

Hi Jolly

He was born as Ali al-Hajaya of Jordanian Bedouin parentage in Jordan in the region of Greater Syria probably in 1828. He was also known as Hadji Ali and later as Philip Tedro. He was an Ottoman citizen and worked for the Ottoman armed forces as a breeder and trainer of camels. He also served with the French army in Algiers. But it is what he did in America that is of interest to us.

Jefferson Davis, future president of the Confederacy, as Secretary of War under Pres. Franklin Pierce became interested in the Army's idea to bring camels to the United States for desert operations. On March 3, 1855, the U.S. Congress appropriated \$30,000 for the project. On June 4, 1855, Maj. Henry C Wayne departed New York City on board the USS Supply bound for Smyrna, where it arrived on January 30, 1856. Two weeks later, the ship departed for the Gulf of Mexico with a load of 33 camels and eight handlers. A second voyage added 41 more camels. On April 29, 1856, the USS Supply arrived with the original shipment at Indianola, Texas. Heavy seas made transferring of the camels to a shallower draft ship for landing impossible. The USS Supply and the Fashion had to go to the mouth of the Mississippi River to find calmer waters and make the transfer. The Fashion returned to Indianola and unloaded the camels on May 14, 1856. On June 4, 1856, the Army loaded the camels and they were driven to Camp Verde via Victoria and San Antonio. Hadji Ali was the lead camel driver during the U.S. Army's experiment with the U.S. Camel Corps in using camels in the dry desert of the Southwest. Finding his Arab name hard to pronounce, the Americans changed it to Hi Jolly.

Initial test reports were largely positive. The camels proved to be exceedingly strong, and were able to move quickly across terrain which horses found difficult. Although the camels successfully traveled round-trip from Texas to California, the experiment went bust for a couple of reasons. The large and foul-smelling camels frightened the Army's horses and mules, and they often panicked. Also, the Civil War led to Congress not approving more funds for the Corps. In 1864, the camels were finally auctioned off in Benicia, California, and Camp Verde, Texas. Some of the camels were taken as far away

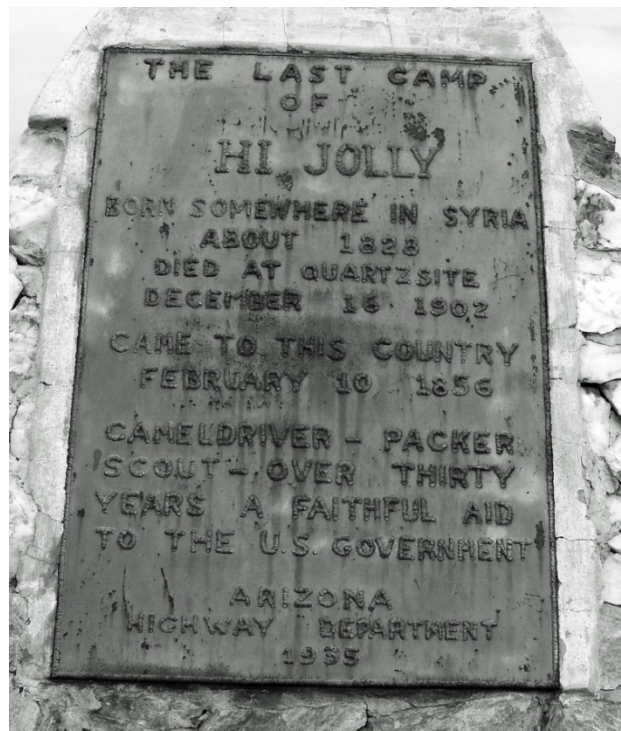


as British Columbia, where Frank Laumeister, a veteran of the corps, used the animals to carry freight during the gold rush. He put the camels out to pasture, from which some escaped. The last sighting of a feral camel in British Columbia was in the 1930s. Feral camels continued to be sighted in the Southwest through the early 1900s, with the last reported sighting in 1941 near Douglas, Texas.

Hi Jolly kept a few of the camels and attempted to run a freight business between the Colorado River and mining establishments to the east. The business failed and he released his camels into the Arizona desert near Gila Bend. He was discharged from the Quartermaster Department of the U.S. Army at Camp McDowell in 1870. In 1880, he became an American citizen and took the name Philip Tedro when he married Gertrude Serna in Tucson, Arizona. The couple had two children.

In 1885, he was again hired by the U.S. Army and worked as a packer under Brig. Gen. George Crook during the Geronimo campaign. After the Army he moved to Quartzsite,

Arizona, where he did some mining and occasional scouting for the U.S. government. On December 16, 1902, he died and was buried in the Quartzsite Cemetery, which was subsequently renamed the Hi Jolly Cemetery in his honor. In 1935, Arizona Governor Benjamin Moeur dedicated the pictured monument to Hi Jolly and the Camel Corps. The monument is located at his gravesite and is built from local stones and topped with a copper camel. The monument is located at his gravesite and is built from local stones and topped with a copper camel.



**THE LAST CAMP OF HI JOLLY
BORN SOMEWHERE IN SYRIA ABOUT 1828**

**DIED AT QUARTZSITE DECEMBER 16, 1902
CAME TO THIS COUNTRY FEBRUARY 10, 1856
CAMEL DRIVER - PACKER - SCOUT
OVER THIRTY YEARS A FAITHFUL AID
TO THE U.S. GOVERNMENT**

