

ADRIEL HILLS
CONDOMINIUM
ASSOCIATION

JUNE 2021 NEWSLETTER

MAKE READY FOR INTERNATIONAL SAUNTERING DAY!

Like all other days when you reach a certain age and are happy just to wake up, June 19 is an important day on the calendar. Not only is it Juneteenth and the birthday of our Newsletter's co-editor, Miranda Pratt, and the date for the 2021 Adriel Hills Golf Tournament and Picnic, it is also International Sauntering Day (ISD).

Sauntering, v., a style of walking slowly with a joyful disposition. It's an old pastime, seemingly less common than it once was. Take Henry David Thoreau. When he wasn't just sitting around at Walden Pond transcendently reflecting on simple living, he is said to have sauntered quite regularly. The purpose of ISD is to remind us that we should slow down and enjoy life, as opposed to rushing through it. It started in 1979, as a response to the growing popularity of jogging. (Jogging is defined as "an especially effective bipedal method of accelerating one's need for knee replacement.")

As for the golf tournament, I understand it is possible just to saunter around the course and occasionally swing a metal club at a small, defenseless, and dimpled ball. But it isn't likely. I have tried. Just listen to the language muttered by its practitioners, who too seldom evidence a joyful disposition. As someone (not Mark Twain, but he often gets the credit) once observed, golf is little more than a good walk spoiled. That is apparently why many of our local golfers use a cart.

To their credit, many Adriel Hillians, like Thoreau, practice sauntering often, some come rain and even more come shine. Maybe on June 19, while golfers are joyfully swearing at their

clubs, their ball, the course, and each other, the rest of us can work up a picnic appetite by walking slowly and joyfully around our beautiful community.

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As usual, the Newsletter offers a variety of reads this month. In addition to the usual informative report on the state of the community from Ralph, you will find a profile of Irmgard and Bill Hunt, two nice people we have been lucky to call neighbors, and several other items of interest, including an interview with a new resident who refuses to pay fees and the second in our Western Mule reprint series, "The Last of the Best," written by Bob Keiss about his experience as an Army muleskinner.

You might notice that we have dropped the two-column format. Because the Newsletter is now published mostly electronically, those who read it on smaller screens should find this format much easier to follow. If we are wrong, let us know.

As usual, don't forget to drop Chris a line if you are willing to write something or be profiled for an upcoming newsletter. If you would like to see a friend and neighbor profiled, feel free to lean on them gently.

Need help with a small household task?

Mark Kenning and Chris Wells are still available *for free* (please ignore rumors to the contrary) to do small handyman chores. Need grab bars installed, light bulbs changed, pictures hung, walks shoveled, stereos wired, holes drilled, nails pounded, planter repaired, someone to hold your ladder (or to climb up on one), or other minor tasks done not requiring a real pro or formal HOA approval? Ask Chris or Mark.

Mark Kenning: patamk7@gmail.com

970-889-5226

Chris Wells: wells_dc@law.mercer.edu

478-361-2691

Announcements

Electronic Funds Transfer:

The March, April, and May Newsletters alerted owners that Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) will soon be required. That will maintain timely dues payments and improve office efficiency. Signing up for Adriel Hills' EFT is not difficult; just contact the office. There will soon come a time when personal checks for monthly dues will not be accepted.

Note that EFT is for monthly dues only. EFT is not used for the insurance premium or Adriel Ct. maintenance/utility payments. These items must be paid via personal check, cashier's check, or money order.

Even more Urgent than it was last month: Adriel Hills Website Manager or Designer Needed.

The Adriel Hills website needs to be upgraded or redesigned soon. **Without an upgrade or designing a new website, Adriel Hills website will no longer be available.** The Board of Directors and the community are still looking for someone who can take the lead on this project, can research options and costs for review by Management and can ultimately present the findings to the board. Please contact the office, if you are interested or know someone who might be.

Fireworks: Fireworks utilized on Adriel Hills' property must be only those permitted by the Larimer County fireworks ordinance. The Larimer County Sheriff should be contacted if there are any unlawful fireworks set off in our community. All residents should contact the sheriff directly and not any Board member or the Manager regarding fireworks

Golf Course Safety: As attractive as the golf course is for frolicking, kids playing, picnicking, dog walking etc., any activities other than golfing are strictly prohibited under the Adriel Hills Rules and Regulations. This is for the safety of all and the sanctity of the game.

Monthly Payments: Another reminder that all owners must be signed up for an automatic dues payment soon. No, it's not because we have to have the money quicker to spend it like the government, it is for the practicality and efficiency of processing. Contact the office for information.

Townhouse for Rent

1560 Adriel Court. 3 bedroom, 1.5 bath, 1380 sq. ft. It features wonderful views of the golf course and grounds, central air, a fireplace, carport, patio and access to golf, a clubhouse and pool. Washer and dryer are included. \$1595/month. One pet 25 lbs. or less, is allowed with a \$300 pet deposit (half is nonrefundable & dog breed restrictions apply). Please call All Property Services (970) 636-0357.

Townhouse for Sale by Owner

1432 Adriel Drive. 3 bedrooms, 2.5 bath, two-story, and recently remodeled. It features a lovely patio area and views of the grounds. *Discount available for direct sale.* Interested parties, please call Rosalind Larsen at (708) 752-3597

Volunteers *Still* Needed to Help Keep Fort Collins Clean

Connie Dedon is still looking for a few good people to help pick up trash along both sides of Timberline between Vine and Mulberry. Adriel Hills residents volunteered last year (as Adriel Hills Plus). Your commitment is three times a year: one spring, one summer, and one fall pick up. Contact Connie at (970) 586-4078 for more details. (And no, you won't have to wear an orange jump suit and Connie won't be wearing jodhpurs and mirrored sunglasses with a shotgun on her shoulder.)

Speaking of Volunteers ...

Board President Jim Fry recently sent an email soliciting volunteers to help organize and supervise several traditional Adriel Hills social events. Our once fearless leader, Deborah Kohler has stepped down and out (moving down the road a piece). Thankfully, several residents have already volunteered to help with some of the events. But *they need more of us to help out*. Here are the folks to contact (refer to directory for contact information) if you can help. No special skills are needed, just a willingness to spend a little time helping to spread the workload and make these events a success.

Golf Tournament, Saturday morning, June 19 (rain date June 26)

Mark Silhasek

Golf Tournament Picnic, same dates

Miranda Pratt

Garage Sale, Saturday, August 21 (??)

Kate Engel

End of Summer Pool Party, TBD (??)

Jim Fry

Fall Soup Supper, Sunday, October 17, 5:00-8:00 p.m.

Merete Cunningham

Holiday Party, Sunday December 12 or 19, 5:00-8:00 p.m.

Merete Cunningham

Notice to Golfers

All broken or pieces of golf tees should be removed from the tee box area after hitting. The broken golf tees dull the blades of the tee box mower and cause increased equipment maintenance. Thank you for your help with this issue and please pass the word to other golfers.

Adriel Hills Newsletter Quiz - Win Prize!!

First prize is a classic cribbage board with instructions. Just add a deck of cards. The prize goes to the first person who can email or call Chris Wells (contact information above) with the correct answers to TWO questions:

--When and where are Wine and Unwind and Game Night held?

--What AH family is most likely to know the Jimmy Rodgers' song, Mule Skinner Blues?

Interested in Creative Writing? Writing Family History?

Judy Keiss asks if anyone is interested in forming a creative writing group. Adriel Hills used to have a group, but most participants moved away. One possibility is working on the story of your life or shorter stories from your life, then meeting once a month to discuss what you and others are writing. If you are interested or would like to know more, please call Judy at 970-493-1583. (And read some of Judy's writing in this newsletter.)

Pickleball and Tennis Need You!

Outdoor court sports are ramping up, so don't be bashful if you would like to play or learn. Pickleball is easy to learn, especially if you have ever played ping-pong, racquetball, or tennis. All you need is a paddle and some court shoes, and you are fully equipped. Tennis requires a little more skill but can still be fun for beginners.

Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays are the usual pickleball days. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday are the usual tennis days. Until the days get too warm, 1:00 p.m. is the typical starting time. In the summer, we play early morning to avoid the heat. Call or text Chris Wells at 478-361-2691 or Miranda Pratt at 478-951-2704 for more information.

Of course, unless otherwise occupied, the courts are always open to all residents for either sport during good weather. The courts also have a basketball goal for those who prefer a much larger round ball.

Property Description Errors: Fast Response from County Assessor

Just after receiving her property tax assessment in early May, one of our residents went online to the Assessor's Office website to check her property description. She found an error: her roof was incorrectly described as "wood shake." While that was true when her condo was built, it had not been true for about the past 30 years. She wondered whether the error had affected her tax valuation.

She called me (Chris) that evening to ask what she should do. I went online and found the Assessor's Office email address dedicated to correcting errors. I also discovered that our own property description had the same wood shake error and a slight misspelling of my name. At about 7:30 p.m. I emailed my corrections to the Assessor's Office. Within a few minutes, I received a responsive email and a *phone call* from Bob Overbeck, the Larimer County Assessor and an email from Lisa Thieme, Director of Assessment Administration. Their responses apologized for the errors and assured me that they would correct them asap. The next morning, I received an email from Jody Masters, Chief Appraiser, who informed me the Assessor had corrected the record and confirmed my assumption that the **wood shake error would have no effect on valuation**. Hard to beat that for a responsive county government!

If you wish to check your own property description for accuracy, follow the instructions on your valuation notice by going online to the website and search property records by entering the 10-digit parcel number on your notice (or use name and address method). If you find your roof is incorrectly described as wood shake, you can safely ignore the error. (You might want to make sure that your homeowner's policy doesn't have that error. That could cost you.)

If you want to challenge your valuation, the Assessor's website sets out the process. If you have any other questions or need to make an important correction, I suggest calling Bob Overbeck at (970) 498-7050 and have his office connect you to the correct person. Or you could call or email Lisa Thieme at (970) 498-7097.

Clubhouse activities reminder

Wine and Unwind is every Tuesday from 4:00-6:00 p.m. Despite the name, it is not actually a wine group. Folks show up to socialize and bring whatever potables they prefer – coffee, seltzer, wine, whiskey, beer, water, you name it. On nice days, they bring folding chairs and meet on the grass behind the Kedron Drive four-plex. In unpleasant weather, they meet in the main room of the clubhouse.

Game Night is every Thursday from 4:00-6:00 p.m. Folks meet in the clubhouse or on the deck. Recently, the game of choice has been Mexican Train, a dominoes variation. In general, participants plan to play whatever board or card games show up or are available in the clubhouse.

Weeders United

In past growing seasons, you might have noticed an intrepid band of women bent (literally) on eliminating weeds in the flower and rock beds around the community. They do it weed by weed, by hand, with no harsh chemicals. If you would like to join them on occasion or as a regular, they would welcome your helping hands. Just contact Connie Dedon, Sara Fry, or Miranda Pratt to find out more. Of course, if you would like to freelance, that would be fine, too ... as long as you know which ones are weeds.

MANAGER'S REVIEW

We continue to enjoy the benefits of the rains with beautiful wall to wall consistently green grass. Our mowing contractor, Lawn Pro, has done a fantastic job manicuring the turf showcasing our expansive green belts and the beauty of our community, and a special treat the peacock to top it off. It just does not get any better.

Irrigation: All of the green grass is on mother nature's moisture to this point with the exception of the golf course which is its own wow factor. Way to go Tyrus, Max and Danny! Due to several irrigation line issues, getting the remainder of the system on has been a challenge. We expect by publication time most of the system will be up and running. Again, thanks for all the effort, guys.

Due to the rains, the agricultural water we utilize to irrigate is a little later this year, but it was recently announced it will be turned on June 1st.

COVID-19/Amenity Use: For the most part, the COVID-19 news seems to continue to get better. The best news for Adriel Hills is that as of the opening of the outdoor pool on Friday, May 21st, the last of the COVID-19 related amenity restrictions have been lifted. A thank you to all community members, Board of Directors and staff hardly seems enough for the patience and perseverance to meet the challenges of the unique year of COVID. I believe availability of our amenities from the Library to the Tennis/Pickleball courts, or even the tranquil walk etc. all contribute to getting through this.

Neighborhood Watch: Call it what you would like but times are changing and you, the community residents, are likely the most effective resource for heading off or minimizing a potential issue. It is the time of year we ask that you be more vigilant in helping protect our community's residents and property. If you see or hear something that does not seem right, there is a good chance that it is not. You are encouraged to take a second look. A call to the non-emergency number, 970-416-1985, for the Larimer County Sheriff at the time a concern is occurring could minimize a potential problem situation.

On a different scale (hopefully) is all of our responsibility to help monitor and gently remind a neighbor if warranted of our community's Rules and Regulations. Everyone's help is needed and appreciated, and it's of course important that you accurately share the parameters of the rule you are referring to. When approached as neighbors this can typically just be a friendly conversation.

I am going to sign-off as we are all in catch-up mode from the rains and being this time of year.

Thank You,

Ralph

Meet Bill and Irmgard Hunt

William R. (Bill) and Irmgard Hunt have lived in Adriel Hills since 2003. For the ten years before that they had the property on the top of the rise of then County Road 11, 1.3 acres with a big barn. The house was said to be designed by an architect from the Frank Lloyd Wright School. It was fun and beautiful, with glorious views, a place they will always miss, but the property became too big after a while. On their walks, they discovered Adriel Hills.

Bill and Irmgard have moved around a lot--from Germany (Irmgard's birthplace) to Seattle (Bill's hometown) to Japan, where they taught for a year as Seattle's ambassadors to its sister city Kobe, then back to Seattle where Bill completed his doctorate in History at the University of Washington, then on to the place of his career as a professor of history at the U of A in Fairbanks/Alaska, with a sabbatical year in England in between. Upon Bill's first retirement in 1979, they moved back to Seattle, where Irmgard finished her doctorate at the University of Washington and began her work as a German professor, first at Texas Tech, then as a visiting professor at UW in Seattle, and finally, from 1989 at CSU, which brought them to Fort Collins.

In 1986, the National Park Service called Bill back to Alaska once more when a research historian was needed. More Park land was to be set aside and Bill worked with his team on the natives' water and fishing rights. A one-year assignment grew into four years, when Bill and Irmgard thought they had had enough commuting between Seattle and Anchorage. But overall, they loved their years in Alaska a lot. Both wrote many books in those years. Here are some of Bill's titles:

North of 53 Degrees. The Wild Days of the Alaska-Yukon Mining Frontier 1870 - 1914 (1974)
Arctic Passage. The Turbulent History of the Land and People of the Bering Sea 1697-1975 (1975)
Alaska: A Bicentennial History (1976)
To Stand at the Pole: The Dr. Cook-Admiral Peary North Pole Controversy (1981)
Vilhjalmur Stefansson. A Biography (1986) Also published in Icelandic.
Distant Justice. Policing the Alaska Frontier (1987)
Front Page Detective. William J. Burns and the Detective Profession 18180-1930 (1990)
Whiskey Peddler. Johnny Healy, North Frontier Trader (1993)

Just for fun, he wrote as his very first book in 1970: *Dictionary of Rogues*.

Irmgard did her BA and MA at the University of Alaska, then taught at Tanana Valley Community College. She raised the children and generally took on the challenge of life in the north during those 12 years in Fairbanks. After completing her Ph.D. at UW, she wrote several studies on 20th century and contemporary authors of the German language, including Günter Grass and Urs Jaeggi, and articles on Christa Wolf, to name those best known internationally.

Upon retirement, she turned fully to literary writing and has six titles in that area, including *Mignon. Eine Erzählung; Pazifische Elegie; Recht ist fehl und fehl ist recht. Leben, Fakt, Fiktion*. She was president of the *Society for Contemporary American Literature in German* 2002-2008 and edited its journal TRANS-LIT2 from 2006 to 2016 (20 issues), then served as treasurer and now as book review editor of the association. She has travelled quite a lot to attend professional conferences all over the US as well as to London, Dublin, Istanbul, Montevideo, Mexico City, and Berlin.

Bill and Irmgard raised three children: a son living in Fort Collins, a son in Texas, and a daughter in Seattle. They have four grandchildren, and all love to visit here. Bill and Irmgard love to read and write, swim, hike and bike, walk and talk, play and listen to music, and just enjoy Adriel Hills, Fort Collins and the Rockies.

New Resident Refuses to Pay Fees

Credible sources report that a new and colorful resident has moved into Adriel Hills. Several folks have seen and even photographed the newcomer. Not many have actually talked to him, probably because although spectacularly dressed, he seems very shy. And he is always on the move. AH Management has unsuccessfully tried to provide him the usual resident information packet and sign him up for EFT to pay his fees. But he ignores these efforts and even denies owning a condo.

Undeterred, the AH Newsletter staff put on his walking shoes, tracked him down, and was fortunate to land a brief interview:

AHN: Welcome to Adriel Hills, Mr. ... say, what is your name?

Mr. X: Sorry, but that I can't tell you. I am in the Peafowl Protection Program (PPP).

But my new best friend, Mark Kenning, is conducting a naming contest, so if any residents have good suggestions for helping me with my new identity, please call Mark at 970-889-5226. Seriously, call him.

AHN: Where did you come from?

Mr. X: You aren't very bright, are you? I can't tell you where I came from. I'm in the PPP. There are people after me.

AHN: Well, how did you find your way to Adriel Hills?

Mr. X: The PPP assigned me to AH after I requested a home with lots of open space, dogs only on leashes, and plenty of bugs. AH seems perfect. The people seem nice, but they sure do take a lot of pictures.

AHN: Is that what you eat, bugs?

Mr. X: Yes, along with grain, berries, seeds, fruit, flowers, and slow reptiles and mammals. I fancy myself an omnivore. I've been known to eat scrambled eggs, cheese, and cat food. You wouldn't have medium-rare, dry-aged, prime NY strip steak on you, would you?

AHN: Ah, no, not at the moment.

Mr. X: Dim and unhelpful both, eh?

AHN: Are you hungry?

Mr. X: I am a little peckish. Yesterday I had a nice snack on bird seed at an AH neighbor's house, but that was little more than an appetizer. The night crawlers are pretty plump this time of year, so that's something. Are you sure you don't have a steak?

AHN: Would you like a drink?

Mr. X: Have you got something better than canal water?

AHN: How about an ice cold Easy Street Wheat from Odell's?

Mr. X: That sound enticing, but I've been on the wagon ever since an unfortunate incident with the NBC peacock.

Say, do you happen to know any nice, single peahens?

AHN: Single peahens? Uh, no... But I do know some Canada geese.

Mr. X: Not really my type. And they all seem to be married with children ...

In fact, I can't seem to find any other peafowl around here at all. The closest I've come is Audi Hertz's socks. Now, those aren't really the same thing, are they?

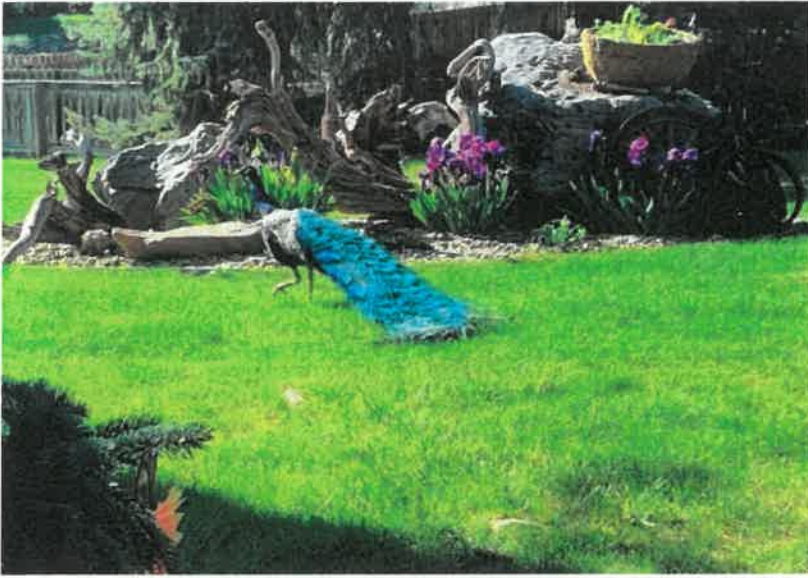
AHN: Before you go, do you have any comment on reports that you have refused to pay your AH monthly fees?

MR. X: That's just an ugly rumor. I haven't even decided on a place here yet. I'm looking at Jim O'Neill's rental and Rosalind Larsen's townhouse. The Kohler mansion got sold right out from under me. This real estate market is crazy ...

Listen, I've got to go. I think I smell someone grilling ribs ...

(Mr. X then headed toward Pat O'Neill's place.)





Administrative and Management Office Hours

Administrative Office	Open by Appointment Only
Administrative Office Hours	M-F 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. <u>by Appointment Only</u>
Management Office Hours	M-F 8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Lunch approximately 12:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Offices Closed	Monday, May 31, 2021 for Memorial Day

Community Activities/Events

Indoor/Outdoor Pool	<i>Open Seven Days a Week</i> 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.
Tennis	Usually MWF at 1:00 p.m.
Pickle Ball	Usually TTH at 9:30 am (beginners), 1:00 p.m. (advanced)
Library	Open seven days a week 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.
Clubhouse	Open seven days a week 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.

Maintenance Projects

Scheduling may change due to weather or other factors

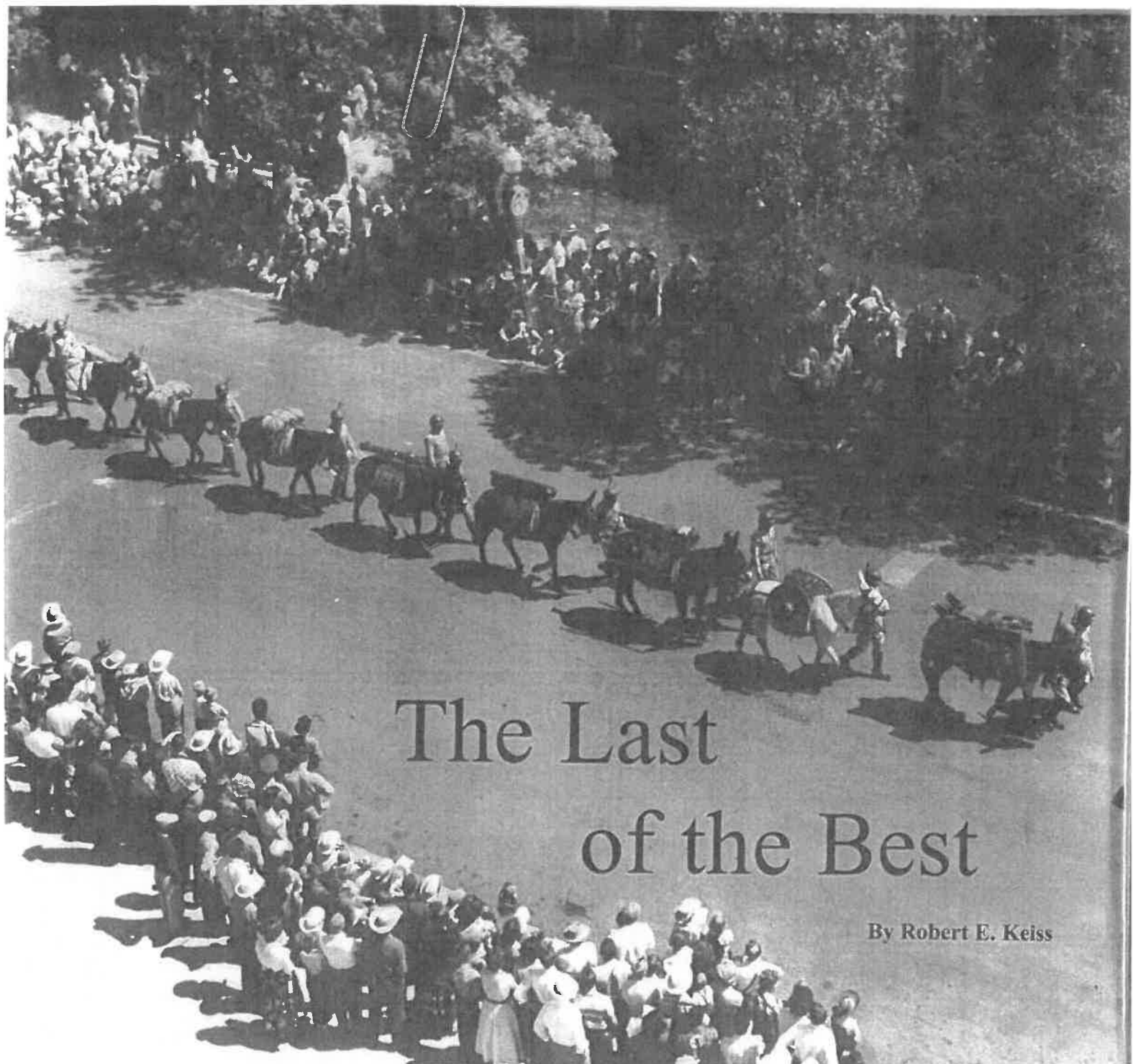
Greens Treatments	Tuesday mornings (Thursday rain date)
Building Repairs	Residents will be notified of pending schedule

Board of Directors Meeting

Board Meeting Tuesday, June 15th, 6:00 p.m. via ZOOM

(connection to Zoom meeting will be available on the Board agenda the week prior to the meeting); agenda and Treasurer's Report will be emailed or distributed to pigeon holes for homeowners and posted on the website.

This information is intended for the benefit and education of our community members.



The Last of the Best

By Robert E. Keiss

Cheyenne Parade, Battery Gun Section. The white mule is the famous "Hambone"

In the spring of 1954, I found myself driving from Oklahoma to Colorado. Having spent the prior three months at the Army Artillery School at Fort Sill, I was on my way to my first duty assignment in the army. I was assigned to Battery A 4th field Artillery Battalion, Mule Pack at Fort Carson, Colorado. I had no idea what to expect and little did I know that this would be a one of a kind assignment.

Having received my orders prior to leaving Fort Sill, I had a chance to investigate the mule pack artillery. I soon

learned that Battery A was the only battery left in the 4th Field Artillery Battalion and was accompanied by the 35th Quarter Master Mule Pack Company. These two animal units operated out of Fort Carson near Colorado Springs and Camp Hale located near Leadville, Colorado.

My biggest question was, "How did I ever get an assignment to an animal unit?" I remembered that as I was filling out my army papers, I had indicated having experience with ranch work and breaking and training horses. I also listed

my experience as a member of National Ski Patrol. I figured the guy at the Pentagon making assignments of school graduates was the same one that assigned John (Jack) Frost to a duty station in Iceland.

Historically these animal units were used during the Indian Wars and deployed in many major campaigns in World War I and World War II. An excellent history of the mule in military operations has been researched by Dr. Milton Bradley and

published in his book, The Missouri Mule, His Origin and Times. This work by Dr. Bradley chronicles the military horses and mules of the past and present, and includes extensive references to their role in military history. In his section on chapter highlights, Dr. Bradley states, "Some historians claim that no horse Cavalry or mules were used in World War II." He then makes reference to more than one hundred citations about their extensive use in at least ten campaigns in World War II. Included in the book are many

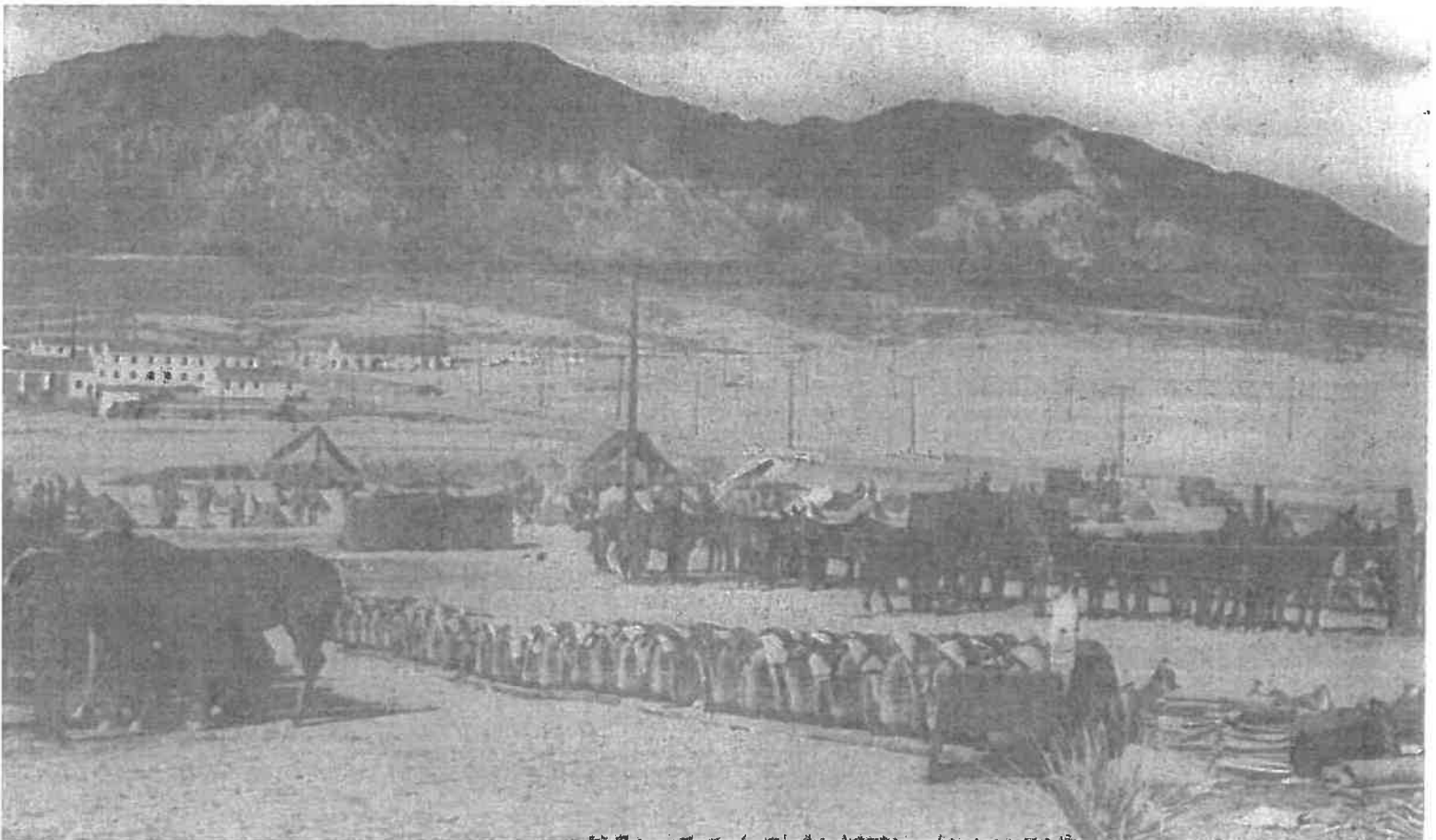
pictures of animals and their handlers in conflict. The book covers years of animal use from their beginning to the deactivation parade of the last animal unit in 1956.

With my assignment to the mule pack artillery in 1954, little did I know that the next two years would be spent with the last animal unit in the U.S. Army. At the urging of friends to relate some of the experiences of these last two years, I offer the following narration.

Upon arrival at a newly assigned duty station, it is customary for any new officer

to report to the commanding officer. Upon entering the battery headquarters, I requested to meet the commanding officer but was told, "Sorry, Sir, but the C.O. hasn't been here for the last twelve months. He is on "temporary duty" with the army pistol team traveling the world, and isn't expected to be back." I then met the staff and began to settle into a normal routine and to become familiar with the mule pack units.

There were several hundred animals and a professional group of career mili-



Fort Carson 35th QM Pack Company, picket line and pack saddles

tary men there. Many of them had been assigned to animal units since World War II. They ranked as non-commissioned officers and warrant officers and had many years of experience in the use and care of horses and mules. I regretted not having a tape recorder to record their many unusual stories and experiences they had in various campaigns in World War II. A number of these individuals had taken part in the China Burma Campaign and the Mars Task Force.

To properly set the stage for a discussion of a mule pack organization, I quote from the Field Manual FM 25-7 Pack Transportation dated August 25, 1944. "Mission: The mission of Pack Transportation is to transport loads on the backs of animals over terrain which is difficult for or impossible to wheeled or track-laying vehicles. Its success depends largely upon the careful selection and training of personnel and pack animals. The employment of correct packing and march techniques is essential."

Pack transportation units are of three distinct types: Cargo Pack Trains operated by Quartermaster Corps; Artillery Combat Pack Units transporting artillery

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pieces and the Horse Cavalry. Cargo pack trains and artillery combat units use mules and cavalry uses either mules or horses. Pack transportation units are not organized, trained or equipped to operate on roads, highways, deserts, or in deep snow. When moving in mountainous terrain, the pack mule may be expected to travel twenty miles a day, carrying a load of 250 pounds, but the distance should be reduced to 10-15 miles per day. Loaded pack mules are usually able to travel anywhere a man can walk without using his hands for support.

The primary purpose of the Pack Artillery Battery was to transport the 75 mm pack Howitzer into battle and position it where the weapon could be fired to support infantry in areas where there were no roads or other means to move heavy equipment. Each battery was made up of four separate gun sections and everything necessary to support the operation of the section. Each gun section consisted of seven mules. The Howitzer broke down into six separate loads and an extra mule was used to carry the tools necessary to operate the Howitzer. The Howitzer loads weighed about 250 pounds each and were carried by an individual mule led by a handler on foot. These individual gun section handlers were very competitive to see which one could unload and set up the Howitzer the quickest. A well trained and coordinated section could accomplish this in about two minutes. The same procedure in reserve was practiced in loading the Howitzer on the mules and march away.

In addition to the gun sections, each battery had a whole cadre of mules which were used to carry the necessary equipment to support the men and mules. These animals carried the kitchen mess equipment; all the personal belongings of the soldiers; tents; stoves; tools for saddles and harness maintenance; as well as the feed and forage for the animals.

During the winter of 1953-1954 the pack units had been assigned to Camp Hale and returned to Fort Carson for the spring and summer months. Camp Hale is located in the high Colorado mountains near Leadville (two miles above sea level.) Camp Hale was constructed in 1942 for the purpose of training ski troops and was the home of the 10th Mountain Division. The terrain was very mountainous and served well for training troops in skiing, rock climbing, combat and use of animals.

In the construction of Camp Hale, the specifications called for accommodations to support in excess of 22,000 military personnel and 11,000 animals. The animals necessitated stables, corrals, hay storage, blacksmith shops, saddle shops and more. This was no small operation and reflected the importance of using mules and horses in the overall mission of the camp in preparing army units for use in World War II.

After the pack units returned to Fort Carson, they settled into a routine of training and preparation for summer operations. The battery made several trips to the artillery firing range at Fort Carson to train in live fire exercises and spent several days camping out. Most of the efforts went into "spit and polish" in preparation for the many public appearances in and around Colorado. Many of the parade committees and organizations in the area would invite the mule packers to appear in their parades. This made the parades unique as few people had ever seen the spectacle of the mules before. The Color Guard was in demand to lead off the parades and was often accompanied by the Fort Carson Band. The gun sections were lead down the parade route as well as the 35th Quarter Master Company. Gun mules were led by personnel on foot while the Quartermaster mules were deployed in lead lines. Lead lines consisted of two riding mules about 20 feet apart, with two ropes running between and the lead riding mule and the last riding mule on each side of the saddles. The pack mules loaded with packs were tied at intervals between the two ropes in single file and were trained to follow the mule in front of it. Usually four lead lines were used and the mules were marched along in a group. This maneuver required a great deal of coordination between the lead riding mule and the rear-riding mule to keep all of the animals under control. In some conditions the pack mules could be tied head to tail in long lines. This procedure worked well under certain conditions but not in a parade situation.

In early summer, for some strange reason, someone in the 5th Army Headquarters and the Cheyenne, Wyoming Frontier Days Organization committee came up with a grand idea. It would be spectacular for the Mule Pack

Units stationed at Fort Carson to make an appearance at Frontier Days the last week of July. The big question was, "How do we get several hundred mules, men, non-coms, and officers plus equipment to Cheyenne?" The answer was, "Have them march!" The wheels were set in motion and it was decided that the 4th FA BN and 35th QM Pack Company would walk to Cheyenne (approximately 225 miles one way). The march was to take the majority of the summer as it would take ten full days march each way and then ten days at Cheyenne for Frontier Days which could be a ten day vacation!

The personnel in the Army, as everyone realizes, turns over with soldiers coming in, finishing their duty time and then

being discharged. The rank and file of the mule units were sadly depleted at this time as we were not high on the essential list of the 40th Field Artillery group. The units were down to almost a skeleton crew necessary to care for animals. Since the Cheyenne trip was mandated by 5th Army it got the attention of the "high brass". A call went out to each battalion commander in the 40th Artillery group with orders that they were to select a few good men to be assigned to the mule pack units.

As any good commander knows this is an open invitation to transfer "problem" personnel out of their hair. As a result we had all of these new "recruits" transferred into our unit. Very few had ever seen a

mule before or knew anything about handling one. The weeks leading up to our departure date were very interesting. To start with, none of the men had ever worn boots and britches which were the official uniform of animal unit personnel. Just learning to walk with spurs on the heels of their boots without tripping required some practice. Many of these men were afraid of the animals and were stepped on or clobbered by a swift kick from an irritated mule.

The non-commissioned officers took charge and under the circumstances did a masterful job to get these young Americans ready to serve in an animal unit. They were trained to saddle the mules, pack the various loads and care for the animals by grooming, feeding and

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watering. In preparation for the march to Cheyenne it was mandatory that all of the men and animals be conditioned to march day after day in the heat of the July sun. A number of the young men learned how hard it was to take care of the mules on a twenty-mile walk after they had been in a local bar the night before. This was a rough way to cure a hangover.

The non-coms did an excellent job to bring all of the personnel into a cohesive unit that could be counted on to get the job accomplished. A great deal of coordination and planning was necessary to bring all of the various components together. This included the kitchen mess, personal equipments and belongings, service personnel to handle equipment repairs, saddle shop, blacksmith shop, as well as all of the hay, grain and water needed.

The route from Fort Carson to Cheyenne had to be determined and the bivouacked areas secured in various towns along the route of the march. Most of the camping areas were municipal parks or county fairgrounds that could accommodate the animal units. This exercise of setting up camps was rather unique and each evening attracted many people who came out to see the large number of animals and men. It was a new experience for viewers to watch an operation like this. One of the local radio stations in Denver sent their roving reporter to join the march and gave a blow by blow coverage of the daily march progress. We had a great deal of media coverage.

In Cheyenne the animal units were accommodated by Frances C. Warren Air Force Base which is located on the west side of Cheyenne. Fort Warren was an old cavalry post established in 1867. The fort was established to protect the transcontinental railroad construction and served in the Indian Wars. In 1958 Fort Warren was taken over by the Air Force and became the headquarters to manage ICBM missiles in Colorado, Wyoming and Nebraska. Since the post was established for cavalry, many of the barns and corrals were still in place and served the needs of our animal units very well. Accommodations were well suited for the men as they were billeted in existing barracks and had good mess hall facilities. Officers were billeted in fine old homes that had served as housing for base officers in the past.

The stay in Cheyenne was centered around the Frontier Days Celebration. Our schedule included appearances in three parades through downtown Cheyenne and two daily appearances in the rodeo. The grand entry was made by our men and animals including the color guard and at least one gun section. The gun section entered the arena with each mule led by a handler. The Howitzer was unloaded and then assembled and fired to start the Star Spangled Banner. After the opening ceremony was completed, the Howitzer was reloaded onto the mules and they were led from the arena. On one very nice warm day, we had a full contingent of all the battery gun sections, and all of the 34th QM Company with all the riders mounted, and four lead lines of mules. The color guard was patiently waiting and the animals were settled into a relaxed state of napping. This was a special appearance as the Commanding General and staff of the 5th Army was in attendance for the rodeo performance. In addition to the animal units, the Fort Carson Band, Drum and Bugle Corps with bagpipes, was waiting to make the grand entry "very special." The scene was one of lethargic contentment, as we all were waiting for what seemed an eternity.

Suddenly the drums hit a loud bang, the bagpipes screeched, and the bugles let out a blast! Every mule jumped up simultaneously and it was hectic herd panic! The animals bolted in all directions. Handlers holding the artillery carrying mules managed to keep them under reasonable control. The lead line mules panicked and many of them stepped over the lead lines and became entangled into a mass of ropes, mules, packs, etc. After the pandemonium settled down, it required a half hour to get the animals and equipment sorted out but the show did go on!

After ten days of parades and rodeos, the units were ready to hit the road and head back to Fort Carson. The trip back was about the same as the trip up to Cheyenne except that we took a different route and visited many of the towns along the Front Range of Colorado. Arrival back at the base in Fort Carson was welcomed by all and we soon settled into our routine of maintenance and getting ready to move the animal units back to Camp Hale for the coming fall and winter. The men assigned on temporary duty for the Cheyenne trip were transferred back to their units so that our units were not at full strength but were adequate to care for the animals. The move to Camp Hale was carried out by hauling the mules by truck from Fort Carson to Camp Hale and went off without compli-

After World War II had come to an end, Camp Hale was deactivated and most of the buildings were removed. Living accommodations were not the same as they were in previous years. The barns were removed and new corrals were constructed for our mules but they didn't have the comfort of barns or sheds. The personnel were accommodated in James Ways, which were designed for arctic living. They consisted of a quonset hut but were covered with thick insulated fabric instead of metal. Each could accommodate ten men and they were heated by an oil-burning stove at each end of the structure. There were no windows but they were relatively comfortable. The only buildings that we had were prefab types that served for the mess hall and battery officers, and day room. The only building left from the old days was the 18,000 square foot field house which provided recreational activities for the men. It was said that our basketball team could beat any team in the country on our home court. This was because the altitude there was two miles above sea level and required very good conditioning to run up and down the court.

In late October the weather took a turn for the worst which was a preview of what was in store for us for the rest of the winter. It snowed for two months without quitting. By December the accumulation was approaching three to four feet and kept coming down. The annual snowfall is 13.6 feet. The animals and men settled into a routine. Taking care of horses and mules facing relatively harsh conditions with the snow and cold every day and night required constant attention. The unit veterinarian had to keep close watch over the animals and every effort was made to insure proper diet and adequate water. Hoof care was especially emphasized because of the exposure to constant snow and ice as they were standing.

The primary mission of Camp Hale during the winter months was the training of Special Forces Troops (Green Berets). Cross-country traveling on skis and snowshoes was a good part of their survival training. The men were also trained in the construction and use of snow caves and bow shelters which served as protection from the elements and offered overnight shelters when necessary for survival. Training in animal care and packing as well as the use of artillery support firepower in combat situations was also included.

On one occasion a group of several hundred Special Forces Troops were coming to Camp Hale for training. It was suggested that since the soldiers were air born qualified it would be different if they were flown in and deployed in a drop zone near Camp Hale. Whoever came up with the plan neglected to check the zone for snow depth. As it turned out the snow was four to five feet in the drop zone and at an altitude of 10,580 feet. These troops were in full battle gear including weapons. When they landed in the deep snow it was their responsibility to gather their parachutes and make their way to the nearest road where transportation to camp was waiting. Between the deep snow, high altitude and heavy equipment load, it was a harsh welcome to the Colorado Rockies. Many of the soldiers were a mile or more from the road and they were exhausted by the time they were picked up. They were a tough bunch of guys and came through this welcome and finished the tour of duty at Camp Hale in fine military tradition.

The Mule Pack Artillery and Quartermaster Pack units were limited in their ability to function in these extreme snow depth conditions. We could use unsaddled mules to break trail but even then they were limited to how far they could travel. We often marched to the top of Tennessee Pass where we could bulldoze the snow to make space for mules and tents. This required the use of D-8 caterpillar tractors and I often wondered if the "cats" could make it up there why did we need mules to carry the Howitzer? This area was the firing range for the artillery pieces and on occasion we could set up and live fire our Howitzers.

The Army had developed a new weapon: the 105 mm mortar. This was an adaption to the classic 105 mm Howitzer which was used extensively for many years in numerous military operations. The planners were looking for new uses for this weapon and someone came up with the idea that perhaps it could be transported via mules.

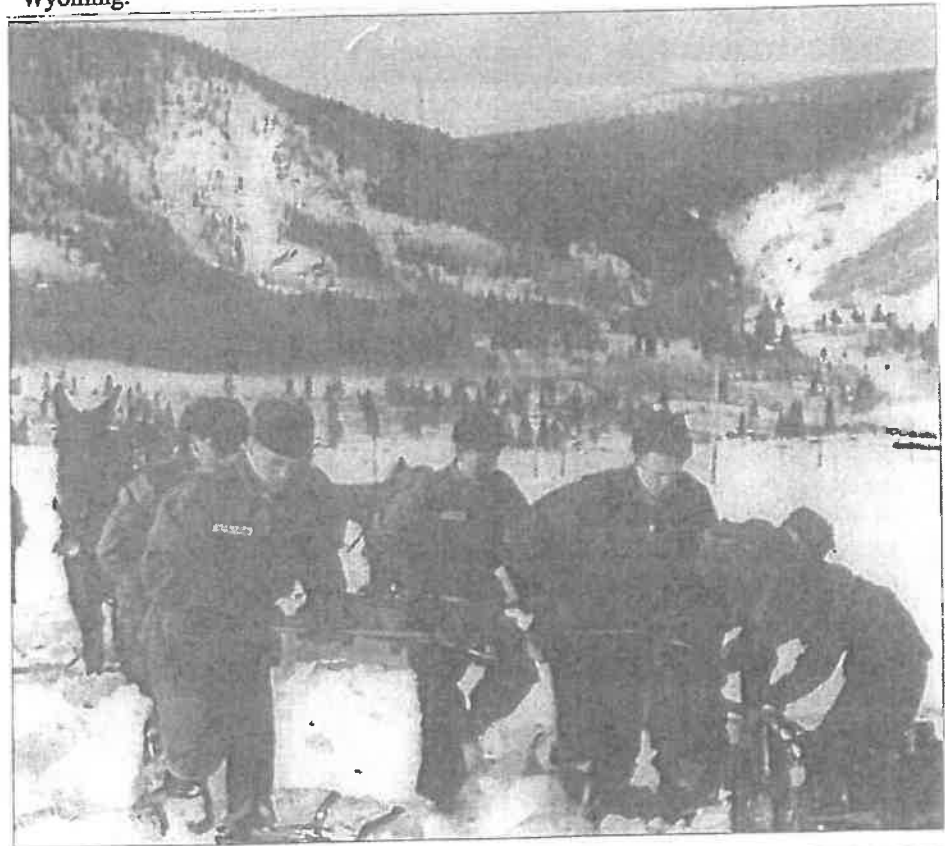
In response we received several of these new weapons and our packsaddle specialists went to work designing the hangers and clamps to attach these weapons to the Philips Pack Saddle. These mortars break down into the base plate, barrel and some accessories. The tube was no problem to adapt to the packsaddle but the base plate was about 4x4 feet square and very heavy. The challenge was that it had to be carried on top of the saddle where the center of gravity was high over the animal's back.

It had the tendency to rock back and forth as the mule walked causing considerable problems of stability and was very hard on the mules' back. They had a test exercise where we packed the weapons to the top of Tennessee Pass and were going to fire live ammunition. Everything went as planned until the gunners unpacked the ammo rounds and small pieces of metal fell out of the shell canisters onto the ground. These tests were under the watchful eyes of the ordinance people and they were alarmed with what they saw. These small pieces were the bore-riding safety pins. They were not supposed to come loose until the round was fired and cleared the end of the barrel at which time the round was armed, a very dangerous situation. The mortars and ammo were quickly rounded up, packed away in trucks, and that was the last time we ever saw the 105 mm mortar.

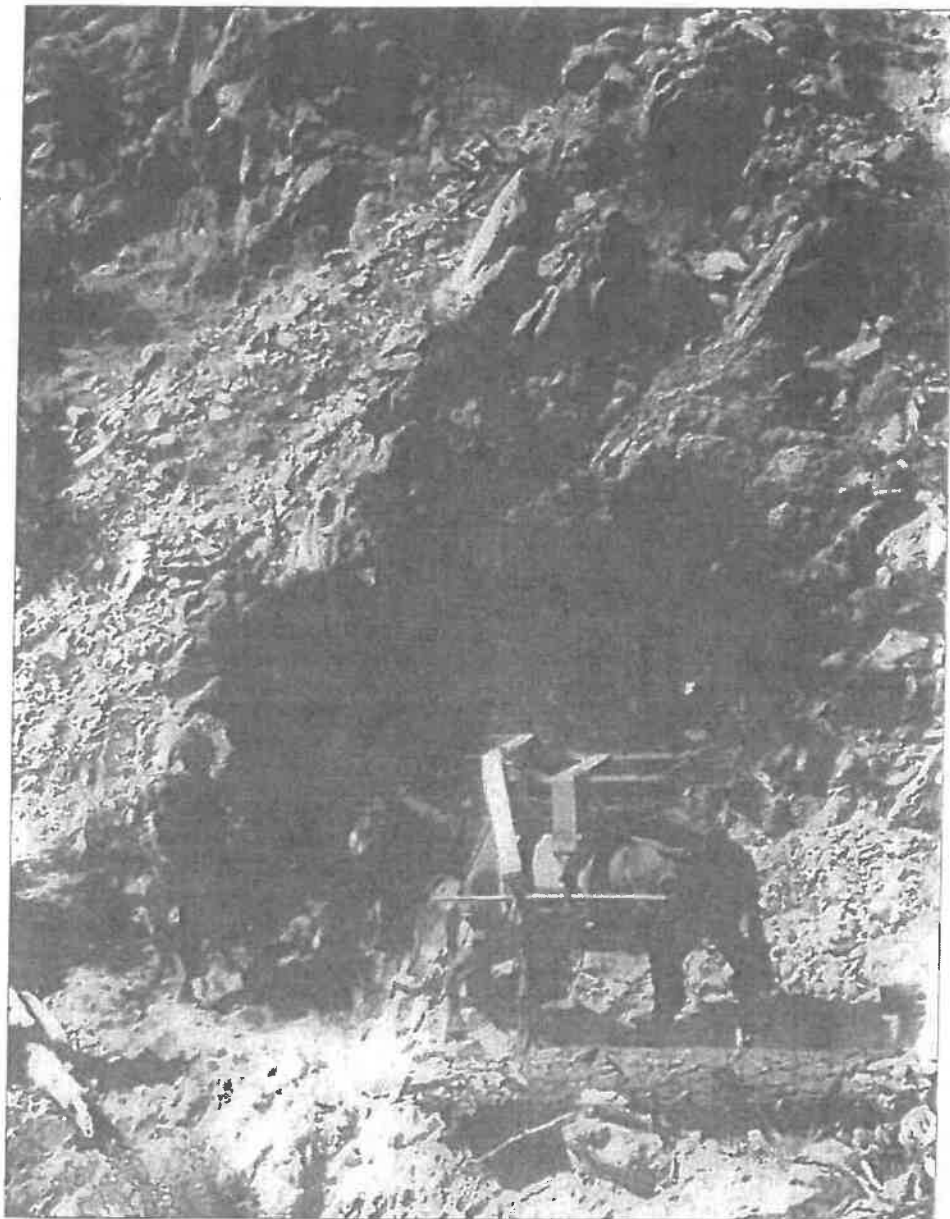
In general our winter in Camp Hale was spent fighting the elements. Those of us who enjoyed skiing spent many hours at this endeavor. Spring began to warm things up and it was time for the mules, horses, and men to return to their home base at Fort Carson. We soon learned that since we had such a great time and experience the previous year at Cheyenne Frontier Days, we could do it all over again! The second trip was similar to the first and we spent most of the summer of 1956 traveling to and from Cheyenne, Wyoming.

One highlight of the return trip occurred when we bivouacked at Colorado A&M College in Fort Collins (now CSU). A few years previously as a student at A&M, I had become friends with retired colonel, Elwood Nye. He was an old army veterinarian who spent most of his military career in animal unit service. Colonel Nye was on faculty at A&M at the time we made our visit. While we were setting up our bivouac area, I saw the Colonel standing by watching the action. I approached him, reintroduced myself, and I observed a sense of nostalgia across the old Colonel's face. I took him on a personal tour of the area, introduced him to the officers and staff and invited him to join us for lunch. We spent a very enjoyable afternoon reminiscing about older times. Later I returned to A&M for graduate work and whenever I saw Colonel Nye, he would always talk about that summer afternoon.

As we settled back into our normal routine, what occurred in the following weeks made me a unique person in military history. One beautiful fall day while we were in the battery area, a big black limousine pulled up by the mule barns. The occupants stayed a few minutes and then drove away. We learned later that this was the Under Secretary of the Army and the top Brass of 5th Army on an inspection tour.



Camp Hale, gun section unloading weapon



"Trail march"

This is the type of terrain that the mule pack was intended to work in.

The Secretary was quoted as asking, "What the hell are these?"

The answer was, "These are the mules of the Mule Pack Artillery and 35th Quartermaster Pack Company."

His next question was, "What do we need them for?"

No sufficient answer was forth coming, and several weeks later orders came down from the Department of the Army to disband the two units.

Time had finally caught up with the last animal units of the Army. The helicopter was coming into its own and occupied an ever increasing importance in the military. Just one attack helicopter has more firepower than several battalions of mule pack artillery firing 75mm rounds. A helicopter when not in use can be parked in a hanger and does not require food or water 24-7. This was an end of a long and glorious era in military history, going all the way back to the Continental Army and every military encounter between. I was the last unit commander of an animal unit in the U.S. Army.

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"On the march,"

35th QM in foreground. These mules are in a "Lead Line"

On December 15, 1956, the deactivation parade was held on the parade grounds at Fort Carson and the colors were cased for the last time. My military tour of duty was finished around the same time so I was not involved in the process of turning in all of the equipment. The first question asked is, "What did the Army do with all the horses and mules?" Rumor has it that several pet food processors were salivating over the prospect of purchasing all these animals for obvious reasons.

The Army, to its credit, decided that no one person or entity could purchase more than two animals. This put the pet food companies out of the running. The Forest Service took some of the mules for their use and a number were purchased by the Al Kaly Shrine Club for their parade unit in Colorado Springs. Many of the animals were used by the base recreation group as riding mules for recreation purposes. Several of the horses were sent to Fort Meyers, Virginia for use in the military funerals at Arlington National Cemetery. Two of the more famous mules, "Trotter" and "Hambone", were assigned to West Point for duty in the Honor Guard and as mascots for the Cadets. Some of the chief warrant officers were assigned to Fort Meyers and finished out their military careers there.

The Unit Motto of the 4th Field Artillery Battalion Pack was, "THE LAST OF THE BEST." This surely was "The Last of the Best".



Fort Carson - Pass in Review

Note: the author, Robert E. Keiss is the one who is saluting in the photo.

