

AUSTRALIAN ARMY VETERINARY TROOP CONDUCT SKILL AT ARMS  
DISPLAY IN USA.



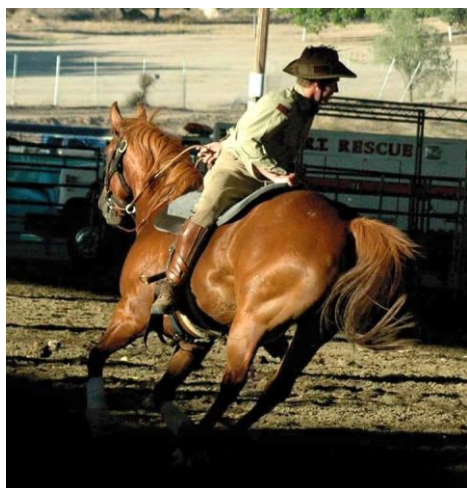
*Some of the members of the troop, Peter McLaughlin, Nigel Allsopp, Chris Kennedy. Josh Knight taking the final bow at the end of the display.*

On 25 July 2015 the Mounted troop of the Australian War Animal Memorial Organization (AWAMO) conducted a display at the Day of the Cowboy equine event in Norco California, USA.

This display was organized by Nigel Allsopp and Roy Mientjes after both members of the Australian Light Horse Association and current serving Queensland Police Officers had undertaken the Advanced California Mounted Police Officers (CMOA) course at Norco last year.

Upon their return to Queensland Roy –Secretary of the Australian Army Veterinary Corps Troop and Nigel President of AWAMO sought the help of several ALHA members and expert riders from the Outdoor Spectacular Show on the Gold Coast.

Prior to the display several rehearsals were undertaken by the team in Queensland, although two team members stationed in Perth were unable to practice until the team assembled in Norco. The team arrived at Norco on the 19 July where Nigel had arranged for 14 CMOA Police horses to be available for use.



Even though these horses by most parts had been trained in basic police equitation they were by no means used to the demands the Light Horse skills would require for the display. It is here that I must honour the skills of the riders we had selected- Josh, Peter, Chris, Laurie, Sky, Amanda, Kyle. These people are truly horsemen/women, what they were able to do with strange unknown horses 4 days prior to a major show was amazing. These comments were echoed on the day by the Mayor or Norco, the Rodeo presenter and dozens of crowd members. One individual at the end of the show came up to me and stated he had been a horsemen for 40 years and had never seen such horsemanship skills before.

The display was part of an overall Cowboy day event starting at mid-day and ending at 22:00 hours. Other events included a 50 flag riding display team from Norco, a western shoot out, stage coach displays, several rodeo events including bull riding, roping and children's mutton busting.



The AAVC team paraded in a mass parade of some 200 horsemen at the beginning of the show and then preformed around 1900 hours that evening. The display consisted of a tent pegging demonstration with lances, this was followed by bursting balloons held by the Mayor with sword



and bayonets at full gallop. This was followed by our State and National flag being ridden around the arena to great crowd applause, then a Roman riding demonstration with two horses that had not only never done this before but had never met. A display of fast riding and stock whip work including standing on horseback took place, then a rescue ride race, where two of our fabulous ground crew members (Ashley and Casey) were picked up at speed by two mounted horsemen. Finally riding a horse backwards for some comic relief which then took a farewell bow. We finished the show with riding past the crowd throwing dozens of soft toys (Kangaroos and Koalas) into their waiting arms.

It was a proud day to be a Queenslander and a privilege to honour the Light Horse. I would especially like to thank Laurie Watts-Director of the ALHA who after Roy had to pull out at the last moment provided professional advice and horsemanship.



*The Norco arena is one of California's largest indoor complexes. Norco City is known as Horse land USA, all residents by City code have to own a horse and all houses must have stables. Norco has the largest horse trail system in the USA. There are 20,000 residents and an estimated 32,000 horses.*



*Nigel Allsopp President of AWAMO was presented a handmade western saddle by the Mayor of Norco and the Council committee for the display from the people of Norco. This saddle will be on display loan to the Mudgeeraba Light Horse Museum, the home of the AAVC troop. The Norco city council put on a formal dinner for the troop and the many friends Roy and I had made whom load us the horses, equipment and above all time.*



All members of the team wore the AAVC maroon colours and badges and displayed both Queensland and the Australian flags. Laurie Watts in the uniform of the day. The CMOA was accommodating with loaning us there Police horses, all horses bar one were solid colours and great “Waler” stand-ins.



A big thank you to all the team, representing the Maroon State.

*Article by Nigel Allsopp-Founder and President of AWAMO.*