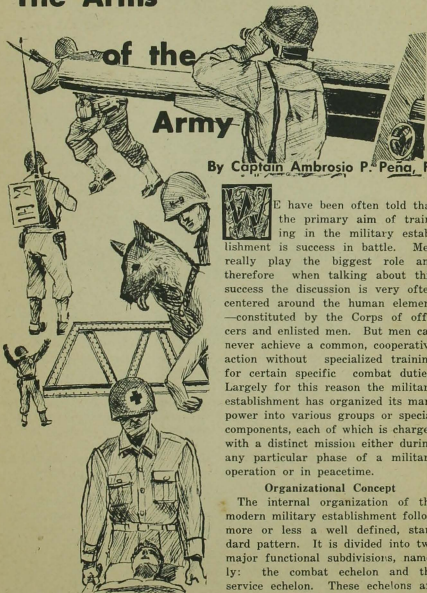


First of a Series

The Arms

of the Army

By Captain Ambrosio P. Peña, FA



We have been often told that the primary aim of training in the military establishment is success in battle. Men really play the biggest role and therefore when talking about this success the discussion is very often centered around the human element—constituted by the Corps of officers and enlisted men. But men can never achieve a common, cooperative action without specialized training for certain specific combat duties. Largely for this reason the military establishment has organized its manpower into various groups or special components, each of which is charged with a distinct mission either during any particular phase of a military operation or in peacetime.

Organizational Concept

The internal organization of the modern military establishment follow more or less a well defined, standard pattern. It is divided into two major functional subdivisions, namely: the combat echelon and the service echelon. These echelons are

in turn broken down to several elements, each of which is called an arm or a service. The last two terms should not of course be confused with the word arm when referred to any ordinary weapon, nor when speaking of the military organization as the military service. In this particular instance the term arm is construed to mean an element of the combat echelon. It follows then that all the elements of this echelon are arms of the Army which "directly engage in combat and are known collectively as the line of the Army."

Like all standard military establishments the world over, the Philippine Army as it was organized in 1936, was composed of the arms and

chiefly with the procurement and distribution of supplies "peculiar to the arm." Generally speaking, however, the service functions associated with these arms do not alter their category. On the other hand the Chemical Warfare Corps which, like the arms, is also charged with the mission of defense and offense by the employment of chemical agents, has for the most part service functions and is therefore appropriately classed under the service echelon.

The Air Corps

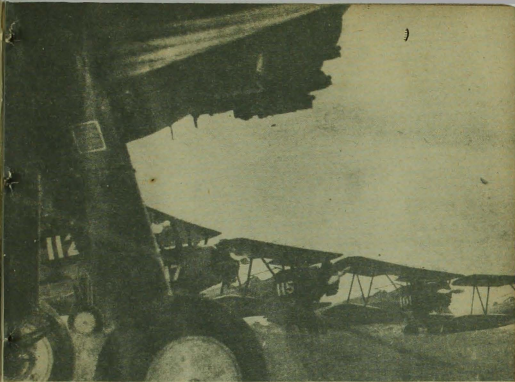
The Air Corps is one of the latest combat elements or arms of the modern military establishment. This is so because the airplane which

Military establishments all over the world, like the Armed Forces of the Philippines has organized its manpower into various groups or special components, each of which is charged with a distinct mission either during any particular phase of a military operation or in peace

services. The basis for this organization is Section 19 of the National Defense Act, which provides the several elements to constitute the Regular Force. Of these elements eight fall within the purview of the term arms, namely: the Air Corps, the Cavalry, the Coast Artillery Corps, the Corps of Engineers, the Field Artillery, the Infantry, the Off-Shore Patrol, and the Signal Corps.

Of these arms, the Air Corps, the Coast Artillery Corps, the Corps of Engineers, and the Signal Corps are so constituted as to make inherent their service functions. This concern

is its main power for carrying out its mission, that of attack and defense in the air, was not invented until the turn of the 20th century. The airplane therefore has had a brief history. Its creation was the product of the genius of the two Wright brothers, Orville and Wilbur. However, even as early as the 15th century the Italian genius, Leonardo da Vinci, had drawn plans for a flying contraption which, for all purposes, could have been the first model of the airplane. A century later, the French astrologer and physician, Michael de Notredame, who is better known today by his pseu-



The Air Corps is one of the latest combat elements or arms of the modern military establishment. Photo above shows the first batch of airplanes of the Philippine Constabulary (aviation unit) which was charged with reconnaissance and intended to seek out from the air the hideouts of bandits and outlaws.

donym Nostradamus, foretold of a flying machine that would be used as a weapon of destruction.

Although the airplane is of American origin, the United States Army authorities were slow in exploiting its possibilities as an instrument of war. It was only on 29 July 1909 that the United States Army acquired its first airplane. At the time, however, its use was limited to reconnaissance and the Army airplanes were grouped into an aviation section of the Signal Corps. It was not until about eight years later, during the first World War, that the United States Army organ-

ized the Air Corps as a distinct element for combat. The Italians, for this matter, appear to have pioneered in the use of the airplane in war, when they employed a few planes in their operations during the Turkish War of 1911.

The Air Corps of the Philippine Army was developed along similar lines as that of the United States Army itself, having been organized on 2 May 1935 as an aviation unit of the Philippine Constabulary which was the only armed organization, though semi-military in structure, maintained by the Philippine Government prior to the Commonwealth re-

gime. This aviation unit was charged with reconnaissance and primarily intended to seek out from the air the hideouts of bandits and outlaws against whom the Constabulary ground troops campaigned.

Since 1947, as a result of the reorganization of the military establishment of the Philippines, the Air Corps was greatly expanded. It is now designated as a major service and, under a new nomenclature the "Philippine Air Force," it has a degree of independence not enjoyed by the other arms.

The Cavalry

The Cavalry is a combatant arm "that marches and fights on horseback, or both on horseback and on foot," in contradistinction to the infantrymen who use horses only for mobility. The latter may ride on horses, from the staging area to the "jumping off" point in the immediate vicinity of the battleground wherefrom they dismount and resume on foot.

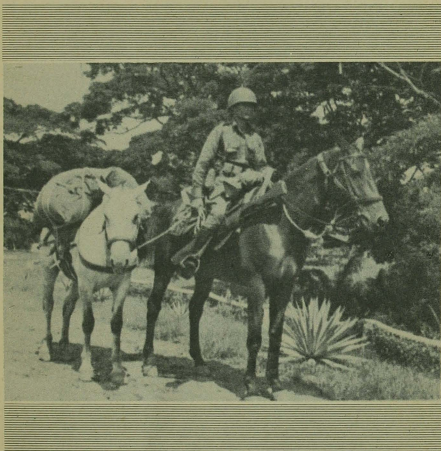
History does not record just who among the ancient peoples had first made use of the cavalry although this arm has been definitely associated with certain territorial areas suitable to horse-breeding including China and the countries of Asia Minor and Eastern Europe. In fact, for many centuries the armies of the great Asiatic nations, Scythia, Assyria, Persia, Tartary, and China "consisted almost exclusively of Cavalry." The history of warfare has also shown the concomitant development of the Cavalry and the Infantry as combat arms. At one time during their long existence one arm had opposed the other; then

at another time they were brought together for cooperative action.

The early Greeks and Romans, great military powers just before the Christian era, were limited in their capabilities of developing a really great cavalry arm, mainly because they were confined to relatively small and semi-mountainous localities not suitable to horse-breeding. Yet it was from them that the modern military establishment has inherited its concept of the tactical organization of the cavalry. A Spartan soldier and statesman named Lyeurgus was the first to introduce the cavalry formed into divisions during the first Messenian War in 743 B.C., while the Romans had within the legion special cavalry units formed into squadrons, and regiments of 746 horses.

Because of this limitation, the Roman legions had to rely largely on the power of its foot troops, and eventually it was the absence of a strong cavalry arm to coordinate with the action of the infantry that was to play a considerable part in the ultimate downfall of Rome. At the battle of Adrianople in 738 A.D., the Roman legioners were pitted against the wild Gothic horsemen from the East. The former were decisively beaten and the great Roman Empire became a thing of the past.

Until recent times, the cavalry's principal tactical use was its shock effect. It was the overwhelming massed charge of thousands of horsemen, a cavalry formation which had turned the tide of countless battles, which crushed the Roman legions. Battlefield formation became



The AFP Cavalry Corps, as it is trained and organized today for offense and defense, originated from the American Civil War. Photo above shows an AFP cavalryman returning to his mother unit after one of the AFP campaigns against dissidents.

more or less standardized. In the groups of opposing cavalry at the center of the battle line were found flanks would engage each other. the opposing bodies of infantry while Sooner or later one cavalry group at both flanks were grouped the cavalry. yielded and, after being driven out of the field, would allow the victorious cavalry to assault the flanks. As the former proceeded in a relatively slow-paced engagement in the center, locked against each other in an indecisive battle, the and rear of the unprotected infantry. Encirclement followed and from

there the battle reached a decisive point.

In time cavalry weapons were designed so as to fully utilize the shock effect of the Cavalry. The early cavalymen were armed with bows and arrows for long distance fighting. Then as soon as they had spent all their arrows they charged with swords, spears, and lances with which they were also equipped. The feudal knights were armed mainly with broad swords and lances, and to protect themselves they wore a cumbersome armor. Naturally they were restricted in their movements and in many instances they could not execute the desired shock effect.

As the importance and effectiveness of the firearm became unmistakably evident, the cavalry added to its equipment the pistol and the carbine, a short light rifle. There was added weight and to bear this, armor was entirely discarded. On the whole, however, the change was slow in coming. As a matter of fact, as late as the last quarter of the 18th century, the Russian cavalry relied solely on the sword and lance, and was "forbidden to use firearms." And even as late as 1914 Austria, Germany, and Russia maintained cavalry units armed with lances, which fought in the initial phase of World War I, while Poland up to 1939 had cavalry units equipped with lances. Today there are still vestiges of the armament and equipment of antiquity used in the cavalry arm of some states which have clung fast to medieval traditions.

It had been recognized at a very

early date that the cavalry and infantry were essential components of a well-balanced army. Likewise, it had been recognized that a nation that relies exclusively on either arms was at a disadvantage when opposed by another that employed skillfully the two. And yet there are many instances in history relating to the blunders of military commanders who made use of either arms. The charge of an English light cavalry brigade against an entrenched Russian infantry during the Crimean War (1854-56), can best illustrate this point. Except for having been immortalized by the pen of Lord Alfred Tennyson, the charge of the light brigade was foolhardy. In passing, it is mentioned that all the world's great military leaders, such as Alexander, Hannibal, Gustavus Adolphus, Frederick the Great, and Napoleon gave careful attention to the training of the troops so as to bring about a close cooperative teamwork between the cavalry and the infantry.

As a result of the introduction of firearm which greatly affected the type of equipment as well as the employment of the cavalry, this arm became organized into three classes. Thereafter, according to the size of the horses and men and the weight of their arms and armor, cavalry was classified as **light, medium, and heavy**. Furthermore, there were terms introduced into the military parlance to describe those mounted troops with reference to their uniform and equipment, such as **cuirassiers, dragons, hussars, carbineers and lancers**. These terms to which formerly were attached some spe-

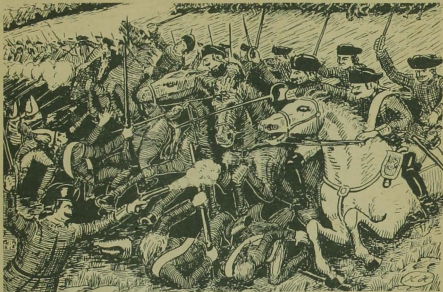


Photo above shows the charge of an English light cavalry brigade against an entrenched Russian infantry during the Crimean War (1854-56) wherein great military leaders, such as Alexander, Hannibal, Gustavus Adolphus, Frederick the Great, and Napoleon gave careful attention to the training of the troops so as to bring about a close cooperative teamwork between the cavalry and the infantry.

cial significance are now largely lost. Today, the cavalryman is generally known as trooper, derived from troop which is the cavalry's equivalent of the infantry's company. The squadron in the cavalry is equivalent to the infantry's battalion.

As regards to its employment, the cavalry has two main missions: one which is offensive and the other which is defensive. To carry out its offensive mission the cavalry had made use of nearly every known small arms. It has been so trained so that whether mounted or dismounted, it could be employed in every type of combat, including fire

action, shock action, and hand-to-hand fighting. However, the cavalry's most important role is that of independent action, to include tactical and strategic reconnaissance and counter-reconnaissance, security, and delaying action.

Information regarding the enemy's actual battle conditions must be uninterrupted. In the early days the arm that could be employed best for this purpose was the cavalry which could maneuver fast and sneak into enemy territory. To accomplish the gathering of information contact with the enemy had to be unbroken, without being detected. This type of action would entail hard riding for

days or weeks. On the other hand, the cavalry's defensive mission was equally arduous. When an army moved and wanted this movement disguised, it was not unusual to throw out a screen of cavalry between the moving army and the enemy. Again, the success of this mission would depend largely on the ability of the cavalry to prevent the enemy from breaking into its rank and thus be in a position to know what was all behind the screen.

For more than one thousand years the mounted soldier did not only dominate in the field of battle, but he was as well the most glamorous among the warriors. This was particularly so after the invention of the stirrups in 550 A.D. which insured the efficiency of the cavalry. During this period rapid mobility was a salient feature of any campaign or battle. The horseman who could make wide-sweeping movements and attack with deliberate surprise at points he was least expected, was easily the most dominating figure on the battlefields. Finally, the mounted warrior was overcome by gunpowder which came into general military use in the 16th century. Henceforth, the cavalry lost its supreme role and although it remained very important, it was relegated into just another arm of the military service, now separate and distinct.

It was a prevailing sentiment in the very early days and especially in Feudal Europe which fostered the glamor and aristocracy attached to the cavalry. The main reason for this was the fact that the upkeep of a horse, including the cost of its

equipment, was very excessive so that only those of the nobility and the moneyed class could get into this arm of the military service. Moreover, the social obligations connected with a commission in a cavalry regiment were so extensive and only those officers with private incomes could afford to fulfill them.

In democratic states, however, particularly in the United States, the cavalry was maintained for its value as a military force. Consequently, the American cavalry made off with a good start, insuring its healthy development. At the time of the American Civil War, the cavalry was greatly expanded along with the other combat arms. New doctrines in cavalry tactics and techniques were evolved. But more important was the fact that in this Civil War, it was established by the American cavalry leaders that this arm could attain its utmost usefulness if **"organized, equipped and trained for every type of combat or service."** This theory was novel to the European military mind which had heretofore maintained that the cavalry could be effective only if **"trained and utilized for single type of combat or service."** The lessons brought about during the American Civil War eventually compelled a change in the European mind.

In short, the modern cavalry as it is trained and organized today for offense and defense, originated from the American Civil War. Henceforth, the cavalry ceased to fight solely from horseback. The rifle and bayonet took precedence over the sword and lance. But the ca-

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