

1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry

1st Regiment of Dragoons

the

Blackhawks



HISTORY

History of 1st Regiment of Dragoons

Numerical designations usually say very little about the unit they represent. The 1st Cavalry Regiment (1st Regiment of Dragoons) is more than just a numerical designation. It is a unit, which is first not only in numerical order, but also in time of service in the Cavalry (164 years), and in battle honors over any unit in the Army (89). The story of the Regiment's 164 years of service should be familiar to all of us who are charged with upholding its name

For a beginning we must go back beyond the actual date of organization, back to 1776 and the American Revolution. During that period there were several groups of mounted fighters. A number of these were irregular militia such as those commanded by COL Francis Marion, the famous "Swamp Fox". Some, such as Light Horse Harry Lee's mounted troops from Virginia, had a more regular organization. They all, however, suffered from the fact that few men in the American Army really understood cavalry. General Washington wanted to replace what cavalry he had with dragoons, who only used their horses as transportation from one battlefield to another, doing the actual fighting on foot. It is therefore not surprising to find that after the Revolutionary War, the miniature army that was retained had no mounted forces at all.

It wasn't until 1792 when defeats suffered at the hands of Indians spurred a reintroduction of authorized light dragoons, and then only a single squadron. From that period on, the fortunes of the mounted forces of the U.S. Army fluctuated depending on the degree of danger felt by the government. The infantry seemed to suffice while America pushed westward through the eastern hills and forests. Soon they began to reach the Great Plains. Here the foot soldier could not hope to match the speed and agility of the Plains Indian mounted on his pony. What was needed here was the mounted soldier.

Formation of the Black Hawks

In 1831 some local militia in Illinois managed to cause enough trouble to bring about the Black Hawk War. Because there were no regular mounted troops in the Army, the government was forced to activate more mounted militia at a cost of more than ten times that required to maintain a similar body of regulars. "Guided by the sober light of experience, Congress authorized the President to raise, for the defense of the frontier a battalion of 600 mounted rangers to serve for one year, unless sooner discharged." These rangers were, for all practical purposes, militia hired by the Federal Government. They provided their own horses, weapons, and clothing, getting only food, ammunition and pay from the government. Their short tours of service made them impractical for the government. Congress firmly believed that the rugged frontier produced men who only had to be collected to produce a force more formidable than any trained army. Economics of the situation finally convinced Congress to authorize a regular Regiment of Dragoons. It was considerably cheaper than the rangers or any militia. So on March 2, 1833 President Andrew Jackson approved a bill "providing for the organization of the Regiment of United States Dragoons to replace the Battalion of Mounted Rangers, which was to be discharged.

It requires more than a stroke of a pen to create a cavalry regiment. The Dragoons' first commanding officer was COL Henry Dodge who had commanded the Mounted Rangers. LTC STEPHEN Watts Kearney, formerly of the Third Infantry did the bulk of the work of organizing the new Regiment. He is still considered to be the "father" of the U.S. Cavalry. The first home of the Dragoons was to be Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, close to St. Louis.

For recruiting, each company was assigned a different area of the country. CPT Cumner, who was joined in July by LT Burgwin, was sent to recruit Company B in the beautiful lake country of central New York State. He concentrated his recruits at Madison Barracks, at Sackett's Harbor on Lake Ontario. As they passed through Buffalo, the Buffalo Journal said, "they were the finest looking raw recruits we ever saw. All were New Yorkers, selected by CPT Cumner himself from the northern and western countries of the state. All within the age of twenty-five years and as nearly as possible five feet eight inches in height. All possessed a good English education and strictly correct habits."

The men traveled to Jefferson Barracks by river, but because of difficulties, didn't arrive until September 6. Among the men who had been collected there were a number of veterans of the Black Hawk War, both enlisted and officer, including COL Dodge. Thereafter, the Regiment was called the "Black Hawks."

Their new home was an established Army post. The barracks were built of hewn stone “in the form of a parallelogram encompassing three sides of a noble parade which was open on the fourth to the river” and commanded “a most extensive view.” These barracks were cold in the winter, but pure luxury compared to what the future had in store.

In other respects the Regiment was not so fortunate. There were no accommodations for horses, so stables had to be built. The Army Quartermaster was unprepared to outfit a Regiment of Cavalry, so everything was scarce. Every item had to be produced from scratch. This took considerably longer than the recruiting. The organization of the regiment was also a prototype, which included many defects, one of which was the lack of provisions for riding instructors. There was no organic transportation for stores or baggage. One other difficulty was the tactics and skills of cavalry had almost been forgotten in the American Army. “There were two copies of Cavalry tactics in the possession of the Dragoons.” Besides all of this, there was no time either. On October 26, 1833 the Regiment received orders to move to Ft Gibbon, in what is now Oklahoma to establish winter quarters. On November 20 they moved out. The Regiment of Dragoons took over the defense of the frontier.

For the next 28 years the Regiment would be scattered over the western plains, pacifying the Indians who were being trampled by the surging settlers, and helping to explore some of the forgotten corners of the vast plain. When they marched out of Jefferson Barracks they hardly looked equal to the task. It was a hard march to Ft Gibson for the inexperienced horses and men. Most days they were lucky to travel 15 miles. In a few years they would be moving three times that as an average. They finally made Ft Gibson on December 14, 1833. The Regiment proceeded to build their own “Camp Jackson” about one mile from Ft Gibson.

The government’s concept of operation was to use the Dragoons to “show the flag” among the troublesome Indian Nations of the West as a warning to settle down. The first summer, 1834, when the Dragoons marched out to show the flag, the thermometer read 114 degrees. Before their return, sickness would fall on 75% of the Regiment and kill General Leavenworth who was in charge of the defense of the frontier. Everyone had a lot to learn about this rugged country, and they learned the hard way.

THE WAR WITH MEXICO

In 1846 the eyes of the nation began to look farther west, toward the Pacific and the lands that Mexico held between the Mississippi and California. Accordingly, in July 1846, COL Stephen Kearney assembled some of his Dragoons at Ft Leavenworth,

Kansas to which were added a regiment of Missouri Volunteers, some infantry and some light artillery. From there he marched for California, moving by way of the Santa Fe Trail. Company B, coming from Iowa, caught up with the expedition at Bent's Fort. At that location the force numbered 1700 men. They marched from there to Santa Fe and arrived without a shot being fired, thereby taking possession of a large part of New Mexico. From Santa Fe, General Kearney set out again with only five companies of Dragoons; B, C, G, K, and I. The date was September 24, 1846. There followed the most difficult of marches with the other three companies being stripped to supply C and K with what they needed to continue. Finally, having marched over 1800 miles, these companies reached California, to discover it in turmoil. On December 6, 1846 at San Pascual, General Kearny's small force, worn from the hard march, met a force of 160 insurgents. In the ensuing battle, Company B's only participant, CPT A.R. Johnston the General's Aide, was killed. The Dragoons won the field, but with heavy losses. October 1846 saw Company B at strength of 1 officer and 12 enlisted men. The rigors of the campaign and the termination of many enlistments had taken the rest. On November 24, LT Love and five men went to Dayton, Ohio to recruit the company back to strength. They trained their recruits at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, and finally in mid June 1847, left for Santa Fe. While traveling on June 26, 1847, Company B was engaged near Larned, Kansas by 300 to 400 Comanche Indians. The company had suffered five men killed in the action and became the first unit of the Regiment to seriously tangle with Indians. The company reached Santa Fe, New Mexico on August 6 with \$350,000 that they had been escorting.

They arrived in time for the Mexican War. Throughout this conflict the First Regiment of Dragoons served well, winning five battle honors. During this period, Company B served as an artillery battery, having six guns. Company B, under LT Love, took part in the battle of Santa Cruz Rosales in Mexico on March 16, 1848 having marched 210 miles in 4 days and nights to reach it. After the hostilities, the U.S. Army evacuated Mexico with B, I, and G companies being stationed at Santa Fe, New Mexico.

INDIAN CAMPAIGNS I

The end of the Mexican War marked the real beginning of the Indian Wars. In these wars the men of the First Regiment of Dragoons played the major role. In September 1848 they left Santa Fe and returned to Ft Leavenworth, where they remained in training. On May 11, 1849 they rode out of Ft Leavenworth to Ft Kearny, Nebraska, 300 miles west. There, with 2 companies of the 6th Infantry, the Dragoons took station to guard the Oregon Trail. Located in the heart of Pawnee Country the Dragoons were constantly on the move. In mid October 1849 they had a sharp engagement with the

Pawnees on the Little Blue River near Linden, Nebraska. A short time later, on October 29th, a group of 20 Dragoons attempted to capture a group of Pawnees located on an island in the Platte River. The Indians resisted and were killed, along with one Dragoon. In October 1850 the Regiment returned to Ft Leavenworth where they remained for the next four years. In 1853, the Southwest again erupted in sharp fighting, but now it was Indians and not Mexicans. After taking some time to organize, the uncommitted elements of the regiment left Ft Leavenworth for New Mexico. The date was July 1, 1854. They reached Ft Union, New Mexico August 23rd. From there on September 14th, Company B moved to Ft Fillmore, New Mexico, reaching on October 6th. 1854 was a year of many casualties for the 1st Regiment of Dragoons. The biggest blow was an ambush of I and F companies 25 miles south of Taos, New Mexico that cost the lives of 22 Dragoons, and wounded most of the survivors. Company B saw little action until January 17, 1855 when Apaches attacked it at night while camped with Company G and a detachment of Company K near the Penasco River, New Mexico. The Indians did not give up when they were repulsed. They skirmished all the next day and on the 19th the Apaches managed to ambush 12 men of Company B who had become separated from the main body. Three soldiers were killed including the company commander.

For the next two years the men of Company B moved often between Ft Fillmore and Ft Stanton, New Mexico. In September 1856 B, D, G, and K companies were collected to officially occupy the area gained in the Gadsen Purchase of 1853. They moved out on November 27, 1856 to establish Camp Moore, Calabasas, New Mexico. The regiment remained there until the spring of 1857 when they moved to Ft Buchanan, Arizona. On June 27, 1857 Companies B, G, and a detachment of D Company fought a short engagement with some Apaches on the Gila River, New Mexico. On May 11, 1858 Company B marched for Ft Tejon, California. Although this was a much quieter area than New Mexico, on January 8, 1859 a detachment of B and K companies fought an engagement with Mojave and Painted Indians in the Mojave country of the Colorado River. On April 12, 1860 B and K Companies left Ft Tejon to establish a post near Yermo, California. On the 18th they skirmished with the Pah-Utes and again on the 19th when they finally reached Yermo. The two companies remained there, establishing Camp Cady. July 3, 1860 they returned to Ft Tejon. They were still at Ft Tejon when the bombardment of Ft Sumter on April 12, 1861 marked the beginning of the Civil War. On June 19, 1861 Company B and Regimental Headquarters abandoned Ft Tejon and rode to Camp Fitzgerald near Los Angeles. While there, they were redesignated as the First Cavalry Regiment, one of six regular army cavalry regiments. In the preceding 28 years of roaming the west, the 1st Regiment of Dragoons won 30 battle honors.

On October 26, 1861 the regiment left Los Angeles by boat to take its part in the first modern war. During the Civil War the regiment fought with the Union Troops in a corps that grew to 80,000 men. Our regiment became buried, but they fought well. In the first two years they bore more than their share until the rest of the cavalry grew to their standards. During the course of the war they won 16 battle honors and participated in 48 engagements such as Chancellorsville, Antietam, and Appomatox. In June 1863, The Confederate Cavalry general, "Stuart himself was involved in the fire fights." He wrote his wife that; "in one skirmish all the 1st Dragoons seemed to be aiming their pistols directly at him." They were unmistakably regulars.

INDIAN CAMPAIGNS II

When the smoke had cleared, the North had won and everyone put up his rifle and went home. Everyone, that is, but the regulars. There was still the frontier, now unattended five years and grown more inflamed. The 1st Regiment still had some housekeeping in the south to do. From June 22 to November 8, 1865 they were at Jackson Barracks, Louisiana. They moved to Sedwick Hospital in Greenville, Louisiana where they stayed until December 29, 1865. The country couldn't afford to keep them there for long. From Louisiana the regiment shipped on the steamer "McClellan" to the Presidio of San Francisco, California. At 23 years of age, with 46 battle honors, the First Cavalry Regiment returned to the wars. These Indian Wars would occupy the regiment for the next 32 years.

From San Francisco the Regiment set out on April 13, 1866 to Camp McKee, Nevada, arriving on June 20th. They stayed there until September 10th when they moved to Camp McGarry, Nevada. Again the men grew accustomed to the extremes of heat and cold on the prairie. They knew months of boredom spiced by moments of mortal danger. On the nights of February 7-8, 1867 25 men of Company B on a patrol were attacked by hostile Indians in the Vicksburg Mines district of Nevada. On July 25, 1868 Company B left Camp McGarry and moved to Camp Warner, Oregon where they stayed until 1871. This was a quiet period with most of the Indian trouble concentrated in the southwest. In 1871 the regiment moved to Ft Klamath, Oregon, arriving on May 29th. A quarrel on a reservation between the Indian Bureau and the Modoc Indians brought the peace to an end there in the north. On November 29, 1872 a detachment of Company B engaged "Captain Jack's" band of Modoc Indians at his camp at Lost River, Oregon. While attempting to apprehend them with Companies B, F, and a detachment of H, they brought the Modocs to battle again on April 16 and 17, 1873 at the Lava Beds, California. Even with substantial militia reinforcement, the Lava Beds, which the Modocs had roamed since birth, became an impregnable fortress. For the next two

months no serious attempt was made to pry the Modocs out of their sanctuary. On June 16 and 17, 1873 B, F, G, K, and part of H Companies, along with five batteries of artillery and a number of infantry moved in. But the quarry slipped away in the dark of the night. After another month of searching and skirmishing they again engaged the Modocs, this time near Fairfield's Farm near the Lava Beds. Both sides suffered some casualties but again, the Modocs escaped. After seven months of riding and fighting against this small, elusive and tough band, the men of the regiment breathed a sigh when the Modocs finally surrendered.

For the next three years quiet again reigned in the northwest. In 1877 it was the Nez Perce who gained attention of fully half the regiment when engaged on July 11-12 1877 near the mouth of Cottonwood Creek, Idaho. This campaign eventually drew 10 companies of the First Cavalry. A month later, August 20, 1877, Company B again ran up against the Nez Perce's, this time at Camp Meadows, Idaho. Here they lost their bugler.

With the campaign over, (October 5, 1878) the Regiment arrived at Ft Walla Walla, Washington where they spent four quiet years. On June 13, 1882 Co B rode to Ft Colville, Washington and then on to Ft Couer d'Alene, Idaho. Things were quiet in this area. In 1883 cavalry companies were officially designated troops. During their stay they accompanied General Sherman on a 737-mile trip to the west and British Columbia. On June 16, 1884 Troop B rode out to Ft Keogh, Montana arriving on July 22nd. On May 29th, 1885 Troop B left Ft Keogh, for Ft Custer, Montana where they joined the Regiment on June 7th. Here was a long period of quiet. 1887 saw the threat of Indian troubles. The center of this threat was at the Crow Indian Reservation in Montana. One of the Crows, Sword Bearer, had gained the following of many in his tribe. He began to agitate the tribe and the Indian Bureau called for help. By November 4th the First Cavalry had Troops A, B, D, E, G, K, in place as well as a number of other units. On the 5th of November there was a skirmish in which Sword Bearer was killed. Order was restored on the reservation.

The next three years were quiet ones for the First Cavalry in the northwest, especially for Troop B. The year 1890 again saw unrest among the Indians. This time it was the Sioux who were chafing at the confines of their reservation. The regiment was in the field from November 1890 to February 1891 as part of the campaign, which herded these Indians back to their reservation on April 20, 1892, they rode out of Ft Custer, Montana back to the southwest. They arrived at Ft Bayard, New Mexico on April 27th. They remained there for three years. On October 5, 1895 they arrived at Ft Reno, Oklahoma where they stayed for three more years. The Indian wars were about over

for the men of the First Cavalry Regiment. They had netted two battle honors for the Regiment in about nine serious skirmishes. These had been spread over 32 years of scouting over the frozen snow and the sunbaked desert, with months of boredom in between. They were a major part of what has come to be known as the Indian Fighting Army.

THE SPANISH AMERICAN WAR

In 1898 the interest of the country moved from the frontier to an island about 90 miles from the coast of Florida – Cuba. The island was under the dominion of Spain. Even before the incident of the Battleship Maine, the people and press of the United States had been clamoring of war. After the Maine mysteriously blew up in Havana Harbor, there was nothing to hold back the flood of public opinion. But how was the U.S. to react? The United States Army numbered 28,183 officers and men. Spain had around 80,000 soldiers on the island. What was even worse was the fact that our small army did not have a unified command. There was no General Staff organization to fit the myriad of details together. Units had not operated on a Regimental level since the Civil War. Besides this, there were National Guard and other volunteers to be organized and deployed. Yet somehow, with great waste and delay, things happened.

The First Cavalry Regiment moved to Chickamauga Park, Tennessee, arriving on April 24, 1898. The other units taking part in the mobilization were also located there. On May 14 the 1st and 10th Regiments of Cavalry moved to Tampa, Florida as a Brigade. On June 7, 1898 they boarded the S.S. Leona, the 1st and 2nd Squadrons being dismounted. The 1st Squadron fought at the battle of Las Guasimas on June 24, 1898 and again at San Juan de Cuba on July 1-3. They took part in the siege of Santiago from July 4-17 for which they received the 61st battle honor for the Regiment. The Regiment remained in Santiago until August 8, 1898. They then returned to the U.S. with A, B, I, L and Regimental Headquarters going to Ft Riley, Kansas. In January the command left Ft Riley and moved by rail to Ft Robinson, Nebraska. This was a period of reorganization in which the Army sought to repair some of the weaknesses, which the war had disclosed. Overseas, the garrisoning of newly acquired lands drew more strength from the Army while an insurrection in one of these lands, the Philippine Islands, caught the eye of the public.

THE PHILLIPINES

The Regiment left Ft Robinson on June 19, 1899 for Ft DA Russell, Wyoming. There they conducted field-training exercises to indoctrinate the new recruits, which the reorganization had brought to them. The Boxer Rebellion in China brought about the 1st Cavalry's second tour overseas, this time in the Philippine Islands. The U.S. Army

garrison in the Philippines was shifted to the Allied Army moving to free the diplomatic legations of many European nations trapped in Peking, China by the Boxers. The Army was concerned because the contingent in China was not as large as what they would like it to be. Also, the Philippines now had no one to deal with the insurgency there. Accordingly, the 1st Cavalry was alerted to fill whichever vacancy proved more needful. On July 21, 1900 they said good bye to Ft Russell, traveling 2200 miles by rail to Seattle, Washington. On August 7th, the men departed Seattle for the far east on the Garonne. Their horses departed four days later on the Pak Ling. At first the men thought they would be going to China to help, but when they got to Japan, they received word that they would be going to Manila instead because the legations at Peking had already been relieved.

On 20 September 1900 the Regiment debarked at Batanges, P.I. on the southern part of the Island of Luzon, a rich and heavily settled area. On the 25th of September, they moved to Santo Tomas, a town of 11,000 down the road to Manila. They were busily engaged in short scouting missions, escort duty, and performing the usual garrison duties in Santo Tomas. There was still a large body of insurgents in the Philippine Islands and some of the other troops had less peaceful lives. The insurgents were guerrillas. "The common soldier wore the dress of the country; with his gun he was a soldier, by hiding it and walking quietly along the road, setting down by the poorest house, or going to work in the nearest field, he became an amigo. Full of good will and false information for any of our men who might meet him."

In October 1901, when a group of insurgents captured 2 native carts, 20 men pursued the guerrillas, found the stolen items, and destroyed the village they were discovered in. On October 22nd a detachment of Troop B and some infantry captured 5 insurgents on Mount Maquilling. From November 18th to December 1st, 35 men participated in the Mount Cristobal Expedition, which struck at the insurgents supply base. On March 15, 1902, 40 men of Troop B and a company of 5th Infantry killed 5 insurgents in a sharp fight on Mount Maquilling. Again on the 19th, this detachment surprised insurgents on Mount Maquilling killing 4 this time. On April 16th, the leader of the insurgents, General Malvar, surrendered. This ended organized hostilities. On April 26, 1902 the Regiment rode to Teal in Bantangas, P.I. On July 6, 1903 the Regiment moved to Bantangas. From there it went to Manila on August 3, 1903.

BORDER DUTY

The First Cavalry moved back to Texas arriving at Ft Sam Houston, on September 29, 1903. On October 1, 1904 the Regiment moved to Ft Clark, Texas where it remained for three years. While there the Regiment provided troops to assist the city of San

Francisco after their tragic earthquake. Troop B moved there on May 11, 1907 and stayed for one month returning on June 9 to Ft Clark. Now came another of the rare “quiet periods” for the First Cavalry. They did not realize that they would see no further action for 35 years.

BACK TO THE PHILLIPINES

In 1908 the Regiment pulled another two-year hitch in the Philippine Islands, this time at Camp Statenburg, Papangas, P.I. On their return to the U.S. on February 12, 1910 A, B, D, and K Troops were assigned to the Presidio of San Francisco, California. They then joined the Regiment at the Presidio of Monterey from December 14, 1913 to August 1, 1914. Then things began to happen south the border, and on August 5, 1914 the Regiment shifted south to San Ysidro, California ten miles from the border. On August 20, 1915 the Regiment moved to nearby San Diego as the tension eased. On August 24, 1915 they moved to Calexico, California for their tour of border duty. They remained there until May 15, 1917. While stationed there Pancho Villa’s raid across the border brought the tension in that part of the country back to a sudden boil. General Pershing organized a punitive expedition into Mexico while the First Cavalry was kept on its border stations. General Pershing was still south of the border when the U.S. entered World War I. The people of the southwest were still jumpy and the war meant that the expedition would have to return. When General Pershing did return, all of the National Guard that had been called up had to be released. That left the First Cavalry all alone to cover the border.

WORLD WAR I

The First Cavalry was anxious not to be left out of the great war. They had served in every war fought since their founding. Therefore they trained vigorously at every opportunity. They received the news that the First Cavalry would be responsible for forming the 24th and 25th Cavalry Regiments. The Regiment, minus those troops still guarding the border moved to Ft Russell, Wyoming. As part of their training, they moved on May 21, 1917 to Camp L.J. Hearn, Palm City, and California for target practice. When the mission of forming the two new Regiments was completed, the First Cavalry moved to Camp Harry J. Jones, Douglas, Arizona. They were joined by the 17th Cavalry Regiment to form the 3rd Brigade of the 15th Cavalry Division. It appeared that they would soon deploy to Europe so training was intensified in anticipation. However, time dragged on and a policy change of the War department converted 12 of the new Cavalry Regiments to Field Artillery. They also were informed that there would be no one to relieve them of border duty until January 1919. Enthusiasm began to wane. They were still waiting at Camp Jones when the war ended with an armistice on November 11,

1918.

On January 19, 1923 the regiment again went to Ft DA Russell, Texas where it continued its training. This was to be the Cavalry's last post as horse cavalry. The machine age caught up with them 9 years later. There was a final mounted parade held at Ft Russell on December 14, 1932. When the men had passed in review one time, they dismounted and passed in review again, saluting their horses this time. The Regiment departed Ft DA Russell in late December 1932 and arrived Ft Knox, Kentucky on January 16, 1933. On this date the First Cavalry became the first mechanized unit in the United States Army.

MECHANIZATION

Saying the word mechanized, however, doesn't accomplish the mechanization. That was left up to such men as COL Daniel Van Voorhis, the Regimental Commander. On April 19, 1934 when the 1st Cavalry Regiment (Mechanized) moved off from Ft Knox to Ft Riley, Kansas for maneuvers, "in the 8 mile long column (one mile in close formation) were 187 vehicles, 587 men and 37 officers. Actually there were only 6 combat cars in the column. One and a half ton trucks painted with yellow bands to indicate they were supposed to be combat cars, made up the deficiency."

The 1st Cavalry Regiment, as a member of the 7th Mechanized Brigade, was the showpiece of American Armor. World War II and the German use of massed armor finally shook loose the blocks to the expansion of American Armor. As a result, on July 15, 1940, they were reorganized and redesignated as 1st Armored Regiment, an element of 1st Armored Division.

WORLD WAR II

When the American Army began the march to Germany, the First Regiment was there. At 0820, 8 November 1942 the men of 1st Armored Regiment landed at St Leu, French Morocco. By 1100 they had captured Tafaraoui airfield, 30 miles away, overrunning a battery of French medium guns, which was defending it. The next day they acquitted themselves admirably against the counter attack of French Tanks. "Company B, 1st Armored Regiment, (CPT William R. Tuck) with LT Whitsit's platoon of tank destroyers, moved eastward from Tafaraoui airfield to engage the French. Whitsit's 75's laid low a base of fire from a hill about eight hundred yards from St Lucien while Tuck's company advanced across open fields in two V's abreast, with a third platoon five hundred yards behind them. Their armor could take the enemy's fire, and their 37mm antitank guns, even with the old type shell with Combat Command B had to use for the rest of 1942, destroyed one after another of the obsolete French E 35's. In the end, fourteen were destroyed for the temporary loss of one American tank and the mortal wounding of one

American sergeant.”

The men of the Regiment showed themselves equally adept against the Germans in Tunisia. “Drawing the full attention of the German-Italian force, Company A lost six tanks in a matter of minutes but drew the enemy’s vehicles into positions which permitted Tuck’s Company B to fire at their vulnerable rears. They knocked out six Mark IV’s and at least one of the Mark III’s before the rest withdrew. Two miles to the north beyond the enemy’s farmhouse, infantry were observed dismounting from a column of trucks. The remaining tanks of Company A and those of Company B first advanced against this force and decimated it, then forced open the gates of the farm enclosure and shot up the garrison which had abandoned the place after dark.”

In November 1943 the First Armored Division moved to Italy to participate in the drive that took the Allies to the base of Monte Cassino. In this drive they won another battle honor, Naples-Foggia. The War in Italy reached a stalemate. The next engagement that the 1st Armored Regiment took part in was in late January 1944. The First Armored Division, less CCB but with 1st Armored Regiment, moved to land at Anzio, Italy with hopes of outflanking the German winter line. The muscle of their metal maintained the threatened perimeter after the first attempt to break out failed in the face of heavy German reaction. Finally, they were the ones who broke the German Ring on 24 May, 1944. This was their fourth battle honor of the war.

After helping to liberate Rome on 5 June, 1944 the First Armored Division ground steadily up the Italian boot, crossing the Arno on 1 September. During this drive, on 20 July, 1944 the First Division was pulled out of the line and reorganized under a new table of organization. The First Armored Regiment became the 1st Tank Battalion. In this campaign the men of the regiment added another battle honor to their guidons. They then participated in a slow grinding winter campaign in the Northern Appennine mountains. This was especially difficult because the countryside greatly hindered tank operations much as the Korean countryside would in a future war. Their final campaign of World War II was in the Po Valley in northern Italy, which they fought from 21-26 April 1945.

THE OCCUPATION

Again the smoke cleared and again the regulars stayed while the citizen soldiers became citizens once more. On 1 May 1946 the remainder was converted and redesignated as 1st Constabulary Regiment; concurrently converted and redesignated as 1st Medium Tank Battalion, relieved from assignment to the 15th Constabulary Regiment and assigned to the 1st Armored Division which was immediately inactivated. For a while even the regulars were sent home.

KOREA

The Korean War broke the quiet spell. On 7 March 1951 the First Medium Tank Battalion was activated at Ft Hood, Texas. There followed a long period of training for the troops who served with it. On 20 May, 1953 it was redesignated the 1st Tank Battalion. On 15 February, 1957 the First Tank Battalion was inactivated at Ft Polk, Louisiana. 2nd Battalion, 1st Armored Regiment, reconstituted 27 February 1951 in the Regular Army, redesignated as 100th Tank Battalion, and assigned to 1st Armored Division. Activated 7 March 1951 at Ft Hood, Texas. Inactivated 15 February 1957 at Ft Polk, Louisiana and relieved from assignment to 1st Armored Division.

1st and 100th Tank Battalions consolidated and redesignated 15 February 1957 as 1st Cavalry, a parent Regiment under the Combat Arms Regimental System (Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Tank Battalion, redesignated as Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Cavalry). After a period of garrison duty the men of the First Cavalry Regiment, First Regiment of Dragoons, were called to duty in Vietnam.

VIETNAM

In August 1967 the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry was detached from the 1st Armored Division and sent to Vietnam as a separate armored cavalry squadron attached to the U.S. Army Pacific. The squadron consisted of three ground cavalry troops, and one air cavalry troop, Troop D, which was deployed in July 1968 and attached to the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) until 1969 when it rejoined the squadron. Troop D's assets were later used in the reactivation of Troop D, 17th Cavalry when the latter unit was activated in Vietnam on 30 April 1972. While in Vietnam, the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry served in Chulai, Da Nang, Tam Ky, and Thach Khe. They departed Vietnam on 10 May 1972.

The 2nd Squadron, 1st Cavalry (1st Regiment of Dragoons) was a separate armored cavalry squadron attached to U.S. Army Pacific from the 2nd Armored Division. They departed for service in Vietnam in August of 1967 and served at Pleiku, Dak To, Svoi Doi, Ah Khe, Phan Thiet, Song Mao, Phan Rang, and Cam Ranh Bay. They departed from Vietnam on 11 October 1970 and returned to garrison duty at Ft Hood. Troop E, 1st Cavalry (1st Regiment of Dragoons) was raised on 1 July 1966 to serve as the Brigade ground reconnaissance element in the 11th Infantry Brigade (Light). The troop arrived in Vietnam on 19 December 1967 from Hawaii. The troop was collocated with Brigade Headquarters in Vietnam and departed service on 18 October 1971.

The 7th Squadron, 1st Cavalry (1st Regiment of Dragoons) arrived in Vietnam on 26 February 1968 from Ft Knox, Kentucky. They were first attached to the 12th Aviation Group at Di An. On 3 June 1968 the Squadron went to Vinh Long and became part of

the 164th Aviation Group. The squadron contained 7 troops; 6 Air Cav and 1 ground. 7th Squadron, 1st Cavalry departed service on 7 April 1972.

SOUTHWEST ASIA

The 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment completed their deployment to Saudi Arabia from Germany on 2 January 1991 with the 1st Armored Division. The move to the division sector in the desert was completed on 8 January 1991. The 1st Squadron was the first combat unit in VII Corps that was ready for action. The entire division was placed into a “desert wedge” formation with the 1st Squadron at the sharp end forward. When the ground war began on 24 February 1991 the 1st Squadron led the way across the border into Iraq. 244 kilometers were covered into the enemy’s rear during the 89 hours of sustained offensive and mopping up operations. The 1st Squadron helped to destroy four Iraqi divisions along the way, three of which belonged to the elite Republican Guard Forces Command. The squadron had no fatalities and only limited injuries during the conflict, and only two M3A2 Bradley fighting Vehicles were lost. **THE**

BALKANS

1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry participation in Operation Joint Endeavor spanned a period from 20 December 1995 through 17 November 1996.

October through November was a busy period of time as the Squadron prepared to redeploy, conduct a relief in place with Task Force 1-18 Infantry, 1st Infantry Division, close out all five lodgment areas, and conduct sustainment gunnery (crew, section & platoon qualifications) at TTA, Hungary. The Squadron trained up the follow-on forces from 10-20 October 1996. C Troop began the redeployment on 16 October, followed by A Troop, then HHT, C/6-6 CAV and finally B Troop. During this month of redeployment, the Squadron at any given time was spread out between base camps in Bosnia, the Rear Staging Base (RSB) in Croatia, the Intermediate Staging Base (ISB) in Taszar, Hungary, the remaining Area at Taborfalva, Hungary, and the Squadron home station at Buedingen (in Germany). This redeployment was conducted by road march into Croatia and Hungary where the Squadron was railroaded back to Germany. The last busloads of B Troop and HHT soldiers arrived at Buedingen on 17 November 1996. The Squadron conducted recovery operations and executed a block leave period from 21 December – 4 February 1997 to close out its participation in Operation Joint Endeavor.

