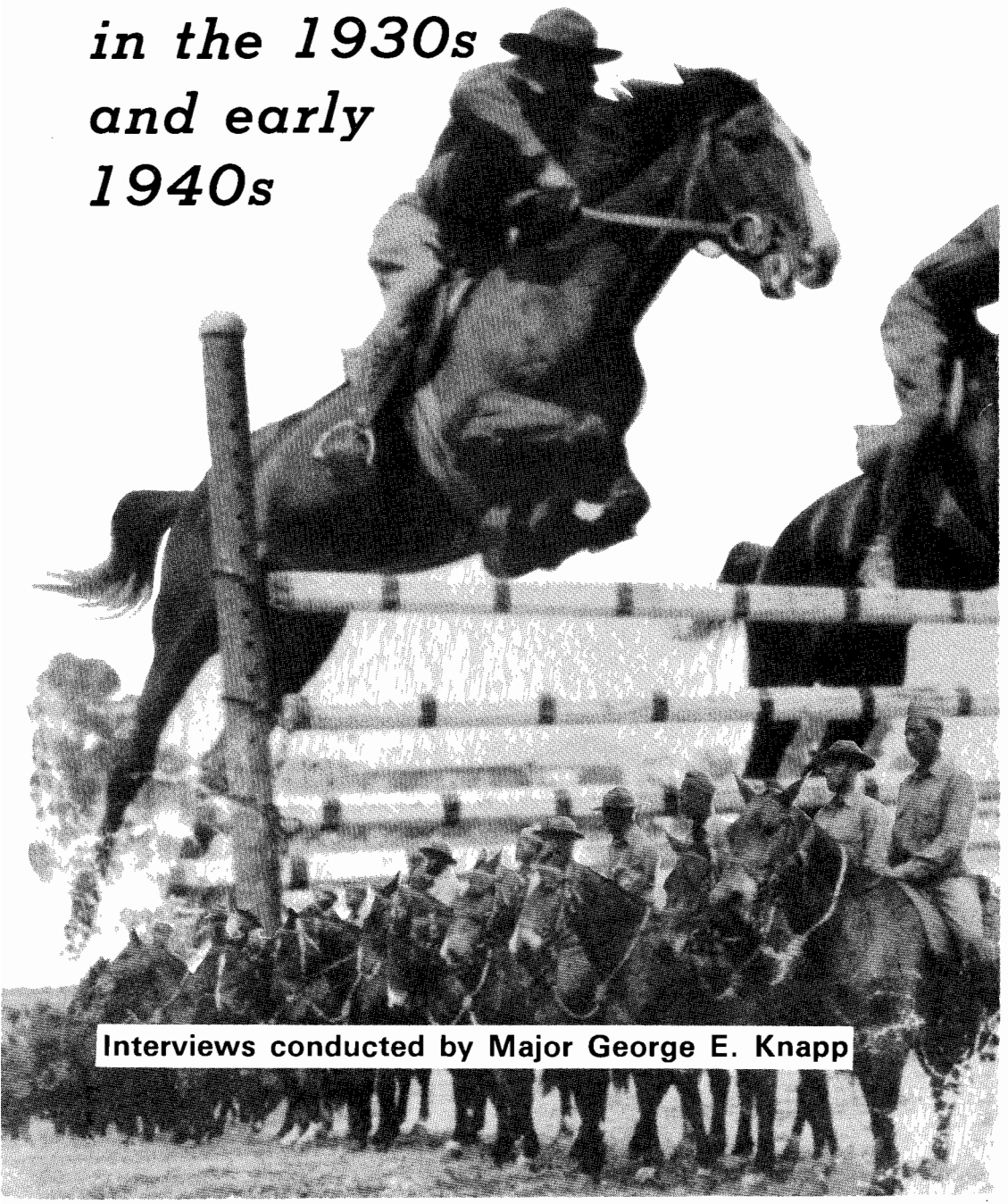
Buffalo Soldiers

at Fort Leavenworth in the 1930s and early 1940s



Interviews conducted by Major George E. Knapp

FOREWORD

Military historians have often focused on the period between the world wars in order to examine issues such as preparedness, doctrine, technology, and politics. Less often have we looked closely at social issues peculiar to the military in that period. These interviews do that for a small segment of the Army—black soldiers at Fort Leavenworth in the 1930s.

In the fall of 1989, the Combat Studies Institute decided to conduct a television interview with veterans of the 10th Cavalry (Buffalo Soldiers). Captain (now Major) George E. Knapp, an instructor at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (USACGSC), conducted background research and preliminary interviews with several veteran Buffalo Soldiers living in the Leavenworth area. Finally, on 19 October 1989, Captain Knapp and four veterans of the 10th Cavalry met in the television studio at Bell Hall for a videotape session. This is a transcription of that session.

During the interview, the four veterans reminisced about their service at Fort Leavenworth and how they felt about their role in the history of the United States Army. Harry Hollowell remembered much about his fellow soldiers and the officers who commanded them. Elmer Robinson talked mostly about his work in the USACGSC bookstore and those with whom he worked. Julian Brown told about working in the stables and as a striker (a soldier who worked daily in the home of an officer for extra pay). Lorn Brown described the details of taking care of the officers' polo ponies and later breaking in new mounts for the regiment. Each veteran focused on different aspects of the 10th Cavalry's service at Fort Leavenworth.

Out of these reminiscences clearly emerges one impression: these men are proud of their military service and, more specifically, proud of the contributions that they have made toward equality in the Army. They believe that they have played an important role in the evolution of Army race relations and that they have seen the results of that evolution during their lifetimes. They remain proud veterans, aware of their contribution to the history of the United States Army.

April 1991

ROGER J. SPILLER
Director
Combat Studies Institute

CSI publications cover a variety of military history topics. The views expressed herein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Department of Army or the Department of Defense.

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Most of all, I thank the interviewees, Harry Hollowell, Elmer Robinson, Julian Brown, and Lorn Brown for their gracious cooperation in sharing their experiences as Buffalo Soldiers at Fort Leavenworth.

GEORGE E. KNAPP
Major, Infantry
Combat Studies Institute

Art and design by Alfred T. Dulin

Captain Knapp: I'm Captain George Knapp of the Combat Studies Institute, United States Army Command and General Staff College. Today, we're talking with veterans of the 10th Cavalry.

The 10th Cavalry was organized on 21 September 1866 at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. It, along with the 9th Cavalry, 24th and 25th Infantry, formed the first all-black regiments in the United States Army.* Collectively, the men who served in these regiments are called Buffalo Soldiers from the descriptive name given them by the Indians. The 10th Cavalry served in the West against the Indians until the war with Spain in 1898. The 10th served in Cuba along with the 9th Cavalry as part of The Cavalry Division.

After the war with Spain, the regiment served in a series of posts in the United States and in the Philippines. In 1916, the 10th was part of General Pershing's punitive expedition into Mexico. It remained on the southwest border during World War I and until 1931 when its squadrons were posted to support Army training at West Point, Fort Meyer, and Fort Leavenworth. The regiment reassembled in 1940 [1941] at Camp Funston [Fort Riley], Kansas.

The 10th was inactivated during World War II and its soldiers transferred to various service units. In the fall of 1950, the 10th Cavalry was converted as the 510th Tank Battalion and activated at Camp Polk, Louisiana. The battalion was transferred to West Germany in 1952 and became [racially] integrated in that year. It remained in West Germany until 1958 until it was reorganized and redesignated as the 10th Cavalry at Fort Knox, Kentucky.

The 1st Squadron fought with the 4th Infantry Division in Vietnam. The 2d Squadron served as the reconnaissance unit in the 7th Infantry Division. The 3d Squadron performed reconnaissance missions for the 77th Infantry Division in the Army Reserve and, in 1977, was activated as an armor battalion in the 1st Cavalry Division at Fort Hood, Texas. The 10th Cavalry was reorganized under the United States Army Regimental

*Initially, all these black regiments had white officers and black enlisted men.

Frontier Army Museum

(1) McNair Hall, (2) Funston Hall, (3) stables, (4) riding hall, (5) Command and General Staff School, and (6) 10th Cavalry service club and athletic fields

System in June 1987 and assigned to the 194th Armored Brigade at Fort Knox, Kentucky.

From 1931 to 1940, the 1st Squadron of the 10th Cavalry served at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. It performed caretaking and housekeeping duties. Its soldiers served as saddlers, painters, horseshoers, mechanics, carpenters, cooks, military police, and grooms for the horses used by officers assigned to the Command and General Staff School. They also performed duties in the houses of officers for extra pay. They cared for the grounds; taught military wives and children how to ride; and served as messengers, clerks, and warehousemen.

They were billeted in what are now called Funston Hall and McNair Hall. Their stables comprised what are now Muir Hall, Flint Hall, and Gruber Gymnasium. Their service club was located in what is now Gruber Field. They trained in the area now occupied by Normandy housing area and Patton Junior High School.

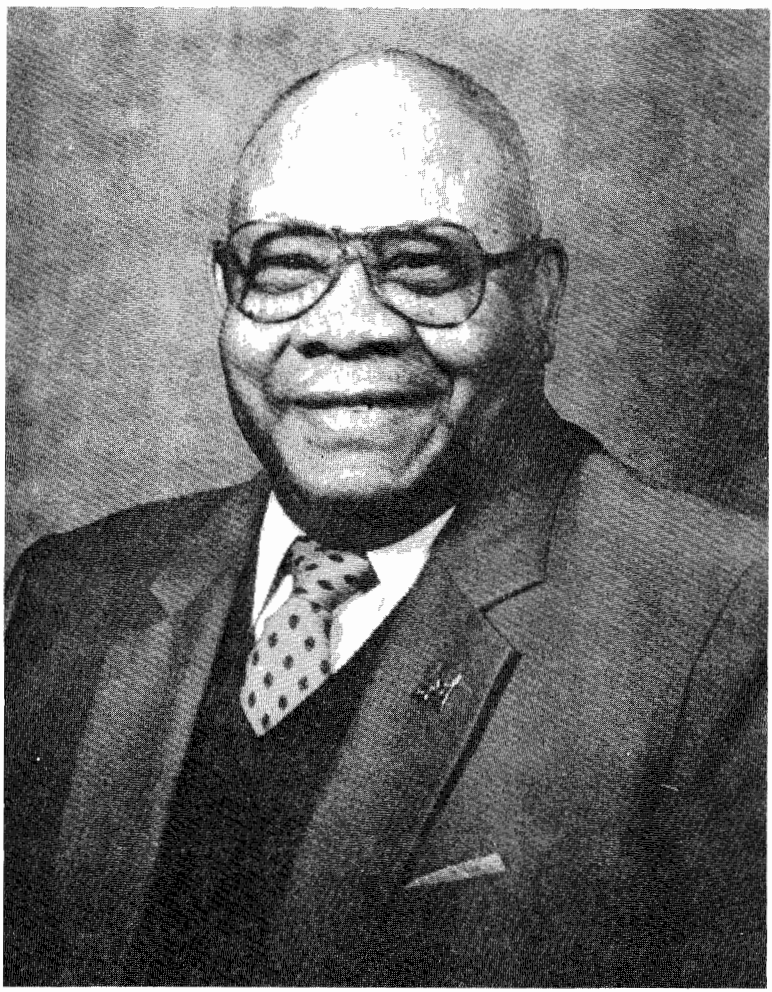
We're fortunate to have with us today four veterans of the 10th Cavalry—four Buffalo Soldiers. They will share with us some of their reminiscences of their service at Fort Leavenworth in the 1930s.

Our four guests today are—

Retired Chief Warrant Officer Harry H. Hollowell of Leavenworth, Kansas. Mr. Hollowell enlisted as a private in the 10th Cavalry at Fort Leavenworth on 25 January 1936. He served in A Troop as troop clerk, recruiting sergeant, and later as squadron sergeant major. He attended the Army Music School in 1942 and graduated as a bandleader. He served as a bandmaster both in the United States and overseas. He retired in August 1964 after more than twenty-eight years of service.

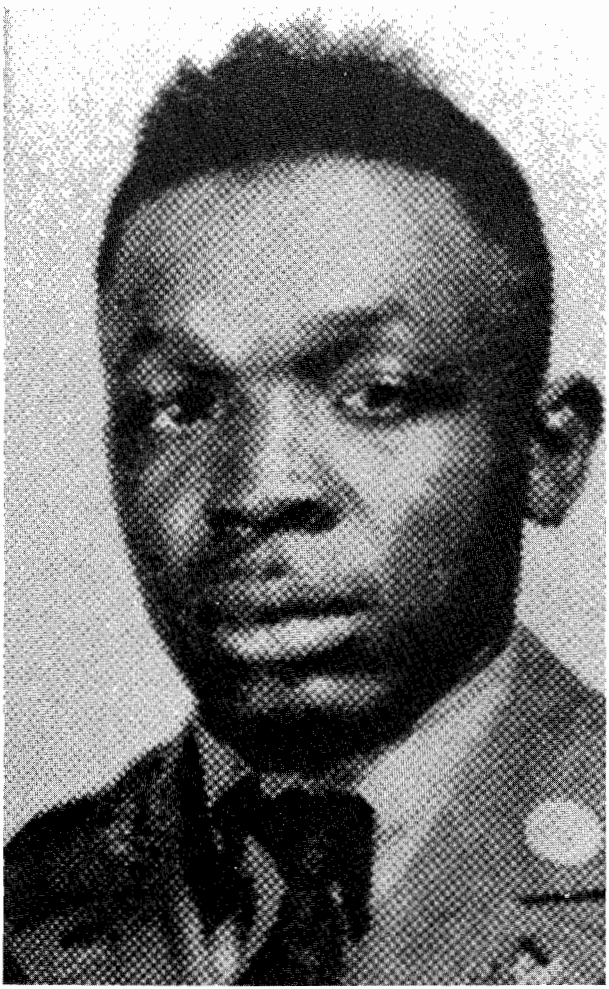
Chief Warrant Officer Harry H. Hollowell, 1958

Retired Sergeant First Class Elmer E. Robinson of Leavenworth, Kansas. Sergeant Robinson enlisted as a private in the 10th Cavalry at Fort Leavenworth on 15 May 1935. He served in A Troop as a groom in the polo stable until selected to work in the Command and General Staff School Book Department as a shipping clerk. He worked in the Book Department until December 1941 when World War II began. He retired in July 1955 after more than twenty years of service.



Elmer E. Robinson

Retired Staff Sergeant Lorn Brown of Lansing, Kansas. Sergeant Brown enlisted as a private in the 10th Cavalry at Fort Leavenworth on 14 January 1936. He served in A Troop as a groom in the polo stable and later as a remount sergeant. During World War II, Sergeant Brown served in the Pacific theater of war. He retired in August 1956 after more than twenty years' service.



The Historical and Pictorial Review: 10th Cavalry of the United States Army—Camp Funston-Fort Riley, Kansas, 1941 (hereafter referred to as 10th Cavalry Yearbook, 1941)

Staff Sergeant Lorn Brown, 1941

Mr. Julian R. Brown of Leavenworth, Kansas. Mr. Brown enlisted as a private in the 10th Cavalry in July 1936. He served as a groom and as a striker (a soldier who worked in an officer's home). Mr. Brown left the service at the end of his first enlistment in September 1939.

Julian R. Brown

Welcome to all of you gentlemen. We're very pleased to have you with us today.

Let's begin with Mr. Hollowell. Mr. Hollowell, you were a troop clerk and recruiting sergeant in the 10th Cavalry. Tell us about how the 10th was organized at Fort Leavenworth when you served there.

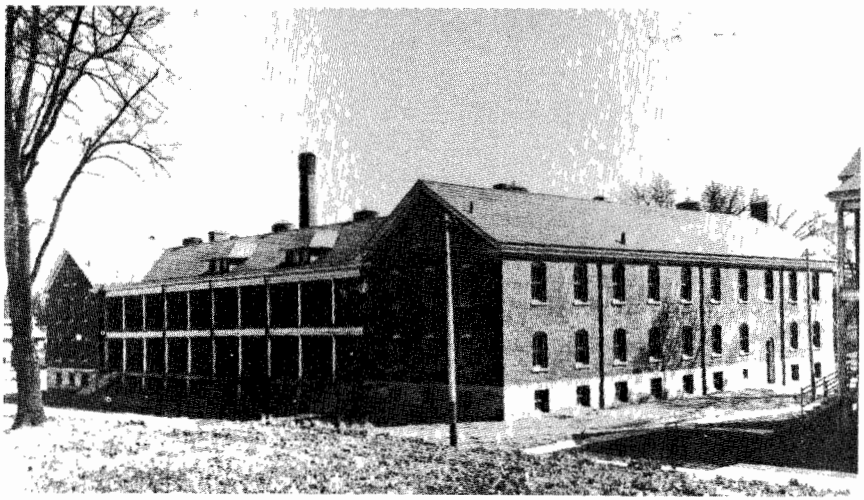
Mr. Hollowell: The regiment was organized . . . consisted of Headquarters Troop, A Troop, and B Troop. The regiment maintained itself up until 1940 at which time the regiment moved to Fort Riley [Camp Funston]. My main interest is that of making any statements that enhances the creditability of the 10th Cavalry soldiers. They performed admirably at that time, and we desire to make creditable the work that they did then and bring it up to make its importance appropriate today as I see it.

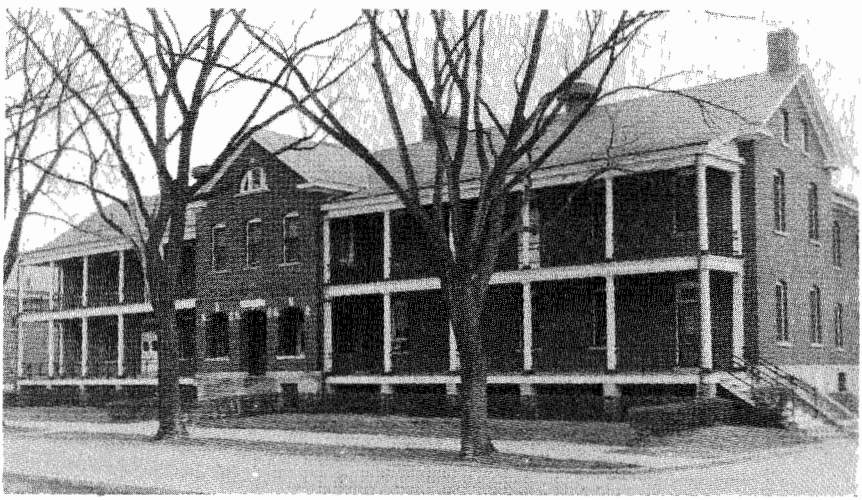
Captain Knapp: Sergeant Robinson, you have an interesting story about how you came to enlist in the 10th Cavalry.

Sergeant Robinson: Well, my father was a member of the CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps] camp, old World War I veterans, and they were stationed here at Fort Leavenworth next to the old 10th Cavalry barracks in a little place of their own there. At the time, I was working in Kansas City as a young man at Fred Harvey's [in the] Union Station. My parents had moved to Leavenworth. I decided to come up to visit them one time. While visiting them, I decided to come out and visit with my dad, my stepfather, rather, at the time.

While visiting with him, I had dinner. He took me around to the 10th Cavalry where they were serving—cafeteria style. The food was so wonderful, and we had a good dinner. Everybody was so jovial and so interesting too—so friendly. He asked me if I wanted to go around and see the barracks. I said that I wanted to see because I wasn't familiar with soldiers. I hadn't been around soldiers. In the meantime, he took me around through the barracks and, at the time, the beds were made up so they looked like stones that way. Everything was in line. The shoes by the bed were just like glass. The floors were like glass, and I was impressed with that.

I asked him, "Can anybody be a soldier?" He said, "Well, if you are accepted, if you want to be a soldier." I said, "Well, how do I go about being one?"





Frontier Army Museum photos

Funston Hall (top) and McNair Hall (bottom), 10th Cavalry headquarters and barracks

In the meantime, one of the fellows was there, and my dad asked him to open his locker—his wall locker with his clothes displayed in it. I looked in there, and the uniforms were hanging so nice, everything was right in its place, you know. I was really impressed with that. We looked at his foot locker, and it was likewise. Everything was so nice and neat. I just simply drew a mental picture of myself being in the 10th Cavalry.

I asked him, "Who do I have to see to get into the 10th Cavalry?" At that time, they had the regimental sergeant major,

Carter, I believe was his name. He [Robinson's stepfather] said, "Go and see him." He took me around to the place. I went in to talk to this man. He was a nice person, and he asked me at the time, "What sports do you play?" Well, as I said, I wanted to get into the 10th Cavalry. He said, "Do you play football?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Do you play baseball?" I said, "Yes, I do. I play baseball."

10th Cavalry Yearbook, 1941

Master Sergeant L. M. Carter

But I exaggerated on the football. I never played football before in my life. But anything to impress him, and he was impressed because I was a young sapling that way—all built up. I was heavy.

He said, "Well, I'm going to put you on the list." At that time, you had to wait for somebody to die . . . or, I say, wait for a vacancy to be filled before they could call you. At the time, I think they must have had about twelve vacancies. So, he put me on this list and I waited, I think, for about . . . it must have been six months, I guess somewhere along there, before I was called. When I was called, I went in and I stayed with it until I got out, until I retired. As I said, I was just impressed with what I saw. I enjoyed every minute of it. It was good. And that's just about all I have to say about it, you know. That's about the way it was.

Captain Knapp: Sergeant Lorn Brown, you worked down at the polo stable. What were your duties down at the polo stables?

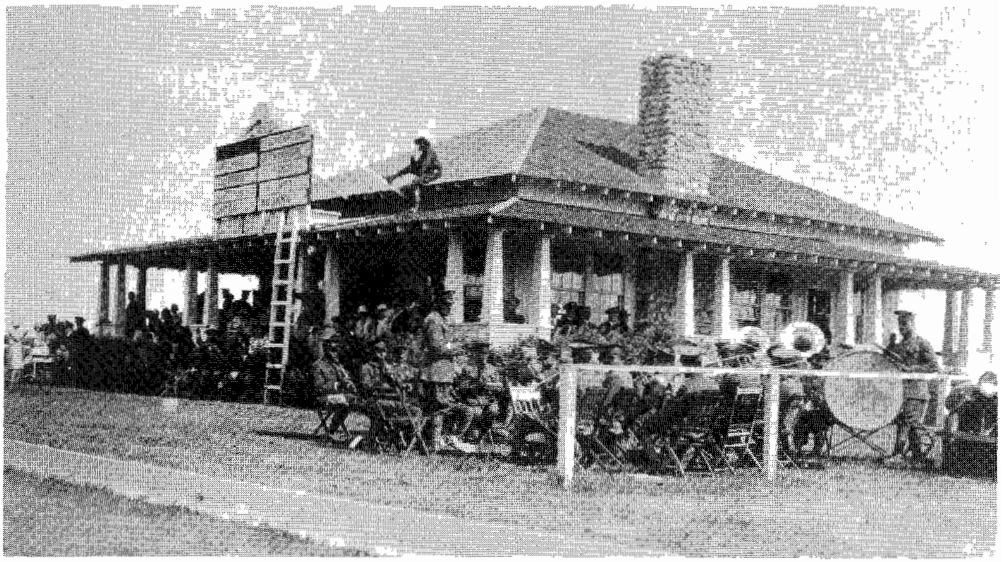
Sergeant Brown: They assigned you four polo ponies. You had to, every morning, take them out and clean each stall—get it ready so it would dry out. After you did that and got the stable cleaned out, you had to saddle up and take them out for exercise. [I'd] ride them from the stables clean out to Metropolitan [Avenue] across the fields and then back, tie them back on the line, and come back in. You'd have to take and get your currycomb and brush, rag, and clean them up, groom them, brush them down. Then, long about noon, we'd have to put them back in the stable and feed them.

Then, about two o'clock or so, if we had a game, we had to take and put the boots on them. So, we'd get the boots on them, maybe round about two. We had to be on the field about 3:30. Each horse was assigned to some officer. He had a certain mount that he rode. All they'd do is call for their mount, and whoever that mount belonged to would carry him up to where they were playing polo. We'd, maybe, get off from up there round about six o'clock. Then, we'd have to come back to the stables, dry the horses, dry them down, wipe them down, water them, put them in their stalls—just put them to bed.

Captain Knapp: How many horses did each man have to take care of?

Sergeant Brown: We had four horses to take care of.

Captain Knapp: Mr. Brown, you were a groom, but you were also a striker.



National Archives

The 9th Cavalry Band plays at a polo match between the Fort Leavenworth and Fort Riley polo teams. Names on the scoreboard are Captains Wood, Davis, Truscott, Gay, Wilkinson, and Smith and Majors Swift and Brown.

Mr. Brown: Yes, but I was a groom first.

Captain Knapp: Tell us about being a groom, and tell us also about being a striker.

Mr. Brown: I was a groom. I had six horses. We kept those just for the officers to ride.

Captain Knapp: These are not the polo horses.

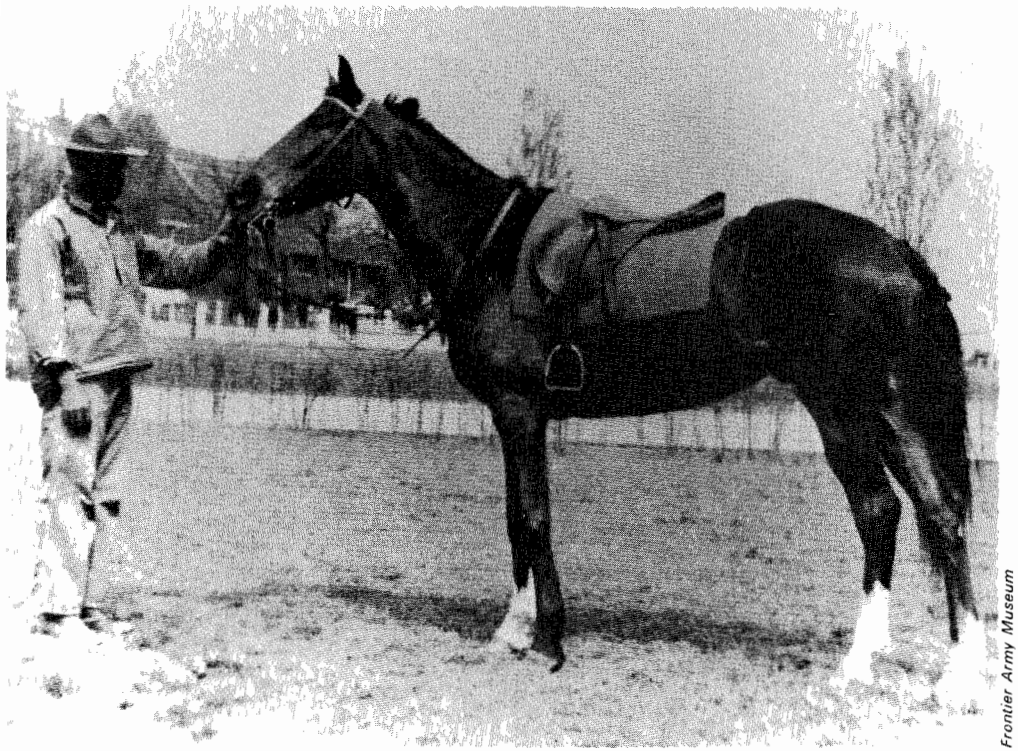
Mr. Brown: No, they were not polo [horses]. These were for officers to ride just on classes. They'd have their class, and you'd have to get the horses ready for them to ride. I done that for a while. Then, later on, the stable sergeant told me that he'd let me go up and be an instructor for the ladies riding class. That would give me a little more money; you know I'm going to take it.

Captain Knapp: You got paid extra for doing that.

Mr. Brown: I got paid extra for doing it—three dollars.

Captain Knapp: Three dollars a month?

Mr. Brown: Yes, that's good money. So, I done that for a while. Well, everything was nice, and then, I thought I could do a little bit better. So, I went up, put in, and got to be a striker. I went to the officer's quarters and things and cleaned and done whatever. That was fifteen dollars more.



Frontier Army Museum

Black cavalryman caring for colonel's horse

Frontier Army Museum

Black cavalryman training a horse at Fort Leavenworth

Sergeant Robinson: That was a month, wasn't it?

Mr. Brown: Yes, fifteen dollars a month. I'm rich now, you see. I kept doing that for a while. I got along just fine with all the people. They switched me to different places—went around to different places. While I was going there, [I found] that the officers really didn't run the Army. Their wives did. Any time I got in trouble, it was always one of their wives that got me out of trouble. So, I found that out.

In the meantime, I had worked for majors before I ever came in the Army, and I stayed with them. The one that swore me in, I worked for him. He lived down in Leavenworth, downtown. He kept telling me how nice it was in the Army. I could get in the Army and go up, you know, and it would be nice. Well, I thought it would be nice too.

But I got there, and it seemed like I was just standing still too long. I kept asking the sergeant, "Why can't I get a rating or something?" He said, "Well, the ratings are froze in the 10th Cavalry."

Captain Knapp: That is, promotions in the 10th Cavalry were frozen.

Mr. Brown: Yes, they were stopped right there. I said, "Well, don't look like I'm going to do any good here, so I'm going to have to hunt some place else to go." As far as the men in the service, I got along fine with them. We had a nice time. I boxed. I had a lot of fun boxing. I had a lot of fun training some of the other guys, you know. But that wasn't making me any money. At that time, it might sound different, I was kind of money hungry. I was greedy. I wanted more all the time.

Captain Knapp: More than twenty-one dollars a month.

Mr. Brown: Yes, I got up to thirty dollars. When I got my fifteen regular pay, cause they took out so much, then I got the fifteen dollars for striking. That gave me thirty dollars. I went on thirty dollars there for a while, you know, like that. I thought that was pretty good. But I said, "I'd like to be a PFC, a private first class, then go on up to a corporal," just like the major and them told me you could do. I couldn't do that. So, I said, "Well, I'm just going to get out." Someone asked me, "Why do you want to get out of the Army? The Army's the best place for you. You get fed. You know that when you came in here you were hungry."

I said, "No. When I came in here, I wasn't hungry because I was working for officers and they were eating good. I wasn't hungry." I got out. Well, before I ever came in the Army, I could cook. I cooked for private families. I ran cattle. I did a lot of things before I ever came in the Army. I thought, well, I'd get out and go back to some of those old deals, which I did. I went back to cooking in Kansas City and got other jobs that paid a little bit more than I was getting in the Army. Of course, I had to buy my own clothes and food and everything like that. As far as the Army, the Army is all right. I liked the Army—if they would advance me a little bit, just give me a little something to satisfy me for a while.

Captain Knapp: Let's ask Mr. Hollowell. Mr. Hollowell, you were a troop clerk and a recruiting sergeant. Mr. Brown is talking about the promotions being frozen. What caused that?

Mr. Hollowell: I think the Department of the Army allocated certain amounts of money for the administration, for the administrators to take care of paying the troops and running the operation on the post. Of course, if they only allocated a certain amount of spaces and a certain amount of monies, then the regimental commander can't authorize any more money for the various grades or any more promotions than what his allocation has been from the Department of the Army.

Captain Knapp: I know that one of your interests is in keeping track of and knowing about some men who served in the 10th Cavalry and went on to do other things later in life. Some of them made really significant contributions to this country. Why don't you tell us about some of those.

Mr. Hollowell: Some of the more famous personalities that were associated with the 10th Cavalry, I would list, perhaps, General B. O. Davis and his son—that is, B. O. Davis Jr. and B. O. Davis Sr. B. O. Davis Sr. was the 4th Brigade commander, which included both the 9th and 10th Cavalry when the regiment reassembled at Fort Riley in 1940. General Davis' son eventually became a lieutenant general in the Air Force. I think he still lives at this time.

Another officer who became famous, at least from what he was when he was in the 10th Cavalry, was Leander L. Doan. Doan was my squadron commander as a major. I met him in Okinawa, and he had the rank of major general.

National Archives

Brigadier General Benjamin O. Davis Sr.

10th Cavalry Yearbook, 1941

Major Leander L. Doan

I also met Peter C. Haynes, who was Mr. Brown's troop commander in the later thirties. He was a captain. I met him in Okinawa when he was the Army IG [inspector general] with the rank of major general.

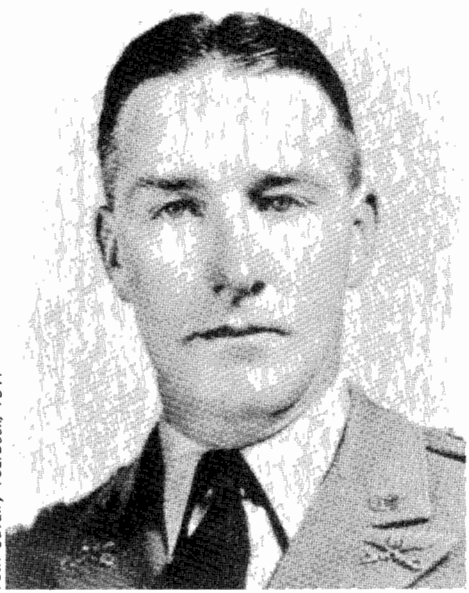
General John P. Willey was my troop commander, I think, in approximately 1939 as a captain. Overseas, he had Chinese and American troops taking them up the Ledo Road to build a road so as to get the Allied troops into Burma. His rank was brigadier general.

Captain Charles Reed was my troop commander. I learned that he became a major general.

Major General Peter C. Haynes and Mr. Hollowell at Fort Leavenworth in the early 1960s

Harry H. Hollowell collection

Brigadier General John P. Willey



10th Cavalry Yearbook, 1941

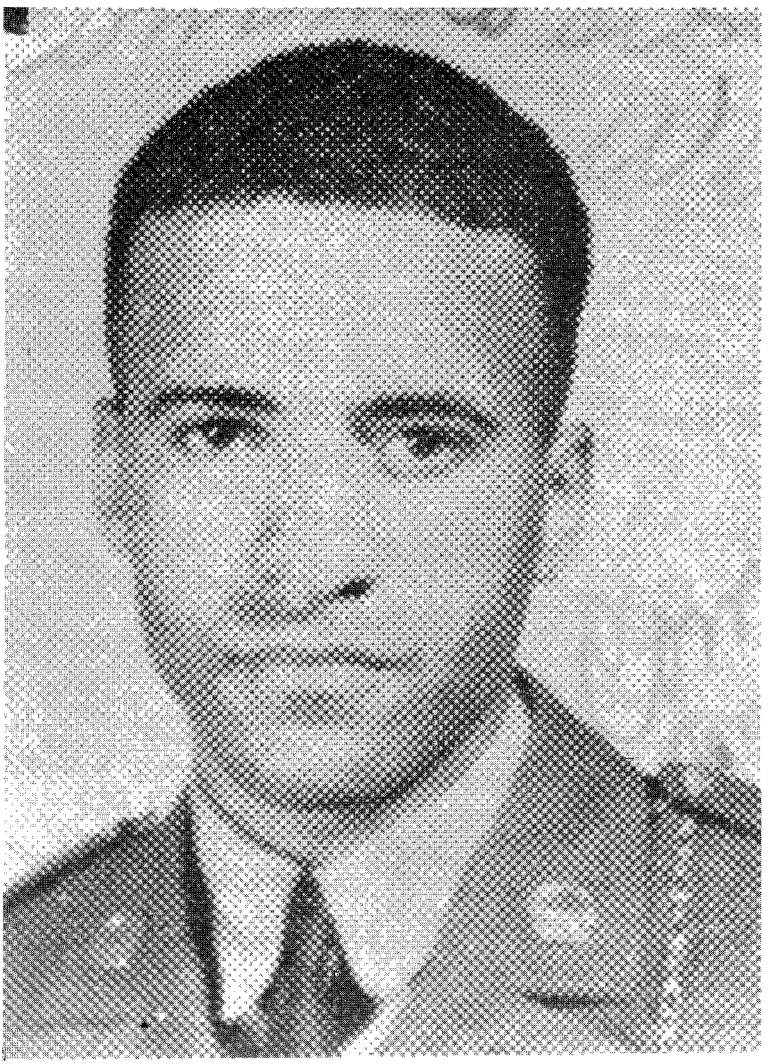
Major Charles H. Reed

The regimental commander at the time I was here at Fort Leavenworth was Colonel P. R. Davison. His son became a major general and the commandant of Fort Leavenworth between the period of the 1960s and 1970s.

10th Cavalry Yearbook, 1941

Colonel Paul R. Davison

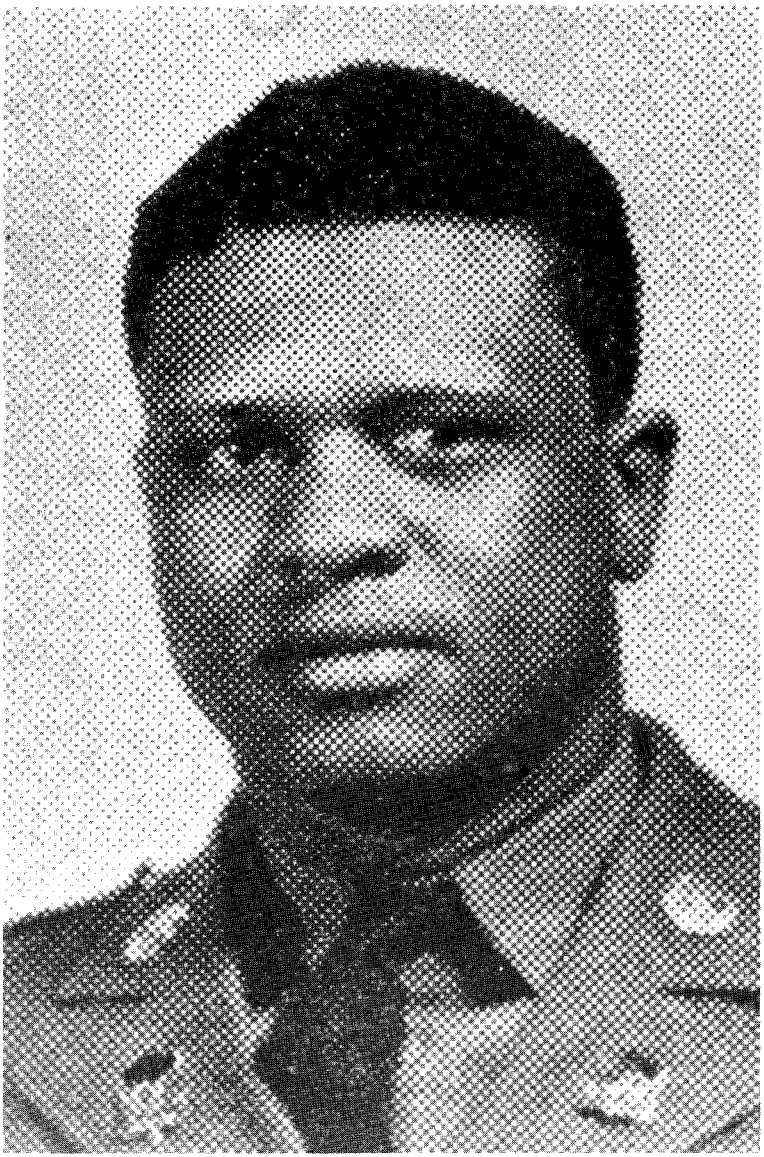
The 10th Cavalry, during the Second World War, members that is, members of the 10th Cavalry, who enlisted as private soldiers . . . a number of them became commissioned officers. Alfred Johnson became a lieutenant colonel.



10th Cavalry Yearbook, 1941

Corporal Alfred Johnson

Irvin McHenry was a private soldier about the time that I came in. He retired a lieutenant colonel.



10th Cavalry Yearbook, 1941

Staff Sergeant Irvin McHenry

Randall Royston was a private soldier along with me, retired as a major.

10th Cavalry Yearbook, 1941

Staff Sergeant William R. Royston

Kenneth Thomas, likewise a private soldier, retired as a major.

10th Cavalry Yearbook, 1941

Sergeant Kenneth L. Thomas

Harry H. Hollowell collection

Leroy Green when he retired from Temple University

I have here a picture of a former member of the 10th Cavalry in the person of Leroy Green—a member of Troop B during the time that Mr. Johnson [Brown] was a member of the 10th Cavalry. He was a private soldier . . . however, this article . . . "Leroy Green Taking Retirement From Temple University" [says that] he had been an instructor at Temple University, which is a great progress. Let's see, what does it state?

> His "first retirement" was in 1956 after serving 20 years in the U.S. Army where he rose from the rank of private to captain. He had enlisted in 1935 in the "horse cavalry" at Fort Leavenworth in his native Kansas.

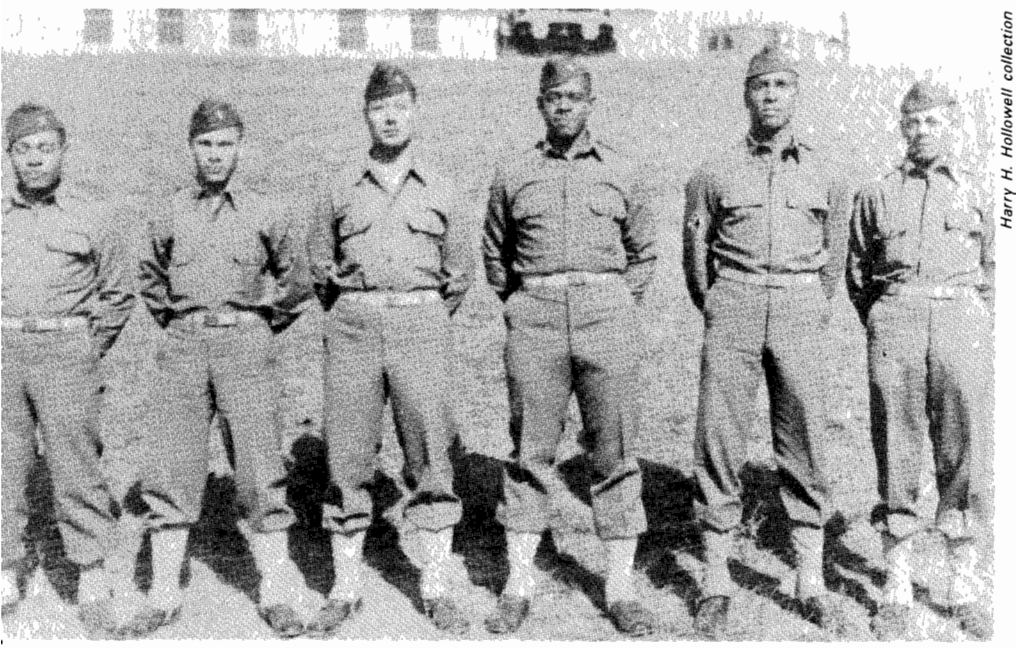
Here, I have a picture of a former 10th cavalryman in the person of my brother. Here, he is as a member of a tank destroyer unit as a first lieutenant. I think he got out as a captain; however, he became a lawyer and a very famous lawyer. His area of work was that in civil rights. They called him Mr. Civil Rights. [reading] "Hollowell Champions Civil Rights in Georgia." He was a member of the law firm that put the first black student in Georgia University [University of Georgia?]. He was also the regional director of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Southern District, which included several [Southern] states. He was commissioned [as an officer] . . . his charge was confirmed by Theodore Roosevelt Jr. Here's a picture at his confirmation.

This is an interesting article. It's *The Kansas City Star*, Monday, January 16, 1989. It's an article in regard to Martin Luther King Jr. The picture here is captioned, "John F. Kennedy phone call to Coretta King contributed to his narrow victory for president in 1969 [1960]." The article says:

> Donald Hollowell, King's chief attorney presented character addresses and a host of arguments but [Judge] Mitchell banged the gavel, revoked King's probation, and ordered him to serve four months at hard labor on a road gang beginning immediately.

Captain Knapp: So your brother was Dr. King's attorney.

The officers of Headquarters Company, 795th Tank Destroyer Battalion, at Camp Custer, Michigan, in early 1943. Lieutenant Donald Hollowell is fourth from the left.



Harry H. Hollowell collection

Mr. Hollowell: On a number of occasions, he got him out of jail. Let's see here—

> In Atlanta, Donald Hollowell dispelled a far more intense gloom that morning when he trumpeted the news that Judge Mitchell had changed his mind and signed an order to release King on $2,000.00 bond.

In my opinion, Don has contributed admirably to our way of life of today. However, he got his start here in Troop A of the 10th Cavalry, having left the regiment in 1938, went to school at Lane College, and pursued a legal career. I'm very proud of his contributions.

At the first 10th Cavalry reunion here in 1966, Hollowell was one of the principal speakers along with Governor Avery, who was governor of the state of Kansas. And in this picture is also a picture of Senator Reilly, the commandant . . . [reading] "Senator Reilly, Governor Avery, Attorney Hollowell, Adolph Holmes, Urban League director, was a member of Troop B of the 10th Cavalry." He became an important person in the National Urban League; he became its director. He was on the podium, on the stage here at the current Fort Leavenworth theater at this 10th Cavalry reunion.

Donald L. Hollowell receives an award at the Kappa Alpha Psi testimonial banquet in Atlanta, Georgia, on 22 February 1969. From left to right are Reverend Ralph David Abernathy, Mr. Hollowell, Rheubin M. Taylor, Mrs. Hollowell, and Bishop P. Randolph Shy

Harry H. Hollowell collection

Harry H. Hollowell collection

On the podium at the 10th Cavalry reunion in 1966 are from left to right Post Chaplain C. A. Goss; Brigadier General Robert C. Taber, assistant commandant of USACGSC; Leavenworth Mayor Thomas D. Beal; Sergeant Henry D. Williams, president of the Retired Men's Club; Adolph Holmes, director of the Urban League; Attorney Donald L. Hollowell; Kansas Governor William H. Avery; and Kansas State Senator Edward F. Reilly

The post commander, or the deputy, I think, was Brigadier General Taber, Fort Leavenworth acting commandant at that time. Sergeant Henry D. Williams was president of the Retired Men's Club, which was the sponsor of the 10th Cavalry reunion.

But the 10th has made a lot of wonderful contributions. The motto of the 10th was Ready and Forward. Many personages of the 10th have made their records here in whatever capacity they served as members of the 10th Cavalry and have gone on to maintain a continuity . . . made their contribution in today's life, made their contributions as then, which brings us up to today.

I'm proud to have been a member of the 10th Cavalry along with these members here. Oh, that's right, I served here from 1960 to 1963 as the post bandleader. That's a far cry from enlisting as a soldier . . . as a private in 1936. When I came in, the

post bandleader's name was Mr. Hebert, I believe, and I had the ambition of one day coming or being a bandleader. I was fortunate enough to make bandleader in '42 and, eventually, come here as the post bandleader [1960—63].

I still live here in Leavenworth, proud of the community, proud of the comments and the remarks which these men have made, and I hope life continues well. Oh yes, there's a young fellow here who was seven or eight years old when I came in. His dad's name was Louis B. Johnson. Seven or eight years old, but the fellow now is a brigadier general, and I wouldn't

Brigadier General Julius Johnson, son of Louis B. Johnson

doubt but what he now wears two stars rather than one. I can't find the article here, but it's a credit because the old 9th and 10th Cavalry did its duty to lay the groundwork for many officers now who go to this school [USACGSC], which shows that the country will never be at its best until it has all of the groups, all of the ethnic groups, of the nation making their contribution to the American way of life.

The article that I was speaking about: "General Johnson, Black History Month Speaker," *The Leavenworth Times*, the date is February 16, 1989. He goes on to make a remark, I hope to be able to find it, in which one item that he remembered as a youngster was seeing me go to church in uniform. Here it is, I think. See, if I had my good eyes—

> Longtime Leavenworth resident Louis B. Johnson. Gladys Johnson raised two sons. The prize photo on Johnson's wall shows his father dressed in his 10th Cavalry uniform standing under the flag of Troop A. . . . Several mentioned their family's devotion to Bethel AME Church. Johnson said the foundation of his upbringing was the church. The Leavenworth High School graduate of 1958 recalls Sunday services on the morning Harry H. Hollowell would play the piano for the service.

I think he made the comment at this address. One of his most memorable memories was seeing me go to church in uniform and participate in the religious service of the old Bethel AME Church.

I do not want to monopolize this period, but it's a wonderful reflection. I appreciate the work that the Department of the Army and that Captain Knapp is doing, and I have great credit for the project which is now underfoot to commemorate the contributions of members of the minority—the black troops. [With] everybody working together, we can't help but be successful.

Captain Knapp: It's alway nice, Mr. Hollowell, that people like you keep up with all these folks and where they are and where they were and when they served. It's good that . . . now Sergeant Robinson, you were going to say something about. . . .

Sergeant Robinson: I was just going to make a comment about . . . he was speaking about not wanting to monopolize the whole thing, but I was enjoying his monopolizing.

Captain Knapp: You knew a lot of those folks he was talking about, all of you did.

Sergeant Robinson: Yes, I knew all of them. Yes, that's why

I said I was enjoying it so well because everything he said that way was true.

Captain Knapp: This brings back a lot of memories for you.

Sergeant Robinson: Yes, it does.

Captain Knapp: You were in the stables for a short time when you first joined the 10th, but you got another job in the Book Department. Tell us about that.

Sergeant Robinson: Yes, I was assigned to the polo stables. Now, it's called . . . let me see, what is the polo stable called now?

Captain Knapp: Flint Gym, Flint Hall.

Sergeant Robinson: Yes, Flint Hall. That was the polo stables at that time.

Captain Knapp: It was a service club for a while too, I think.

Sergeant Robinson: Yes, it was. It was a service club in 1940. I believe that's when the 10th Cavalry, with their own labor, made it into a service club. But the time when I was there, it was the polo stables and we had, as Sergeant Brown pointed out, we had four horses apiece to take care of. I worked there for a little while. Finally, one day I was summoned to come over to the orderly room and said that the commanding officer wanted to see me. Well, that was Captain Willey, I believe. Captain Willey was his name. I said to myself, "What have I done? What does he want to see me about?"

Captain Knapp: You thought you were in trouble.

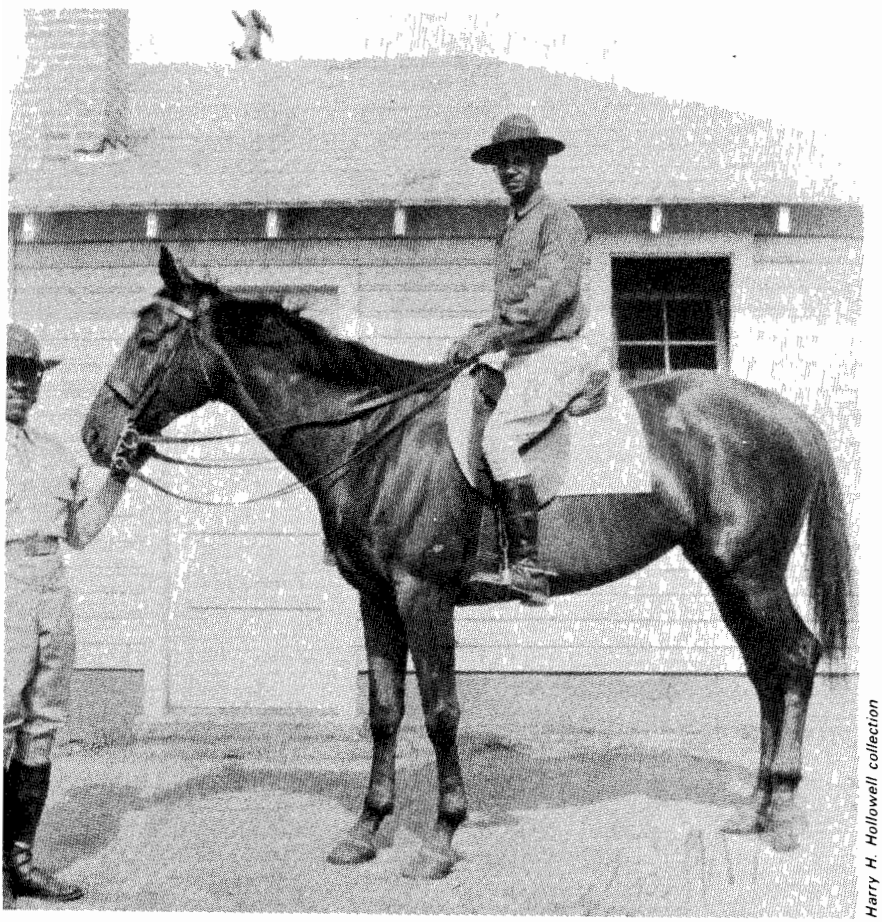
Sergeant Robinson: Yes . . . no, I didn't think I was in any trouble, but what could he want to see me about? I went in to the first sergeant who said, "Captain Willey wants to see you." I said, "What about?" He said, "I don't know." Of course, I think he knew. Anyway, I walked in and saluted Captain Willey, and he said, "Private Robinson, I've got an assignment for you."

I said, "An assignment?" He said, "Yes." He said, "Mister Williams, the chief warrant officer at the Book Department, sent down here to fill a vacancy with an honest person to work at the Book Department as a clerk." I said, "Captain, I have no experience as a . . . no clerical experiences. I have nothing like that."

The man up there was a retired black man who had retired as a first lieutenant. "Sergeant Bly," they called him. His nickname, they called him "Captain Bly." He was in charge of the

Book Department under Mr. Williams. He was in the shipping department. He said Mr. Williams wanted an honest person up there.

I said, "I don't know how he found out, but I'm honest as far as that's concerned." He said, "Are you willing . . . do you want to go?" I said, "Yes sir, I don't mind." So, they sent me up there to fill this vacancy. When I walked into the shipping room, Cap [Bly] recognized me because, at one time, when I lived on Dakota [Street], he lived on Kiowa [Street]. He knew me by my being a friend to his son. He knew of me, but we didn't actually know one another. When he saw me, he said, "I recognize you. I've seen you in the neighborhood."



Harry H. Hollowell collection

Corporal Albert Bly with Harry Hollowell holding the horse's reins

I said, "Yes, but Sergeant Bly, they sent you the wrong man." I looked at all the typewriters and all the things that were to be done that way, and I said, "They sent you the wrong man. I know nothing about any of this in here. I don't know how to do any of this." He said, "Well, you may not know but are you willing to learn?" "Yes sir, I'm always out to learn," I said; "I'm willing to learn, sure." He said, "I'll teach you."

Mr. Hollowell: Ready and forward.

Sergeant Robinson: Yes, ready and forward.

In the meantime, there was another fellow there who was from B Troop. He was working there as a clerk, LaFlore. Danny Miles was working there as a truckdriver. LaFlore was the chief of the thing. He was an expert with all of it, you know. He said, "Rob, I'll teach you."

But it just looked like I couldn't comprehend. My schooling itself was limited. I hadn't finished high school. Nothing like that. How was I going to do this? This is too much. But, as I said then, my stepfather always taught me that if you apply yourself you can do anything that anybody else can do. So, that came back to me. In the meantime, he said, "Well, we'll start you out."

They were showing me what my duties were to be. He first started out, after I was there for a little while, he taught me on the typewriter. LaFlore, the chief man there, had me to make out a bill of lading for the shipment that was to go out. We shipped maps all over. You name it, we'd ship it all over the country. It was a hunt and peck, hunt and peck, and it was wrong when I got the bill of lading made out for the shipment. I put it on Captain Bly's desk and he said, "Well, that's wrong Rob. Try it again." He was a very patient man.

I'd go and type it again, and finally, I put it on his desk, and he said, "Put it on there and let it go." Well, that aroused my ego, man. I was ready to do anything.

Captain Knapp: You got it right!

Sergeant Robinson: Yeah, I got it right. Well, then I'm on my way now. In the meantime, I was there for about a month, and I was doing pretty good. If the people there were that interested in me improving myself, why not help myself? So, I sent off to Chicago, and I bought myself a typewriter. After they sent it, my parents lived here in Leavenworth at the time, and I . . . after they sent this typewriter, I would go up there

and I would type . . . the table and everything they had. They sent me everything, the touch system. I'd go up there, and I would type, type, type until two in the morning trying to improve my typing.

All of this, unbeknownst to the people whom I was working with. LaFlore, I didn't tell him. I didn't tell Captain Bly or nobody else. Nobody knew it but my mother and my dad because I would be up there so late and the wastepaper basket was just loaded when I'd make so many mistakes that way. But I said that's the only way I could do it, just applying myself. That word kept going to me all the time—apply yourself. I kept doing that.

They had noticed, after a certain length of time, that when I'd make out a bill of lading the way that I was, you know, doing pretty good without errors. I was slow but no errors in it. I had practiced. I had took some of the forms that we'd make out the bill of lading and carbon copies.

Captain Knapp: Practiced on the real forms.

Sergeant Robinson: Practiced on the real thing. When it came my time to make out a bill of lading, I put it on his desk, and he said, "Ship it. Let it go." Boy, that was encouraging to me and very inspiring. I said, "I'm doing all right you know."

In the meantime, I continued this practice, all the time, late at night until I got to the place until they began to notice that way. When I'd sit down, I learned that I could make out the bill of lading and learn the touch system. Cap looked and said, "Look here. How are you doing this?" Well, I was honest. I came out and told him.

Captain Knapp: That you had been practicing.

Sergeant Robinson: That I had been practicing. I told him that I bought me a typewriter, that he was interested in helping me. Everybody here was interested in helping me. Why couldn't I help myself? He said, "Well that's good. We're behind you."

I improved, improved, improved on that until I became schooled so well on the job, he thought, that LaFlore, who was the chief man, the clerk, was going to take a vacation.

Captain Knapp: And you were still a private soldier at the time.

Sergeant Robinson: Still a private soldier. No, a PFC.

Captain Knapp: PFC.

Sergeant Robinson: PFC. This man went on vacation, and I took his place. The man in charge was well pleased with my work. In the meantime, the man in charge himself, eventually, he wanted to go on leave. In the meantime, something happened with the chief clerk that left me there all alone. Mr. Williams said, "What are we going to do?" Captain Bly said, "Robinson will take care of it." He said, "Yes, all right then."

So, I was there alone, with the exception of the truckdriver. I had made out all the invoices and everything, made out the shipments and all of that for about almost four days—just alone—taking the chief's job.

Captain Knapp: How long had you been there?

Sergeant Robinson: Let me see . . . I guess practically a year.

Captain Knapp: So, you had a chance to learn the job.

Sergeant Robinson: Yes, I was learning it. Otherwise, I applied myself. That's all I thought about was that these people were helping me and I am going to try to learn this.

Captain Knapp: And you didn't have to work in the stables.

Sergeant Robinson: No, I never did go back to the stables again. I held the job down, and the chief warrant officer, Cleveland Williams, he was in charge of the Book Department, commended me. He commended me for the work that I had done, and he told Captain Bly after Cap came back what a wonderful job I had done and "we don't want to lose Rob." They trained me for that job. When the war broke . . . no, no, not when the war broke out, but when things were going on in Europe, Hitler was marching into Czechoslovakia, things began to move here.

Captain Knapp: Going toward war.

Sergeant Robinson: Yeah, that's when the 10th Cavalry, what was that '40 . . . ?

Mr. Hollowell: Uh huh, '40.

Sergeant Robinson: They began to get shook up.

Captain Knapp: They brought the squadrons back together out at Fort Riley, or Camp Funston as they called it.

Sergeant Robinson: Well no, not at that time, was it? Speaking of the 10th Cavalry proper here.

Captain Knapp: Ah, the squadron here.

Sergeant Robinson: Yeah, they became, you know, getting

together. They talked about moving and all like that.

Captain Knapp: Start doing more military training and less service business.

Sergeant Robinson: Well, yes. Then, they moved in other companies. I think C Company came in here at that time, didn't they?

Mr. Hollowell: Yes.

Sergeant Robinson: As I said, I'd been trained for the job up at the Book Department. When they began to consider the chance that the 10th Cavalry was going to leave, the same man that I talked to about getting into the service, Sergeant Carter, regimental sergeant major, sent for me. I went to him and he said, "Rob, do you stay here or go with the 10th Cavalry?"

In the meantime, I had met a wonderful girl here that I contemplated marriage.

Captain Knapp: A woman enters the scene.

Sergeant Robinson: A woman. She was here, and she had talked of marriage. I said, "I'd just as soon stay here." I had never been anywhere else, so I didn't know the disadvantage or the advantage of going. In the meantime, he said, "Well, it's left up to you." He said that Mr. Williams had called [and that] he had inside information about the 10th Cavalry getting ready to leave. He said, "He [Williams] would like for you to stay, but it's left up to you." I said, "I would like to stay here in the detachment." Mr. Williams, in the meantime, had asked me if I wanted to stay. He told me the same thing—that it was left up to me. I told him that I would like to stay here. He said, "That suits me well." So, I transferred from the 10th Cavalry into the detachment, and the 10th Cavalry left me here.

Captain Knapp: The Service Detachment it was called.

Sergeant Robinson: The Service Detachment, that's right. After the 10th Cavalry left, I was here and I could see, after they were gone a certain length of time, the fellows coming back and I was a PFC; I could see the guys coming back with chevrons on.

Captain Knapp: Gotten promoted.

Sergeant Robinson: Yeah, fellows that I was in long before they were. They were sergeants and corporals and things that way. That's what I said about the advantages of staying and the disadvantages of staying and the advantages of going.

Captain Knapp: So, once the 10th Cavalry reassembled out there at Fort Riley, the promotions came back to being like normal.

Sergeant Robinson: Yeah, they began to rise.

Captain Knapp [to Mr. Brown]: Except for you. You were out of the Army by then.

Mr. Brown: I was out of the Army, but I knew about things going to happen because the majors told me.

Captain Knapp: Officers talking about war coming on?

Mr. Brown: They talked about the war, and they talked about changing from horses to tanks. I said, "I'll be a tank man. I'll get in that tank, and I'll run it." But it wasn't happening fast enough.

Captain Knapp: Are you talking about the students, or are you talking about the officers in your own squadron?

Mr. Brown: No, the officers that I'm talking about was majors and things that wasn't even in the 10th Cavalry.

Captain Knapp: Students in the college.

Mr. Brown: The ones that I worked for. Yeah, they were students. They told me, well they brought in the 1st Cavalry on tanks and things, and the majors started telling me that the 10th Cavalry would eventually go to tanks, for the horses were going out of style.

Captain Knapp: But, in fact, the 10th Cavalry didn't go to tanks right away, did they, Sergeant Brown?

Sergeant Brown: No.

Captain Knapp: You stayed with the regiment all the way through its deployment out to Camp Funston, and you were with the regiment through the maneuvers and getting ready to go to Europe. Tell about what happened then.

Sergeant Brown: Yes, it was in '41 when we went on maneuvers all down through Louisiana and Texas. Horses were the great thing in that maneuver.

Captain Knapp: Horses?

Sergeant Brown: Horses were in that maneuver. They could go sometimes where tanks couldn't go.

Captain Knapp: You were a remount sergeant then, isn't that right?

Sergeant Brown: Yes, I was a remount sergeant when we first went down there. When they first went down there, we had to train all these horses and everything for these recruits . . . and have horses for these recruits. We had to train them.

Captain Knapp: Train the horses.

Sergeant Brown: Train the horses just like we did the recruits. They had eight weeks of training; horses had eight weeks of training.

Captain Knapp: Tell us about that.

Sergeant Brown: Just like a recruit, we'd get the horses, and I had a squad of, I think it was about twelve, thirteen men. We'd all get out there and drill horses just like you would drill a soldier. It was mounted drill, mounted drill on the horses. We got them where we could get them from wanting to buck and raise cain.

Captain Knapp: These are horses that have been procured and broken. . . .

Sergeant Brown: They'd been broken. The cowboys broke them up there in Fort Robinson, Nebraska. They'd just get on a horse, saddle him up, get out there, and as soon as he'd stop bucking, they'd turn him over into a lot and call him broken. Well, he was saddle broke for the time being, but when the Army got him, he'd been out there in that pasture for three or four years and ain't been never rode since but five minutes.

Captain Knapp: So, you really had to start all over again with a lot of them.

Sergeant Brown: Had to start over again with a lot of them.

Captain Knapp: But the horses learned like the men learned.

Sergeant Brown: They learned. You could say, "Left turn, ho," and he'd turn left. "Right turn, ho," "walk," "trot"; he'd just pick up whatever command you'd give.

Mr. Hollowell: However, the only difference is those horses, though, were being trained for military operations rather than for post activities when they were here for the polo . . . that sort of thing. They were being trained to perform combat missions in case they were needed in the Second World War. That's the thing.

Captain Knapp: I suspect that when you got out to Camp Funston . . . you were still with the regiment then, weren't you?

Mr. Hollowell: No, I'd gone to . . . well, I was with them for a short time.

Captain Knapp: For a short time because you're in the [year] book.

Mr. Hollowell: That's right, but I went to school in '42, to the bandleaders' school in January '42.

Captain Knapp: When the regiment got out to Camp Funston and you had all the squadrons together and you were back doing the kinds of things that soldiers enlisted to do, was there an improvement in morale? How did the men feel about being able to soldier again?

Sergeant Brown: Mostly, it was young soldiers. It was practically all new recruits and everything, so they started doing regular duties as a soldier—guard duty and one thing and another.

Captain Knapp: So, there were some parts about it that you didn't care much for.

Sergeant Brown: Well, as long as we were doing something . . . we had our own horse to take care of. They were getting you ready for wartime. [A] lot of times, the colonel would come down there at night—it would be raining and carrying on—in his car. We had to stop him and tell him to dismount and be recognized. He'd say, "I'm Colonel So-and-So."

[General laughter from all]

"I don't care who you are. Dismount. Put your things down and back away from it."

Captain Knapp: ID card.

Sergeant Brown: ID card. It's raining, see. They were just trying us out to see what we would do. A lot of them would say they were Colonel So-and-So-and-So. Well, I ain't going to put the colonel out there, make him get out there too—the general, make him get out there. After they seen how everyone was going . . . I liked it.

Captain Knapp: You liked being a soldier.

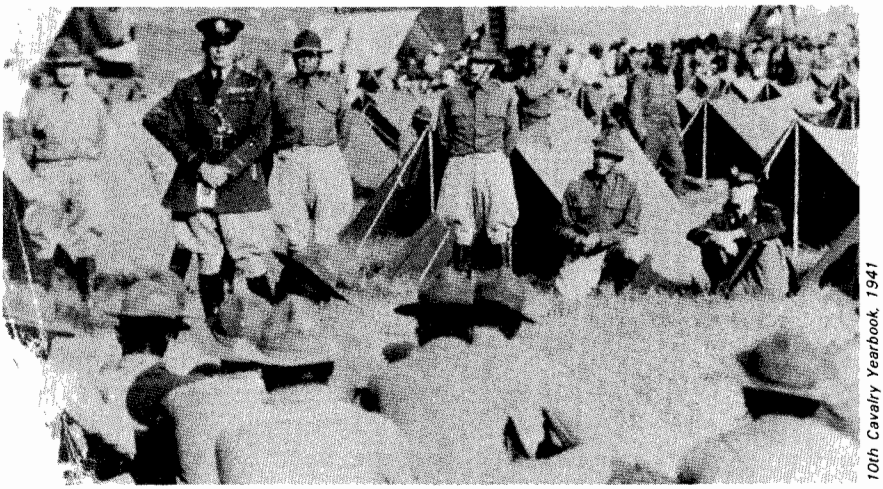
Sergeant Brown: Yeah, I loved it.

Captain Knapp: You stayed with the regiment until it actually ended up on the east coast somewhere, didn't it?

Sergeant Brown: After they broke up, some started going here and there . . . California; Camp Clark, Texas; wasn't it?

10th Cavalry Yearbook, 1941, photos

Remount training at Camp Funston, 1940—41



10th Cavalry Yearbook, 1941

Lieutenant General Ben Lear addresses the officers and noncommissioned officers of the 10th Cavalry at Camp Funston. Officers standing left to right are Brigadier General Terry Allen, Lieutenant General Ben Lear, and Brigadier General B. O. Davis.

Mr. Hollowell: When did you leave for the maneuver?

Sergeant Brown: We left there in '41.

Mr. Hollowell: '41. But it was after the maneuver that they started to. . . .

Captain Knapp: These are the maneuvers down in Louisiana and. . . .

Sergeant Brown: Louisiana and Texas and all that. After they came back, they started breaking up one thing and another. [Of] course, that's when I got pissed off at the Army anyway. They wanted to send me to Camp Polk, Louisiana. Well, down South then was kinda hard, see. 'Cause a buddy of mine, he went down there and got into the MPs. They hadn't gotten things broken down the way they do now, so they had MP duties, but the white MP could carry a gun and they gave the colored MP, he had to carry a stick. So, he wrote and told me about it, and so, they were going to send me down there and I told them, "I ain't going."

[General laughter]

Sergeant Robinson: A stick is not competition against a gun, is it?

Sergeant Brown: If I'm an MP and I can't carry a gun, then I ain't going.

Captain Knapp: Were there a lot of differences between what white soldiers could do and what black soldiers could do back then?

Sergeant Brown: Yes. Yes, when they first started out. When they first started breaking up, then you didn't . . . you couldn't arrest white soldiers down there in Louisiana.

Captain Knapp: Well, here at Fort Leavenworth, there were white troop units at the same time you all were here, weren't there?

Sergeant Brown: Let's see, there were mostly quartermaster and MPs. The guard company was practically all white.

Sergeant Robinson: The 17th Infantry also was here.

Sergeant Brown: [The] 17th Infantry, that was all white. We didn't come too much in contact with them no way.

Sergeant Robinson: No, no.

Captain Knapp: They didn't do any of this school support or. . . .

Mr. Hollowell: Yes, yes, they did.

Captain Knapp: Did they do some of that?

Sergeant Robinson: But they didn't do any of the type of work that we were doing. They weren't servants. They [weren't] strikers or nothing like that, working or doing stable work or nothing of that kind. I guess they were more or less in administrative work, wasn't it?

Mr. Hollowell: I can't qualify that, but they were primarily in support of the Command and General Staff College [School] activities and training.

Captain Knapp: Helping out with exercises and maneuvers, small kinds of maneuvers and war games and training exercises that the students here in the school would do, plus their own training?

Mr. Hollowell: Right.

Mr. Brown: Well Rob, I heard you and Hollowell mention one thing that you made a mistake on.

Sergeant Robinson: What's that?

Mr. Brown: You said, "C Company." C Troop. A cavalryman does not like for you to call a troop a company.

Sergeant Robinson: That's right; it was not a company.

Captain Knapp: Well, I'm an infantryman. I'm not going to argue with you.

Sergeant Robinson: That's right, there's no C Company in the cavalry at that time, especially the old horse cavalry.

Mr. Brown: When they used to meet one another and they didn't know you, they call you "trooper." And if you was a trooper, a white cavalry[man] and black [cavalryman] would fight for each other.

Captain Knapp: Troopers would.

Mr. Brown: Yes, they'd stick together. They don't let nobody run over a trooper.

Captain Knapp: In fact, there was a parade. Wasn't there a parade out at Manhattan, Kansas, and the units were organized for the parade . . . this is during the 1940—41 time when you're out at Camp Funston. One of the black cavalry units was the lead in the parade? Because its lineage was. . . .

Mr. Brown: Yes, they led right here in Leavenworth when they had parades. We led the parade. We always led the parade. Wasn't no other outfit here ranked above us as far as the cavalry.

Captain Knapp: Lineagewise.

Mr. Brown: Yes, the cavalry is . . . well, I think the engineers come ahead of the cavalry, but there wasn't no engineers here. So, that put the 10th Cavalry in front.

Captain Knapp: The regimental motto, Ready and Forward, was that part of your everyday greeting when you'd see an officer and have to salute, did you say that?

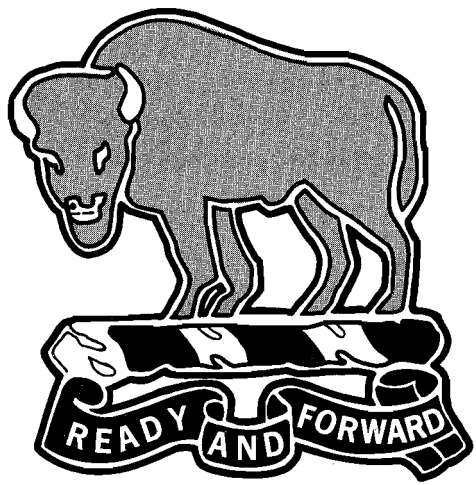
Mr. Hollowell: No, no, that's just on the inscription. The buffalo around the edge of the. . . .

Captain Knapp: Today, particularly in a lot of line units which have mottos, whenever a soldier passes an officer and salutes he'll say . . . he'll call out whatever the motto is.

Sergeant Robinson: No, we didn't have to do that.

Captain Knapp: Mr. Hollowell, you were quite an athlete here at Fort Leavenworth, and I know you have got a special philosophy about athletics and the way athletics help men prepare for life. Why don't you tell us a little bit about that?

Mr. Hollowell: I always like sports from high school until such time as I got into the service. Having played football, track,



Distinctive insignia of the 10th Cavalry

and basketball, those were the three major events. Sports always stimulates esprit de corps within the regiment. A regiment that plays well, fights well, works well. That's the way I tick and the way that perhaps any regiment that had a good football team or could win . . . the 9th and 10th Cavalry, when they came together, that was one of the most important events of the whole year, with the 9th Cavalry and 10th Cavalry playing football here on old Gruber Field.

Captain Willey . . . when I first came in, Captain Barnes—what's Barnes' first name?

Sergeant Robinson: Wallace.

Mr. Hollowell: Wallace Barnes was the coach of the team. A fellow by the name of "Hamfat" Jenkins was his assistant.

Captain Knapp: Hamfat Jenkins!

Sergeant Robinson: That was his nickname.

Mr. Hollowell: His name was Cleveland Jenkins, but his nickname was Hamfat because he was a chubby, big, fat fellow.

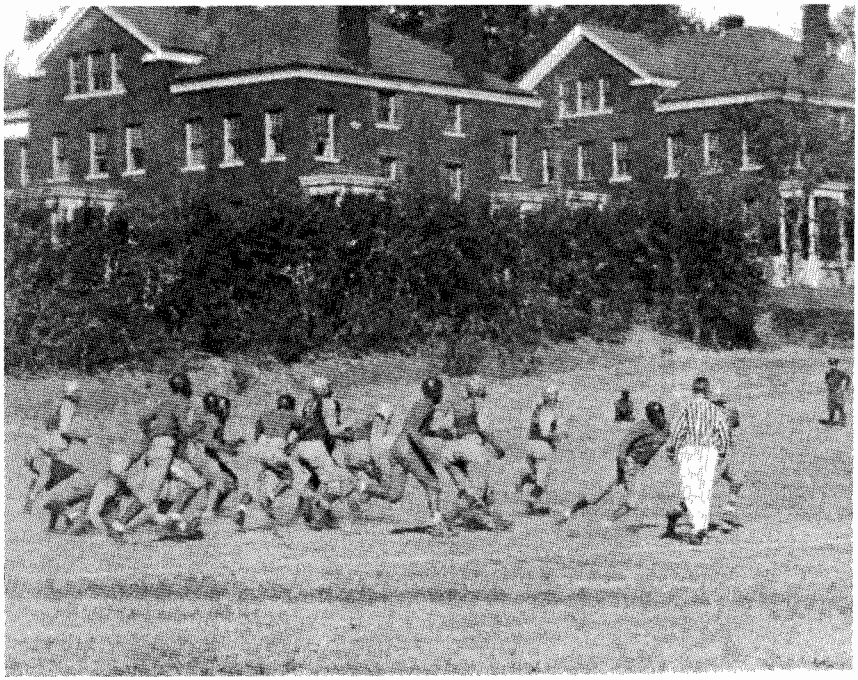
Sergeant Robinson: He was in charge of the horseshoeing department; he was a horseshoer.

Mr. Hollowell: That was his duty. Another fellow who played on the football team was named Fitzgerald—big fellow.

Sergeant Robinson: Also was a horseshoer.

10th Cavalry Yearbook, 1941

First Sergeant Cleveland ("Hamfat") Jenkins



Harry H. Hollowell collection

10th Cavalry football team playing on Gruber Field

Mr. Hollowell: Both were horseshoers.

Sergeant Robinson: Much of a man, had hands like elephant hands.

Mr. Hollowell: Fitzgerald played on the football team. I think he played guard.

A young fellow who lives in town now—his name is Young [his father was a 10th cavalryman]—played end on the football team. Skip Young they used to call him.

Another fellow who lives in town, at least the son of the fellow who played . . . name is Oliver. Oliver, I think, was a GS-12 or 13 up here in Bell Hall. Well, he just retired, but he was a computer specialist. His dad was in the 10th Cavalry.

At any rate, my main thinking is a team that plays well, fights well. Its main function is to stimulate pride within the regiment, and it establishes a type of esprit de corps which is good for the units just like the World Series is to the nation. The competition between regiments and agencies is good for the people. It's a morale builder. That's sorta the way I . . . I like sports.

Captain Knapp: I've seen a poster, an old poster, that's got a picture of you. "Hollowell leads 10th Cav to another victory," something like that.

Mr. Hollowell: Right. That's true.

Captain Knapp: Let's talk a little bit about family life here at Fort Leavenworth. Now, none of you were married while you were at Fort Leavenworth, but all of you, I think—I don't know about you Sergeant Brown—but I know you [Sergeant Robinson] married a local girl and, Mr. Hollowell, did your wife come from the Leavenworth area?

Mr. Hollowell: She taught school here in the Leavenworth public school system for twelve years prior to our getting married.

Captain Knapp: Were many of the soldiers in the 10th Cavalry married when you were here? Where did they live? How were their families kept and all that?

Sergeant Brown: A lot of them lived in town.

Mr. Hollowell: Most of them.

Sergeant Brown: Right over the hill here, they got this housing area where they had a kinda . . . what do you call them [the group joins in with "cantonment area"]. A lot of them stayed over there.

Captain Knapp: Where one of the enlisted housing areas is now at Fort Leavenworth.

Sergeant Brown: Yes, over there by that school.

Captain Knapp: Over by . . . OK, down by Patton Junior High School.

Sergeant Brown: A lot of them lived there, and a lot of them lived in town. Those that weren't married, like Rob here and Brown, me, we had shacks in town since we weren't married.

[Laughter]

Sergeant Robinson: Yeah, the old "shack-pappy trail."

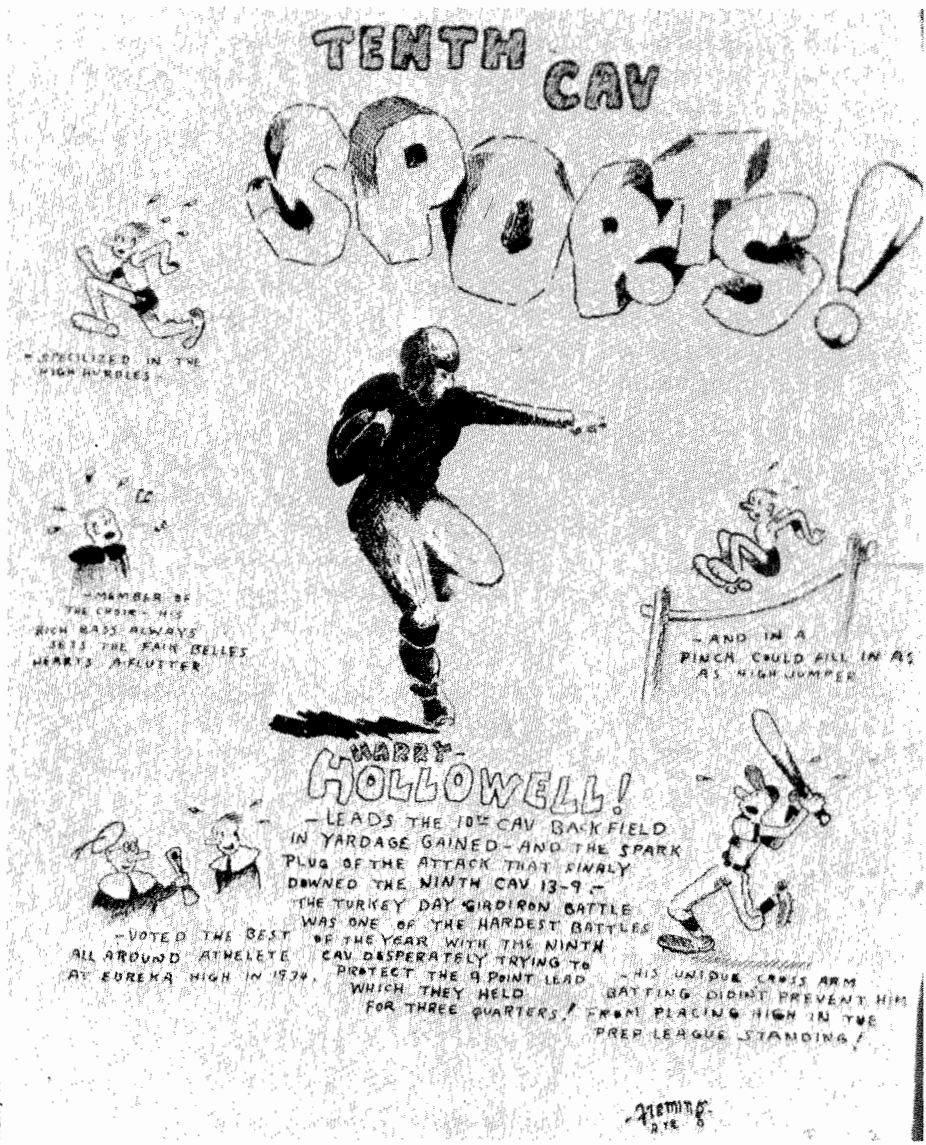
[More laughter from the group]

Yes, that's what it was. I was telling Harry that winter's coming on. This here sewage coverage that runs across the street coming to the fort, you know, going round by Bluntville, that thing, I could walk that thing at night.

Captain Knapp: With your eyes closed.

Sergeant Robinson: I don't know about with my eyes closed, captain. I ain't going to say that, but I had walked it so much that [it] was called "shack-pappy's trail."

Captain Knapp: Mr. Brown was telling me about that as we were coming in. He says that you all would use that sometimes when you wanted to slip off without getting caught.



Harry H. Hollowell collection

10th Cavalry sports poster highlighting Harry Hollowell

Mr. Brown: Yeah, if you go out the front way, the main thing . . . well, the captain or anybody could pass you there and you better have your tie on and all that. Who wants to have a tie on, as hot as it was, with that blouse on. . . .

Sergeant Robinson: Oh yes, I see what he's talking about.

Mr. Brown: With that Sam Browne belt around your waist, and there you sweating up a breeze and walking to town.

Sergeant Robinson: Yes, well, you see, going through the "shack-pappy trail," you could relax, undo your tie, unbutton your blouse and put your blouse on your shoulder because it was an all-wooded area through there, see. But about the time you got to Metropolitan, you had to put that back on again, when you're in town. I see what you're speaking about.

Mr. Brown: I'd sneak in down below.

Mr. Hollowell: On the other hand, right here where Bell Hall is was what they called Arsenal Hill. There may have been perhaps a half-dozen sets of quarters in which some of the higher-ranking enlisted men lived right here.

My first sergeant, Chappie Brown, lived in one of those little concrete buildings just as you come in, let's see, the hospital. There is the hospital and coming north, where that insurance agency is, you come around that back gate and come around that . . . the commissary used to be down in that south[west] end. But you come around that . . . you continue north and, of course, you're going to run into the back area of the . . . come around the little curve and make that left turn, I don't know what that's called but there's two little sets of quarters there. That's where my first sergeant lived. [Mr. Hollowell is talking about the quarters at the corner of Biddle Boulevard and Organ Avenue.]

Mr. Brown: You know what that used to be before it was quarters?

Mr. Hollowell: What was it?

Mr. Brown: That was a milking barn.

Mr. Hollowell: Yeah, something like that.

Captain Knapp: They had cattle over there?

Mr. Brown: Yeah, they had cattle over in the pastures.

Captain Knapp: About where the old bakery was?

Mr. Brown: That's right. The bakery was over there, and the

cattle came up under the hill there and came to that milking barn, and they'd milk them and send them on back down there. Now, that's been a long time ago, 'cause I wasn't nothing but a real small kid.

Captain Knapp: The area we are talking about is the area over by where the new hospital is and where the communications center is.

Mr. Hollowell: Oh, I see. We're coming farther north. When you come to the end of. . . .

Captain Knapp: Organ Avenue and that area there.

Mr. Hollowell: Yeah, you go farther north, if you pass the back of the hospital, then you're going to run into the . . . you've got to . . . that runs out, you see. Where that road runs out, then you make the left turn and that next time you can go north . . . those little sets of quarters right there was where Brown lived.

Also, at the end of McClellan Street, going north, there used to be three or four sets of quarters on the right-hand side of the road there, I think. Evans lived up there at one time. A fellow by the name of Baker lived up there. [George] Barnes used to live up there.

Sergeant Robinson: That's just right north of the old hospital.

Mr. Hollowell: No, no, I'm speaking about, you know where the engineer, uh. . . .

Sergeant Brown: Right north of where the fire station is.

Mr. Hollowell: Yes.

Sergeant Robinson: Oh yes, I see [several talking at once], they had Number 7 Stable right up on the. . . .

Captain Knapp: The veterinary clinic is in there now.

Sergeant Robinson: Yes, that's right.

Captain Knapp: Family housing is down that way; the Engineer Snack Bar is that way [all agree].

Mr. Hollowell: Then, as you make the left turn at the end of McClellan, there was a big . . . what they called a mule skinner's barn. That's where the band was located, on that knoll over there when I was. . . .

Captain Knapp: Where was that exactly?

Mr. Hollowell: When you get to the end of McClellan Street, make the left turn, you start to go down the hill.

Captain Knapp: Sure, past the old MP Station . . . go ahead, tell us.

Mr. Hollowell: When you get to the end of that road, McClellan, that big building, I don't know what it is there now, but just over to the right there, on that knoll was the, what they called the mule skinner's barn where the band used to be located. You understand where I'm talking about?

Captain Knapp: I think so, sure.

Mr. Hollowell: Let's see. Once you get down to the bottom of the hill, then over to the left side is where the . . . uh, the . . . I can't think . . . the rec, rec . . . where they fix cars there. What do you call it? [Recreational Services Auto Craft Shop]

Sergeant Brown: The motor pool?

Mr. Hollowell: Yes, the motor pool. Down in the motor pool, you see, down below but before you get to where you make the turn down there, on this knoll I'm talking about is where this band quarters used to be.

Captain Knapp: You all talked earlier about the . . . very briefly about your service club that's now located, well, that was located where Gruber football field is now. Aside from that service club, what other things were available to the black soldiers, black troopers for recreation on post.

Sergeant Robinson: Well, they had the bowling alley. Didn't they come up with the bowling alley?

Mr. Hollowell: That was later on; that was after '36.

Sergeant Brown: That was after we broke up; that was after '40.

Sergeant Robinson: That's right. They had that before the 10th Cavalry left here, didn't they?

Sergeant Brown: They just was fixing it.

Sergeant Robinson: Just had fixed it.

Captain Knapp: Was that the bowling alley that was inside the polo stable or in Gruber riding hall?

Mr. Hollowell: That was inside the polo stable.

[What followed was a lengthy discussion of just exactly which building was the polo stable and which was Stable Number 1. At the end, Sergeant Brown and Mr. Brown agreed that Mr. Hollowell and Sergeant Robinson were wrong. We never really decided where the bowling alley was. Post records show that

there was a small bowling alley in Building 315, now called Flint Hall.]

Captain Knapp: Fellows, I don't think we're going to solve this. Aside from the service club and playing sports, those who did, were there any other recreational things that you could do on post? How about the movies?

Sergeant Brown: You could go to the movies.

[The rest agreed.]

Captain Knapp: And I'm sure the dances and things at the service club.

Mr. Brown: That's where I done my thing. I'd get on that floor.

Captain Knapp: You were a dancer?

Mr. Brown: Yes.

Mr. Hollowell: You mean in the old 10th Cavalry Club?

Mr. Brown: Yeah, in the old 10th Cavalry. I done my thing on the floor. That's the reason why my wife gets after me today.

Sergeant Brown: You're out there trying to dance.

Captain Knapp: What? Do you try to get her out there on the floor . . . ?

Sergeant Robinson: You can't do your thing. . . .

Mr. Brown: I tell her, "Come on, let's dance." She says, "I will have to raise you up in the morning 'cause you won't be able to get up."

Captain Knapp: Well, this has been great. I'd like to bring us to a point now where I'd like to ask you general questions and let each one of you respond for a couple of minutes. What do you think are the main contributions of the soldiers of the 10th Cavalry, black soldiers in general, during the time that you served in the Army? What is the legacy during the time you served? Let's start with you, Sergeant Brown.

Sergeant Brown: Well, the only thing I can say is we did just what we was told to do. I mean, we did what we was supposed to do, and there wasn't much soldiering to be done is the only thing I can say—at first. After we left here and went . . . I enjoyed doing what duties we did have to do preparing the younger men for what they had to come through in World War II.

Captain Knapp: How about you, Mr. Brown?

Mr. Brown: I think it was kinda slow going, but the war shook all that up, and that's what brought them to the ranks and everything. But see, I made a mistake. I was looking too far ahead too fast, and that's when I got out. Mr. Williams and Mr. Hunnicutt [Sergeant Hunnicutt] tried to get me to stay, and he said, "Something's going to break pretty soon, Brownie, something's going to break." I said, "Yeah, my back." They laughed. He said, "No, no. Just stay in a little bit longer." Well, I didn't see that, but they saw it cause they said something was going to break pretty soon. I got out in '39, the winter of '39 and '40 is when they commenced to bringing them all in there.

Captain Knapp: Sergeant Robinson?

Sergeant Robinson: I feel that the contribution that we made as black soldiers made it possible for some of the people to be in the position that they are today because we took so many of the hard knocks. We withstood the embarrassments and everything. It's like I have told many of them that we had more . . . what is that we had in the PX?

Mr. Brown: We had more money and everything in there.

Sergeant Robinson: No, no, I'm talking about what the companies had . . . well, the 10th Cavalry had more of it in the PX than anybody on the post. What am I trying to say? They took it and bought furniture with it and all like that. What am I trying to say?

Mr. Hollowell: You mean "fund" [Unit Fund]?

Sergeant Robinson: Funds, yes. But at that time, I told lots of these people today that's wearing bars on their shoulders that, at one time, in this very . . . where the PX is stationed up there in the big building where the library is now . . . that we, as black men couldn't go in there and eat an ice cream cone, see.

Of course, I don't hold that as a thing for them to go by because that was, as I explained to you about it, as being the law of the land. I'm just saying those are some of the things that we had to contend with. We wanted a package of cigarettes. We'd go in there and buy them, but we couldn't smoke it in there. Mr. Hollowell and myself have been sitting in the choir—we both sing in the choir at church—on military day, we look out and see these colonels and these black young ladies, captains and majors, and so forth, and it makes you feel so good on the inside that we made it—broke the ice—made it possible for them to be in that position. They are reaping the

benefits of the hard knocks that we made the sacrifices for . . . that we went through. That's what makes me feel good about.

Captain Knapp: I think you all reap some of the benefits too. At least, I hope you do. Mr. Hollowell, why don't you wrap it up for us.

Mr. Hollowell: I think the mission of all soldiers is that of being prepared for war in time of peace. The contributions that were made by the soldiers, they happened to be black in this particular situation, I think the contribution that [we] made was just the same as that made by any other troops. We had to withstand many disadvantages as a result of the prejudice, or discrimination, but I think the conscience of the people is such that a number of those things have been changed to the satisfaction of all concerned in the memories of the majority as well as the minority.

The success of our nation is dependent upon the contributions of everybody doing his best to make our nation great. The measuring stick should be that of people, not necessarily people of color, but all peoples making their contribution regardless of who they are, where they are. They make a contribution as an American rather than necessarily as a black man.

I'm thinking particularly in the case of the one assignment as of this day. I feel that the president of the United States, the current president, the vice president, and those people made their selection of the current joint chief . . . what do you call it?

Captain Knapp: Chairman of the Joint Chiefs [General Colin L. Powell]. . . .

Mr. Hollowell: Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I think they had reasons for selecting him to do that job because they thought he could do it. But I don't think they had in the back of their mind that this is a black man necessarily. I'm hoping that they made the choice based on the effect that he is an American who happens to be black. I hope that as we move forward today that that be the barometer, the catalyst, the main objective of the administration of our government and administrators of our Army . . . that they include all of their subjects exploiting their talents to the greatest degree based on the fact that they are Americans who happened to be black and that the nation goes forward and we all live happily ever after.

Captain Knapp: Thank you, Mr. Hollowell, and thank all of you for being with us today.

I hope you have found this session with these veteran soldiers informative. I hope you found it interesting, and I hope that it's given you a new perspective on the contributions of soldiers to this country several years ago and even up through current times. Thanks very much for being with us today.

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