HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL LANCERS
1836-2018

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During the 19th Century, most American cities had an elite cavalry troop that escorted high government officials, presidents and other visiting personages. While part of the state militia with the mission defending the state from invasion or putting down insurrection, the cavalry's first obligation was to wear resplendent uniforms mounted on well-groomed horses. Some of these units, such as the 1st and 2d Companies, Governor's Horse Guard of Connecticut; and First Troop, Philadelphia City Cavalry still exist. Many units such as Squadron A of New York; the Essex Troop of Newark; and the Charleston Dragoons have faded into history.

Boston had several elite cavalry troops. Prior to the Revolution, the royal governor was escorted by the Governor's Horse Guard. The unit disappeared in 1775 and reorganized in 1787 only to disband two years later. The Boston Dragoons were organized in 1802 and were joined in 1910 by the Boston Hussars, composed of Boston's richest gentlemen. The Hussars wore elegant Napoleonic hussar uniforms which proved to be extremely costly leading to the troop's demise in 1818. The Dragoons disbanded in 1833.

For several years there was no cavalry unit in Boston. The enrolled militia, composed of all men between the ages of 18 to 45, was disbanding due to a lack of interest. In its place were companies and battalions of volunteer militia.

The volunteer militia was a popular organization in American towns and cities in the first part of the 19th Century. These companies were made up of men in the 20s and 30s with the means and time to purchase uniforms and to drill and parade several times a month. While the ostensible mission was to take the field in case of invasion or insurrection, its *raison d'etre* was to function as a military unit-social club that wore ornate uniforms, took part in patriotic and civic ceremonies and maintained a busy social calendar with meetings, dinners and balls. The volunteer militiaman was part soldier, part policeman and a fulltime social butterfly.

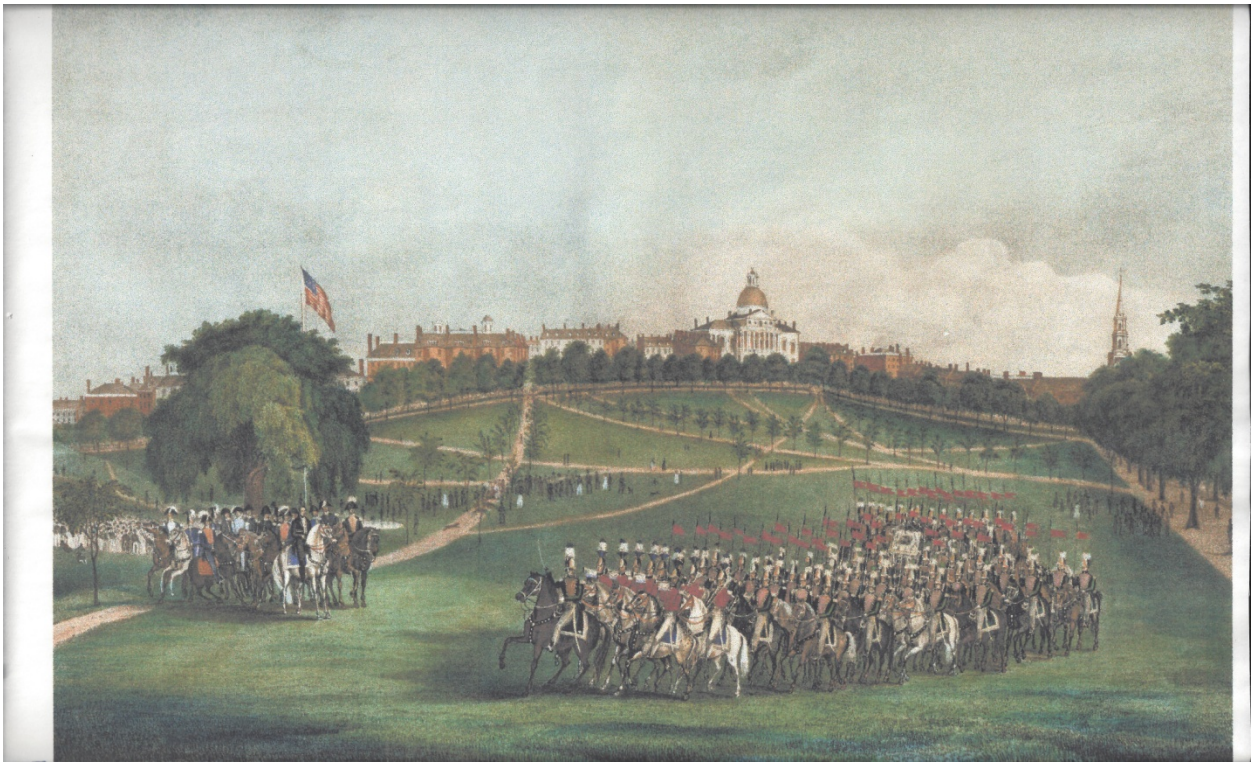
Edward Everett, governor of Massachusetts from 1836-1840, was the founding father of the National Lancers. In early 1836 he was seated at a dinner next to Thomas Davis, a former militia brigadier general. The governor raised the issue that there needed to be an elite cavalry troop in Boston to provide escorts for him to important civic and patriotic events, such as the Harvard Commencement. Davis liked the idea so much that he promised the governor to raise a cavalry troop.

General Davis spoke with several friends who had contacts in the teamster business in Boston. During the summer of 1836 Davis and others approached stable owners, teamsters, and young men who had an interest in horses, and by October had recruited 58 men who signed a petition sent to the Governor's Council requesting permission to organize a cavalry troop with admission into the militia. The Council and governor quickly approved the petition and on 31 October Brig. Gen. Henry Dearborn, The Adjutant General, authorized the troop's organization.

The new troop met the next day on 1 November and organized itself as a militia unit and social organization that, according to the unit constitution, promised to maintain the law by strengthening the security of the state by forming a cavalry troop in order to "form a more perfect union, to better our common purpose and to promote our own common welfare." Davis was elected captain; Louis Dennis was elected first lieutenant; Peter Dunbar was elected second lieutenant; Gervis Monroe was elected as cornet by the 64 men present. The new unit voted to designate itself as the National Lancers.

The new organization was officially part of the Massachusetts Militia (redesignated in 1840 as the Massachusetts Volunteer Militia) and was attached for administrative purposes to the 2d Regiment of Infantry, 3d Brigade, 1st Division. Capt. Davis and his officers spent the winter of 1836-1837 training the troop in the rudiments of mounted drill and the school of the soldier. The troop was busy organizing, training and equipping in preparation for its first inspection in 1837.

It is unclear as to why the new troop voted to call itself the National Lancers. It was not unusual for militia units to call themselves the National Greys, National Rifles, etc. The designation of lancers, however, is interesting. The troop elected to be uniformed, trained and equipped as lancers.



The National Lancers with Reviewing Officers on Boston Common 1837 by Fitz Hugh Lane

Lancers were light cavalry that carried a nine-foot lance with a sharp finial designed to kill infantrymen. Lancers were the elite Polish and French cavalry who earned a reputation in Napoleon's army as shock troops. The British were impressed enough that they converted five light dragoon regiments as lancer regiments beginning in 1815. Other European armies soon followed suit.

By definition, lancers were uniformed in the Polish fashion with distinctive uniforms; the traditional square-topped shako called a czapka, and carried a lance with a pennon. Lancers were the height of military fashion in Europe and their fame spread to the United States. The

National Lancers were the first lancer unit in the United States and one of the few in American military history.

The state issued the troop Model 1833 light cavalry sabers and horse pistols. Each trooper provided his own mount and purchased his own uniform. The uniform consisted of a green lancer tunic which could be buttoned to show a red plastron. The distinctive troop button, N.L. in Old English, was adopted and is still worn today. The breeches were scarlet with gilt braid. The czapka was red and blue, embellished with gold lace, cords and tassels; the helmet plate was a sun-burst insignia, and topped by a plume of swan feathers. This style czapka was worn into the early 1960s. The Lancer uniform was intended to give the wearer an imposing martial appearance on horseback.

While the uniform made the troop appear to be an elite volunteer unit, it was not made up of the Boston's elite. From the beginning, the Lancers were open to all classes in all trades. Most troopers were connected to the large horse business in Boston and were teamsters, hostlers, carriage and harness makers with the means to purchase uniforms. Others were merchants, clerks and artisan "mechanics."

The National Lancers functioned both as a militia cavalry troop and social organization which was typical of volunteer companies. The captain was the troop commander and president of the club. The militia unit carried out military duties. The club planned social events such as dinners, balls and outings. The first headquarters was the fourth floor armory of Faneuil Hall where most of Boston's volunteer companies were stationed.

Capt. Davis was informed by Brig. Gen. Dearborn that the National Lancers would be reviewed by Governor Everett and his military staff on 14 June 1837 on Boston Common. The Lancers were making preparations for the review when on the night of 11 June the city alarm system summoned the militia to duty. Troopers quickly reported to Faneuil Hall and were issued weapons and ball ammunition. They mounted and rode to break up what was later called the "Broad Street

Riot," a street clash between an Irish funeral procession and a Yankee fire company. The troop was on duty until the morning of the next day.

In the morning of 14 June, the troop assembled and rode to the Common. Several thousand spectators watched as a mounted band and the National Lancers did a slow trot. The scene was captured in a painting by Fitz Hugh Lane with 64 Lancers in formation in line before the governor and his staff, also mounted.

Orders were read and the troop was formally inducted into the Massachusetts Militia. That evening there was a sumptuous banquet attended by all Boston civic and military officials and the Lancers. This day has been observed by the National Lancers as their Organization Day with an annual dinner. In peacetime the dinners were held in Boston but when the Lancers were on active duty, dinners have been held in South Carolina, Virginia, France, and in the Pacific.

The Lancers drilled several times a month and held weekly social meetings. On 30 August 1837, the Lancers were ordered to escort Governor Everett to the Harvard Commencement. At the state house, the governor addressed Capt. Davis stating "I congratulate you sir on the success of the efforts made by yourself in raising this handsome troop." The governor then presented Capt. Davis with the Lancers' first color. Capt. Davis accepted the color and pledged that the sacred cause of the National Lancers would be "Liberty, Union and the Laws." This became the unit motto and is embroidered on the Lancers present unit color and on its distinctive insignia worn on the uniform. (The motto comes from the speech given by Senator Daniel Webster in the Senate on 27 January 1830. He ended the speech with "Liberty and Union now and forever and inseparable.")

From 1837 through the early 1960s, the National Lancers escorted the governor to Harvard Commencement exercises. The Lancers continue to serve as the governor's mounted escort and, over the years, have escorted presidents and other dignitaries.

Through the 1840s and 1850s, the Lancers consisted of some 80 officers and troopers. The troop took part in many inspections, summer camps and parades. Also important were the troop's social activities such as dinners, dances and beginning in 1850 with a trip to Brooklyn, NY, exchange visits to other volunteer militia units.

National Lancers 1850

In 1845 the National Lancers adopted a new uniform that consisted of a red swallow-tail coat trimmed in blue; enlisted men wore red and blue epaulets, a white belt, and light blue breeches with a yellow stripe. Officers were identified by their gold epaulets. They continued to wear the distinctive lancer shako. The Lancers elected to wear a red uniform which made a distinctive military fashion statement. The 1845 uniform, with minor modifications, was worn until 1935.

Police duties were always part of the Lancers mission. In 1842, the Lancers dispersed a mob. In 1850 the troop was called up to raid illegal gambling houses. In February 1852 the Lancers were assigned to the newly organized Battalion of Dragoons and designated as Company A. The Lancers kept the designation of either Company A or Troop A for many years but also retained their traditional designation of National Lancers.

In 1857 the troop moved out of Faneuil Hall to its new armory at 71 Sudbury Street. The noted American composer and military bandmaster Patrick Gilmore joined the Lancers as

Officer, National Lancers 1850

the troop trumpeter. When the Civil War broke out in April 1861 the Lancers waited for an opportunity to serve.

Initially, the War Dept. refused to call on the states for cavalry. On 27 August 1861 the troop sent a letter to Governor John Andrew tendering their services for three years provided that the state

Officers and NCOs, Troops C and D, 1st Massachusetts Volunteer Cavalry

accept its officers and organization. The War Dept. requested that Massachusetts provide a three-year cavalry regiment. Rather than accepting the Lancers' offer as an entire unit, the Lancers were authorized to organize Troops C and D of the 1st Massachusetts Volunteer Cavalry Regiment. The Lancers provided the cadre who recruited and trained new troopers. In effect there were three National Lancers troops during the war; the militia troop in Boston and two war-service troops.

Troops C and D were mustered into Federal service on 17 September 1861 at Readville, Mass. There the 1st Massachusetts Cavalry trained for three months under the supervision of former militia cavalry officers now on active duty. On 19 December, the National Lancers escorted the 1st Cavalry from Roxbury to Boston as the regiment rode through the city prior to its deployment to Hilton Head, South Carolina.

The 1st remained on occupation duty until the regiment was transferred to the Army of the Potomac in Virginia in September 1862. Elements of the 1st took part in the Antietam Campaign in September; and the Fredericksburg Campaign in December.

The active duty Lancers saw some action at Brandy Station, VA on 9 January 1863. The 1st Cavalry saw the heaviest action of the war at Aldie, Virginia on 17 June. Union cavalry were attempting to locate the Confederate Army which was marching north into Maryland. The 1st Massachusetts and 4th New York charged into the 5th Virginia. The ensuing battle cost the 1st some 200 casualties.

The 1st screened the Union left flank at Gettysburg and took part in a number of skirmishes in the fall of 1863. The Lancers of Troops C and D performed reconnaissance missions during the 1864 campaigns of the Wilderness, Spottsylvania, Cold Harbor and Petersburg. The two troops served as military police in the spring of 1865.

The 1st was mustered out of Federal service in July 1865. In accordance with Army lineage and honors policy, the National Lancers were granted the right to carry the 11 campaign streamers earned by Troops C and D on its squadron colors by The Adjutant General's Office.

Back in Boston, the National Lancers were issued state regulation blue uniforms which were worn during drills and on active service. From then on the Lancers have worn its unique full dress uniform and Army uniforms. During their annual summer camp in Medford in 1862 the troop mustered 100 men. The Lancers performed escort duties for the many regiments going to the front.

The Lancers were relegated to home guard duties since most of the troop was made up of older men. They were ordered into active state service in July 1863 when Irish American mobs began rioting in Boston after learning about the draft riots in New York on the night of 14 July. Lancers were ordered to report to the armory and by 7 PM some 100 troopers were mounted and ready.

At 8 PM Capt. Lucius Slade ordered the troop to load ball ammunition and then ordered the troop to ride to Faneuil Hall Square. There the troop confronted the mob and were able to disperse it without casualties to either side. Later that night, the troop rode to the North End where the

mob was preventing firemen from dousing the fire at the armory of the Boston Light Artillery on Cooper Street. The mob attacked the troopers who fired their pistols in self-defense. After the melee, the mob dispersed and the troop rode back to its armory but remained on duty until 16 July and on call for several more days.

With the end of the Civil War, the National Lancers renewed its ties with elite militia units in other cities. In October 1865, the Lancers visited Chicago where it was hosted by Ellsworth's Zouaves. On 22 June 1867 the troop escorted President Andrew Johnson from the train depot to the State House. Annual inspections were held every May on the Boston Common and the troop attended five-day camps every summer. The annual celebration on 14 June was the highlight of the year with a ride through the city and a banquet in the evening attended by the governor, his military staff, the mayor and other political and military officials.

The Lancers escorted President Ulysses S. Grant several times. He usually came to Boston every year and in 1875 the Lancers escorted him during ceremonies marking the 100th anniversary of the Battles of Lexington and Concord and the unveiling of the Minuteman statue in Concord on 19 April.

The Lancers dedicated their own armory on 18 December 1872 at 1 Bullfinch Street with a ceremony and a ball. The Harvard Commencement escort detail continued every year. In June 1877 the troop escorted President Rutherford B. Hayes and President Chester A. Arthur in October 1882.

The troop attended Mardi Gras in New Orleans in February 1881. The troop chartered a train that transported the unit to New Orleans. The Lancers were hosted by the Continental Guards and attended a banquet hosted by the Louisiana Division, Veterans of the Army of Northern Virginia. This was a time that Northern militia units, now increasingly called National Guard, visited Southern militia units as part of the effort

to renew ties and heal the rift created by the Civil War. In June 1883 the Continental Guards visited Boston as guests of the Lancers.

In 1886 the Lancers visited units in Washington, DC, Richmond, Virginia and Charleston, South Carolina. While in Washington, the Lancers visited the White House where they met President Grover Cleveland. In Charleston the Lancers were royally feted by the elite city militia units such as the German Artillery, Cha-rleston Dragoons and the Washington Light Infantry. In recent times the National Lancers have renewed their friendship with the Washington Light Infantry.

The Lancers marched through the streets of Charleston onto the parade ground at The Citadel where the Lancers were formally greeted by the Corps of Cadets. (In 2010 a National Lancer officer, in formation with the Washington Light Infantry, reviewed the Corps of Cadets on the parade ground at The Citadel)

Muster rolls available in the archives of The Adjutant General's Office give us a snapshot of the membership of Troop A in the 1880s and 1890s. Troopers enlisted for three years and most reenlisted. Thirty troopers were in their 20s, 50 in their 30s, and 30 in their 40s. The troopers were from Boston and surrounding communities. While most were engaged in horse-related businesses, there were professionals such as businessmen, insurance salesmen, lawyers, merchants and other professions.

In October 1891, the Lancers travelled to Washington, DC where they were hosted by the National Rifles. The group photo and presentation certificate are on display in the National Lancers Museum. The troopers visited the White House where they were received by President Benjamin Harrison.

Troop A concentrated on its military duties in the period between the Civil War and the Spanish American War. There was an emphasis on

Mounted Lancer in state issue uniform, dismounted Lancer
in troop full dress uniform 1894

marksmanship in the Massachusetts Volunteer Militia as well as in other state National Guards. Both drill and tactical skills were stressed. Curtis Guild, Jr. joined the Lancers and became a skilled marksman. In 1897 1st Lt. Guild was appointed Inspector General of Rifle Practice in the grade of brigadier general. He served on active duty during the Spanish American War and in 1906 was elected governor. Guild's contribution to the marksmanship program was honored in 1926 when the new state marksmanship center was designated as Camp Curtis Guild.

Peacetime soldiering and social events were suspended on 26 April 1898 when the United States declared war on Spain. A detachment from Troop A was ordered to state active duty on 3 May and assigned as military police at the state mobilization center at Camp Framingham. Massachusetts was not tasked to provide cavalry for the war so Troop A remained on alert but was not called into Federal service. The troop wore the Army blue uniform instead of the red full dress uniform when it escorted the governor to the Harvard Commencement indicating that the troop was prepared for active service.

After the war, the Massachusetts Volunteer Militia (redesignated as the Massachusetts National Guard in 1907) made strides toward becoming a professional military force. The Militia Acts of 1903 and 1908 gave the War Dept. greater supervision over the National Guard in return for increased Federal funding.

Military training for Troop A, 1st Squadron Cavalry took priority over escort duties and social events. The social side of the Lancers was formally incorporated in 1903 as the National Lancers, Inc. The troop commander remained as president, however, officers and members were current, former or invited members. The club took over responsibilities for the social events so that the officers and NCOs of Troop A focused on their military duties.

Both club members and Troop A cavalrymen wore the red full dress uniform during escort duties so that the National Lancers turned out 60 mounted riders. In September 1909 the troop escorted President William H. Taft during a visit to Boston.

As part of the supervision of the Guard, Troop A was inspected annually by a Regular Army officer. In 1911 all three Troop A officers were placed on Federal active duty to attend the Cavalry School at Fort Riley, Kansas. In February 1912 Troop A was called into state active duty during the Lawrence Mill Strike. It was unpleasant duty as many of the strikers were women. Nonetheless, troopers had to perform their duty.

The two mounted organizations of the Massachusetts National Guard, the 1st Squadron Cavalry and the 1st Field Artillery, had advocated for a large armory specifically designed for horse-mounted organizations to be built. Their efforts successfully culminated on 30 December 1915 when the Commonwealth Armory was dedicated. It was the largest armory in New England and served both organizations for many years Both Troop A and the National Lancers, Inc. had excellent quarters in the new armory. The Bullfinch Street Armory, the Lancers' home for 44 years, was vacated in March 1916.

Peacetime soldiering came to abrupt end on 19 June 1916 when Capt. John Kenney received orders at 2400 hours to mobilize Troop A for duty in Texas. This was the first Federal mobilization of the National Lancers in its history. The entire National Guard, except for coast artillery, was

ordered into active Federal service by President Woodrow Wilson as a precautionary measure after the raid on Columbus, New Mexico on 9 March 1916 by the Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa. To prevent the Mexican revolution from spilling over into the United States, President Wilson decided to seal the border with the National Guard. Massachusetts fielded a brigade with supporting arms including the 1st Squadron Cavalry.

The 1st rode to Camp Framingham and departed for Texas by train on 28 June. The 1st Squadron arrived at El Paso, Texas and occupied tents at Camp Pershing which was adjacent to Fort Bliss. The squadron began a rigorous training schedule which proved to be hard on trooper and mount. Heat, wind and sand added to their misery. The Lancers, who have always prided themselves on their horsemanship, proved themselves ready to take the field and conduct patrols in New Mexico and Texas. In a sign of modernization, the National Lancers Assoc. sent a check for $500 to Troop A to purchase a Ford truck which was used to pick up supplies.

The Troop A Lancers continued to train and conduct patrols until November 1916 when they received orders to return to Boston where they mustered out on 18 November. Troop A returned to weekday drills through June when orders were issued for its second Federal mobilization.

After the United States declaration of war against Germany on 6 April 1917, Troop A was authorized to recruit to war strength of three officers and 105 enlisted men which it achieved within days. On 13 May 1917 the troop wore olive drab uniforms instead of the customary red full dress when it escorted Marshal Joseph Joffre, Chief of the French Military Mission to the U.S. during his visit to Boston. The troop was on unpaid fulltime duty while it ordered uniforms and equipment and trained recruits.

On 25 July Troop A was ordered into active Federal service under the command of Capt. Kenney at Commonwealth Armory. The troop was

busy taking physicals, filling out forms and taking care of their mounts. The troop went by train to Camp Framingham on 18 August and four days later found out that the 1st Cavalry had been reorganized and redesignated as the 102d Machine Gun Battalion, an element of the 26th Division.

It was a shock for the Lancers to find out that they had been dismounted and transferred to the infantry. Company A, as it was now designated, consisted of six officers and 172 enlisted men. A detail of 61 men from the 1st Vermont Infantry brought Company A up to strength.

Soldiers of Company A (National Lancers), 102d Machine Gun Battalion changing positions near Chateau Thierry, France on 19 July 1918

The 26th Division, composed of units from the National Guards of the six New England states, was the first infantry division to deploy to France. Company A left on 22 September and landed in France on 7 October. The 102d Machine Gun Battalion trained until 1 February 1918 when the 26th "Yankee" Division went into the front lines.

The 102d was assigned to the 51st Infantry Brigade of the 26th and supported operations of the 101st and 104th Infantry Regiments by providing heavy machine gun support. Company A and the 26th were

transferred to various sectors as part of the acclimation to trench warfare. Company A helped repel the surprise German attack on the 26th on 20 April at Seicheprey.

Company A was credited with six World War I campaigns as part of the 26th. The company saw heavy action in July, September, October and November. It returned to the United States on 17 April 1919 and demobilized at Camp Devens on 29 April.

The company fought with great courage and distinction during the war. But it came with great cost; 27 Lancers died and 62 were wounded. Virtually everyone was gassed. Three troopers were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the Army's second highest award for gallantry in action: Corp. Harold Batten, Sgt. Cola Gray, Pvt. Charles Toy.

While the active duty Lancers were in France, National Lancer veterans organized the 1st Provisional Cavalry Troop, Massachusetts State Guard in May 1918. The State Guard was the replacement militia formed for state service while the Massachusetts National Guard was in Federal service. The 1st Troop was called into active state service in September 1919 during the Boston Police Strike. The troop remained on duty for several weeks.

Prewar Lancers of Troop A and Company A, a few young troopers from the 1st Troop and new recruits reorganized Troop A, 1st Squadron Cavalry in March 1920. In November 1921 the 1st Squadron was reorganized and redesignated as the 110th Cavalry Regiment. Troop A was issued surplus Army uniforms, saddles and Federal horses. There were not enough red full dress uniforms so the dress uniform was the olive drab blouse. Troop A did have a few red full dress uniforms for special occasions. At this point in its history, the National Lancers split into two units.

Troop A, the National Guard unit, concentrated on its military duties. While it took part in 110th Cavalry social events and fielded a polo team,

the troop was first and foremost a military unit. The Lancer heritage was heraldically displayed on the 110th uniform in 1930 when the Army authorized a distinctive unit insignia that displayed crossed lances with red pennons and the motto "Union, Liberty and the Laws."

The National Lancers Association wanted to retain the social and ceremonial side of the Lancers. There were enough red uniforms in their possession so that they could carry out escort duties for the governor and VIPs but with fewer Lancers. For the next 25 years there would be two National Lancers: Troop A and the National Lancers Association which began calling itself simply the National Lancers.

The National Lancers took part in parades and provided the mounted escort to Vice President William Dawes, a descendent of the 1775 alarm rider William Dawes, and General John J. Pershing in 1925. In 1926 the escort to the governor for the Harvard Commencement was reinstituted. In 1936, just before the centennial observance, the Lancers modified their full dress uniform which had remained largely the same since 1845.

Instead of a swallow-tail coat, a red tunic with a blue plastron was adopted. Officers wore gold shoulder knots with a gold cavalry officer's belt. Enlisted men wore red shoulder knots with the traditional white leather belt. Both wore the cipher N.L. on the collar. The blue breeches and lancer czapka were retained.

A grand banquet was held on 14 June 1936 marking the Lancer's 100th anniversary. Times had changed and so had the Lancers.

The heyday of the horse cavalry in the US Army was almost over. As World War II approached, the Army began converting cavalry regiments to other branches. In the late summer of 1940 Troop A turned in their mounts, saddles and cavalry equipment and was reorganized and redesignated on 9 October 1940 as Battery A, 180th Field Artillery Regiment, 26th Division. The 110th Cavalry was no more; it was now a 155mm artillery regiment. It was a sad day in the history of the Lancers.

In January 1941 the 26th was ordered into active Federal service and stationed at Camp Edwards. In January 1942 the 51st Infantry Brigade with supporting units was detached from the 26th Infantry Division, designated as Task Force 6814 and shipped to the Pacific Theater. The 180th Field Artillery was redesignated as the 200th Field Artillery in February 1942 and in August as the 221st Field Artillery Battalion, an element of the Americal Division.

The former Troop A was redesignated as Battery A, 221st Field Artillery Battalion and landed on the island of Guadalcanal where the Americal reinforced the 1st Marine Division in its epic battle against the Japanese. The 221st took part in campaigns in the Northern Solomons, Leyte and the Southern Philippines as well.

The Lancer lineage continued after World War II in the National Guard when Battery A, 180th Field Artillery Battalion was reorganized at Commonwealth Armory in 1946. Few, if any, of its soldiers knew anything about the Lancers. In 1959 the 101st Field Artillery and 180th Field Artillery Battalions were consolidated to form the 101st Artillery Regiment. Battery A lost its identity in this reorganization.

The National Lancers had completely assumed the identity of the troop organized in 1836. To themselves and the public they were the National Lancers. They inherited the historical objects and lineage as well. During World War II they were somewhat inactive. They had a room in the Commonwealth Armory where they maintained a small museum and meeting area.

After the war the organization revived with new members many of whom had served in the war. The Lancers started taking part in patriotic events and parades. Sometime in the early 1950s the Lancers began reenacting the rides of Paul Revere and William Dawes on Patriots Day. The ride of Paul Revere had been performed before the war but not a regular basis; now it became one of the Lancers' important annual events.

New uniforms were purchased; horses acquired and equipment and tack were purchased so that the traditional mounted escort for the governor to the Harvard Commencement was also renewed. In 1952 the Lancers moved to Littleton where they maintained their own stables and horses.

Capt. Dino DiCarlo who had joined in 1948 was elected commander in 1956. For the next 40 years, with some time off, he served as commander and the driving force to place the Lancers on a more permanent basis. Due to his political connections, DiCarlo was able to negotiate a 99-year lease with the Department of Corrections for the dairy farm at the state prison for women in Framingham.

The Lancers acquired the barn, pastures and auxiliary buildings for their use in 1964. The herd consisted of 20 horses. With the Lancers firmly established, the organization's strength increased to 40-50 men during the 1960s and 1970s. The Lancers rode in the inaugural parade for President John F. Kennedy in January 1961, which was a great honor for the unit.

Col. DiCarlo's, next mission was to obtain the formal military status for the National Lancers in the organized militia. This took an act of the legislature which was passed in 1964. Paragraph 4A, Chapter 33 Militia, Massachusetts General Laws made the National Lancers a unit in the Massachusetts Organized Militia with the right to select its own officers and to govern itself.

Governor Endicott Peabody, mounted on horseback, administered the oath to the officers and troopers, also mounted, on 18 October. The year 1964 was probably the most important year in the Lancers' history since 1837.

The National Lancers expanded their participation in parades and patriotic events. They rode in the Rose Bowl Parade in Pasadena, California. The parade season began with Patriots Day in April and usually ended in October. The Lancers also trained the State Police

Mounted Unit when it was organized in 1977. The State Police Mounted Unit was stationed at the Lancers' facility for a year before it acquired stables in Acton.

Col. DiCarlo was promoted to brigadier general with the additional duty of Chief Aide de Camp to the Commander-in-Chief. For his many years of service to the state and the Lancers, he was later promoted to major general. General DiCarlo had the honor of enlisting his daughter Helen as the first woman to serve in the Lancers. Upon Maj. Gen. DiCarlo's death in 1997, his brother, Col. Mario DiCarlo assumed command of the Lancers.

Col. DiCarlo spent a great deal of time and energy in repairing the stables, barn extension and headquarters building. He also enhanced the status of the National Lancers within the state and with the Massachusetts National Guard. For his efforts and career achievements, he was promoted to brigadier general in 2002.

Gov. Endicott Peabody administers oath of office to COL Dino DiCarlo and the National Lancers on 18 Oct 1964

In 2003 the Lancers facility at 1 Merchant Road, Framingham was designated as Camp Dino DiCarlo in honor of the longest serving commander of the Lancers. A derelict building was rebuilt as the new headquarters and museum building. The former barn extension was rebuilt as multi-use hall and designated by the Lancers' officers and troopers as Brig. Gen. Mario DiCarlo Hall.

Carlo

On 23 July 2004, the National Lancers was ordered into active state service during the Democratic National Convention in Boston. As part of the force protection plan for Camp Curtis Guild, the Lancers patrolled the perimeter of the installation for seven days. This allowed additional Army National Guard soldiers to guard the Boston Garden-North Station area in Boston where the convention was taking place.

2004

In 2012 a new squadron color was authorized, and affixed to the color were 17 campaign streamers awarded to the National Lancers for service in the Civil War and World War I.

Maj. Gen. Scott Rice presents the Organizational Colors to Brig. Gen. Richard Reale, Jr., during a National Lancers change of command ceremony

The Lancers color guard proudly carries this color in every parade and ceremony.

On 4 April 2014 on the Salem Green, a new chapter in the history of the National Lancers began when the executive officer, Col. Richard Reale, Jr., was promoted to brigadier general and took command of the organization. General Reale, grandson of Maj. Gen. Dino DiCarlo, continued the family tradition of serving in and commanding the National Lancers.

The Lancers have come a long way since 1836. Their missions have changed as the nation and military have changed. The Lancers have adapted in order to continue to flourish as a cavalry organization. A great amount of hard work, personal funds, and dedicated service has kept the National Lancers alive for 182 years.

National Lancers 2012

Lineage and Honors

Organized 31 October 1836 in the Massachusetts Militia at Boston as the National Lancers

Reorganized and redesignated 5 October 1852 as Troop A (National Lancers), 1st Battalion of Dragoons

(While remaining in state service additionally organized Companies C and D, 1st Massachusetts Volunteer Cavalry; mustered into Federal service 1 November 1861 at Readville, Massachusetts; mustered out of Federal service 26 June 1865 at Washington, D.C.)

Reorganized and redesignated 20 August 1864 as Troop A

Reorganized and redesignated 27 March 1865 as Troop A, 1st Battalion of Cavalry

Reorganized and redesignated 19 March 1906 as Troop A, 1st Squadron of Cavalry

(Massachusetts Volunteer Militia redesignated 15 November 1907 as the Massachusetts National Guard)

Mustered into Federal service 26 June 1916 at Framingham, Massachusetts; mustered out of Federal service 18 November 1916 at Boston

Ordered into Federal service 25 July 1917 at Boston; drafted into Federal service 5 August 1917

Reorganized, redesignated and converted 18 August 1917 as Company A, 102d Machine Gun Battalion and assigned to the 26th Division

Demobilized 29 April 1919 at Camp Devens, Massachusetts

(Veterans organized 1st Provisional Cavalry Troop, Massachusetts State Guard 4 September 1917; disbanded 23 November 1920)

Reorganized 24 June 1920 as the National Lancers, an independent unit, and Troop A, 1st Separate Squadron of Cavalry (hereafter separate lineage)

Reorganized 18 October 1964 in the Massachusetts Organized Militia at Framingham as the National Lancers

Ordered into active state service 23 July 2004; released from active state service 30 July 2004

CAMPAIGN PARTICIPATION CREDIT

Civil War

Antietam
Fredericksburg
Chancellorsville
Gettysburg
Wilderness
Spottsylvania

Cold Harbor
Petersburg
South Carolina 1862
Virginia 1863
Virginia 1864

World War I
Champagne-Marne
Aisne-Marne
St. Mihiel
Meuse-Argonne
Ile de France 1918
Lorraine 1918