

1921 - 7 Dec. 1945

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE REPORT - PORT VETERINARIAN'S BRANCH

NEW YORK PORT OF EMBARKATION

From 11 July 1921 To 7 December 1941

The Veterinary Branch started at the New York Port of Embarkation some time around 11 July 1921. At that time the New York Port of Embarkation was designated as Headquarters New York General Depot and the Veterinarian was designated as Depot Veterinarian. It was not until 14 March 1929, that the Depot Veterinarian was charged with the duty of the Port Veterinarian in addition to his other duties.

The Veterinary Service of the Depot was originally under the Supply Service but was later placed under the Port Surgeon. The Surgeon, being a representative of the Medical Department, was assigned to the Staff of the Depot Commander with the Veterinarian as his assistant. The Veterinary personnel at that time consisted of six (6) officers and twenty (20) enlisted men. The officers were: J. R. Shand, Captain, VC; P. H. Riedel, 1st Lt. VC; O. C. Schwalm, 2nd Lt. VC; L. N. Barringer, 2nd Lt. VC; C. J. Cook, 2nd Lt. VC; N. E. Ward, 2nd Lt. VC.

The duties of the Depot Veterinarian consisted mainly of inspection of meats and dairy products purchased by the Quartermaster Supply Officer for troops at foreign stations. Inspections of Surplus foods in storage prior to Surplus Property Sales and shipment were included in the duties of the Depot Veterinarian. Refrigerators and warehouses were filled with such supplies, and in order to save as much of these products as possible, immediate steps were taken to re-inspect these supplies. The inspections were conducted at various points where the foodstuffs were located, and they were then disposed of as quickly as was possible.

A greater portion of the canned meats was stored at Port Newark, and it was necessary to designate it as a sub-depot with an administration

set to handle activity at that Port. An office was established by the Veterinary Service at the sub-depot which facilitated considerably inspection of foodstuffs that were sold by the Surplus Property Division.

By November 1923, O. C. Schwalm, 2nd Lt. VC, was the only VC Officer at the New York General Depot; all other officers had been transferred or discharged. On 1 November 1923, Lt. O. C. Schwalm, VC, was relieved by Capt A. D. Martin, VC. Capt Martin was evidently Depot Veterinarian from November 1923, to November 1926, when Lt. Schwalm returned to the Depot and relieved Capt Martin to become Depot Veterinarian. There is no historical record of Capt Martin's administration.

Lt. Schwalm, VC, served as Depot Veterinarian from November 1926, to 30 June 1930. The duties of Depot Veterinarian were similar at this time as in 1921 - 1923. However, by this time all surplus foodstuffs had been sold, and inspections were limited to regular Army stock. All Army foodstuffs of animal and dairy origin received inspection at time of receipt and again at time of issue to other stations. In addition to inspection of foodstuffs, the Depot Veterinarian assisted in purchase and inspection of Medical Supplies for the Medical Supply Section of the Depot. Stores for Army Transports were inspected at shipside as usual. Considerable work was done in connection with the purchase of forage by the National Guard. Reserve Officers coming to temporary duty from the metropolitan area during the summer months were trained at the Depot. The Veterinary Division played an important part in supplying the hurricane stricken Island of Puerto Rico in 1928. Four million pounds of food supplies were purchased, inspected and loaded aboard the U. S. Navy Transport "BRIDGE" in forty-eight hours, then rushed to be used by the Red Cross in their relief work.

Effective 14 March 1929, the Depot Veterinarian was charged with the duties of Port Veterinarian. Immediately after the War, animals were

purchased in foreign countries by Army Remount Association and shipped to the United States for breeding purposes. Stallions were received at the Port of New York, cleared through the Port, held in quarantine locally or shipped direct to the various Remount Stations. The greater number of animals received were those returned from Germany with the A. E. F. when they returned to the United States. Local quarantine was usually established at Governor's Island, New York, where animals were received direct from ships and transported by covered barges to the point of quarantine. Stallions received for the Remount Association were transported by Arms Palace horse cars directly to the various Remounts. Large quantities of forage were purchased and inspected for shipment to Panama and Puerto Rico where animal transportation was used extensively during that time. This forage was received from Eastern and Middle Western States by rail and shipped by Army Transport to destination. Purchases were made quarterly in two-million pound lots each of Oats, Hay, and Straw, including a proportionate amount of Bran and Salt. Double compressed bales of Hay were usually purchased in order to economize on storage space in ships. On 30 June 1930, Lt. Schwalm was relieved by Capt H. M. Savage, VC.

No memoirs of Capt Savage are available but it is assumed he served as Port Veterinarian from 30 June 1930, to 1 February 1931.

On 1 February 1931, Capt J. R. Ludwigs, VC, reported at the New York Port of Embarkation for duty and remained until 19 December 1933, when he left for Terminal leave prior to retirement. During this time the Depression was being felt by all, including the Government, hence Veterinary activities were practically at a standstill. During his tour of duty at the New York Port of Embarkation Capt Ludwigs was promoted to Major, VC.

On or about 14 February 1934, Major H. K. Moore, VC, reported for duty at the New York Port of Embarkation and was Port Veterinarian until

relieved from assignment on or about 15 March 1938. At the time of Major Moore's arrival, Capt L. R. Bower, VC, was on duty at the New York Port of Embarkation, shortly after he was transferred to Fort Meade, Maryland.

During Major Moore's administration S/Sgt Ross McClure, M.D. (VS) was acting First Sergeant. One enlisted man was detailed for duty on board an A.T.S. freighter that carried Government owned animals and officers' mounts and pets from New York to Panama, San Francisco, and Hawaii; and from Hawaii, San Francisco, and Panama to New York.

Several officers of the Veterinary Corps were assigned to duty at the New York Port of Embarkation between February 1934, and March 1938. These officers were placed on duty for training and sent to other stations after short periods of time.

Practically all foods of animal origin purchased for ship supplies or for shipment to foreign stations were inspected prior to delivery to the pier for loading. A check inspection was made at the time of loading.

On or about 15 March 1938, Major Moore was relieved by Lt Col F. C. Hershberger, VC, who reported to the New York Port of Embarkation on the following orders:

C O P Y
E X T R A C T

Special Orders
No. 46

WAR DEPARTMENT
WASHINGTON 25 FEBRUARY 1938

5. Lieutenant Colonel Frank C. Hershberger, Veterinary Corps, is relieved from further assignment and duty at Fort Hamilton, New York, effective on or about 15 March 1938, is then assigned to duty at the New York Port of Embarkation, Brooklyn, New York, and additional duty as attending Veterinarian, Port Hamilton, New York, and will report to the Commanding General, New York Port of Embarkation for duty (AG210.312 Seattle QM Depot) 25 Jan 38.

OFFICIAL:
Frank C. Burnett,
Brigadier General,
Acting The Adjutant General

BY ORDER OF SECRETARY OF WAR

MALIN CRAIG,
Chief of Staff

In March 1938, the following personnel handled the Veterinary activities at the New York Port of Embarkation: Lt Col Hershberger, VC; S/Sgt Ross McClure. Pfc Wallace J. Van Hoose, Pfc Melvin E. Olson, Pfc Herman Mills and Pvt Carl Hess. On 15 February 1940, Capt Eggert, VC, was assigned to duty with this Office. Also, during 1940, Capt Collins, VC, was placed on temporary duty at the New York Port of Embarkation for approximately six months. The personnel of the Veterinary Section increased as the amount of work increased, and by 7 December 1941, the personnel numbered seven (7) officers and seven (7) enlisted men, and one civilian clerk. The degree that the work increased is shown in the following table:

TABLE REPRESENTING MEAT, MEAT FOOD PRODUCTS OF ANIMAL ORIGIN,
POULTRY, DAIRY PRODUCTS & SEAFOOD
INSPECTED AT THE NEW YORK PORT OF EMBARKATION

<u>PERIOD</u>	<u>LBS PASSED</u>	<u>LBS REJECTED</u>
1 9 3 8	17,980,043	583,584
1 9 3 9	24,684,821	794,131
1 9 4 0	50,573,200	1,317,374
1 9 4 1	104,234,329	3,011,748

TABLE REPRESENTING FORAGE INSPECTED
AT THE NEW YORK PORT OF EMBARKATION

<u>PERIOD</u>	<u>LBS PASSED</u>	<u>LBS REJECTED</u>
1 9 3 8	160,040	
1 9 3 9	95,712	35,645
1 9 4 0	69,186	
1 9 4 1	139,916	26,065

The records show that between the years of 1934 to 1938, the total Regular Army inspections approximated twelve million (12,000,000) pounds a year.

In December 1939, the Port Veterinarian's Office began inspection

work for the Panama Railroad Co. The task of inspecting meat food products for the Panama Railroad Co. was offered to all other Veterinary installations in the vicinity of New York, and all of them refused the work. However, Washington, D. C., decided that the New York Port of Embarkation had the proper facilities and the Port Veterinarian was told to take over the work. Another officer and an enlisted man were sent here to facilitate the inspection. Inspection included not only foods of animal origin but also fruits and vegetables.

Some time prior to the inauguration of the Port Veterinarian's inspection service for the Panama Railroad Co., the Assistant Secretary of War made an inspection tour of the Panama Canal Zone Facilities. He received many complaints regarding the quality of meat food and dairy products which were received for consumption by U. S. Army Troops. Before and during the time of inspection by the Assistant Secretary of War all meat food products were inspected in New York City and adjacent territory by lay inspectors of the Agricultural Marketing Service. Soon after the return of the Assistant Secretary of War to Washington he informed The Surgeon General that steps must be taken to place the inspection work under the jurisdiction of the Army Veterinary Corps.

TABLE REPRESENTING MEAT, MEAT FOOD PRODUCTS OF ANIMAL ORIGIN,
POULTRY, DAIRY PRODUCTS & SEAFOOD INSPECTED FOR THE PANAMA RAILROAD CO.

<u>PERIOD</u>	<u>LBS PASSED</u>	<u>LBS REJECTED</u>
Dec 1939	637,281	96,850
1 9 4 0	18,265,842	1,119,422
1 9 4 1	10,966,253	618,686