



Riding for the Disabled Association NSW
"Bits 'n' Pieces" 2019

Autumn/Winter 2019



RDA NSW CARRIAGE DRIVING CHAMPIONSHIPS 2018

***Tara Copp – Grand Champion,
Ebony Pressnell – Reserve Champion, Pei Yong Forbes – 2nd "In Action".***

From my Desk

Autumn/Winter issue 2019

With the success of the 2018 'one stop shop' for venue/accommodation and, for the first time to support the towns in areas experiencing severe drought, RDA(NSW), changed the venue for hosting the 2019 AGM/Administration Workshop from Sydney to Dubbo Cattleman's Country Motor Inn.

This weekend also combined Face to Face Committee Meetings being held by SNC (State Network Committee) consisting of the Board of Directors and Regional Representatives, also CASP, Carriage Driving, Mounted Games and Regional Representatives.

It was thrilling to see the largest attendance at an RDA(NSW) AGM/Administration Workshop. 85 Members attended from 25 registered Centres with many of our Centres proudly displaying their Centre emblems in the 'Banner Parade'.

With the new State Constitution passed at the 2018 RDA(NSW) AGM, this year we welcomed to the Board Tracy Lucas from Mudgee Centre, bringing a total of seven elected Members to the Board of Directors team.

The Portfolios for Directors are as follows:-

Margaret Norman OAM	Chairperson
Jan Pike	Executive Officer & Riders Representative
Joseph Orland	Financial Officer & Company Secretary
Olwen Smith	MPIO & Development Officer
Melanie Spaggiarie	Marketing Officer
Susan Turner-Davis	Communications & Fundraising Officer
Tracy Lucas	Grants & Risk Management Officer

As in the past all decisions made by this Board are based on a keen desire to protect the core values of our Constitution and a strong commitment to ensure a safe and productive environment for our Riders, Volunteers, Coaches and Staff alike.

CONGRATULATIONS to the following:

Recognition of Centre Years of Service to Wauchope/Port Macquarie - 20 years, Tweed Valley - 30 years, Ballina & District, Central Coast and RT & LH - 40 years.

Plaques:

- **Bev Amery** - Retiring from Regional Representative of the Riverina Region for the many years of Service.
- **Fiona Little** - Retiring from Carriage Driving after many years of Service
- Certificates of Appreciation: Jenny Whiteford - Retiring Regional Representative for North West Region

Winners of RDA(NSW) State Awards

Pearl Batchelor Volunteer of the Year	Patrick McCormick	Goulburn Centre	Southern Highlands Region
Young Volunteer of the Year	Emma Bryan	RT/LH Centre	Hunter Region
Volunteer Encouragement	Russell Ubrihien	Wagga Centre	Riverina Region
Rider of the Year	Santana Wenitong-Rios	RT/LH Centre	Hunter Region
"Shush" Memorial	"Cinnamon"	MGL Centre	Mid North Coast Region

Congratulations to the winners of RDA(NSW) Awards, Centre year plaques, Photo and Drawing Competitions. Full details of their names will follow in this "Bit n Pieces".

Congratulations to our Winners of the Regional Awards - their names will also be published in this edition of Bits 'n' Pieces

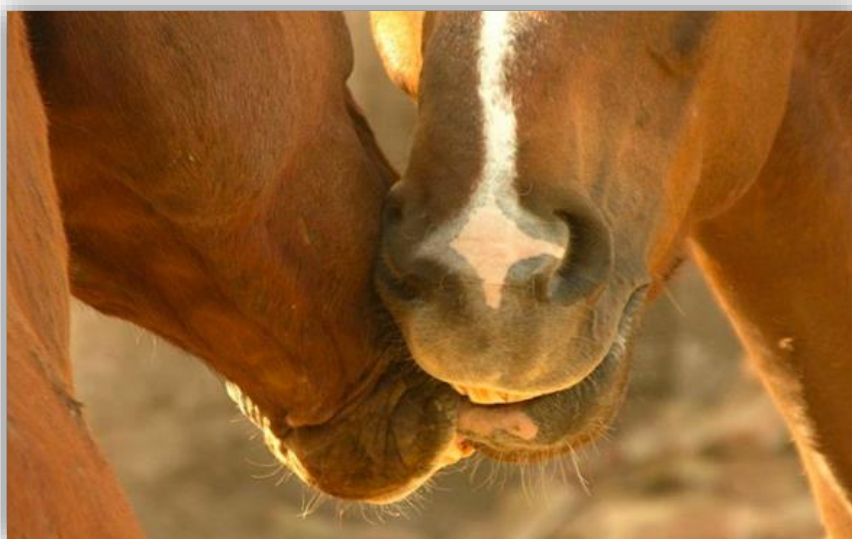
The State Workshop was very successful with over 85 members, volunteers taking advantage of the key speakers, the Board Directors, giving attendees the chance to hear current topics.

Thanks to Joe, Jan and Melanie for packing their cars with the many boxes from State Office of Annual Reports, other AGM paperwork, Trophies both Perpetual and Keepers, plaques, the many Photo and Drawing Competition entries, merchandise and other incidentals too many to mention.

SPECIAL THANKS to the Centres, volunteers, riders and others who contribute to our "Bits 'n' Pieces" especially to Lyn Lazarus who makes it all happen.

Extra big hugs to OUR HORSES - there would be no RDA without them

Margaret Norman OAM
Hon. Director/Chairperson
RDA(NSW)



FROM THE CENTRES

"Tall Timbers"

HILLS COUNCIL CITIZEN OF THE YEAR 2019

congratulations KAREN O'NEILL

Congratulations Karen! The Hills Shire Council Australia Day Awards Citizen of the Year - Joint Winner for 2019! Amazing recognition for your dedication and commitment not only to our Centre, RDA(NSW) and for all the participants that you have helped through your 36 years of volunteering!



Karen O'Neill from Riding for the Disabled - Tall Timbers: Karen O'Neill started volunteering at RDA (NSW) Tall Timbers Centre in 1982, assisting with the Saturday group riding classes. Over the course of 36 years, Karen has worked her way up to become a senior coach, an assessor for RDA (NSW) and has been the honorary President for the Tall Timbers Committee for more than 10 years.

Karen is involved in organising and assisting fundraising events, working bees and is always thinking of clever ways to improve the service and property for the riders, volunteers and staff. She also assists during dressage days, mounted games days and during interclub competitions. Karen is always integrating new ways in which her riders can benefit from their sessions, including implementing music, games and/or activities. During her time with RDA, the enthusiastic teacher and coach has been the recipient of three awards, including Volunteer of the Year Tall Timbers Centre 2002, Pearl Batchelor Volunteer of the Year RDA (NSW) State Award 2003 and a Life Membership for Tall Timbers in 2006.



TAMWORTH

Here we are again with the first article from Tamworth for 2019. We finished up last year with our great Christmas Party again and everyone had a great time. On the day we were very lucky to be given an exhibition of side-saddle riding by Joey Dernee-Mannion)



Christmas



Joey Dernee-Mannion

Our horses came back into the grounds looking great and we are trying a few new ones. Stan Day received his whips badge from John McBride.



Stan Day and John McBride

We did not start back riding until a bit later because of the excessive heat and dry. We only had the adult groups in the first term, but the schools started back again on 2 May so we will be very busy indeed this term. As we only operate on Thursdays it is a big day for all our wonderful volunteers. We have been very fortunate to have picked up some new volunteers, as well as some students from Farrer Agricultural High School.

Author Rosie Mackenzie launched her book "The Homestead on the River" at Collins Bookstore in Tamworth and she very kindly gave our Centre a substantial donation from funds raised from book sales which we intend to use to buy a nice display unit for our Awards and Certificates etc. Marie Lucas, our Patron was presented with her signed copy from Rosie.



• Rosie Mackenzie and Marie Lucas

On Friday May 24 our Centre was honoured in the Tamworth Regional Council Volunteer Awards by winning best Volunteer Team of the Year from about 12 other various volunteer groups. We were just so delighted by this win and I feel how well deserved it was to be recognised for all the great work the volunteers do and have done over the years since the Centre first started.



Annette Miller and Colin and Gillian Rosewarne

We had our Annual biggest morning tea on Thursday 30 May for the Breast Cancer Foundation. Our canteen ladies put on such a great spread of all sorts of wonderful foods hot and cold.



Biggest Morning Tea

In conjunction with the morning tea, three of our volunteers were awarded their RDA life membership badges. They were John Stokoe, Jill Laidlaw and Denise Warden. We had Helen Tickle from The Tamworth Regional Council pin their badges on - it was such a lovely happy day all round. John, Jill and Denise certainly deserved their recognition, they have worked so hard in so many different roles for a great number of years for the Tamworth Centre.



Bob Pontifex, John Stokoe, Jill Laidlaw, Denise Warden and Councillor Helen Tickle

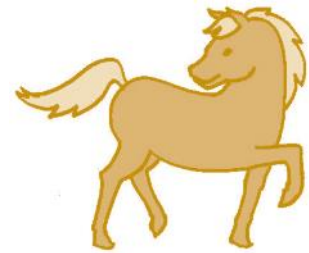
This will be my last article as publicity officer. Colin and I are retiring from RDA Tamworth as we are relocating to live nearer family down at Kiama on the South Coast later in the year. Colin retired as President after seven years at our AGM in March and Bob Pontifex is now our new President. I have retired as Volunteer Coordinator and Publicity Officer. These positions have been taken on by Lee Bayliss and Deborah Figuera. Colin and I have had 15 very happy years as volunteers at RDA Tamworth. We retired to Tamworth after 42 years on the land managing cattle studs and showing cattle and all the other things that managing a stud and property entail. We were very lost at first moving into town and did not know how we would cope. It was suggested to us that we join up RDA and as we have been involved with horses from our earliest years we thought it would be good for us and it certainly has, as not only the horses were still very much in our life but we loved helping the clients so much and what great friends we have made with the other volunteers and we will be very sad to leave them after all these years. We thank everyone at RDA Tamworth Centre for their great friendships, and care and support. A lot has happened and been achieved in those 15 years with our clients and grounds and the Centre has gone ahead so much. We owe so much to the volunteers who first started it up and got it going from scratch all those years ago, it was very hard work. Over the years lots of great volunteers have been there keeping it all going and we have a great team now helping in so many ways, we will miss them all. Thank you, RDA Tamworth.

Gillian Rosewarne -Tamworth RDA Centre

Colin and Gillian Rosewarne



CENTRAL COAST



Dear RDA friends,

My name is "Eddy" – I am a miniature and have been at the Centre since 2003, the longest serving member of the equine team.

When I first arrived, I had a strong idea of my own importance. I believed I could behave more or less as I liked. However, it didn't take long to realise that I had to obey the rules in order to give my riders the best possible experience.

I am the most important member of the team, therefore I occupy the first of fourteen stalls. This means I am 'front of house' and responsible for giving everyone a friendly greeting. The (sometimes) nervous first-time riders get a calm and gentle introduction to the activity. I also like to greet all other riders and helpers but to my dismay no treats are allowed. What a silly rule!

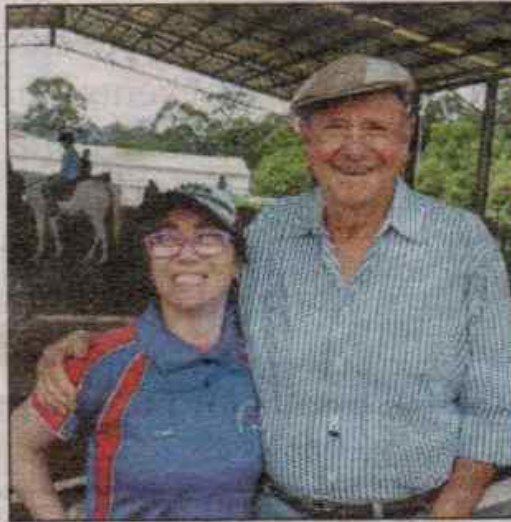
Some of the bigger ponies look down on me (literally) and can be a bit dismissive of me and my mate "Buntly". He is also a miniature and owns the stall next to mine. After a busy day, we often lie down at the same time on the comfy floor of our stalls. I have heard people remark how sweet we look.

As for grooming – well – my team members and I watch you coming towards our stalls with buckets and with our ears pricked because we think they contain a second breakfast but no, it's just a grooming kit. Disappointment might make some of us turn our backs on you. Don't be offended, just talk to us in a quiet way as you get us ready. Don't forget to pick out our hooves as stones could be lodged in them. If we say 'we can't stand on three legs' get a Bossperson to help with this important task. We sometimes like to make things difficult – it doesn't work with the farrier though!

On behalf of the equine team, I would like to thank everyone for the excellent care and comfort that is provided for us. We have generous well- maintained paddocks with great fences and plenty of shelter from all weathers. It really is a 5 star accommodation.

I think RDA also stands for Really Delightful Activity.





Karli Quirk with Dr Harry.

DR HARRY PAYS A VISIT

A VERY special visitor came to see members of Riding for the Disabled at Wauchope Showground earlier this month.

On Tuesday November 13, RDA Wauchope and Port Macquarie had the pleasure of a visit from the TV vet, Dr Harry.

"We had been looking forward to this visit for some weeks. A lot of excitement had been generated," said RDA Wauchope and Port Macquarie secretary, Cathy Wagstaffe.

Vale Len Crowe RDA Cowra Centre

I have known Len since Cowra RDA inception in 1993. Len has been the back bone and mentor of Cowra RDA being elected Vice President, then becoming President in 1994 holding that position over 20 years and with his love and expertise with horses held the position for many years as head coach.

Len was a great Character and will be sorely missed by not only the Cowra RDA but all in RDA(NSW) who met him throughout the many Meetings and Workshops he attended.

Margaret Norman
Hon. Director/Chairperson
Riding for the Disabled Association (NSW)

I have just been informed that Len Crowe the founder of Cowra RDA has passed away. His funeral is for Friday 25th Feb 2019.

Len was the coach at Cowra and I believe he started the Cowra RDA Centre after his brother Colin Crowe from Young RDA introduced him to our organisation. He retired from coaching some years ago.

Olwen Smith

Attached memorial to Len Crowe that was read out over Sky Racing Channel when they were placing horses in the barrier for his Memorial Race on 4 March from Cowra Centre

Len Crowe

Leonard Crowe, better known as Len, sadly passed away on Feb 12 this year. He was deeply devoted to his family and horses. He was instrumental in the formation of Campdrafting in Cowra and was the main force in establishing Riding for the Disabled in Cowra. RDA is now in its 26th year and when Len began the group there were eight children registered. We now have 45 and growing. This is a wonderful testament to a man who had the vision to help those less able, to develop skills and to know the freedom that riding a horse afforded.

Len was over 91 and RDA Cowra was able to celebrate his birthday with him. He was always interested in our activities and when able, attend Gala days, Open days and especially Horses' birthday. He will be missed by all who knew him and Cowra has lost not only a gentleman but a gentle man.

Cowra RDA Centre would like to thank the Cowra Jockey Club for honouring Len and for their ongoing support.

coonabarabran

2019 Annual Report Coonabarabran Centre

Our lovely little Centre has been ticking along nicely. We had 18 riders enrolled this year, coming from Breakthru People Solutions and Coonabarabran Public school. The drought posed some issues but there's no keeping Coonabarabran Centre down.

Community Events and Fundraising

Our horses have been kept well fed and cared for ... and the community has continued to support us. We did our usual fundraiser at the Northwest Area Equestrian Expo and Calrossy Anglican School have been holding an ongoing raffle to raise funds for our little Centre. Thanks, Calrossy! We also received a wonderful donation from the regional Australia Bank Community Support Initiative.

Further to the monetary donations, there have been donations of feed - making the world of difference for the horses, who must have by now forgotten what grass looks like. We made a grant application for infrastructure improvements at our Centre but were unsuccessful-2019 we will continue to apply.

In July Coonabarabran held a Disability Awareness Oztag game day ... and we were asked whether our pony could be their mascot. The 'Breakthru Unicorns'. Imagine the fun we had dressing up our littlest team member 'Pop Goes the Weasel' and doing our very best to cheer on the team at the game. To top it all off the Breakthru Unicorns won! We also attended the Community Services Expo, in the hope that we can increase our client numbers by introducing the community to the wonderful services we offer. Of course, we couldn't attend without our equine pals. The two shetlands "Poppy" and "Bronc". One was 'naughty reindeer' and one was 'nice reindeer'!!

Volunteers

It was a bumpy start to the year with only two volunteers keeping the show on the road. BUT! With a little 'noise making' we have increased that number to five. All thanks to Breakthru who raised awareness across the local radio.

Welcome to our new volunteers! Glen, Steph and Jenni! They are all so dedicated, coming every Wednesday to provide riding support for the clients. They come with great knowledge, skills and values ... contributing invaluable to the RDA Coona team. We operate with one Coach, who tirelessly shows up every week knowing there is no back up plan, and one of our volunteers is currently undergoing coach training.



Shelley on "Jack" with Glen

Horses

Our horse numbers have been up and down, starting the year with six. Unfortunately, we lost our dear beloved "Pablo" to ill health, another was retired and the third has moved away. We have, and have had, wonderful dedicated horses this year, all exceptional at being calm and obliging for our riders.

Riders

Our riders are progressing beautifully. Their riding skills, ground work skills and their grasp on horse related terminology. For some it's not about how fast we can go and how well we can do it, it's about gathering together and spending time with peers and equine friends. A win all round!



The Breakthru crew

Manning Great Lakes

SAYS FAREWELL TO "CINNAMON".

For quite some time we had all known this day was coming, the day we would have to say goodbye to our beloved old "Cinnamon".

"Cinnamon" came to us when her owner, Julie, had ceased competing on her and had, in fact, bred a few foals from her and was competing on them.

"Cinnamon" was 'getting on a bit' and Julie thought she would be able to spend a few years giving pleasure to our riders at Manning Great Lakes RDA Centre. And so began a partnership which lasted just over nine years.

During this past year we were having difficulty keeping weight on her, and were continually changing her diet in an increasingly difficult effort to encourage her to eat her feeds.

This lovely old girl has left us with some special memories. Such as, when a really reliable mount was needed for a nervous rider, she was the 'go to' horse.

Travelling to Sydney Show or to SIEC she never moved on the float but when the tail gate was lowered it revealed a horse lathered in sweat. A nervous traveler who never complained.

In the early days one had to be quite fleet of foot to lead her at trot, especially if her rider had full use of his legs! And she had no brakes!

The great facilities at SIEC did not impress our "Cinnamon"! She considered the stalls too small, and as for the wash bays, "absolutely no way am I going in there! I will stand outside and you can bucket the water over me!!"

One year at Sydney Royal it was pouring rain. The Schmitt Arena was flooded over our boots so the Horse of the Year was cancelled. Then someone suggested we use half of the practice arena so the competition was reinstated. I had dried off, unplaited and untacked and rugged all our horses except "Cinnamon". Volunteers had gone so it was "Cinnamon" to the rescue!

She repeated the course over and over again with the riders from Manning Great Lakes and a couple of other riders whose horses were unavailable. It will not surprise you to learn she was "Horse of the Year" that year.

When I noticed fine lines around her hooves and could not detect a pulse of any consequence below her knees, I knew it was time for our dear old girl to spend some quality time with her 'other family' who love her as much as we do, and so I phoned Julie.

Amongst the things I gave Julie eg "Cinnamon's" brow band, her vet records etc I also gave her the medal and ribbons her lovely old horse had won. When I handed over the HOTY sash and explained what it takes to be "Horse of the Year" for NSW Julie looked at it and burst into tears, "Sydney Show, Sydney Show, I never thought I would get a ribbon from there!"

All the riders and the volunteers miss old "Cinnamon", especially one small boy who took almost two years before he would sit upright on her back. He would lie across her, or along her, jump off if he could and run beside her. After two years and because of her patience he now sits upright and joins in a class.

"Cinnamon", you have given so much, we owe you so much, from the bottom of our hearts we thank you for your service, your patience and above all your beautiful kind nature. We miss you and we will never forget you, enjoy your retirement you have justly earned it.

If we ever find a horse as good, I just hope it has brakes!!

Maureen Turner.



"Cinnamon" decorating the Christmas tree

2019 AGM AWARDS



Pearl Batchelor Award 2018 Patricia McCormick, Goulburn Centre



Rider/Driver of the Year Award 2018 Santana Wenitong-Rios, Raymond Terrace & Lower Hunter Centre



Young Volunteer of the Year Award 2018 Emma Bryan, Raymond Terrace & Lower Hunter Centre



Shush Memorial Award 2018, "Cinnamon" Manning Great Lakes Centre



Volunteer Encouragement Award 2018, Russell Ubrihien, Wagga Wagga Centre



Photo Competition Winner 2018, Mudgee Centre



“Riding in the Rain”

Drawing competition winners 2018
4-8 years Roxie, Ryde Centre
15-20 years Chloe Dyer, Nepean Centre
Adult Peter Williams, Cootamundra Centre



The Board with Mudgee supporters

CENTRE YEAR'S OF SERVICE AWARD



20 Years, Wauchope/Port Macquarie



40 Years, Raymond Terrace & Lower Hunter and Central Coast



A big "thank you" to Bev Amery for her many years of support to RDA and for her term as Regional Representative for the Riverina region from which she has recently retired.

Riding for the Disabled Ball

Thirteen beautiful girls went out
To celebrate tonight.
Thirteen beautiful debutantes
In gowns of pristine white.
In a hall packed tight with folk they love
With practices over and gone,
They knew that wonderful night of nights
Was theirs and theirs alone.

Hardly an eye in the hall was dry
As each made her graceful bow,
They danced and whirled till the early morn
A part of society now.
The modern world has little time
For old fashioned airs and graces,
But oh, what it missed when it didn't see
The wonder on thirteen faces.



Stock photo

From "The Mare in the Mist" by Maureen Turner
Manning Great Lakes Centre



Riding for the Disabled Association NSW

congratulations

to the following placegetters in our

Musical Ride Competition 2018

Judged by Sergeant Karen Owen (retired)
NSW Mounted Police

Musical Ride with a Theme or Story – Led

1st Orange Centre

“Looking Forward Looking Back”

2nd Eurobodalla Centre

“Three Billy Goats Gruff”

Musical Ride with a Theme or Story – Unled

1st Tamworth Centre

“Keep a Dream in Your Pocket”

Drill Ride (school movements to music) – Unled

1st Eurobodalla Centre

“Eurobodalla Cheer Leaders”



Congratulations to all winners and place getters – it is great to see our Centres participating and achieving results in our Musical Ride Competition.

Lucy Pentony
Office Coordinator

NSW RDA Carriage Driving Awards 2018

What a wonderful start to our 2019 carriage driving year with the announcement of the results for the 2018 NSW RDA Carriage Driving Competition.

Tara Copp – Grand Champion

Ebony Pressnell – Reserve Champion

Pei Yong Forbes – 2nd “In Action”

The annual competition is aimed at involving as many RDA Carriage Driving centres in NSW to participant in events at their own centre. Manning Great Lakes Centre drive, with the permission of the Taree Showground Committee, at the showground once a month.

There are eight classes in the competition to choose from:

1. *Photo class – ‘best on parade’. The carriage and horse standstill,*
2. *Photo class – ‘carriage driving in action’,*
3. Preliminary square bending race, (needs assistance)
4. *Open square bending race,*
5. Preliminary precision cones course, (needs assistance)
6. Open precision cones course,
7. Preliminary flag race, (needs assistance)
8. Open flag race.

Classes 1 & 2 were attended by photographer Paul Murrell. Fun was had by all in practicing Class 4 and having the final occurrence timed.

The photographs and times of the cone race(s) were forward to the Convenor, Jan Muspratt last December, who in turn passes them onto an independent judge. The points gained for each class are then added up and the driver with the most points is awarded the prize.

The girls worked hard all year practicing their driving skills, learning how to hold the reins, keeping the horse in a straight line and then how to drive the horse through the cones, at a walk. Tara managed to trot around the cones without knocking any down which reduced her timing.

Of course, this activity would not be possible without our beautiful horse, “Monty”. He is well trained to harness work and thoroughly enjoys his outings. Although he shouldn’t, he is usually rewarded with a carrot.

Volunteers are in great need for carriage work, with a minimum of three volunteers needed for each session - 3:1 ratio is high for one activity. Volunteers are trained as full support staff and assist the Whip in all aspects of driving. The lessons could not proceed without them and I unreservedly say “**Thank you**”.

**Helen Murrell,
Whip, MGL RDA
29.03.19**



Ebony Pressnell, Tara Copp and Pei Yong Forbes



"Monty" in action

Rossmore's Janet Muspratt honours parents with OAM

Deserving honouree: Janet Muspratt, with one of her trusty carriages, is the recipient of an Order of Australia Medal. Picture: Simon Bennett



"Thank you for thinking I was worthy."

Janet Muspratt doesn't know who nominated her for an OAM, but she's honoured someone thinks she's led a life worthy of recognition.

The Rossmore resident is one of hundreds of Australians to receive an Order of Australia Medal in the Queen's Birthday Honours list today.

The 72-year-old was recognised for her service to horse sports, especially carriage driving.

"I couldn't believe it when I received the note," Ms Muspratt told the *Advertiser*.

"I just thought that were heaps of other people who were more deserving of this than me.

"I always thought my parents were the kind of people who should have received honours like this.

"I suppose in a way I'm accepting this OAM for them."

Ms Muspratt said her parents were community-minded people who passed on that generosity of spirit to their daughter as she grew up in Quirindi.

"My Mum and Dad were very caring people, they just did so much for others," she said.

"They definitely instilled that community-mindedness in me."

Ms Muspratt has lived in Rossmore for 40 years and has been involved in the horse community her whole life.

She spent many years working with the Riding for the Disabled Association of NSW (RDA), teaching people with a range of disabilities to drive carriages.

"I never thought that they couldn't drive," Ms Muspratt said.

"I'd just put the reins in their hands and let them take it from there.

"Working with the RDA was totally rewarding - I've taught people who are blind or in a wheelchair. I had a very successful time with the RDA."

Ms Muspratt has been involved with the Australian Carriage Driving Society for decades and still publishes their 'Whip Around' newsletter for the NSW branch.

She has competed in and judged carriage driving competitions across Australia ("I've always loved getting to know the people and I've always been an animal lover"), including the Camden Show.

Ms Muspratt has also been the secretary of the Hills District Harness Club (which covers most of Sydney) since 1978.

She is now preparing to adjust to life with those three extra letters at the end of her name.

Wollondilly Pony Club stalwart Betty Wallace awarded OAM



SHOCKED: Bargo resident Betty Wallace OAM stands at her beloved Wollondilly Pony Club grounds. Picture: Simon Bennett

The name Betty Wallace is synonymous with the Wollondilly horse community.

Ms Wallace helped found the Wollondilly Pony Club more than five decades ago and has been a driving force behind Tahmoor's Riding for the Disabled Association.

She has taught countless children and adults to ride a horse over the past 50 years, including many people with disabilities.

The Bargo resident has now been rewarded for her dedication with an Order of Australia Medal.

The 89-year-old told the *Advertiser* she was "quite surprised" to receive the OAM. "I am very proud and very honoured," Ms Wallace said.

"You don't do these things to get the awards at the end of it. You do it because it has to be done and to help people."

Ms Wallace was specifically recognised for her "service to people with a disability" on the Queen's birthday honours list.

The idea of launching a Wollondilly-based Riding for Disabled Association (RDA) club began during the 1970s.

The first RDA club was founded in NSW by riding instructor Pearl Batchelor in 1972.

"When I heard about it, I thought it was a brilliant idea," Ms Wallace said.

Ms Wallace, with support from her husband Graham, held a public meeting in 1986 in Tahmoor to gauge interest for starting a local club.

"I had received feedback from people that a lot of parents wanted to bring their children with disabilities to the Wollondilly Pony Club," she said.

"Graham chaired the first meeting and became club president. I was our first vice-president and became head coach."

Ms Wallace said support for the Tahmoor RDA had continued to grow over the past three decades.

"The club has been wonderful and we've had some great successes," she said.

"There are very few kids that we couldn't help over the years."

Ms Wallace estimated that she had taught hundreds of disabled people, mainly children, to ride a horse.



"It's been an absolute pleasure," she said.

"We have around 25 helpers and we ride every second Tuesday during the school term.

"Everyone is different, so coaching has been a day-to-day kind of thing.

"You need to adapt [your coaching style] to what's in front of you."

Ms Wallace's husband passed away in 2017 and she took over as Tahmoor RDA club president.

The community stalwart also remains Wollondilly Pony Club's president.

The Wollondilly Pony Club toasted its 50th anniversary last October and Ms Wallace said she was proud to keep supporting the club.

"To be still operating after 50 years, it's a long time," Ms Wallace said.

"I'm very proud to see how much the club has grown."

Ms Wallace is also recognised today for service to other Wollondilly community groups, including Meals on Wheels, the Tahmoor Bush Fire Brigade and Picton Show Society.

Queen's Birthday 2019 Honours List: Beechwood's Robyn Coombes awarded OAM



Horsewoman Robyn Coombes has been recognised for her dedication and service.

Robyn Coombes from Beechwood is an exceptional horsewoman, a natural teacher and an inspiration to her family and friends.

Her service to horse sports and to people with a disability have earned her the award of Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the Queen's Birthday Honours

List. Four other people across the Hastings were also recognised - Alan Morris (AM), Bruce Cant (OAM), Edna Lamb (OAM) and Gerry de Vries (OAM).

Robyn has been a member and volunteer at Riding for the Disabled at Wauchope Showground since 2005 and a coach since 2008. She volunteers many hours

She was Course Designer and Organiser of the Bago Endurance Ride, a major fundraiser for Wauchope/Port Macquarie RDA, from 2006 to 2016.

A member of Hastings District Pony Club since 1973, Robyn is an instructor and a Life Member, and has been club secretary, zone treasurer, chief instructor and examiner.

Robyn has been a member of Hastings Valley Dressage Club since 2015 and a committee member since 2017. She has been a treasurer and committee member for the Hastings Trail Riding Club which she joined in 2000.

Her other activities include trail boss and ride coordinator with the New South Wales Endurance Riders' Association, and member of the New South Wales Endurance and Pleasure Riding Club, where she planned and ran endurance rides, and designed courses.

At the Wauchope Show, Robyn was a volunteer and ring steward until last year, and deputy ring master from 2014 to 2018.

Robyn grew up on a dairy farm in the Manning Valley before marrying in 1959 and moving to Cunnamulla, Queensland. She then ventured to a remote cattle station in the Northern Territory.

In 1968, the family moved to Mudginberri in Arnhem Land. While bringing up four young children, Robyn set up and taught a mobile school for Aboriginal children along with children from local stations and mining camps. She returned to the Mid North Coast in 1974 to teach and now lives in Beechwood.



The Sewing Basket supplies a wide range of unique fabrics and patterns, embroidery stock, knitting, haberdashery, plus much more. At our stores, a team of experienced volunteers work alongside supported employees with disability. Supported employment allows our staff to learn valuable job and interpersonal skills and encourages their inclusion in the local community.



Don and Jo McKerrell with their daughter, Vicki.

All our stock at The Sewing Basket is donated, which means we are a sustainable shopping solution and have a wide range of vintage and rare products from individuals and estates. Our dedicated team will assist you with our large variety of stock and help you with ideas and suggestions for your next creation.

Follow us on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#) to receive the latest updates from The Sewing Basket, or you can also sign up to our email list below.

The Sewing Basket has a host of loyal followers from across NSW, Australia and is even known internationally.

Customers arrive in store on the hunt for that something special, unique or exceptional for their latest sewing or craft project. This social enterprise with a difference also has a rich history that goes back twenty years.

In 1998, when a fabric store in Eastwood closed, the remaining stock was donated by Diana Oakley to Don and Jo McKerrell. Over the years, Don and Jo's daughter, Vicki, had attended school and training at Crowle Home for children with disabilities.

As part of the annual fundraiser to support the school, Don and Jo rallied together with other parents to create a special needlecraft sale from the donated stock.

Word quickly spread throughout the community and enthusiasts came from far and wide on the hunt for unique fabrics, patterns and handcrafts.

As more people heard about the sale, further donations poured in and the community began contributing from their own needlecraft collections.

"We've seen remarkable collections come in over the years that showcase the lifelong passion of people's handcraft," said founder of the original fabric store, Jo McKerrell.

"Our volunteers would treasure the items that were donated as some materials had even passed through many generations. It was a way for families to share a loved one's craft with other enthusiasts and honour their creative work," said Jo.

By the time of the second annual sale, there was so many donations coming in, and the sales so successful, that a larger shop was fitted out at Crowle to keep up with the increasing demand.

Following a merger with The Crowle Foundation and Achieve, a new retail shop opened up in Meadowbank in 2013 dedicated to fabric, needlecraft and more, which later became the name for the shop.

Today, The Sewing Basket has been modernised and transformed at a brand-new integrated site in Newington and at another shop in West Ryde.

It still, however, operates under a similar model as it did all those years ago by relying solely on donations and support from the community and it is still run by a group of dedicated volunteers, like Don and Jo were for many years.

"We arrived from the country in 1964 to Crowle Home to help our daughter Vicki and it is without doubt one of the most incredible parts of our lives to see the advances and benefits for people with disability over the years," said Jo.

The Sewing Basket also provides employment for people with disability who work alongside our experienced volunteers in the shop.

This provides supported employees an opportunity to earn an income, improve their workplace skills, and engage with the community.

The Newington and West Ryde shops are now open and donations to The Sewing Basket are gratefully accepted from Monday to Friday from 8am to 4pm via the loading dock at the rear of the Newington premises.



Locations and opening hours
NEWINGTON
 Unit 5, 2 Holker Street (Cnr Ave of Asia)
 Newington NSW 2127
 Opening hours - 9am to 2pm
 Monday, Wednesday and Friday
 1st Sunday and 3rd Saturday of the month

Donations
 Donations are gratefully accepted from Monday to Friday from 8am to 4pm via the rear loading dock at the Newington shop.

WEST RYDE
 1079 Victoria Road (Cnr Bellevue Ave)
 West Ryde NSW 2114
 Opening hours - 9am to 2pm
 Monday and Friday
 The Sewing Basket shops are closed on public holidays.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
 To volunteer at The Sewing Basket, visit our website to complete the online form.

NEWINGTON

WEST RYDE

1300 22 44 38

achieve
 Building achievement and hope

SEWING BASKET
 The fabric shop supporting people with disability

[f](#) Achieve Australia
 [t](#) @AchieveAus
 [i](#) @achievesewingbasket
 [globe](#) achieveaustralia.org.au/my-career/the-sewing-basket



Poisons in the paddock

*Dr Jennifer Stewart BVSc BSc PhD MRCVS Dip BEP AAIM
Equine Veterinarian and Consultant Nutritionist
www.jenquine.com*

It's good to walk around your paddocks from time-to-time, not just to check fences and detect potential hazards, but to also identify potentially poisonous plants – especially after rain. Although we can learn to recognise plants that are poisonous to horses, we can't 'see' such plant hitchhikers as fungi and mycotoxins. Warm, wet weather favours fungal growth, so knowing which grasses are susceptible can help. And, rain and run-off also introduce weeds that can quickly become large infestations in one season – much harder to deal with than a few small plants!

Plant toxins can affect metabolism, the heart, brain, liver or the skin. Some plants contain different amounts or types of toxins at different stages of growth and in the leaves, roots, bark, flowers and seeds; some are only dangerous at certain times of the year and the flush of growth after fertilising can increase toxins. Some herbicides improve poisonous plant palatability to horses, and wilted or dried poisonous plants are often just as toxic as fresh plants. Hungry, bored and young horses grazing low-fibre, lush pasture are more likely to indiscriminately eat plants that they would otherwise avoid, and if moved to a new area horses can nibble on unfamiliar plants. Most pastures contain some level of potentially poisonous plants and although the odd, random poisonous plant in a healthy pasture is not usually a risk, others require such a small amount to be toxic and still others such as crofton weed can be grazed preferentially and with a depraved appetite. Horses do not have an innate nutritional wisdom.

In addition to poisons in plants, bacteria and fungi that infest plants also produce toxins. Mycotoxins are poisons produced by fungi and horses can ingest these toxins while grazing. Mycotoxins only accumulate in pasture grasses under moist conditions and most pastures are safe most of the time. The most common pasture grasses associated with illness in horses in Australia are perennial and annual ryegrass and paspalum. 'Perennial ryegrass staggers' can occur in horses on ryegrass pastures or ryegrass hay that has been infected with mycotoxin-producing fungi. Almost all perennial ryegrass that grows in Australia contains mycotoxin-producing endophyte fungi, which causes uncoordinated movements, trembling, sudden startle reactions and collapse. The risk is injury from ungainly movement and panic. Identical signs occur with paspalum staggers, which affects cattle and horses. Also called 'ergotism', paspalum staggers is caused by *Claviceps* fungi. This fungi can occur in a variety of pasture grasses and grain crops including ryegrasses, cereal rye and phalaris. Watch

for symptoms during the high-risk period over summer and autumn, especially when rain has produced a flush of growth.

Claviceps on ryegrass or as a contaminant of oats, and *Neotyphodium* on tall fescue produce alkaloids that can cause prolonged gestation, difficult birth, weak foals and poor milk production. These fungi grow on many other pasture grasses and cereal grains and the toxic effects are the same.

Aflatoxins are liver-damaging mycotoxins produced by *Aspergillus*. They can accumulate during growth and storage of grains and protein additives — corn, wheat, oats, barley, cottonseed, copra and sunflower seeds. Again, moisture, high humidity and warm temperatures promote the growth of the fungus. When damaged, harvested soon after rain or grown in wet conditions, oats, corn and feeds containing these (including pellets) can also be infested with *Fusarium* fungus that produces fumonisins and causes brain damage. Feed should always be stored in dry, cool conditions and sourced from reputable suppliers.

As well as fungal mycotoxins, rain increases the risk of annual rye, blown grass and annual beardgrass seed heads being infected with bacteria that produce corynetoxins. Seed heads can appear normal or twisted and deformed with a coating of yellow slime. Horses are affected by eating infected grasses, the stubble or hay – which can remain toxic for years. Causing brain damage, most poisoning occurs in late spring to early summer. Although not common, cases have been confirmed in Western Australia, South Australia and in northern New South Wales.

Other plants contain hormones or chemicals that affect horses. To protect fertility, select only low-oestrogen varieties of red and subterranean clover for broodmares. Many subtropical grasses (buffel, guinea, kikuyu, oxalis, para, pangola, purple pigeon, setaria and signal) contain oxalate chemicals that bind calcium. A generalised, difficult-to-diagnose osteoporosis results – with vague, shifting lameness; increased incidence of tendon, ligament and joint problems and spontaneous fractures, weight loss and ill-thrift. Unless a chelated form of calcium is used, up to 3kg of molasses + lime or DCP per week, per horse is needed to correct the calcium deficiency. Only chelated calcium is protected from oxalates.

Keeping paddocks 'clean' takes a little biosecurity and managing horses and plants is important. To avoid introduction of weeds and poisonous plants (including ornamental and garden plants), first develop a working knowledge; be on the look-out for potentially invasive or poisonous weed species,

and ensure potentially poisonous weeds and prunings of ornamental species are not dumped or composted in horse paddocks. Note many weeds may be declared 'noxious' and this varies between states – information is available on state agriculture department websites. Make sure farm machinery is clean before it comes onto your property. For new arrivals, check for seeds and mud on coats, hooves, manes and tails and quarantine them for 10-14 days after they arrive on your property – unlike sheep, goats, cattle, ducks and chickens, over 40 species of weed seeds can pass unharmed through the horses gut. Only use certified seed when improving paddocks.

Sugar and starch have recently been suggested to be 'poisons' in people – and the same applies to horses. Rain can promote high pasture sugar and starch levels which can be extremely dangerous to horses. So despite the existence of various national and international breed societies, from a veterinary perspective there are only two types of ponies in the world – ponies that have foundered and ponies that are going to founder! Restricted, careful grazing, or complete withdrawal from pasture is often required after rain and urgent veterinary and farriery attention must be sought for any horse that shows a reluctance to move. Lush growth is also low in calcium and magnesium and certain conditions favour production of toxic nitrates. Nutritional supplements can be supportive, but should be formulated in approved facilities. They can help maintain health and reduce the risk of several diseases.

Many toxic weeds flourish after rain. Patersons curse, flatweed, fireweed, cestrum and oxalis are a few. Many shrubs and trees found in gardens, paddocks and within 3-4 metres of fence-lines can be extremely toxic. Horses may browse them when pasture is damaged from rain, or fresh growth is low in fibre. The species vary between geographical locations. The Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) publication *Poisonous Plants to Horses* – an Australian field guide' is an excellent reference (<http://www.horsecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Plants-Poisonous-to-Horses-Aust-field-guide.pdf>) for all parts and states of Australia.

With a lot of rain comes a lot of mud and in some places, floods. Pastures can be ruined by horses congregating and by their hooves – meaning you may have more poisonous weeds and mycotoxin-affected plants than healthy grass when the rain stops. Since horses are browsers, when they don't have a lot of grass to eat they may start eating those plants. Bacteria and fungi love not just plants and mud increases risk of bacterial and fungal infections of the skin, hooves, feet and legs. Some horses like to forage in mud and are at increased risk of sand or dirt colic.

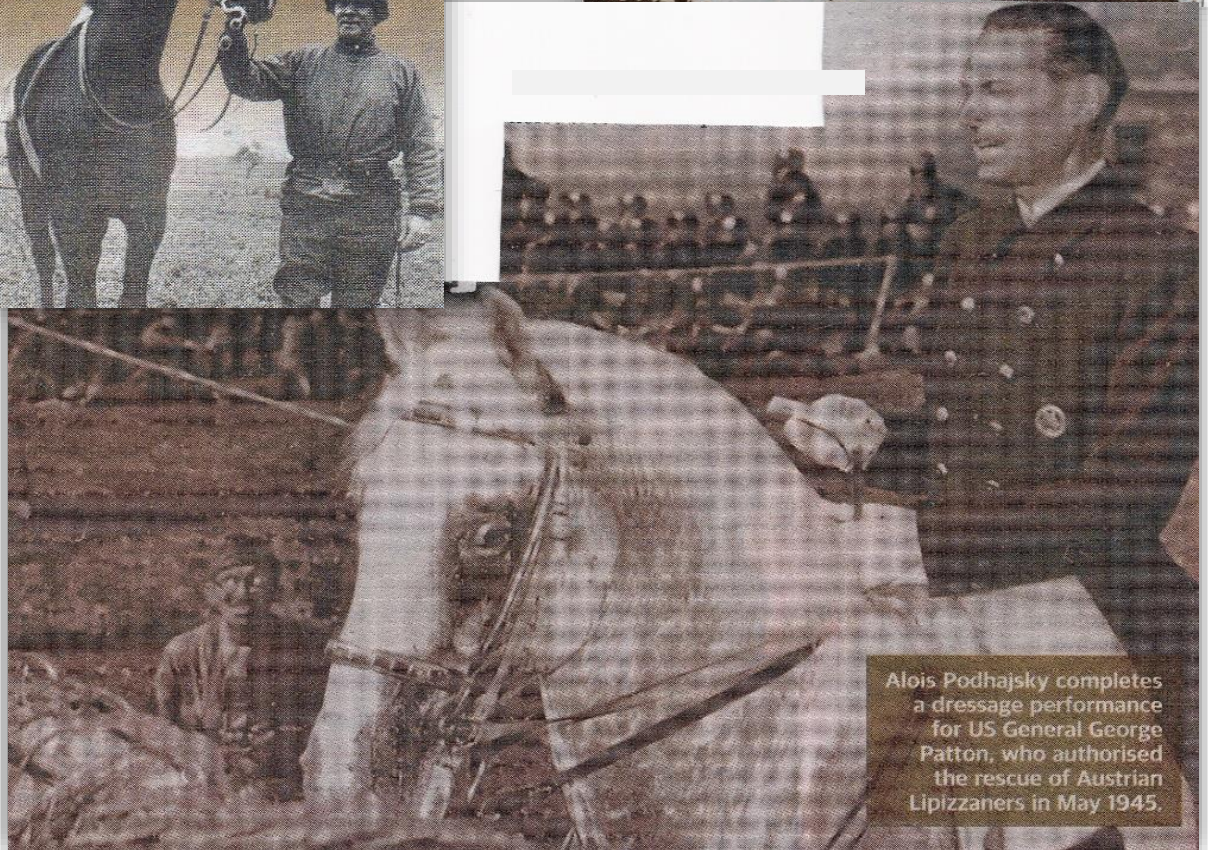
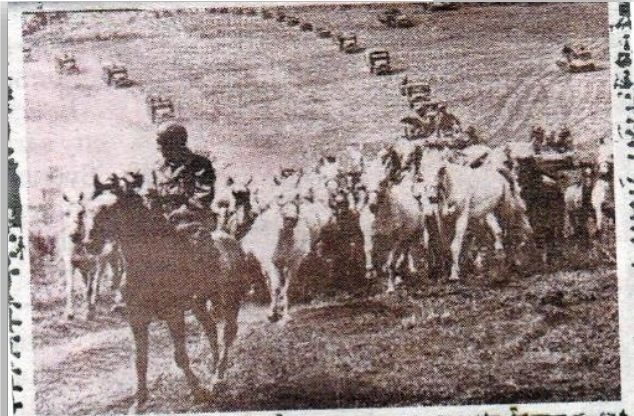
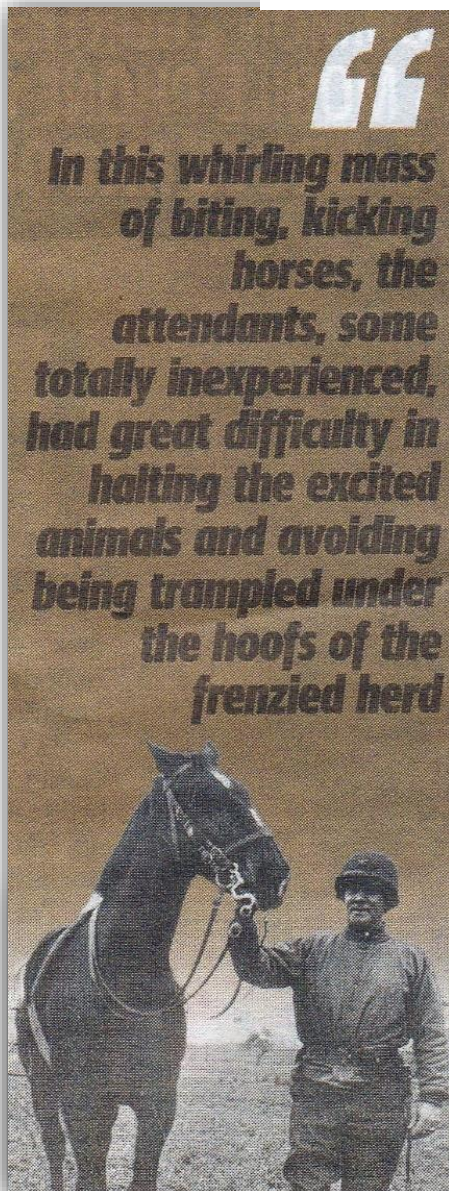
Veterinarians and horse owners often wonder if there is some insidious weed growing in the pastures or paddocks when a vague acute or chronic disease syndrome occurs. An investigation into plant poisonings is similar to searching for a needle in a hay stack. Walking your paddocks; inspecting grasses; identifying the predominant plants, and collecting samples of plants the horses are eating, and not just after heavy rain, is a sound and sensible approach.



Dr Jennifer Stewart is an equine veterinarian with over thirty five years' experience. She is also a consultant nutritionist and has formulated feeds, custom mixes and supplements for leading international horse feed manufacturers in Australia, India, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, Philippines, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey and the UAE. Dr Stewart is passionate about equine nutrition and its role in the management, treatment and prevention of many equine disease and she is committed to bringing 'science to the feed bin'.



Austrian Lippizaners



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SAT **EXTRA** SUNDAY

HOOF DARES WINS

A DARING MISSION TO RESCUE PRIZED HORSES FROM SLAUGHTER WAS MADE IN THE LAST DAYS OF WWII, WRITES MAREA DONNELLY

It was called Operation Cowboy, but the yard of an elegant horse stud just inside the Czech border in the dying days of World War II resembled an equine comedy-chaos.

As a foreign legion of more than 100 riders led 300 Austrian Lipizzaner show horses and Arab stud breeders to freedom, within minutes 13 riders were unseated, tossed from fleeing mounts.

"There was an appalling confusion of uncontrolled, riderless stallions and mares," stud staff recounted. "In this whirling mass of biting, kicking horses, the attendants, some totally inexperienced, had great difficulty in halting the excited animals and avoiding being trampled under the hoofs of the frenzied herd."

It was one unforeseen setback in the two-week covert US military operation that dodged uncompromising remnant Waffen SS soldiers and equally brutal troops of the advancing Red Army, detailed in Ghost Riders by British

war historian Mark Felton. The operation to rescue performing stallions from Vienna's Spanish Riding School began in April 1945 when German intelligence officer Colonel Walter Holters fortuitously arrived at a US 2nd Cavalry Regiment command post near the Bavarian-Czech border.

Ordered to turn out his pockets as he insisted on seeing the unit's commanding officer, Hank Reed, Holters produced photographs of horses. He proceeded to ask Reed if he liked horses.

A former cavalry officer and reservist for the US equestrian team at the 1932 Olympics, Reed admitted he did, and recognised photos of Lipizzaner stallions.

"They are the purest breed of horse in existence today," Holters insisted, with a breeding program dating back more than 500 years. "The horses I have shown you are in great danger. You must save those horses."

Holters' fear, shared by Spanish Riding School director Colonel Alois Podhajsky and Hostau stud manager Colonel Hubert Rudofsky, was that the Russian Bolshevik army, then about three days march from the western Czechoslovakian town of Hostau, would slaughter all 600 horses crowded onto the 460ha Trauttmansdorff stud.

A month earlier, Soviet tanks had forced 22 Lipizzaner stallions evacuated from Budapest's Royal Hungarian Spanish Riding School to surrender. Red Army soldiers

butchered 18 stallions for rations, with four put into harness to pull overloaded ammunition wagons. Grooms or riders who attempted to protect the horses were also shot. School director Lieutenant Colonel Vitez Geza Hazslinszky-Krull von Hazslin survived to warn Podhajsky of the risk to his Viennese Lipizzaners from Soviet troops, given rights to Czechoslovakia at the Yalta Conference in February 1945.

As Holters also conveyed horror stories of Soviet treatment of Allied prisoners of war who were stripped and shot dead, Reed was persuaded to act, although he required permission from US General George "Old Blood and Guts" Patton.

Frustrated that the Yalta agreement stopped Allied troops at the Czech-Bavarian border and cruelled his ambition to "piss in the Danube at Prague", Patton was enthusiastic about saving valuable horses from the Communists, even if it required a temporary incursion some 50km into Soviet territory, still defended by SS fanatics as regular German soldiers surrendered in their thousands to the Allies rather than become prisoners of a vengeful Red Army. Since the Soviet massacre of Polish officers at Katyn in 1940, Patton had opined that "If I ever marched my corps of two divisions in between the Russians and the Germans, I'd attack in both directions."

Receiving a message from Patton to "Get them. Make it fast," Reed later said he was delighted to end his European mission with a horse rescue.

"We were so tired of death and destruction; we wanted to do something beautiful," Reed said.

Along with breeding mares for the Vienna school, Hostau hosted 200 famous European racehorses and 100 Arab stallions, collected by Nazi equine breeding chief Gustav Rau to breed a "super horse" for the new European "master race". Rau had identified Lipizzaners as the "purest" horse breed in Europe and

planned to use them as base bloodstock for his super horse.

Working from 14 stud farms, including one in Auschwitz concentration camp grounds, Rau used young mares to breed horses that were closely related, and moved Lipizzaner mares to soil and pastures that Podhajsky considered risked their survival. Rau had fled when Reed's troops began planning an evacuation, leaving Americans to work with Rudofsky, who had encouraged Holters' rescue mission.

With many mares due to foal, Rudofsky and Hostau veterinarian Captain Rudolf Lessing knew they could not walk 40km into Bavaria. After the German surrender on May 7, 1945, US soldiers requisitioned German army trucks to increase their own vehicle count, constructing crates from salvaged materials to cart out mares and small foals.

Watched by Russian agents, the mission rolled on May 15, when Captain Tom Stewart bellowed "Let's move". His Jeep led a convoy of three groups of horses. Polish and Austrian grooms and released German prisoners added another 20-odd riders, charged with controlling hundreds of horses, followed by 30 trucks carrying mares and foals.

Their destination at Furth im Wald in Bavaria was in sight when three Czech partisans, armed with German rifles and Soviet machine guns, stopped the convoy at a roadblock on a narrow bridge.

"You can't take these horses out of Czechoslovakia," the leader yelled. In a tense showdown, Quinlivan stood his ground. Two groups of horses and riders had tangled among trucks carrying mares and foals. As the partisans stepped down, dozens of Lipizzaner stallions, with their Arabian and thoroughbred stablemates, stampeded across the bridge into Bavaria.

Ghost Riders, Mark Felton, Icon Books, \$29.99

