

HISTORY OF STATE TROOPERS

ROUGH RIDING TEAMS

During the year 1921 with the approval of the Superintendent Geo. F. Chandler and under the direction of Captain Stephen McGrath, Lieut. John M. Keeley and Sergeant Tremain Hughes the first rough riding team was organized in Troop "D" at Oneida.

The purpose of this was to promote horsemanship thruout the Division of State Police and to build up public relations. Shortly thereafter rough riding teams were organized in Troop "G" Troy and Troop "C" Sidney, at first blankets and surcingles were used and the exhibitions at that time were called a "Monkey Drill" soon after McClellan Saddles were being used, and as the riding and the tricks became more difficult high class western saddles were secured by the men themselves. This equipment was very colorful. Troop "D" used the famous Palomino horses some were secured in the west and some were bred at Troop "D" Barracks, Red leather bridles, Red leather Martin-gales (Breastplates) and saddles studded with silver studs and trappings.

About 1926 the riding team at Troop "G" in Troy was disbanded for the reason that they had at the time a fine stable of show horses which were shown at all principal shows in the Eastern States and Canada, and as they say at horse shows "They always finished in the ribbons."

Troop "C" at Sidney rode the Pinto bred horse and used the same equipment at Troop "D" trimed with white leather trimmings, and as in the case of Troop "D" they were led by that great friend and good fellow Captain Dan Fox.

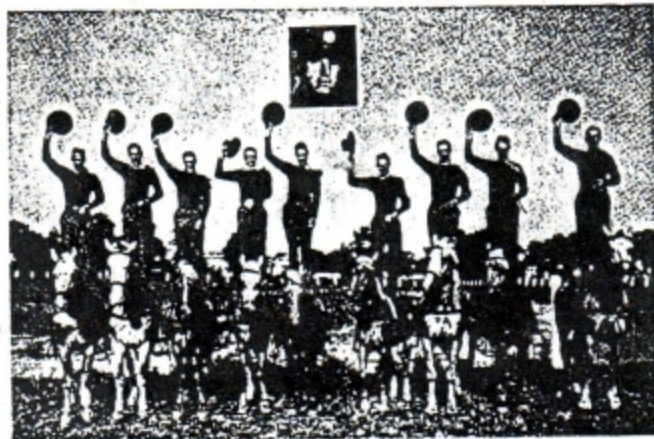
During those years it was the desire of the department that all Troops participate and specialize in some form of horsemanship, and so the rough riding teams became a great attraction at all State and County Fairs so that a great many invitations could not be accepted.

Troop "D" rode at the National Legion Convention in Boston, Mass., and were congratulated by General John J. Pershing a guest of the convention also at the National Legion Convention in Detroit, Mich., and while they were in existence always rode at the New York State Fair on Governor's Day and for several years rode at the Tri-State Fair in Athens, Penn., at all County Fairs in Troop "D" territory and at many celebrations for the purpose of raising funds for charity and the under-privileged.

The New York State Police Rough Riding Teams were rated as the best trick riders in the country by many experts and Rodeo performers including the late Tom Mix. Space in this publication will not permit a detailed account of the many difficult tricks that made up the program of Troop "D" riders but let us in passing mention the 10 man pyramid and carry it at a full gallop for one half mile it is very difficult and dangerous and at the present time we know of no organization that performs the act.

We would like to pay tribute to the many men of Troop "D" who over the years made up the riding teams, but space and the danger of missing some of the men makes it difficult. But let there be a word of remembrance expressed to the everlasting memory of the greatest rough rider that it was our pleasure ever to know, the late Lieutenant Tremain Hughes who a few years before his untimely death competed in the National Rodeo at Madison Square Garden against the best riders from all over this country and finished in third place, Troop "D" will always remember him.

It was said that an agreement existed between Captain McGrath and Captain Fox that they would never compete against each other for prizes of any kind or to determine the best team, a wonderful example of sportsmanship. Both teams finished their careers as Champions.



"THE CREAM OF THE STATE"—Troop D Rough-Riding Team.