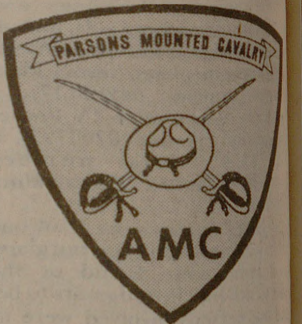


ROUGH RIDERS



Photos and Story by
Phelan M. Ebenhack



LEFT: Senior members of the Parsons Mounted Cavalry watch the March to the Brazos events from atop a ridge.

BELOW: Lt. Col. Dunham, the adviser to the cavalry, leads the seniors down Turkey Creek Road Saturday morning.

BOTTOM: Senior Kevin Franks brushes his horse before heading out to the Brazos River.

As the rising sun signals the beginning of a new day, the sound of restless horses and the sight of the

Parsons Mounted Cavalry conjure up images of the Old West.

It was a time when long hours and hard work were prerequisites for survival, when man and nature were considered equals. Today, the Cavalry consists of 52 cadets who display that same rugged spirit.

Each must put forth the tremendous energy and dedication needed to care for their horses. However, the chance to ride during march-ins representing Texas A&M University and the Corps of Cadets makes all the hard work worthwhile.

Formed in 1919 as part of a program to commission Reserve officers into the cavalry branch of the U.S. Army, the cavalry at Texas A&M was disbanded in 1943 as the need for horse-mounted soldiers decreased with the advent of new technology.

But in 1973, a group of cadets reorganized the cavalry and named it after then-Corps of Cadets commandant Thomas R. Parsons, Class of '49.

The new cavalry was given the tasks of keeping alive the memories of an armed force that traveled and fought on horseback, and promoting the spirit and traditions of Aggieland.

Positions in the Parsons Mounted Cavalry are open to all Corps members, but only after at least completing their freshman year.

As sophomores, prospective members must take two required animal science courses that teach the cadets horse care. Afterward, members of the cavalry must take a riding course every semester.

In addition to the coursework, cadets must clean stalls and take care of the horses. The sophomores also maintain 57 acres of land, called the Fiddler's Green,



where the barn and horses are kept.

The cavalry is made up of people from a variety of backgrounds. Some are from the country, but just as many members are from

broke a few horses," Moore said.

Moore wanted to be in the cavalry ever since he and his father, Class of '68, visited A&M when he was 12. After seeing a cavalry member on a horse, Moore then

cavalry ever since she joined the Corps. She owned a horse while living in South Dakota and simply wanted the chance to ride again.

Although she is only the second woman ever to be accepted into the cavalry, Henrikson said she has felt no pressure to be an example for other women with similar aspirations.

However, she does encourage all cadets who want to be members of the cavalry to give it their best shot.

Henrikson said she gains great satisfaction from being in the cavalry. "Hearing a little kid at a football game say that they want to be just like me and be in the cavalry is the greatest feeling in the world," she said.

big cities such as Dallas or Houston.

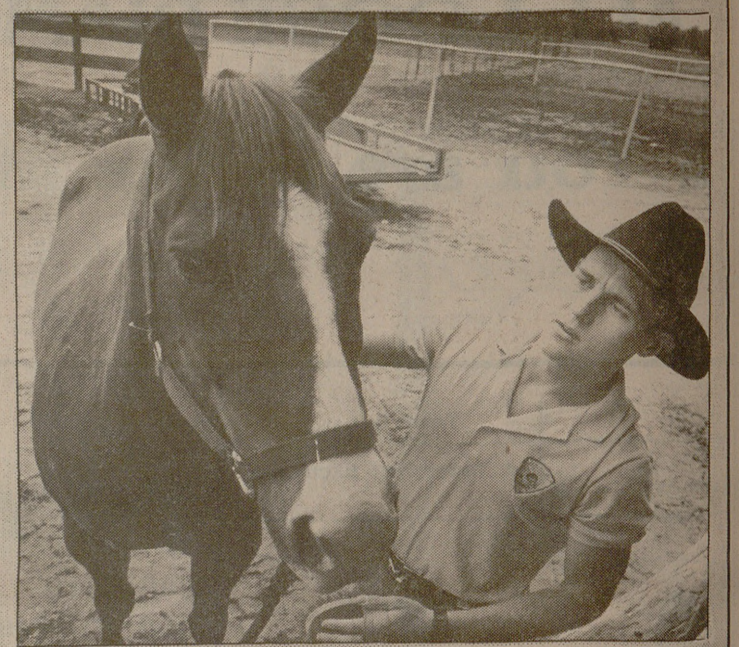
James Moore, commander of the cavalry, learned how to ride horses as a child on his family's ranch in New Mexico. "I even

decided he wanted to join the cavalry.

This year's group of cadets also consists of one woman, Sonja Henrikson. The senior from Redlands, Calif. wanted to try out for

"Here's to us, and those like us. There's damn few of us left."

— Col. Westervelt, former adviser Parsons Mounted Cavalry



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