

couple of days, I graduated to the saddle again. The procedure was repeated ever so slowly, with one hand on the saddle — when no one was looking of course.

Two days before pass out I felt that we were ready. Our instructor put us to the supreme test and grudgingly we were given the green light. Though both slightly nervous, "Knight" and I got through pass out with royal colours, rather than flying colours.

It may seem an insignificant event to some, yet I was extremely proud of our achievement, especially because after having been trained by the horse for six months I was able to reciprocate.

I find it most regrettable that the majority of today's recruits are not offered equitation training. They will never have a chance to feel the true bond between a man and his horse. They will never experience the false bravado of a city-slicker recruit striding into a stall for the first time, pretending he was born with manure under his heels. Nor will they experience the different character each horse has, such as "Houdini the Magic Horse" who could untie any man-made knot. Nor will they ever have a giant hoof placed on their boot with just enough pressure to let you know that you shouldn't try to remove it. They shall never see a horse with such a sense of humour that when at the water trough he picks your forage cap off your head with his teeth and then fires it into the water.

Where else could you observe a runaway steed galloping across the prairie with a recruit seated backwards in the saddle and hear the instructor bellowing "bring back the mail!"

What is more fun than watching a recruit going horseless over a jump with arms crossed, and seeing the little clouds of dust that puff up when his

bottom end hits the ground like a rock skipping across the water.

What is a better lesson in discipline than hearing the sobering sound of the sharp crack of hoof on skull or the hollow sound of hoof on chest and have the instructor holler "check the horse first!", only to discover after training that he felt worse than you did.

They will never experience the frustration of having their mount circle left instead of right when they have single rein et sans spurs.

What can match the exhilarating feeling of speeding across the prairie at full gallop or the unique and questionable feeling of comfort whilst doing the fast trot on pavement.

Humility abounded in the equitation program. Who ranked first in importance, man or beast? Nobody brought us our food, combed our hair or made our beds each day!

Anyway "Knight," wherever you are, they don't know what they are missing, do they?

G. F. Van Belleghem
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Dear Mr. Van Belleghem,

D/Commr. Kelly agrees with you. "Knight" was indeed a handsome, statuesque horse and his photo in "How the RCMP Came To Have Black Horses" does not do him justice. D/Commr. Kelly would like to point out, however, that "Knight" was only three years old when the photo was taken. Ed. ■