Sgt. McNamara Is Army 'Old Timer' Since '13

96th Div. Veteran Was First With 'Hoss' Cavalry in East

By Cpl. Paul R. Kalman, Jr.

Last year on November 26th First Sergeant John J. McNamara of the 96th Division Troop was 53 years old; he doesn't look a day over 35 and swears that he feels even younger.

The hoss cavalry was his choice when he signed up at New Rochelle, N.Y., in 1913. Possibly it was the exceptionally active life of riding day in and day out for over 20 years that put his body in the splendid physical condition that embraces him to this day.

By the end of his first week in the army the young rookie learned that horses were much different critters than the lathes and presses that he had familiarized himself with during four years apprenticeship in a machine shop.

His stiff new cavalry boots began to buff at the sides from the rub of stirrup straps and his face took on a ruddy glow, the effect of a torrid Texas sun. His day began at 5 a.m. and ended shortly before noon. Quite soft, the sergeant commented, having the whole afternoon to one's self but we were inclined to be a bit skeptical about this after hearing the work that he accomplished during the morning hours.

After breakfast and physical drill he mounted his charge and practiced cavalry maneuvers for three hours when he returned to the stables, unsaddled the horse, and cooled off the animal with an hour's slow walk. Then he'd curry and feed the horse and himself.

A skirmish with a group of Mexican baditos near Mission, Texas, on the Rio Grande gave him his first taste of fire.

Realizing that they had been caught in an ambush, Mac and his column dismounted and shot it out with the guerrillas. When the smoke cleared away a half hour later, 80 Mexican bodies dotted the Texas landscape while only one American soldier required medical care.

In November of 1917, Sergeant McNamara was divorced from the cavalry temporarily and went overseas with a horse drawn ammunition train serving the 19th, 20th and 21st Artillery Battalions which were attached to the 5th Division.

Three weeks after he landed in France he became self appointed veterinarian to a score or more French horses.

He described the decrepit animals as being "half gassed and so worn out from trips to the front that they were hardly fit for anything but the glue factory.

Many times we had to cut the sicker ones out of harness and the rider would mount the caisson and ride there for the remainder of the trip."

The 5th entered its first major encounter with an offensive in the spring of 1918. Rain came down in torrents and turned the French highways into a sea of sticky, clinging mud that bogged down the American advance to the point where horses, guns and caissons moved along at a snail's pace.

At night when artillery fire was at its lowest ebb, the ammunition train was busiest. Horses were allowed to rest during the daylight hours but as soon as darkness came they were harnessed to the caissons and began the all night trek to the front lines bringing up supplies of fresh ammunition to the big guns.

The 5th received its most terrific bombardment in the St. Mihiel Drive and Salient when the desperate Germans tried to blast their tormentors away with a final barrage before beginning their retreat.

Sergeant McNamara and other mounted soldiers stayed with their horses throughout the attack and quieted the panicky animals while shells plowed up the dirt all around them.

Following a 6 month stay in Luxemburg after the Armistic Sergeant McNamara came back home and re-enlisted in the 16th Cavalry at Brownsville, Texas. He lost his sergeancy, of course, but had his stripes right back on his sleeves six months later.

In 1922 the 16th was disbanded and he went to the 4th Cavalry, staying with that outfit until he came to Camp Adair last summer.

He has some definite ideas about the army—ideas that only 29 years of military life can develop. One of these is that the hoss cavalry will eventually show its importance in this war.

"There are many places in the desert and in other areas where mechanized and armored columns can't operate," he opines. "Horse borne light artillery and other mounted cavalry units can get around on terrain that would be almost impossible to cope with by other methods. That's when the horse will come back into his rightful glory."

The sergeant also believes that the Model 1943 Doughboy is twice as tough as the 1918 version because soldiering that he gets in training is twice as hard and that his food, equipment and officers are twice as good.

The conversation ended there as the sergeant excused himself to turn out his troop for retreat.

Son of Camp Worker Wins Hero Citation

The proudest mother in this Camp is Mrs. Erma Byington—and the Camp is just as proud of her.

Mrs. Byington has two sons in the service, one overseas, the other in San Diego, California.

The other day Mrs. Byington arrived for work at the Station Hospital at the usual time—6 a.m.

Before starting her round of chores, she took time to read a letter, informing her that her son Cpl. Byington made numerous trips as flight navigator, under extremely hazardous conditions in an aircraft having no defensive armament to supply combatant forces and evacuate the wounded from the combat area in the South Pacific.

After reading the letter, Mrs. Byington went on with her work in the ward.

Yes, Camp Adair is as proud of Mrs. Byington as Mrs. Byington is of her sons.

Ah, Death, Old Stinger

York, Pa. (CNS)—After 35 years of careful planning, the funeral of Howard S. Thomas has been held just as he wanted it following his recent death. He made his own coffin of $4 worth of cherry wood and exhibited it in his barber shop. He carved his own tombstone complete with all inscriptions — except the date of his death. He chose pallbearers and outlived four of his six original selections.

Bingo!

Sooner or later charming Betty Grable will be seen in one of the Post movie theatres, so here is a bit of advance billing. Nice of us, don't you think?

Beware of Ides of March; Income Tax Deadline

On Monday, income tax day rears its ugly head. Better file that return, soldier.

Any single person that earned more than $500 last year must file an income tax return by March 15; any married person must, if he earned more than $1,200, likewise must file.

All servicemen below the grade of a commissioned officer receive a specific deduction of $250 for single men and $300 for married men and heads of families. If you're a married man and seperated from your wife or family because of military service, you're still the boss!

Income tax blanks may be procured from the Judge Advocate's office at Post Headquarters.

"Timberwolves on the Air"

"Timberwolves on the Air" presents the thirteenth in its present series of radio shows, 7:30 to 8:00 p.m., over Station KOAC, Corvallis tonight.

The all-star cast includes the Divarty band, under the baton of Warrant-officer Rubel; Pvt. Ray Eisenman, vocalist extraordinary; Cpl. Don Chapman in one of his inimitable comedy sketches; and a team new to the show—Bob and Mary Gregory, singing song-stylists.

For a half-hour of music and laughs tune in to "Timberwolves on the Air" tonight at 7:30 p.m., Lt. Francis Bowen emcees; the program is produced by the Division Special Service Office.

Army's 'Who's Who' To Appear in Yank

Publication Lists Names of War Heroes

An exclusive "Who's Who" of Army war heroes, with the names of more than a thousand enlisted men decorated for bravery in action since Pearl Harbor, will begin to appear in the March 26th issue of YANK, The Army Weekly, which goes on sale for servicemen all over the country March 19th.

Such a list of war heroes has never been published before. YANK will print in its first "Who's Who" installment, the names and home towns of men who have won the Distinguished Service Cross, the Distinguished Flying Cross, and the Air Medal, with citations describing what each man did under fire to win his decorations.

The names of more than 700 enlisted men who have won the Silver Star will appear in later issues. In the future, YANK will print a list of new decorations at regular intervals as they are awarded by the War Department, so that soldier readers in Alaska, for example, will be able to find friends in North Africa on the Army hero's rolls.

Australia, through reciprocal aid, has furnished American forces with more than 26 million pounds of fresh meats, 20 million pounds of potatoes, 25 million pounds of fruit, and almost 5½ million quarts of milk.

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