ambulances to the front lines. The Spanish-American War was the last conflict in which wagons had dominant usage to transport wounded, as advances made to motorized vehicles quickly filled that role.
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Shipping Charges for Store Items

| Under $10.00    | $5.75  |
| $10.01-$25.00   | $8.75  |
| $25.01-$50.00   | $11.75 |
| $50.01-$75.00   | $14.75 |
| $75.01-$100.00  | $17.75 |
| Over $100.00    | $25.50 |

Make all checks payable to: United States Cavalry Association or USCA

Mail Payment & Order to: United States Cavalry Association P.O. Box 2325 Fort Riley, KS 66442-0325

Merchandise Subtotal

Shipping & Handling

Total
Specials at the Sutler's Store

"The Last Charge"
U.S. Cavalry’s Last Charge with the 26th Cavalry
20" x 16"
Signed by Edwin P. Ramsey
Certificate of Authenticity
www.edwinpriceramsey.com
$100.00

Old Bill Statue
$128.95
10" x 4 3/4" x 12 1/4"

Cavalry Stetson
$159.00

Lieutenant Ramsey's War
by Edwin P. Ramsey and Stephen J. Rivele
$9.95
Horsemanship and Horsemastership 1937 Reprints
Three Volume Set

$29.95

Fort Riley Shot Glass

$5.95

Military Fighting Vehicle: Model 1876 T-Shirt

$12.95

Hat Cords
Available in yellow, blue, green and red

$9.95