

The Sergeant Allan MacDonald Cavalry Trail

*A Fort Ord History Trek from the
Marina Equestrian Center to Comanche's Grave*



The Sergeant Allan MacDonald Cavalry Trail:

- ▶ Links historic Marina Equestrian Center Park with Fort Ord National Monument
- ▶ Recognizes and preserves Fort Ord history
- ▶ Preserves a trail traversed by horse soldiers, equestrians, bikers, and walkers for over 70 years
- ▶ Promotes Fort Ord Reuse Authority trail system as a vital segment

by Margaret Davis, Friends of the Fort Ord Warhorse

SGT Allan MacDonald, U.S. Army (retired) is one of the last surviving horse cavalymen, an active rider, and a longtime Marina resident.

Born Oct. 14, 1923, SGT MacDonald enlisted in the horse cavalry at seventeen years old, inspired by his grandfather, a horse soldier in the Indian Wars.

MacDonald fought in the Philippines, Admiralty Islands, Leyte Island, and Luzon. Despite mechanization, SGT MacDonald's work with Army horses went on. He was stable sergeant for the 1st Cavalry in Camp Drake, Japan, after the surrender and was reassigned to Tokyo as stable sergeant for General Douglas MacArthur in 1949.

Stationed at the Fort Reno remount station in the 50s, SGT MacDonald broke 1,200 stud horses for shipment to Turkey and in 1954 was assigned to the 35th Quartermaster, Pack Mules, at Fort Carson, NV. He retired in 1965, taking a job on Fort Ord in post maintenance.

U.S. Army Horse Comanche

SGT MacDonald bought his mare, Comanche, at a BLM mustang gather and rode her twenty-three years in official U.S. Army functions. She was the last ceremonial horse at Fort Ord, until the colors were retired in 1993 and the base closed. On her death, the Army accorded SGT MacDonald the distinction of permitting her burial on a hill overlooking an old training field, beside the concrete troughs built for warhorses. Comanche's grave, marked by a picket fence and display case, is a landmark for riders, bikers, and hikers.

Horse Recreation

In 1965, SGT MacDonald joined a co-op of retired and active Army horsemen who built stalls at the old Army equestrian center/veterinary clinic. More stalls were added over the years. The equestrian center was given to the City of Marina by the National Park Service in 1998 as the core of a projected multiuse, equestrian-themed, public park, and was renamed Marina Equestrian Center Park,—listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2014 through Friends of the Fort Ord Warhorse.

In 2010, MacDonald rode Comanche II to Comanche's grave in the "Ride for the Rescues" a Guinness World Record event that used the SGT Allan MacDonald Cavalry Trail as its route.

The Trail: A Brief History

During WWII, 1,400 horses and mules were stationed on Fort Ord with the 76th Field Artillery, housed in the cavalry stables lining General Jim Moore Blvd south of 8th Street, and treated at the Army Veterinary Station Hospital at 9th St and 5th Ave—built in 1940 and still standing at Marina Equestrian Center Park. The Sgt Allan MacDonald Cavalry Trail runs roughly along the PG&E right-of-way, a direct shot from the Army stables to training and maneuver grounds in the Fort Ord acreage.

After the war, Army recreational riders used the trail; today walkers, riders, bikers, and runners traverse the trail from the Marina Equestrian Center Park to Comanche's grave.