VETERINARY MEDICINE IN THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

Introduction
Trostle’s Barn at Gettysburg
Mathew Brady photo of dead horses
CHRONICLE OF EVENTS

• 1849 – First congressional authorization for hiring veterinary surgeons
• 1853 – Quartermaster General asked Congress to establish an army veterinary corps and include a school for mounted officers and candidates for the veterinary corps
CHRONICLE OF EVENTS Continued

• 1855 & 1856 – Capt. George B. McClellan visited veterinary schools in France, Prussia, and Austria

• 1857 – A formal course on the “Veterinary Art” was introduced at West Point

• 1857 – The New York College of Veterinary Surgeons was founded
CHRONICLE OF EVENTS continued

• 1859 – Dr. John C. Ralston urged the establishment of a veterinary corps in the U. S. Army

• 1860 – The Northern States had an estimated population of 4.7 million horses; the South, 2.8 million
CHRONICLE OF EVENTS continued

• 1861 – the Cavalry had the 1\textsuperscript{st} & 2\textsuperscript{nd} Dragoon Regiments, the Mounted Rifleman Regiment, and the 1\textsuperscript{st} & 2\textsuperscript{nd} Cavalry Regiments

• 1861 – The Army of the Potomac employed 2 non-graduates of the defunct Boston Veterinary Institute as animal inspectors
CHRONICLE OF EVENTS continued

• July 1861 – the 3rd Cavalry Regiment formed
• August 1861 – Henry Corby, a graduate of the Royal Veterinary College of London, was wounded in action at Springfield, MO
• August 1861 – all of the existing cavalry units, by whatever name, were renamed as Cavalry Regiments 1st through 6th
July 1862 – the battalion veterinary sergeant position was eliminated

July 1, 1860 to June 30, 1861, only $168.50 was spent to hire civilian veterinarians

July 1, 1861 to June 30, 1865, only $93,666.47 was spent for the hire of veterinary surgeons

July 1, 1861 to June 30, 1865, $323,964.77 spent for medicine for horses and mules
CHRONICLE OF EVENTS continued

• August 1862 – Col. J. B. Fry, Union Cavalry Chief of Staff, wrote, “Employ veterinary surgeon cheap as possible”

• Fall of 1862 – EVERY MAN, HIS OWN HORSE DOCTOR (1738)

• Cost of horses: 1861 - $125; 1865 - $145 to $185
CHRONICLE OF EVENTS continued

• 1863 – 6 “contract veterinarians” in the U. S. Army
• 1863 – American Veterinary Medical Assoc. organized in New York City
• March 1863 – Congress authorized another reorganization of all 6 Cavalry Regiments
CHRONICLE OF EVENTS continued

• April 1863 – General Orders No. 110 ordered each volunteer cavalry regiment to have a veterinary surgeon
• October 1863 – about 16,000 unusable cavalry horses on hand
• 1863 Annual Report – estimation that 50% of these are returned to military service
CHRONICLE OF EVENTS continued

• December 1863 – “The United States Army is the only one in the civilized world without educated veterinarians”

• January 1864 – Pres. Lincoln asked a graduate veterinarian to serve in the army as a veterinary sergeant

• January 1864 – Giesboro Cavalry Depot opened
Giesboro Point Cavalry Depot
Mathew Brady photo
Giesboro Point Cavalry Depot
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Giesboro Point Cavalry Depot
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CHRONICLE OF EVENTS continued

• May 1864 – General and Special Orders provided for the procurement of horse medicines and supplies

• 1864 – Sec. of War Stanton reported 500 horses used up per day
1866 – Glanders: a legacy left by the war
July 1866 – Congress authorized 4 more cavalry regiments; each to be staffed with 2 veterinary surgeons with a pay increase
1867 – The 1st graduation from the New York College of Veterinary Surgeons
CHRONICLE OF EVENTS continued

• March 1879 – War Dept. General Orders No. 36 required that army veterinary applicants shall be graduates of recognized veterinary colleges.

• 1916 – Establishment of the Army Veterinary Corps with veterinarians as commissioned officers
World War I Poster
Veterinary Services in the Confederacy

- 1861 to 1863 – no veterinarians available by contract or otherwise
- Early 1863 – General Lee concerned
- August 1863 – Criticism from Col. John Chambliss
- October 1863 – system of large horse infirmaries established
Confederate Horses
Mathew Brady Photo

Confederate horses at Fredericksburg, VA, 3 May 1863
Veterinary Services in the Confederacy

- 1864 – no verifiable provisions in the entire year for veterinary services
- January 1, 1865 – budget included expenses for veterinary surgeons
GLANDERS

- A contagious disease
- 1863 – caused the death of 3,000 Confederate horses
- 1915 - $5 million loss in the U.S.
- Eradicated from the U.S. in 1934
- A biological warfare weapon – 95% fatal in humans