

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:

- ▶ Honors a colorful horse soldier and Marina resident during Marina's 35th Anniversary year
- ▶ 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 goals by formalizing a vital segment of the system



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 the old parade fields, beside the concrete troughs built for war horses. 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 started 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 became known as Marina Equestrian Center. MacDonald is a strong advocate for exploiting this superb recreational legacy.

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 the Marina Equestrian Center. The proposed SGT Allan MacDonald Cavalry Trail runs roughly along the PG&E right-of-way, following a direct shot from the Army stables to artillery maneuvering grounds south of Watkins Gate Road.

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

The LT Lee Stickler Artillery Cutoff

Monterey resident LT Lee R. Stickler, 93, was born on an Enterprise, Oregon, farm in 1917, and was called up to the Army in 1940, at age 23.

LT Stickler was inducted at the Presidio of Monterey and assigned to the 76th Field Artillery (Horse Drawn) at Camp Clayton, a bivouac near the present Marina Dunes shopping center. Fort Ord had been a remote maneuvering grounds, but construction boomed in anticipation of WWII. LT Stickler and his men lived in tents as they awaited the first barracks on the western side; their 1,400 horses, including LT Stickler's "Sam Brown," stayed in corrals until their stables along General Jim Moore Blvd. were ready. The artillery horses and mules were a

cussed lot; harnessing the six-horse field-artillery rig in the morning was "like a circus," even for a country boy.

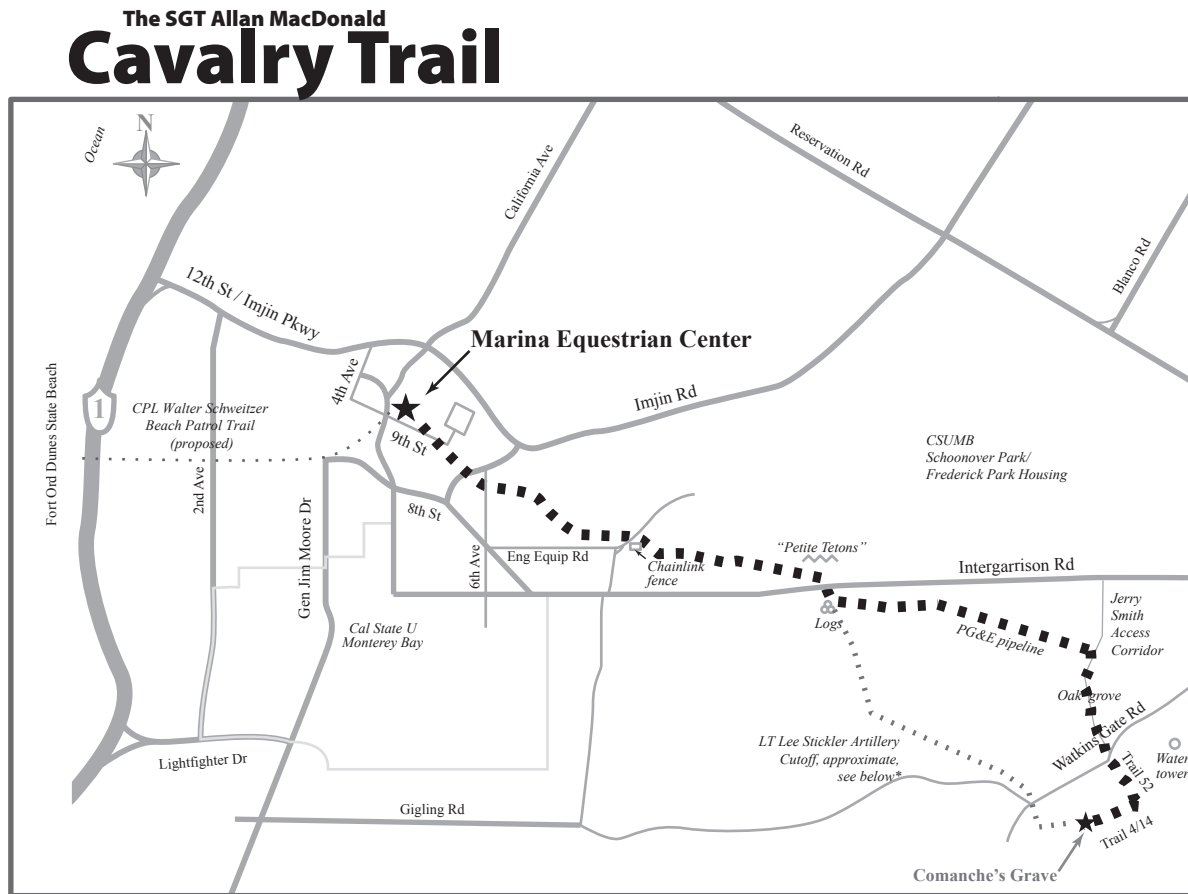
LT Stickler recounts a night exercise on Fort Ord in which a rider kept falling behind, requiring him to double back and administer "strong words." In the morning he was chagrined to learn that the laggard was Brigadier General Joseph Stilwell himself.

Shipped to Hawaii in 1942, then to France to support the 7th Army Corps in 1944, LT Stickler and the 242nd Quartermaster Battalion pushed towards Berlin in 1945. After the war, he returned to Fort Ord, and has called the Monterey Peninsula home ever since. His barracks was demolished in 2009, but the cavalry stables, located on land given to California State University, still stand as of January, 2011, though slated for demolition.

The proposed CPL Walter Schweitzer Beach Patrol Trail

The proposed CPL Walter Schweitzer Beach Patrol Trail connects the Marina Equestrian Center with the Fort Ord Dunes State Beach, a mile west. The trail honors Cincinnati resident Walter J. Schweitzer, a trooper with the 107th Cavalry at Fort Ord in 1941-

1942. CPL Schweitzer patrolled the Monterey Bay beaches horseback on "Big Cain;" thier jeep-jump in 1942 is an iconic image of Fort Ord warhorse history. Mr Schweitzer's beautifully written memoirs are online by searching "Walter Schweitzer cavalry."



Explore the SGT Allan MacDonald Trail (three miles to Comanche's Grave)

1. Park at the Marina Equestrian Center (5th Avenue and 9th Street, just north of CSUMB)
2. The trail begins at the MEC and leads southeast along the PG&E gas lines, trending toward Intergarrison Road.
3. The trail crosses Intergarrison about a mile out.
4. Proceed southeast to connect with the Jerry Smith Corridor, which leads to Watkins Gate Road.
5. From Watkins Gate Road to Comanche's Grave is about a quarter mile south. Turn west at Trail 14. Comanche's gravesite is a trekker's landmark, meeting place, and picnic spot.

**Note: the LT Lee Stickler Artillery Cutoff is presently closed north of Gigling Road, due to munitions cleanup, and will not be open for public use till about 2014. Trespassers run the risk of arrest.*