



YOUR NEIGH-BORHOOD HULLABALOO

## Meet the only horse to become a Marine Sergeant

By Robin Hutton

*Over Sixty-five years ago, a barrier was broken for the US military — the first animal ever was promoted to sergeant. But Reckless the horse was no ordinary beast. Serving with valor in Korea, she saved the lives of fellow Marines and was decorated with presidential citations and two Purple Hearts. In this excerpt from the new book, "Sgt. Reckless: America's War Horse" (Regnery History), writer Robin Hutton tells her story.*

In the spring of 1954, as the Korean War was winding down, Navy Corpsman Robert "Doc" Rogers decided to buy a Marine a drink.

"I heard stories about the guys. Marines would come in drunk off of liberty and they'd go down and say, 'Let's go down and let Reckless out.' And they'd do it — just to see what trouble she'd get into.

That Reckless was a horse didn't really matter. She loved beer — and camaraderie.

"Sometimes the guys would be standing around talking and she'd walk right up to us and just stand there," Doc Rogers said. "And somebody would be talking and she would look at him. And the other guy would start talking and she'd look at him. And another guy would talk and she'd look at him. It was like, 'Hey, I'm a Marine. I'm one of you.'

"One night a bunch of us were all standing around in a circle, talking. There was a Marine lieutenant there. Lieutenant Louie was his name. And while we were talking, Reckless came up behind this one soldier and muzzled the back of this guy's neck. Nipped him on the back of his neck. It scared him half to death and he screamed, 'What the f—!' and jumped and turned around. And he's right face to face with Reckless, and shouted, 'Get that motherf—g nag out of here!'

"And Lieutenant Louie exploded on the guy and said, 'That horse has done more for the United States Marine Corps than you have, or ever will do. And besides that, she outranks you. And if I ever hear you talking to that horse like that again, I'm going to have you written up and court-martialed.'"

'Reckless ! Let's call her Reckless!' a voice cried out from the crowd of Marines gathered around their newest recruit. The name might have seemed ill-suited for a small, chestnut-colored horse with a blaze down her forehead and three white stockings.

But to the Recoilless Rifle Platoon of the 5th Marines, the moniker was perfect — it was their radio call sign and captured the toss-caution-to-the-wind attitude of men who relied on the "reckless" rifle.

The little Mongolian mare was born Ah-Chim-Hai, or "Flame-of-the-Morning," and raised to race at a Seoul thoroughbred track. She officially joined the Marines on Oct. 26, 1952,

# Wildwood Farm CLIPS & CLOPS Oak Harbor

## September 2021

after the commander of the Recoilless Rifle Platoon, Eric Pedersen, bought her for \$250.

Not as a mascot, but because his unit desperately needed help hauling heavy guns and artillery over Korea's rugged terrain. Trucks simply couldn't negotiate the steep, rutted mountains, especially in frigid, icy conditions. Pedersen realized a horse would make the ideal ammunitions carrier.

Because it had no wheels and sat on a tripod, the 75 recoilless rifle, at 6-feet-10 inches long and weighing nearly 115 pounds, was awkward and challenging to carry; moving it in the field usually required three and at times four men, though sometimes two could manage. It could throw a 75 mm shell several thousand yards with extreme precision.

Reckless was put through "hoof camp," learning how to get on and off a trailer, carry the rifle and ammunition, and not stand behind the gun as it was fired. The horse was even taught to lie down or kneel in case she needed to crawl into a shallow bunker for protection from incoming fire.

After much experimentation, the platoon found Reckless could safely and easily carry six rounds of recoilless rifle ammunition in canisters without much trouble. Yet in the heat of battle, they found she could tote eight to 10 rounds, if necessary.

The day of Reckless's long-awaited "baptism by fire" finally arrived in late November 1952.

*Continued on page 11*

# Stall Shi\*fter:

## The horse stall cleaning machine

Stalls can be cleaned perfectly in about 4 minutes with a horse stall cleaning machine. The amazing Brockwood Stall Shi\*fter® is an electrically operated horse stall cleaning machine. It does more than just clean horse stalls, it conditions them by completely sifting and aerating all the bedding and removing all the manure, even particles as small as a kernel of corn! Other mechanical and manual methods allow much larger pieces of manure to remain in the stall. That's not good enough for discerning barn owners and managers.

The Stall Shi\*fter is also used to sift the bedding of pens or stalls of other animals such as miniature horses & donkeys, llamas, alpacas, goats and exotic zoo animals like giraffes and zebras; it's the most versatile horse stall cleaning system on the market. No other system matches the quality of the Stall Shi\*fter's construction and materials or the cleanliness of the stalls when finished.

Brockwood claims you will save up to 50% on bedding costs and cut horse stall cleaning time and labor up to 65%. The more horse stalls you clean the quicker the Stall Shi\*fter will pay for itself, and it will continue to repay your investment many times over as years go by.

In addition to saving you thousands of dollars a year in bedding and labor expense, this horse stall cleaning system will make your stalls cleaner than you can possibly clean them with a fine tine manure fork using the manual horse stall cleaning method.



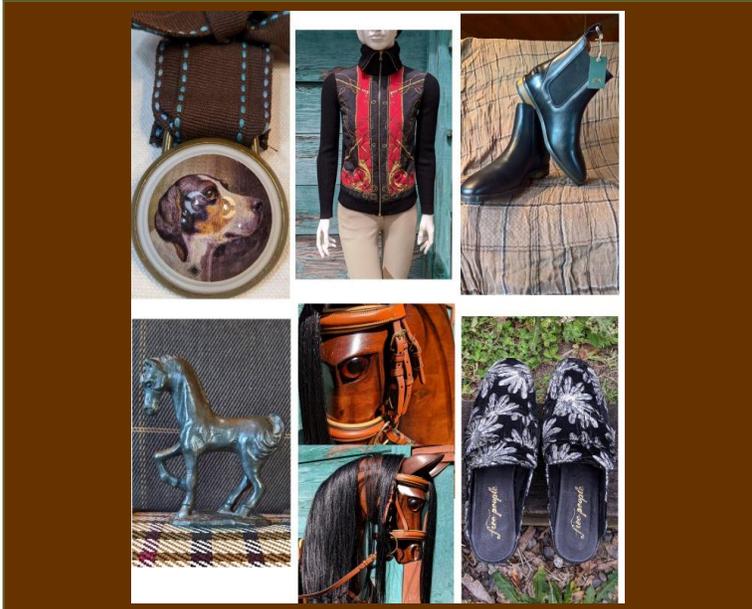
The Stall Shi\*fter is a manure sifter on wheels with an electric motor driven sifting screen. The Shi\*fter is rolled into a stall and turned on. As the sifting screen shakes, the user shovels the mixture of bedding and manure onto the screen. It's like magic, the bedding sifts through the screen and falls to the floor in a nice fluffy pile as the manure moves to the low end of the screen and falls off the rear into a muck bucket.

When using the Shi\*fter in the preferred manner, the stall is prepared for sifting before the manure sifter is rolled in. This preparation takes less than a minute. Wet spots are easily identified and scooped up into the tub with your grain shovel. If small wet spots are missed, don't worry, the wet bedding has a tendency to clump together and most of it goes off the end of the screen into the tub anyway. What falls to the pile of sifted bedding is inconsequential and will be well mixed with the dry bedding. [www.brockwoodfarm.com](http://www.brockwoodfarm.com)



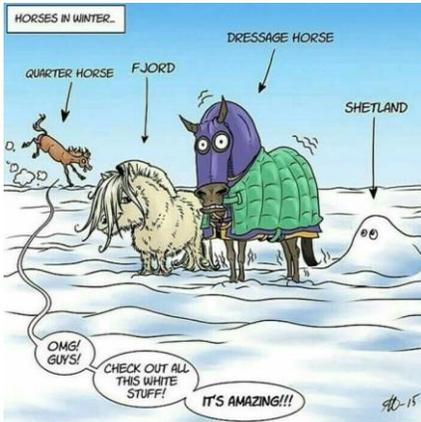
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## New Items for September



Our store is open 12:00pm – 7:00pm Monday, Wednesday, Friday & Saturday





# WILDWOOD FARM B&B



## This is your moment.

Today at Wildwood Farm B&B



**An Insurance Agent  
Realized that in life there are some  
people you are going to have to lose  
in order to find yourself.**

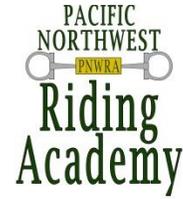
Immerse yourself in the equestrian world at Wildwood Farm B&B located on beautiful Whidbey Island.

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Come experience the power of possibility with these magnificent creatures and explore the abundance of silent repose.

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WILDWOOD FARM HAS IT ALL!



**“In riding a horse  
we borrow  
freedom”.**

-Helen Thompson



**“A good rider can hear his  
horse speak to him. A great  
rider can hear him  
whisper.”**

-author unknown

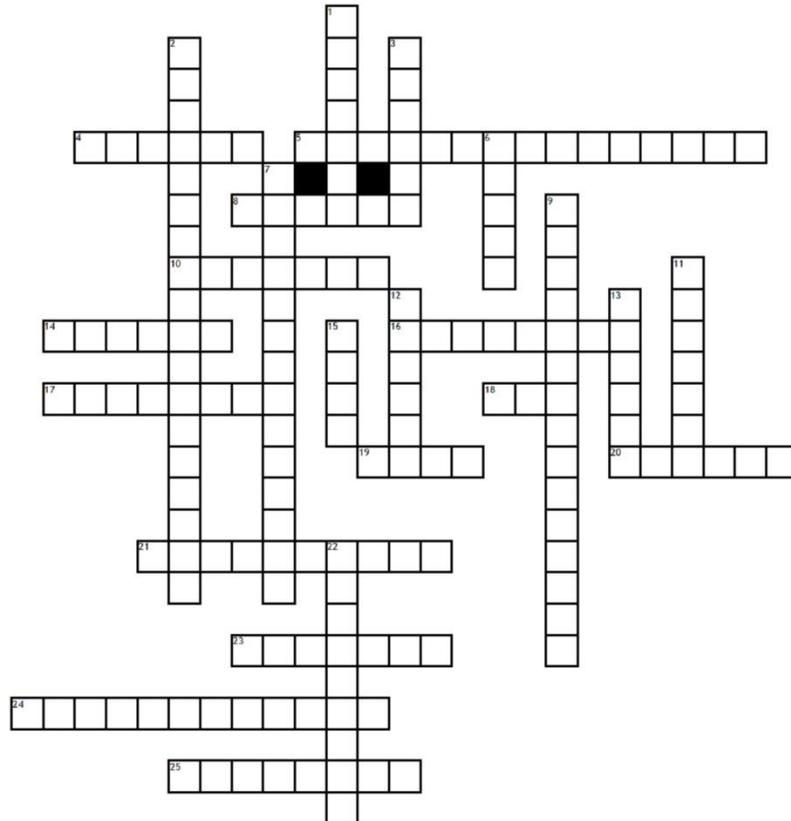


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# WarHorse Crossword Puzzle



**Across**

- 4. Joey's trainer
- 5. The horses are pulling carts of
- 8. What was the first battle
- 10. Horses were sold at
- 14. Joey was purchased for 30
- 16. Author of War Horse
- 17. Joey's first rider
- 18. Joey was shot by a
- 19. In the end Joey was considered a
- 20. What color was Joey considered

- 21. What did Joey get trapped in
  - 23. Language spoken
  - 24. Albert marries his sweetheart
  - 25. Book I read
- Down**
- 1. Joey's horse friend
  - 2. Where did Joey and Albert reunite
  - 3. Country where Joey fought
  - 6. Albert's father was considered a

- 7. Who helped Joey after he was wounded
- 9. Joey's trainer
- 11. Where did Joey live
- 12. Girl (granddaughter) that cared for Joey
- 13. Who was Joey separated from at a young age
- 15. What year did the story take place
- 22. What war did story take place in

## Nutrition Corner

### The Benefits of Raspberry Leaf

Just like the fruit, raspberry leaves also contain a good amount of vitamins and minerals. Here are some of the benefits:

**Raspberry leaf tastes good.** In the wild, horses enjoy the taste of herbs as they will naturally seek out any herb based on their need. Having this herb so tasty is a benefit to allowing the plant to work for them.

**It is a great supplement.** Raspberry leaves are an unexpectedly good equine supplement for horses. They are complete with vitamins and minerals and can boost nutrition intake in your horses. Such a simple addition that gives optimum benefits.

**It benefits the Immune System.** There is a high amount of Vitamin C in Raspberry Leaves that will supplement their immune system.

**It has a calming effect.** Due to the high levels of magnesium, Raspberry leaves can have a calming effect and contribute to their mental health and help provide focus.

**It helps promote a healthy reproductive system.** The minerals in raspberry leaf contribute to the normal functioning of the reproductive system, reducing spikes in hormones and keeping cycles regular.

**It supports a healthy pregnancy.** Fed regularly Raspberry Leaf can strengthen and tone uterine and pelvic walls. This will also contribute to an easier delivery. One note of caution: do not feed to mares within 6 weeks of foaling.

**It is a naturopathic Medicine.** Horses have an instinct to self-heal when their bodies need something. It is ideal to plant raspberry plants where horses can get to them naturally, or feed free-form so they can dose as needed.

**WILDWOOD FARM AND TRIPLE CROWN FEEDS.**  
Our partnership with Triple Crown began in 2014 through a promotion with the USEF encouraging farm members to compare their current feeding programs with Triple Crown products. We have found the TC products to be superior over other products primarily because of the EquiMix technology and the research support of a leading edge team including independent representatives of Equine Universities, Medical clinics and top level riders and trainers

## MEET LUNA RAINBOW

Luna is one of our retired thoroughbred brood mares that was born in 2001, at Foothills Farm in Washington State. She was bred to run with an impressive pedigree: Her sire was the famous Son of Briartic, a Canadian Racehorse that was bred by Canada's most prominent horseman, E.P. Taylor. Her dam, Honorable Moon, was a stakes winner in her own right, although an injury ended her racing career early on.

Luna came to Wildwood Farm in 2004 in exchange for a foal that our other brood mare, French Dancer ( See August 2019 newsletter) has just delivered. She was kind and sweet and instantly won us over.

In September of 2004 we put her through the American Warmblood Society Inspection as a Recorded and approved sport horse breeding mare.

She received a 70.5 on her inspection, with high scores in her purity & correctness, quality of gaits and shoulder and foreleg conformation. She was awarded the Preferred status with the registry.

In 2006 we bred her to a beautiful Arabian stallion and she had a stunning, correct Anglo-Arabian filly named Foxy. In 2008 we bred her to the fabulous Thoroughbred Stallion Private Gold and she had a handsome colt we named Putter



In 2010 we bred Luna again to Private Gold and in 2011 so had a stunning filly we named So Adeline (Addy). Foxy was sold to a buyer in Eastern Washington as an endurance horse; Putter was sold to a buyer in Ferndale as a dressage horse and Adeline was sold to a buyer in Enumclaw as a hunter /jumper. Today Luna is retired but lends her energy to our farm every day with her kind demeanor and wise spirit. She can be seen in the large field that runs along the main drive with her forever friend, French Dancer, and whatever other horses need her gentle companionship.

## **INTERVIEW WITH JILL RAPPAPORT, author of “People We Know, Horses They Love” by Brian Dakas**

### **What is the attraction for you to celebrities and horses?**

I grew up loving “National Velvet” and Elizabeth Taylor. I was obsessed with her and tried to find every Liz Taylor in Hollywood when I was a kid. It’s really amazing. I’m not the only one in the world with this craziness for horses. Everyone in the book is just like me. Well, just like me but famous! What I love about the book is that it’s all about the love of animals and the true passion of these celebrities when they are away from the limelight. It’s about their being with nature. As rich and powerful as these people are in their own right – it’s the animals that really make them who they are. They are all about loving their animals.

### **You wrote this book with the help of your sister, Linda Solomon – how did she feel about the project?**

Linda really liked working on the book because it showed celebrities in their natural environments. She was amazed that we had such access. These celebrities were proud to show their horses. At none of the shoots were there any assistants, any public relations people. No one asked for photo approval. There was a trust and a willingness to share their love of their horses.

### **Tell us about Richard Gere**

Richard is passionate about appaloosas, bred by the Nez perce tribes of the Northwest. They were probably the first selectively-bred horses in America. Richard and his wife Carey Lowell own four appaloosas. He is very active in the “Chief Joseph Foundation”, which focuses on the Nez Perce cultural preservation, emphasizing kids and horse programs. Richard really loves his horses. He told me, “First horses are like your first girlfriend. You never forget.”

### **Tell us about Christie Brinkley**

People might be surprised to discover that Brinkley is a champion cutting horse rider. Cutting horses are those that are used to herd cattle. Brinkley became interested in the sport in the early ‘90s and even put together her own cutting horse show. This sport is dangerous, but Brinkley feels no fear when she is riding. However, she is not doing as much since the birth of her children!

### **Tell us about Robert Redford – How did you get him to agree to be a part of your book?**

I wrote him a very funny letter and he agreed to do it. My sister was a nervous wreck. Suddenly we found ourselves out with Redford and then in his study doing an interview. I admit I picked the smallest bench so I could sit close to him! Roy Rogers and Trigger inspired Redford and gave him his passion for palominos. Redford’s love of horses is very much a part of his being an environmentalist and getting back to nature. Linda shot the photos and I taped the interview on the same day. At the end of the session I checked the tape and found that I failed to record any of the interview. He was adorable and graciously agreed to do it again!

### **Tell us about Dennis Quaid**

He’s all hands-on. He takes care of his horses himself and enjoys hanging out with them. He’s a fearless rider. He rides very fast and covers a lot of ground. And he’s got this adorable little dog, Clyde, who rides with him, holding onto Dennis. Quaid has a ranch in Montana. After being there a few days he can’t imagine leaving to go back to L.A.. In the book he says “I love the way the world looks on horseback, the way it moves by... you get to experience the sound of your own heartbeat and the sense of silence that is so important to us all.

### **Tell us about Maria Shriver**

Maria agreed to be in the book early on – before her husband Arnold Schwarzenegger announced he would run for Governor of California. She says riding and horses were a big part of growing up. Shriver was always surrounded by a lot of boys, and horses were her way of doing something on her own. The shoot for the book happened just after Shriver’s horse died, and she was still mourning its loss. The photos of her in the book are with Schwarzenegger’s white Andalusian

### **Tell us about Kelsey & Camille Grammer**

Riding is a form of therapy for Kelsey Grammer. And, he’s got a great seat. He is a very elegant rider and adores spending time with his horses in the outdoors.

### **Tell us about Hilary Duff**

Growing up on a family ranch outside Austin, Texas Hilary has always had a passion for horses. Deeply philanthropic, she has combined her love of these animals with an important cause, serving as Youth Ambassador for Return to Freedom, The American Wild Horse Sanctuary, located just thirty miles north of Santa Barbara, where she was photographed for the book. Her involvement with RTF include spearheading the Sponsor-a-Horse national classroom program that will help raise much-needed funds for taking care of the more than two hundred wild horses currently at the sanctuary. Hilary told me “I loved riding and being around horses ever since I was little. My family owns a ranch outside of Austin with lots of land and a great house, and my parents used to put my older sister, Haylie, and me on the ponies when we were babies. We may have been just about able to sit up, but we knew we had to hold on tight!” She started riding at the age of four and for the next several years Haylie and she were lucky enough to have two Shetland ponies and a Welsh. Their favorites were the brown and white brother and sister Shetlands that were named Cinnamon and Sugar. They were really beautiful and quite small – the perfect size for them. Cinnamon was Hilary’s, she had a bit of Diva attitude with others, but Hilary recalls she was really sweet with her. Hilary went on to say that having a special animal in your life can help anyone learn to appreciate nature more. And a horse can become your best friend, just like a dog. Both have a strong sense of loyalty. She acknowledges that it is hard for some people to have horses because they may not have enough space to keep them. When she was eight or nine they moved to Los Angeles and could no longer have horses. But she still managed to ride, taking lessons at the Equestrian Center in Burbank. With everything happening for her right now and her schedule so busy, she still finds time to go with her friends to the Equestrian Center for a trail ride sometimes. She said there is nothing she loves more than getting out of the city environment and having some fun!

# Heilan Horse Culture Museum

Wuxi Shi, China

**A palatial horse museum outside Shanghai is home to the most pampered horses in the world.**



NOT EVERY HORSE PEN CAN BE made of marble and cleaned with a buffer, but at the Heilan Horse Culture Museum in Jiangyin City, China, the stables are just that nice.

There are 43 breeds of horses at this unique horse museum, representing 30 different countries, from Germany and Spain to Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan, as well as some native to China. All in all, there are more than 300 horses, many of them very high-end. There are also a few zebras.

The horses on display are “dressed” for the occasion. Some of their manes are braided, or styled in ripples or waves. The horses live in proper stables, but are displayed in luxurious marble pens to greet visitors. The palatial museum is decorated with chandeliers, carpeted grand staircases, amazing statues, gold ceilings, and a shopping mall.

There is also a glorious performance space for dressage, in which the Heilan Equestrian Club broke the Guinness World Record for the largest horse dressage show ever in 2015. The show included 30 black horses, 30 white horses, and a riding team of all women.

Located about an hour and a half north of Shanghai, the museum was founded as part of an effort by the Heilan Group, a menswear manufacturer in China, to expand into the tourism industry. It is part of a larger “Luxury Town” project that is set to include a water park, university, and cultural center.

When the museum was built in 2009 the Heilan Equestrian club moved in, providing training, performances, and competitions—the first comprehensive equestrian facility in China. The museum was opened to the public in May of 2016. The club has 100 members and employs many professional equestrian trainers and coaches from around the world. There are also onsite veterinarians to take care of the horses.

# Horse-loving Celebrities-Vintage Edition



Olivia Newton-John



Charlie Chaplan



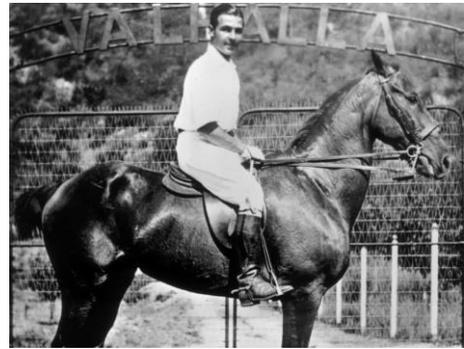
Errol Flynn



Elizabeth Taylor



Roy Rogers



Rudolph Valentino



Audrey Hepburn



Bianca Jagger



Clark Gable



Elvis Presley



Jackie Kennedy



Grace Kelly



Ronald Reagan



Marlon Brando

# Sable Island

## Halifax, Nova Scotia

**This crescent-shaped sliver of sand is a magical haven for a herd of feral horses.**



**IMAGINE AN UNINHABITED ISLAND SHAPED** like a string bean where feral horses roam free and you'll have a decent idea of Sable Island's odd reality.

Located about more than 180 miles southeast of Halifax, Nova Scotia, the island, which is nearly 25 miles long and made entirely of sand, is a low-lying stretch of land in the middle of the ocean. Due to the island's low profile and isolated placement, the oversized sandbar also has a long legacy of shipwrecks thereby earning the island the moniker, "Graveyard of the Atlantic."

In addition to shipwrecks, Sable Island is known for its population of some 400 feral horses that have lived there ever since their ancestors were introduced in the 18th century. In addition to the Sable Island Ponies, harbor and grey seals breed on the island's shores without any human interference.

Not even wild horses could drag travelers to the island without permission. The island has an odd mix of two climate categories, humid continental, and the milder end of sub-polar oceanic, due to Gulf Stream influence, summers are also kept below 75 degrees Fahrenheit almost always by the cold Labrador current. One could compare its climate to that of a coastal environment in maybe a country like Denmark.

It lies in USDA hardiness zone 8a (minimum winter temperature 10 to 15 degrees Fahrenheit and highest zone anywhere in eastern Canada, a place of the same zone with warm or hot summers would be considered at the lower end of humid subtropical), but due to constant cold saline winds and sandy soil, trees are not really able to grow and the only woody species to be found here are very stout wild roses and cranberries and possibly a dwarf birch or two.

In the early 20th century, many trees were brought from Ottawa to plant experimentally back before anyone cared or was aware of what this could do. Only a single Scots Pine (a native of northern and alpine Europe and western Siberia) has survived and grows in the research station as a pathetic-looking sort of natural bonsai, dwarfed by the elements. Brackish pools exist in the interior of the island where the ocean is about one mile away on either side, and are home to a unique species of sponge. Despite the relatively mild temperatures, the island is often subject to snowfall as heavy as it is on the much colder mainland, due to high atmospheric moisture and heavy precipitation.

**Meet the only horse to become a Marine sergeant** *contd from page 1*

The intended firing line was the colorfully nicknamed "Hedy's Crotch," a valley between outposts Ingrid to the south and Hedy to the north (the Marines named the hills after famous actresses), in the center sector of the Jamestown Line

The Jamestown Line was a series of defensive positions occupied by UN forces stretching about 35 miles from the Imjim River near Munsan-ni, to a point east of Kumhwa, South Korea. The distance from camp to the firing site was 2½ miles. Part of the way could be traveled by Jeep, but the final five hundred yards was a steep climb to the ridgeline. Three trucks were sent out at 10-minute intervals. The squad, led by Lt. Pederson and Sgt. Ralph Sherman, and weapon went out first, followed by Reckless in her trailer and finally the ammunition.

When they reached the base of the ridge, Reckless sensed something was up. She clambered out of the trailer, and headed straight to Technical Sgt. Joe Latham's pocket, sniffing for chocolate. But her trainer stopped her. "No pogeys 'til this is over," he said as he strapped on six canister rounds of high-explosive shells on her and slapped her backside for encouragement. ("Pogey bait" is Marinespeak for non-issued food or drink, especially sweets.)

Pvt. 1st Class Monroe Coleman, a Utah native who was Reckless' minder, took the horse's lead rope and started up the steep hill. The key to a successful mission was speed and teamwork. And now they were about to see how their newest recruit would handle the pressures of battle.

Reckless and Coleman had just returned to the firing line with their second load when Sherman began blasting away. The roar of the weapon echoed through the hills and dust exploded from the back of the gun. Even though Reckless was laden with six shells totaling about 150 pounds, the force of the blast frightened the horse right off the ground. Coleman saw the whites in her eyes and moved quickly to calm her.

The second shot roared just as loudly.

Again, Reckless went airborne, although not as high this time. Coleman managed to talk her down. As she shook her head trying to stop the ringing in her ears, the third round left the tube. This time, Reckless stood closer to Coleman and shook from the concussion of the blast.

That third time was the charm for the rookie recruit because she didn't jump and was breathing more easily. She watched the gun crew fire the fourth shot and hardly jerked her head.

"The whole idea of what that horse was able to do was remarkable . . .," observed Sgt. Ralph Sherman, "and she did everything they expected her to do."

As an adjective, "proud" didn't do justice to how the Marines felt about Reckless' first battle performance. When they returned to camp, they offered her a can of beer to celebrate with her comrades. She gulped it lustily and naturally wanted more. From then on, Reckless was an indispensable part of the unit.

In just one day of battle, Reckless made 51 trips carrying 386 rounds (almost 5 tons) of ammunition, walking more than 35 miles through rice paddies and up steep mountains through enemy fire.

"They would tie a wounded Marine across her packsaddle and she would carry them out of there with all of this artillery and mortars coming in," said Marine demolitionist Sgt. Harold Wadley. "The guys down at the bottom would unload the wounded off of her and tie gun ammo on her and she would turn around right on her own and head right back up to the guns. She was always moving and unforgettable on that skyline in the flare light."

On one trip, Reckless shielded four Marines heading for the front line. They returned the favor, throwing their flak jackets over her for protection, thus risking their own lives. Reckless sometimes looked like a "prehistoric hump-backed monster covered with large scales" wearing flak jackets head to tail, but the Marines valued her that much.

On one trip to the guns, Reckless suffered a shrapnel cut just above her left eye. Blood oozed down into her white blaze, but she kept going. Arriving at the guns, Pedersen checked her out, cleaned the wound with iodine and sent Reckless on her way.

Later that day, she was wounded a second time when another shard of hot, sharp shrapnel struck her left flank, behind the ribcage and in front of her hind legs. Again, the wound was dressed and she returned to work.

Neither gash slowed the horse even one step, and she was honored with two Purple Hearts.

# Wildwood Farm CLIPS & CLOPS Oak Harbor

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Oak Harbor WA 98277

On April 10, 1954, Reckless was officially promoted to sergeant — an honor never bestowed, before or since, on an animal. There have been animals, especially dogs, which surpassed their roles as military mascots and were recognized with awards and even medals. For example, in World War II, an Army German shepherd named Chips attacked an enemy pillbox in Sicily and took four startled prisoners. Chips was awarded a Silver Star and Purple Heart for valor. (The medals later were revoked following complaints that presenting service medals to a dog diminished their prestige.)

In World War I, a pit bull mix named Sergeant Stubby served with the 102nd Infantry, 26th (Yankee) Division, in France. Stubby was on solo patrol in the Argonne when he heard something in the bushes and found a German spy mapping American positions. Stubby charged, the spy ran, Stubby gave chase, tackled his prey and bit him in the leg. When the patrol followed Stubby's barking and a man's cries, they found the German on the ground, Stubby's steely jaws clamped emphatically onto his rear end. The commanding officer of the 102nd reportedly was so impressed that he "promoted" Stubby to sergeant. But it was an honorary promotion, not an official one.

But honorary Sergeant Stubby wasn't actual Sgt. Reckless, who was held in the same high esteem as any human Marine of the same rank. No other animal has ever held any legal, officially sanctioned US military rank and been genuinely respected for that rank, except for Reckless.

Reckless would survive the war and come back to the United States a hero. At Camp Pendleton, she was promoted again, to staff sergeant, by the commandant of the Marine Corps. She bore three colts, one of which was promoted to private first class. She died on May 13, 1968, at the ripe age of 20. A statue of her stands at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Quantico, Va. Her proudest day was the day they promoted her, Corpsman Doc Rogers recalled. "They broke us all out in formation," Rogers said, "and they had Reckless there. And they had her corporal blanket on — had corporal stripes on the side of it, had all of her ribbons on there — and they promoted her to sergeant.

"They took the old blanket off and put the new blanket on her that had the sergeant stripes on there. And, of course, the same ribbons. It was the most beautiful horse blanket I ever saw.

"But, you know, I think back on that and I think she just acted like she knew everything that was going on. She just stood still. They read off everything and it was almost like she was just a part of it. She knew what was happening. She was a proud Marine."

