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The 8th Cavalry Regiment in the Korean Conflict

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

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From 1866 to 1891, 10 U.S. Cavalry regiments fought a dozen major campaigns against the American Indians of the western United States. Cavalry horses carried the troopers into battle, hauled supplies and endured privations – sometimes being abandoned, shot or eaten. Through it all, however, horses were respected, loved and well cared for.

When John Finerty rode into camp outside Fort Fetterman, Wyoming, in May 1876, he noted “clouds of cavalry horses and pack mules grazing in the valley.” The pugnacious newspaperman accompanied Gen. George Crook’s troops on their campaign against the Sioux, and he reported his observations in a series of Chicago Times articles.

Finerty and troopers from the 2nd and 3rd Cavalry regiments had spent a full day in the saddle, riding across steep sandstone ravines. “Our horses nearly stood upon their heads, but they did not go over,” he wrote, “They were all bred in that country and were as sure-footed as mules.”

By the time Crook’s campaign ended five months later, the soldiers and a handful of horses had survived some of the toughest battles and greatest hardships of the American Indian wars. Through the trials, the troopers and horses shared their days, work, food and water, life and sometimes death.

**Cavalry-Horse Acquisitions**

Soldiers lived and worked in companies of 60 to 80 men, with 10 to 12 companies each of the 10 regiments. During the American Indian wars, the cavalry maintained about 10,000 men, including officers. Each trooper was assigned a horse, and the trooper often kept the same animal throughout his enlistment. Officers purchased their own mounts, preferring well-bred stock from Virginia or Kentucky. Each might have a charger, trotter and an all-around riding horse.

Army-purchasing boards, comprised of a quartermaster and one or two regimental officers, bought horses from ranchers and civilian breeders. The Civil War depleted the country’s supply of quality horses, so the boards often accepted mustangs or stock bred from Morgan or Thoroughbred stallions and mustang mares. Though the horses’ quality was often unequal, the military generally obtained good horses at fairly reasonable prices.

In 1873, $142 was the average cost of a cavalry horse. Purchasing boards selected suitable horses to use as models while inspecting stock. They looked for geldings in fair condition, between 14 and 16 hands high and 750 to 1,100 pounds, from 5 to 8 years old and with good conformation. Sometimes the selection was limited. At one point, Crook, after losing hundreds of horses, mounted 50 troopers on captured American Indian ponies.

The cavalry preferred solid-colored horses, and assigned them by color so that a regiment would have a bay company, a sorrel company, a chestnut company, etc. M company, the last in the military alphabet, received the leftover roans, piebalds and pintos, along with the nickname the “Calico Troop” or the “The Brindles.”

The 3-inch letters “US” were hot-branded on new horses’ left shoulders. Additional
hoof brands identified each animal's unit.

**Training Horses and Riders**

Officers generally entered the service as experienced horsemen and received additional riding instruction at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Many enlisted men, however, got their first horseback experiences at frontier posts. Following the Battle of the Little Bighorn, U.S. Congress hastily increased the cavalry's strength. After meeting his new recruits, an officer wrote, "None of the new men in my troop could ride at all."

It wasn't until the 1880s that the cavalry offered formal, organized horsemanship training. At Jefferson Barracks, the recruit depot in Missouri, troopers received instruction in mounted and dismount saber drill, and regular and bareback equitation. Practical jokes were common. One 7th Cavalry replacement remembered his buddies urging him to ride an especially fractious horse with the stirrups crossed over the saddle so that his feet hung free, a technique usually used to improve a rider's seat. In the end, many cavalrmen became proficient, enthusiastic horsemen.

Horse and soldier training drew heavily on great European cavalry-school techniques and traditions, particularly the school in Saumur, France. The cavalry sent many officers to study in Europe, among them young Philip Kearney, who rode into battle with a sword in his hand and the reins in his teeth, in the style of French Chasseurs.

**Poinsett's Cavalry Tactics**, first issued in 1841, included a section on working with young horses. Officers directed their men as they trained their horses during daily exercises that included jumping ditches, maneuvers in formation and mounted calisthenics, known as "monkey drills."

Poinsett repeatedly emphasized kind treatment. "Make use of gentle means to remove his (the horse's) fears," he advised. "Whenever a horse has obeyed, the hand should be held lightly and he should be caressed."

Cavalrymen gradually accustomed their horses to the sounds of artillery fire and other military noises. At the end of a lesson, men mounted on experienced horses fired their guns at some distance from the new horses, which continued to march around the track. Troopers calmed excited or frightened horses. During subsequent sessions, the horses moved closer to the sound, until their own riders fired from the horses' backs. The same technique was used to accustom horses to waving flags and standards and beating drums.

What the manuals recommended in the riding school, however, the troopers couldn't always carry in the field. "At first we had some exciting times with our young and untrained horses," wrote Capt. Williard Glazier in 1861. "Several of our wildest and seemingly incorrigible ones we have been compelled to run up the steepest hills in the vicinity, under the wholesome discipline of sharp spurs, until the evil has been sweated out of them."

Part of the trouble lay with the men, "many of whom have never bridled a horse nor touched a saddle," Glazier continued.

The captain also faulted cavalry-issued curb bits, which caused the horses "to pitch up into the air as though they had suddenly been transformed into monstrous kangaroos, while the riders showed sign of having taken lessons in somersaults," he described.
Horsekeeping at the Post and on Campaign

“The efficiency of the cavalry depends almost entirely upon the ‘condition of the horses,’” Col. Phillip St. George Cooke wrote in his tactical manual, “which alone makes them able to get over long distances in short spaces of time. The horses must, therefore, be nursed with great care, in order that they may endure the utmost fatigue when emergencies demand it.”

Sgt. Percival Lowe, who served in the cavalry from 1849 to 1854, put it more succinctly. “Everything must be done for the comfort of the horse,” he said.

Each of the army’s frontier posts was laid out in similar pattern, with a dusty parade ground bordered by the officers’ quarters on one side and barracks for the enlisted men on the other. Behind the barracks were the stables and the corrals for the horses. Stables were built from the best material available – logs, adobe or stone. Each stall had a window, a manger and straw bedding on a natural base. When not in use, horses spent the day outdoors on a picket line or grazing under guard.

Reveille sounded at 5:30 a.m., followed by breakfast and 1 ½ hours of stable call, when the troopers watered, groomed and fed their horses.

Mounted drill occurred from 8 to 10:30 a.m., with stable call again at 4 p.m. On an average day, when not on campaign, cavalrymen spent approximately five hours caring for and riding their mounts, contact that often led to close bonds between the men and their horses.

At stable call, troopers wore white canvas frocks to avoid soiling their expensive wool uniforms. Twice a day, they led their horses to the picket line and groomed them, using a currycomb, brush, hay wisp, sponge and cloth. Troopers sponged the horses’ eyes and nostrils, combed their tails and picked their hoofs and reset or replaced lost shoes. In case a horse lost a shoe during marches, troopers carried a set of shoes fitted to their horses.

Cavalry horses spent as much time as possible on pasture and were supplemented with hay and grain. Lowe had never seen better nor more enduring horses, he wrote, than those in his own troop, “and prairie hay, corn and good care made them what they were,” he observed. A visiting French dragoon noted in the 1890s that a day’s ration for a horse consisted of 14 pounds of hay, 12 pounds of grain, and 3 ½ pounds of straw for bedding. Horse rations were one of the elements of a successful campaign, and cavalry horses often carried 10 to 15 pounds of grain along with the rest of the equipment.

With proper feeding and shoeing and well-trained, considerate riders, cavalry horses could serve up to age 25.

A day’s march averaged 20 miles, usually at a walk. Cooke recommended periods of trotting with frequent stops to feed and water the horses, allowing them to graze on even the shortest breaks. During ordinary marches, he added, the soldiers should dismount and lead their horses every third hour.

Notes in officers’ journals show that they made a point of seeking campsites with clean water and plenty of grass. When possible, they bought hay and grain from local ranchers. Lt. William Carey Brown recorded the purchase of a field of standing wheat from an Oregon farmer for $100 during the Bannock War in July 1878. The purchasing officers immediately turned out their fatigued horses to graze.

Once in camp, horses were picketed and allowed to graze. If hostile tribes were in the area, the unit formed the supply wagons into a corral and tied the horses inside. The troopers cut grass and bundled it in their blankets to carry back to the horses.

In November and December 1876, during McKenzie’s Powder River Expedition, soldiers cut cottonwood trees and fed the bark to their mounts. The work was “a gate bother,”
Pvt. William Earl Smith wrote in his diary. When no feed was available, horses went without.

“A stampede was the terror of the terrors on the plains,” wrote Lowe. He recorded one stampede when 600 horses, poorly picketed in sandy ground, broke loose. They charged “in a mad rush trampling everything underfoot, upsetting and breaking a dozen six-mule wagons by catching picket pins in the wheels as the moving mass rushed on; picket pins whizzing in the air struck an object and bounded forward like flying lances.” The flying picket pins and tangled ropes killed almost 100 horses and mules.

Smith and other enlisted men had their own opinions. “I awoke in the morning,” Smith wrote in December 1876, “and found, to my surprise, that I had no hoss for the hird had stamped during the nite. I never saw the men in as good yummer as they were this morning every boddy praying that they would never find them for we had been worked to death cutting cotton wood for them.”

**Horses in Combat**

The cavalry rode to battle and dismounted to fight. “Every fourth man was supposed to take the horses back,” wrote Pvt. Jesse G. Harris about the action at the Wounded Knee massacre, “but a lot of them didn’t. The horses were simply turned loose and ran wherever they wanted to.”

Though trained to remain still under fire, the horses often panicked during combat. “There was no need to urge our horses to cover,” wrote Finerty about a Sioux attack. “They were badly stampeded by the firing, after the manner of most American horses.” Custer’s troops’ horses, he added, had “plunged, reared and kicked under the appalling fire of the Sioux.”

Most Cavalry horses died in action or from exhaustion, lack of feed, exposure or overwork. Troopers shot their horses when they were injured or too weak to keep going. “Some of the poor beasts fell dead from the effects of fatigue and want of proper forage,” wrote Finerty, “but a majority simply lay down and refused to budge an inch farther. My horse became a burden on my hands.”

Sometimes, played-out horses were simply abandoned.

Western campaigns took a great toll on both horses and men. They suffered together on marches through the desert or in bad weather without adequate shelter, feed, wood or water. Eating horse meat was a symbol of great hardship. Crook’s men shot and ate horses in September 1876, after their rations ran out. “As for eating horses,” Lt. Lawson told Finerty, “I’d as soon think of eating my brother!”

Nonetheless, Finerty reported “Lawson dined on horse steak, like the rest of us, before many days.”

Winter campaigns, undertaken when the American Indians were encamped and easier to find, created their own special hardships. The soldiers, dressed in almost everything they owned, could hardly mount their horses. Horses and troopers sometimes froze to death during the night.

When no other place could be found to hitch his horse for the night, a trooper might wrap the halter line around his hand and lie down, using his saddle as a pillow. The horse would graze all around the sleeping man, even nosing him awake to get the grass he lay on. “An instance can scarcely be found,” Glazier observed, “where the horse has been known to step upon or in anywise injure his sleeping lord.”

Daily care and drill and shared hardships brought men and horses together in close companionship. “The Indian may love his faithful dog,” Glazier added, “but his attachment cannot surpass the cavalryman’s for his horse.”

Lee Farren lives in northeastern Oregon. Her two-part series on American Indian horsemanship appeared in our June 2004 and July 2004 issues.
Cavalry Organizations

The 8th Cavalry Regiment in the Korean Conflict

By Natalie Frakes

In September 1945 the 8th Cavalry Regiment was sent to occupy Japan even though the GHQ hadn’t planned on deploying them. By July 18, 1950 they were deployed to Korea. The regiment needed to furnish key NCO’s and provide combat relief to the 24th and 25th Infantry Divisions, although the 8th was only forty-five percent combat effective. The deployment started with the establishment of a beach-head at Pohang-Dong Bay and within one day they were loaded on Korean freight trains and taken several miles north of Taegu in Yong Dong.

The 8th Cavalry took tremendous losses due to being sent in without enough support of artillery tanks and communications with the adjacent units. For days they were outnumbered by the enemy that had Russian tanks. Finally, the 3rd Battalion arrived on August 27th with a full strength defense of tanks, weapons and crew.

The 8th Regiment with strength and equipment that the 3rd Battalion provided relocated to defend Taegu in what was called the “Bowling Alley”. The “Bowling Alley” was located within deep ridges and was on the main road leading north. In the “Bowling Alley” is where some of the heaviest fighting occurred and was critical in the defense of Taegu. Capturing enemy vehicles, the 8th quickly gained yards and the enemy retreated north. By October the 8th Regiment made it to the 38th parallel and attacked onward toward the North Korean capital of Pyongyang. In late October, they were then given the mission to give some relief to the Republic of Korea Regiment that was located just north of Pyongyang. While they were giving the ROK Regiment relief the 8th Cavalry Regiment was attacked by thousands of Chinese infantrymen. This battle took place in a North Korean Valley and lasted for two days. During this battle on November 1st and 2nd, 1950 the 8th lost about 800 men, officers and enlisted. Withdrawal was eminent after the deadly attack by the Chinese.

After some reorganization, the 8th Regiment went back to attacking to the North in January of 1951. They forced the Chinese back to the North in some extreme weather of snow, ice and rough terrain. Finally, at the end of April the 8th Cavalry Regiment started defending the “Golden Line” north of Seoul. The Chinese had a plan to take over Seoul as a May Day surprise but the 8th defended it at all costs and on May 2, 1951 the UN Summer-Fall offensive began.

The 8th Cavalry was awarded the Republic of Korea Unit Citation for their service in support of the 1st Cavalry Division in the stand against the North Korean aggressors. They also won a PUC for Taegu and two ROK PUC’s and the Greek Gold Bravery Medal for their time in Korea.

Paper – EIG Cavalry in Korean War by LTC Ret Jennings

Army mule in Korea
Photo courtesy of Memorial Research Library

Photo courtesy of en.wikipedia.org
“I can make a General in five minutes but a good horse is hard to replace.” – Abraham Lincoln.

While obviously it takes years of training and experience to become a military general, the same is true of the cavalry horse.

In today’s modern military that consists of equipment with the latest technology, it is easy to forget that not long ago it was the cavalry horse that helped change the tides in many battles. It was not an unmanned airplane providing up-to-the-second reports of the battlefield, it was the cavalryman and his mount. It was not the tanks that broke through the enemy lines to provide a path for the soldier, it was the cavalryman and his mount. And, it was not the HUMVEE that removed the wounded from the battle, it was the cavalryman and his mount.

The 1st Cavalry Division, located at Fort Hood, TX, is the largest cavalry unit in the Army today. It is comprised of three Armored Brigade Combat Teams, an Aviation Brigade, a Fires Brigade and recently the famed 3rd Cavalry Regiment, Brave Rifles. More than 25,000 soldiers are assigned to 1st Cavalry Division, a division whose original lineage can be traced back to the Civil War. It has been said that in order to know where you are headed, you must first know from where you came. So even though soldiers of the 1st Cavalry Division may drive a tank or fly a helicopter, they do not forget the heritage that they bear. The 1st Cavalry Division’s Horse Cavalry Detachment (HCD) is a living reminder of that heritage.

The Horse Detachment is a special all-volunteer ceremonial unit that supports III Corps and Fort Hood and the 1st Cavalry Division by participating in parades, ceremonies and many other events all over the country. The Horse Detachment also supports the United States Army with its public relations and recruiting efforts, all while maintaining the standards of drill and tradition of the Cavalry of the late 1880’s.

Though the HCD is not the only mounted unit remaining in today’s Army, it does stand out among them. The soldiers in this unit take great pride in remaining both self-sustaining and self-sufficient. The soldiers care for the current stock of thirty-three horses, five mules and two dogs daily, but that is just the beginning. Soldiers assigned to the unit are in charge of all the maintenance of the stalls, the grounds, and overall upkeep of the equipment.

To remain self-sustaining The Horse Detachment will send select Troopers to a specialty school. The detachment has a fully equipped ferrier shop where soldiers care for and maintain the feet of all the horses and mules under the detachment’s care. Soldiers selected for this duty are sent to Oklahoma State Ferrier School only after many hours of apprenticeship in the ferrier shop.

The detachment also has a fully equipped leather shop where soldiers make and maintain the iconic 19-inch cavalry riding boots and the 1885 McClellan saddle that the troopers ride in. Troopers selected to attend boot school are expected to not only make
new boots, but repair older pairs as well. These soldiers are sent to school in Saint Jo, Texas and are taught the trade of handmade boot making by Carl Chappel, a 3rd generation boot maker. Soldiers sent to saddle building school are also expected to not only build new saddles, but perform maintenance on older saddles as well. Soldiers selected to become saddle builders are sent to Springdale, Arkansas where Doug Kidd teaches them how to build a saddle by hand, and only after that is complete, he will teach them how to build the saddle using machinery, all of which the HCD is fully equipped with. Sending soldiers to these specialty schools does help to keep the Horse Detachment self-sustaining, but it also saves the Army tens of thousands of dollars annually.

The highlight of the Horse Detachment is their 30-minute mounted drill and ceremony and weapons demonstration performed by eleven riders and mounts and the 1873 Escort wagon which is pulled by two to four mules and is driven by a mule skinner and swamper. The demo showcases precise drill and ceremonial movements mounted and is conducted at a walk, trot and canter. This is followed by a fast-paced weapons demonstration that highlights the weapons of the period--the 1873 Springfield Carbine, the 1873 Colt revolver and the 1860 light cavalry saber. The detachment has performed the demo all over the United States and is a must see for all who have the opportunity.

U.S. Cavalry Association’s National Cavalry Competition where other military units, reenactors and cavalry enthusiasts gather to showcase their skills. In 2014 SGT Jesse Hurst from Springdale, Arkansas earned the top honors in the Bolté Cup Competition, and his mount, Cobra, was voted best cavalry horse. Soldiers from the HCD have always placed well in the competition, but the unit has only sent a few soldiers every year. In 2015, however, the HCD is looking to send their full demonstration team to participate and also perform the demo.

Soldiers assigned for duty at the detachment typically spend about 18 months with the unit before going back to their parent unit. This ensures that soldiers do not lose proficiency in the job that they enlisted to do. Many of the soldiers at the detachment are combat veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and are among the best that the Division has to offer. Soldiers must go through multiple interviews before being accepted to even try out for duty at the HCD. The try-out period, or Cavalry School, is a 30-day process where soldiers are taught the basics of military horsemanship, the history of the detachment, and how to care for and maintain the animals and grounds. At the end of the 30 days, soldiers are tested, and those that pass, earn the privilege of being a part of the Horse Cavalry Detachment. Currently the detachment is comprised of one officer and thirty enlisted soldiers.

These Soldiers and mounts are living reminders of the rich history that the 1st Cavalry Division enjoys. So, while the Army no longer has a need for horses in combat, we still keep our mounts with us, constantly reminding us that even though the face of war may shift and change, we are STILL the CAVALRY!

“The Horse Detachment has traveled all over the country, from Washington D.C. to Pasadena, California, performing the demo, taking part in parades and bringing a unique experience to military ceremonies. A few soldiers each year take part in the annual U.S. Cavalry Association’s National Cavalry Competition where other military units, reenactors and cavalry enthusiasts gather to showcase their skills. In 2014 SGT Jesse Hurst from Springdale, Arkansas earned the top honors in the Bolté Cup Competition, and his mount, Cobra, was voted best cavalry horse. Soldiers from the HCD have always placed well in the competition, but the unit has only sent a few soldiers every year. In 2015, however, the HCD is looking to send their full demonstration team to participate and also perform the demo.

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“Look back at our struggle for freedom, Trace our present day’s strength to its source; And you’ll find that the pathway to glory Is strewn with the bones of the horse.”

-ANON
Guest Author

LT. SAMUEL A. CHERRY

By Trooper Bob Witt, 1SG, US Army Ret.

Life on the plains during the Indian Wars was a harsh existence, with danger at every turn. Death could come from unexpected sources and at any time. Such an example was the life of Lt Samuel A. Cherry.

Samuel Austin Cherry (Apr 14, 1850-May 11, 1881) was a Lieutenant in the United States Cavalry. He spent most of his career at posts in Wyoming and Nebraska. Cherry was born in Lagrange, Indiana and spent his boyhood there. He was admitted to the United States Military Academy in 1870 and while there, he pushed a classmate away from falling cannon which struck him instead. This injury left him with a distinct limp for the rest of his life. He graduated from the Academy in 1875, ranked 35th in a class of 43.

Upon graduation Cherry was promoted to the rank of second lieutenant and assigned to frontier duty under the command of General Crook whose forces were engaged in the process of confining Indians to reservations, following Custer’s massacre on the Little Big Horn River in Montana in July 1876. He distinguished himself as an excellent and courageous officer and received several citations for bravery in action during these operations. Later, in 1876, he was transferred to the 5th Cavalry at Fort D. A. Russell, near present day Cheyenne, Wyoming. He continued to serve at various posts in Wyoming until virtually all Indians were confined to reservations by 1878.

On September 21, 1879 Cherry was attached to one infantry and three cavalry companies under the command of Major Thomas T. Thornburgh at Fort Steele near Rawlins, Wyoming. Thornburgh had been ordered to march to the White River Indian Reservation at the request of Nathan C. Meeker, the Indian Agent, who had become engaged in altercations with the Ute Tribe.

At noon on September 29 Cherry was leading a small detachment, scouting in front of the main body, when he detected some 300 to 400 Ute warriors waiting in ambush. Cherry waved his hat, a shot was fired, followed by intense firing from the Ute warriors. Major Thornburgh was killed, and command passed to Captain J. Scott Payne who was also wounded. Cherry and a group of men were ordered to undertake a rear guard action to allow the rest of the command to withdraw and form a defensive position. With great courage and skill, Cherry conducted the operation over 1000 yards, keeping the much larger Indian force in check and brought all of his men back to the main column, although many were wounded due to the intense fire of the numerically superior force. The column was under siege for six days until the arrival of Company D, 9th Cavalry and the arrival of Col. Wesley Merit with about 450 men of the 5th Cavalry on October 2.

This engagement became known as the battle of Milk Creek, part of the White River War. On the day this battle started the Utes attacked the agency and killed Agent Meeker in what is now known as the Meeker massacre.

After the battle, fourteen non-commissioned officers from the three cavalry companies engaged in the battle (Company E 3rd Cavalry and Companies D and F 5th Cavalry) composed and signed a letter for Cherry commending his bravery and “cool, disciplined leadership” in conducting the rear guard action that brought his unit back across open ground and under intense fire to the safety of the entrenchments while having 17 of his 20 men wounded. His actions kept the larger command from being ambushed and later overrun.

In June 1880 when he was 30 years old, he was assigned as a Lieutenant of Cavalry to Fort Niobrara, near present day Valentine, Nebraska. Valentine is located about 9 miles south of the South Dakota border in central Nebraska on the Niobrara River. This newly established post was about 7 miles southeast of the Sioux Reservation and about 40 miles east of the Rosebud Agency. With Fort
Robinson about 150 miles to the west, it provided a large military presence near the Brule and Oglala Sioux. Lt. Cherry served with distinction and was very popular and well liked by the civilian population.

Fort Niobrara had been established barely a year when Lt Cherry was assigned there. The Rosebud Agency had been established nearby as the headquarters for the Indian Reservation after the containment of the Sioux in 1878. The mission of Fort Niobrara was to insure Indian confinement, care for their needs and protect the influx of white settlers.

Plans of a plot to rob the stagecoach carrying the Army payroll to Fort Niobrara from the end of the railroad tracks at Neligh, Nebraska to Fort Niobrara was overheard by the post blacksmith while at the nearby Deer Park Hotel. He hurried back to the Fort and notified Major J.J. Upham of what he had overheard. The commander, while expressing disbelief, decided to take no chances. He ordered Lt Cherry to escort the payroll and Col Stanton (Paymaster) from Long Pine to Fort Niobrara. Lt Cherry and his troops executed the mission without incident, and the payroll arrived safely on May 9, 1881. Payday was normally an occasion for rejoicing, so of course some celebrating was in order.

Not far to the east of Fort Niobrara was an establishment known as Casterline’s Ranch. This brothel and gambling den was located as near to the fort as military law would allow. Hank Casterline was a tough character who provided just the place to relieve soldiers of their pay where drinking, gambling, and sleeping space were available, as well as women of questionable character. A common name applied to businesses such as this during the day was “Hog Ranch.”

By midnight a large crowd was enjoying the festivities gambling, dancing and lounging at the bar when at midnight three masked men burst through the front door, brandishing three Government rifles and yelling “Hands up.” Most people complied, but Hank Casterline ducked behind his bar while the three robbers discharged their rifles in his direction. The three would-be robbers later proved to be Tedde Reade, Dick Burr and a private named Johnson from Co F, the sentry on duty at Cavalry Stable No. 2 at the Fort. Casterline reappeared over the bar with a double barrel shotgun and discharged both barrels at point blank range at the renegades. His first shot wounded Burr severely, nearly shooting his hand off, and wounded Johnson moderately. Pandemonium broke loose, and many drew weapons and started shooting in all directions. Johnny Boudeaux, a half breed herder from the Agency, was struck by a bullet in the head and died instantly, making someone a murderer. The three robbers made their retreat into the breaks along the Niobrara River and disappeared into the night, possibly on horses stolen from the Fort. Apparently, they knew Casterline’s would have been a good target for robbery since it was reported that he took in almost 1200 hundred dollars that night.

On the morning of May 10th, Major Upham had been briefed on the events of the previous evening. Pvt Johnson was AWOL from duty, and three of the best Government horses with full equipment and three new rifles were missing. Major Upham ordered Lt Cherry with a party of troopers to pursue the renegades to bring them back to Fort Niobrara to face charges and recover the stolen government property.

Lt Cherry left with three Indian scouts, 12 troopers and a couple of civilians pursuing the outlaws. After several hours, they located the trail in the breaks and pursued it up to the tableland. The land was dry and dusty, and the renegades had zig zagged back and forth to elude pursuers. By the evening of the tenth, the search party rode into the Jed Sharpe ranch, approximately 28 miles northwest of the fort. The exhausted men spent the night there.

The next morning, May 11, Lt Cherry told the ranch foreman, Lett Beckwith, that he thought the renegades would head for Fort Pierre or the HK ranch where Burr was known to have worked as a cowhand. By 6 a.m. the troopers were in the saddle again, heading in an easterly direction, deviating every now and then to check streams for tracks. Beckwith recounted that two soldiers,
Locke and Conroy, got into an argument as they saddled their horses. Lt Cherry called them down. When the party headed out with Conroy and Locke leading the pack horses, they got into another argument. Lt Cherry ordered them to stop and told Beckwith “those two don’t get along.” Lt Cherry split his group into three or four separate units to cover more ground and more thoroughly search for tracks. Lett Beckwith accompanied them for a short distance. As the Rock Creek Buttes came into sight, Beckwith left the party to ride in another direction on ranch business. Sometime later he heard a shot, then another, thinking perhaps the party had shot an antelope.

At this time Lt Cherry’s own group consisted of Sergeant Herrington, Pvt Conroy and Pvt Thomas W. Locke. They were now approaching the “Old Crossing” on Rock Creek, the main freight road between Fort Niobrara and the Rosebud Agency. Locke remarked that he wanted a drink and asked Conroy for his drinking cup, but Conroy stated he didn’t have one. Locke dismounted and drank straight from the stream while Conroy rode on slowly. Upon remounting Locke suddenly drew his revolver and shot at Conroy missing him; he then spurred his horse forward toward Harrington and Cherry. Cherry, hearing the shot exclaimed, “What was that?” By now Locke was upon him and he pushed his revolver into the left side of Cherry and pulled the trigger. Cherry fell from his horse and died in a few moments. Locke then fired at Conroy again, striking him in the thigh and knocking him from his horse. Locke managed to make it to the prone body of Lt Cherry saying, “Let me have your pistol sir, he shot me, too.” He took the pistol from the lifeless Cherry, but Locke was out of range riding at top speed toward Sharpe’s ranch. Sgt Harrington in a state of shock rode rapidly away to “save his life.” He later arrived back at Fort Niobrara, where he reported the incident. Major Upham charged him with neglect of duty and confined him to the guardhouse until trial. The only explanation given for this act of violence was thought to be that Locke, a known alcoholic, had been drinking heavily for a week before he left the fort and went berserk when deprived of liquor.

Lt Cherry’s body was returned to Fort Niobrara and buried with full military honors. Cherry’s father and his fiancé came the following spring, had the body exhumed and transported to Lagrange, Indiana where it was reburied in the family plot. Thus, ended the glorious career of a great soldier in an inglorious manner.

Lt Cherry was well liked by all who knew him and a popular young officer at Fort Niobrara. So popular was Lt Cherry, that a petition signed by many local residents was presented to the Nebraska legislature requesting the new county being formed around Fort Niobrara be called Cherry County. The legislature granted the request and the county was so named in March of 1883.

What happened to the others? Three days later, Locke was spotted near Bassett, Nebraska and returned to Fort Niobrara. He was taken to Deadwood, South Dakota to stand trial where he was sentenced to 18 years in prison in the Federal Penitentiary at Detroit, Michigan. Why not the death sentence? It was speculated that testimony of Locke’s long history of alcoholism and his mental instability by Post hospital orderlies may have influenced the court.

What about the renegades? Lt Cherry’s hunch proved to be correct. They were indeed headed for Fort Pierre in Dakota Territory. They were caught by Fort Pierre policemen attempting to cross the Missouri River in a skiff. They were taken to Yankton, South Dakota and lodged in jail to be returned to Deadwood for trial. The three attempted to break jail in Yankton. Pvt Johnson was shot and killed; Dick Burr, with one good hand, did escape and all track of him was lost. Tedde Reade was not so fortunate. He was recaptured, and taken to Deadwood for trial, where it was learned he was wanted for a previous murder. He was found guilty of the charges and “executed.”
“Fours Right” is a preparatory command and tells the cavalrmen there will be four files abreast in the formation (a file is a line from front to rear). During the first formation each morning the cavalrmen count off by fours. The first set of fours is the first rank (a rank is a row, from right to left). Number one is always on the right of the rank and number four is always of the left of the rank in the formation. Thus the right most file is the ones and the left most file is the fours, with the twos and threes in the middle of each rank. The formation will have only four files and multiple ranks. This is how cavalry units marched; not in two files as seen in the movies.

“Column Right” identifies the direction the formation will travel with the first rank turning to the right, followed by the other ranks.

The trumpeter had one specific duty: sound the calls that relayed the commander’s orders. In a garrison environment such as Fort Larned, the calls included Reveille, Stables and Water, Drill, Guard Mount, Boots and Saddles, and Taps. In the field, and especially combat, the calls included As Skirmishers, Charge, Recall, To Horse, and Officer’s Call. Following is an example of bugle calls combined to convey the commander’s orders:

1. Attention
2. Fours Right
3. Column Right
4. March

“Attention” alerts the cavalrmen a command is to be given. To be called to Attention, the cavalry unit had to be at a halt.
Following the coup which overthrew President Diem in November, 1963, two Vietnamese Armored Cavalry squadrons were tasked with dual missions.

1. Serve as anti-coup forces to protect against any armed movement by military forces towards the Capital Military District (Saigon) and,

2. Destroy anti-government forces, i.e. Viet Cong, in their assigned areas of operation.

One cavalry squadron, the 6th, served in the southern part of South Vietnam, in the area known as IV Corps. This was largely the Mekong Delta, and the squadron senior advisor was a capable and aggressive American major, a Texas A&M graduate, named Mebane “Stud” Stafford.

The other squadron, the 1st, conducted operations north and west of Saigon in III Corps, against the local insurgents and those streaming into South Vietnam via Cambodia and the “Ho Chi Minh” trail. Previous articles in the Journal have related some of the activities of this squadron. The senior advisor was a graduate of the New Mexico Military Institute.

By late summer of 1964, the war was assuming a markedly different character than that of the start of the year. Gone were the Viet Cong antiquated bolt-action rifles left over from the Viet Minh struggle against the French, and (which) were rapidly being replaced by one of the world’s best automatic rifles, the AK-47. Also being introduced down the supply line was a new shoulder-fired anti-tank weapon which became known to U.S. forces as the RPG (Rifle Propelled Grenade) launcher. These weapons, with some crew-served weapons taken from South Vietnamese forces, and with truly excellent leadership among the Viet Cong, became deadly opponents against South Vietnamese units. A series of encounters in late summer ‘64 and on into the fall, led to the decision to reinforce the South Vietnamese with a Korean combat unit, followed shortly thereafter with elements of a U.S. Marine division. The subsequent build-up by Army and Marine units is well-known.

On the American side, the armed helicopter was proving to be the primary source of support for Vietnamese Army forces and their American advisors. Initial development work on the concept of arming helicopters was led by then Major Bob Reuter, U.S. Cavalry Association? and Colonel, U.S. Army deceased. By the spring of 1964, the helicopters were equipped with two pods of 2.75 inch folding-fin rockets. Thus promoting the term “Aerial Artillery”.

The article entitled “High Noon in the Ho Bo” (U.S. Cavalry Journal), described the last engagement by two troops of the 1st Cavalry Squadron against a superior Viet Cong force. Following this, the remainder of the Squadron was sent back to the Armored Training Center for replacement vehicles and training of replacement soldiers.

The Senior Advisor was told to report to the III Corps Senior Advisor for assignment.

The major highway leading north out of the capital area, National Route 13, was the life-line into the northern provinces to deliver rice from the Delta, and to bring lumber and rubber down into the manufacturing area around Saigon. Although the Army of Vietnam’s 5th Division was tasked to keep the highway open for traffic, it had utterly failed. Despite battalion-sized units from the division moving up and down the highway, the Viet Cong would force the population from hamlets along the highway to cut the roadway with trenches, effectively stopping all wheeled traffic.

The Corps Senior Advisor and his counterpart, a Vietnamese Lieutenant General who ultimately became the Vietnamese Secretary of Defense, informed the Major of the importance of keeping Highway 13 open, and told him to “get it done”.

12
Several different approaches to the task were tried over the following weeks, but none brought a lasting solution. Finally, the Major asked for eight Nungs (ethnic Chinese living in the highlands of South Vietnam), and an interpreter. Following training as two teams of 4 men, led by the Major with the able assistance of the interpreter, operations began. Each team would go into the wooded jungle along the highway for three days and nights, setting ambushes against the Viet Cong attempting to enter the hamlets. The results were deposited at the entrance to the hamlets to show that the inhabitants would no longer be subjected to demands by the Viet Cong to cut the highway. Following a 24-hour break for rest in the base area, the Major and the next team would again enter the jungle to conduct operations in the area, previously the sole property of the Viet Cong. After a period of several weeks, commerce was flowing along Highway 13.

Although the teams were meeting with total success, they found themselves up against superior forces on several occasions. The Major had been provided with a special handheld radio, and using this he was able to call for help from armed helicopters. As it happened, the platoon leaders of the armed helicopter units (one platoon had the call sign of Bandit and the other was known as Playboy), had served on the same Army base in Germany years before with the Major (then a Captain company commander). The Major now used the radio call sign of Whipcrack.

When the team found itself in greater trouble than it could deal with, which happened on altogether too many occasions, the Major would issue a call on the radio for assistance. All Advisors were on the same Advisory radio channel at that time in the war. Hearing the call, one of the gunship platoons in the air would respond, asking for a location. The radio conversation might go substantially as follows:

“Gunship, this is Whipcrack, I’m needing some help, over.”

“Whipcrack, this is Bandit 36 (platoon leader) with a flight of 4—Give me your location.” “Roger, Bandit 36, come north on the ribbon (Hwy 13) to the plantation (experimental rubber plantation at Lai Khe, later the headquarters of the U.S. 1st Infantry Division) and pick up a heading of 270 (compass heading) for about 5 clicks (5000 meters)—when I hear you I will pop smoke.”

“Roger, Whipcrack. I estimate about 07 minutes.”

Upon hearing the choppers, the Major would throw a colored smoke grenade. “This is Bandit 36, Whipcrack. I’ve got grape.” (Confirming the sighting of purple smoke.)

“Bandit 36, the smoke is in a small clearing 25 yards north of our position, Victor Charlie is in the woodland north of the clearing.”

“Roger, Whipcrack, I’m going to make a slow pass over your position, south to north.”

“Negative, Bandit, low and slow won’t hack it. There are at least 6 AK-47s” (Automatic fire from these weapons would do serious damage to low flying helicopters.)

“Roger, Whipcrack, starting our passes two by two, saturating with rockets, (2.75 inch folding fin rockets) keep your heads down.”

“Ah, roger Bandit, but we are blown here and will use your dustup to work our way south. Try not to pick us off.”

“Roger, Whipcrack.”

“Thanks for the help, Bandit.”

“Roger, Whipcrack, have a nice day.”

This last, uttered sardonically, knowing that the helicopter pilots were returning to clean sheets and cold beer, became a standard and ultimately widely-imitated sign-off from the gunships. The saying, although the sardonic purpose was lost, was brought back to the United States when the Advisors finished their tours. It did not take long for the saying to sweep the nation.

Photo courtesy of Vietnam Order of Battle by Shelby L. Stanton
Roland H. del Mar was born in Attica, Indiana, on 11 February 1908, but claims Maryland as his home state. He attended schools in Chicago and Winnetka, Illinois, and the College of Wooster in Wooster, Ohio. For 14 years he was associated with the International Harvester Company in a variety of capacities as a representative of the motor truck sales and service department of the Corporation and as manager.

In 1931 General del Mar began his military career through the Organized Reserve Corps, obtaining a commission as 2d Lieutenant, Cavalry-Reserve, in April 1932. During the next nine years, in assignments with International Harvester in Alabama, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan, General del Mar enhanced his military knowledge by both inactive and active-duty training with Reserve units in these states, with National Guard units in Alabama, Indiana and Wisconsin, and with the 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry, Regular Army, at Fort Sheridan, Illinois, with active-duty training at Fort Knox, Kentucky; Allegan County, Michigan; Camp McCoy, Wisconsin; Camp Williams, Wisconsin; and Fort Sheridan, Illinois.

When called to extended active duty in June 1941, due to his broad Reserve background, he was selected for the Staff and Faculty, The Cavalry School, Fort Riley, Kansas, where he was an instructor in all Cavalry weapons and small unit tactics for the next one and a half years.

In 1943, he became Executive Officer and later Commanding Officer of the Rifle Squadron at Fort Riley – the last horse cavalry unit in the United States Army. In 1944 he served as Executive Officer of the 29th Cavalry Group (mechanized) at Fort Riley and later as Executive Officer of Cavalry School Troops (demonstration) made up of veterans rotated back from the war zones. General del Mar was ordered to Fort Leavenworth for the Command and General Staff College wartime short course upon conclusion of the war in Europe and was among those graduates selected to serve at General MacArthur’s headquarters for planning the invasion of Japan. The war ended before he could arrive in the Pacific and he was diverted to the Procurement and Disposal Division, Hq AFWESPAC, Manila, in which assignment he flew over much of the island-hopping campaign route, determining the status of the equipment remaining behind.

From November 1945 to August 1948 General del Mar served in Japan with the 5th U.S. Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division. In July 1946, he was appointed a Captain in the Regular Army.

Subsequent assignments included duties as Commanding Officer, 73d Heavy Tank Battalion, 3d Infantry Division, Ft. Benning, Georgia; Operations Officer or planning of the Caribbean amphibious operations umpiring in Exercise “PORTEX”; a two-year tour in G-2 Division, Department of the Army, Pentagon; Chief of Staff of the 25th U.S. Infantry “Tropic Lightening” Division in Korea; Deputy G-3, Eighth U.S. Army, Korea; G-2, Third Army, Ft. McPherson, Georgia; and
then two years as assistant division commander, 4th Armored Division.

As assistant Division Commander, 4th Armored Division, Fort Hood, Texas, from August 1956 to August 1957, General del Mar was responsible for training of the division in preparation for gyroscope with the 2d Armored Division in Germany. From September 1957 to August 1958 General del Mar served with the Division in Germany, actively supervising training in platoon and company tests and exercises and participating in a variety of Seventh U.S. Army and VII U.S. Corps Command Post and Field Training Exercises. He considers his two years with the Division as being the most professionally satisfying.

General del Mar was reassigned after two years with the 4th Armored Division to Hq Allied Forces Southern Europe, with station at Naples, Italy, where he was first the Readiness Officer and then Assistant Chief of Staff for Plans and Operations.

Upon returning to the United States in July 1960, General del Mar was assigned as Commanding General, Combat Command “A” 1st Armored Division, at Fort Hood, Texas, the armored element of STRAC.

In May 1961 General del Mar assumed the duties of Commanding General, Antilles Command, U.S. Army Caribbean, with station at Fort Brooke, San Juan, Puerto Rico, where he remained until April 1963. He was subsequently appointed to post of Director, Inter-American Defense College, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C., and assumed these duties until May of 1963.

In addition to his special training at The Cavalry School and Command and General Staff College, General del Mar is a graduate of the Armed Forces Staff College, Norfolk, Virginia; the Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania; and the Command and Management School, Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

General del Mar holds the Bronze Star Medal, Army Commendation Ribbon with Medal Pendant (with Oak Leaf Cluster), the United Nations Medal, and the Legion of Merit.

General del Mar was married to the former Elizabeth K. Adams of Fort Wayne, Indiana. They have one daughter.


Roland Haddaway del Mar died on 19 January 1982. He was buried in Section 30 of Arlington National Cemetery. His wife, Elizabeth Catherine Adams del Mar (27 August 1907-20 October 1994) is buried with him.

(http://www.arlingtoncemetery.net/rhdelmar.htm)

~Mrs. Hughes has donated many boxes of her father’s archives to the U.S. Cavalry Memorial Library. These items are irreplaceable in value because of their historic content. Thank you for saving this history and allowing us to share with so many.~

From the Cavalry School, Fort Riley, Kansas
Colonel Gerfen on Pillu* going up the nose of the ridge from behind which 81-mm Mortars are fired on Academic Division Range. The picture serves to show the extremely rolling country on which all field firing is conducted.

* Pillu later became Roland del Mar’s horse

Roland H. del Mar on Pillu in the late 30’s or early 40’s at Fort Riley, Kansas
Generals in Gray
Lives of the Confederate Commander
By Ezra J. Warner

Walter Paye Lane, a native of Ireland, was born in County Cork, February 18, 1817, and emigrated to the United States with his parents in 1821. The family first settled in Guernsey County, Ohio. At the age of eighteen Lane went to Louisville and then to Texas, where he fought in the battle of San Jacinto. His subsequent antebellum occupations ranged from cruising the Gulf of Mexico as a member of the crew of a Texas privateer to fighting Indians and teaching school, and included service in the Mexican War as captain of a company of rangers. From 1849 to 1858 he spent much of his time in mining in California, Nevada, Arizona, and Peru, making and losing several small fortunes. He was elected lieutenant colonel of the 3rd Texas Cavalry in 1861, with which he fought at Wilson's Creek and Elkhorn Tavern (Pea Ridge).

Lane was later active in Louisiana in 1863, and in the Red River Campaign the following year. He was severely wounded at the battle at Manfield. He was recommended for promotion by General Kirby Smith and was commissioned brigadier general to rank from March 17, 1865, being confirmed the last day on which the confederate Senate met. After the war he returned to his home at Marshall, Texas, and became a merchant, and also wrote his memoirs (see Bibliography #76a). As the years passed he became symbolic of the heroic age on Texas history, and was for long an idol of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas and United Daughters of the Confederacy. Never married, General Lane died at Marshall, January 28, 1892, and is buried there.

Generals in Blue
Lives of the Union Commander

By Ezra J. Warner

Benjamin Henry Grierson was born of Irish parentage in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on July 8, 1826. He was educated at an academy in Youngstown, Ohio, and later taught music there and at Jacksonville, Illinois. After 1856 he kept a store at Meredosia, a nearby hamlet on the Illinois River. When the Civil War came, Grierson entered the service as a volunteer aide-de-camp to General Benjamin M. Prentiss. He was commissioned major of the 6th Illinois Cavalry in October, 1861, and became its colonel the following April. During that spring and summer the regiment was engaged in a number of skirmishes in Tennessee and Mississippi, its squadrons being posted at three different stations. In the latter part of December the regiment was reunited and took part in the pursuit of Earl Van Dorn after his Holly Springs raid. On April 17, 1863, under orders from U.S. Grant, Grierson left La Grange, Tennessee, in command of seventeen hundred men of the 6th and 7th Illinois and the 2nd Iowa raid southward through the heart of the Confederacy. In seventeen days the command marched eight hundred miles, repeatedly engaged the Confederates, ruined two railroads, and destroyed vast amounts of property, finally riding into Baton Rouge on May 2. For his feat Grierson was appointed brigadier general of volunteers to rank from June 3, 1863. He later commanded a cavalry division and at times the Cavalry Corps of the Army of the Mississippi during 1864 and 1865. In 1865 he took part in the campaign against Mobile. He was commissioned major general of volunteers on March 19, 1866, to rank from May 27, 1865, and was mustered out of volunteer service on April 30, 1866. Upon the reorganization of the Regular Army that July, Grierson was appointed colonel of the 10th Cavalry. The following year he was awarded the brevets of brigadier general and major general, U.S. Army. In postwar years Grierson was stationed mainly in the Southwest, commanding at various times the Department of Arizona and Districts if New Mexico and Indian Territory. He was promoted to brigadier general on April 5, 1890, and retired three months later. Residing in Jacksonville thereafter, he died at his summer home in Omena, Michigan, on September 1, 1911, and was buried in Jacksonville Cemetery.
President's Tack Room

As president, I am looking forward to 2015, an exciting year for the USCA as we move our headquarters to our new home at Fort Reno, OK and establish a permanent home for our Bivouac/National Cavalry Competition which this year will be September 23-27. (Details will follow in our spring Crossed Sabers.) This permanency will be a benefit to all members and competitors as you plan for this annual event.

Our new home will have our day-to-day operations, the research library, and a Cavalry museum. I am pleased to announce that as part of the research library, we are establishing a new section, the Bolté Library of Military History, an extensive collection donated by Trooper Phil Bolté.

Raising funds for the renovation of the officer’s quarters at Fort Reno is progressing with $60,000 donated toward the $100,000 goal. We still have a long way to go in reaching our goal, and I know it is attainable with your help. Thank you to all who have already done their part to pitch in.

Keep the Guidons flying!
Bill Tempo

Our new home at Fort Reno, Ok

Photo courtesy of Dori Luzbetak

Notes from the Editor

Keep the Guidons flying!

WHY WE'RE MOVING
Fort Reno was a frontier Army post and became a US Army remount station prior to World War II. From the remount stations, the Quartermaster Corps provided horses for the cavalry and other branches of the Army. Historic Fort Reno, Inc., which is based at Fort Reno, has an excellent museum and a very active, year-round educational and living history program. Historic Fort Reno and the US Cavalry Association share a common goal of preserving and presenting the history of the US Army and the cavalry branch in particular. Fort Reno receives thousands of visitors annually from around the globe. Co-locating with Historic Fort Reno will enable the US Cavalry Association to reach a broader audience.

http://www.uscavalry.org/contribute/building-fund.html

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Signature ____________________________
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