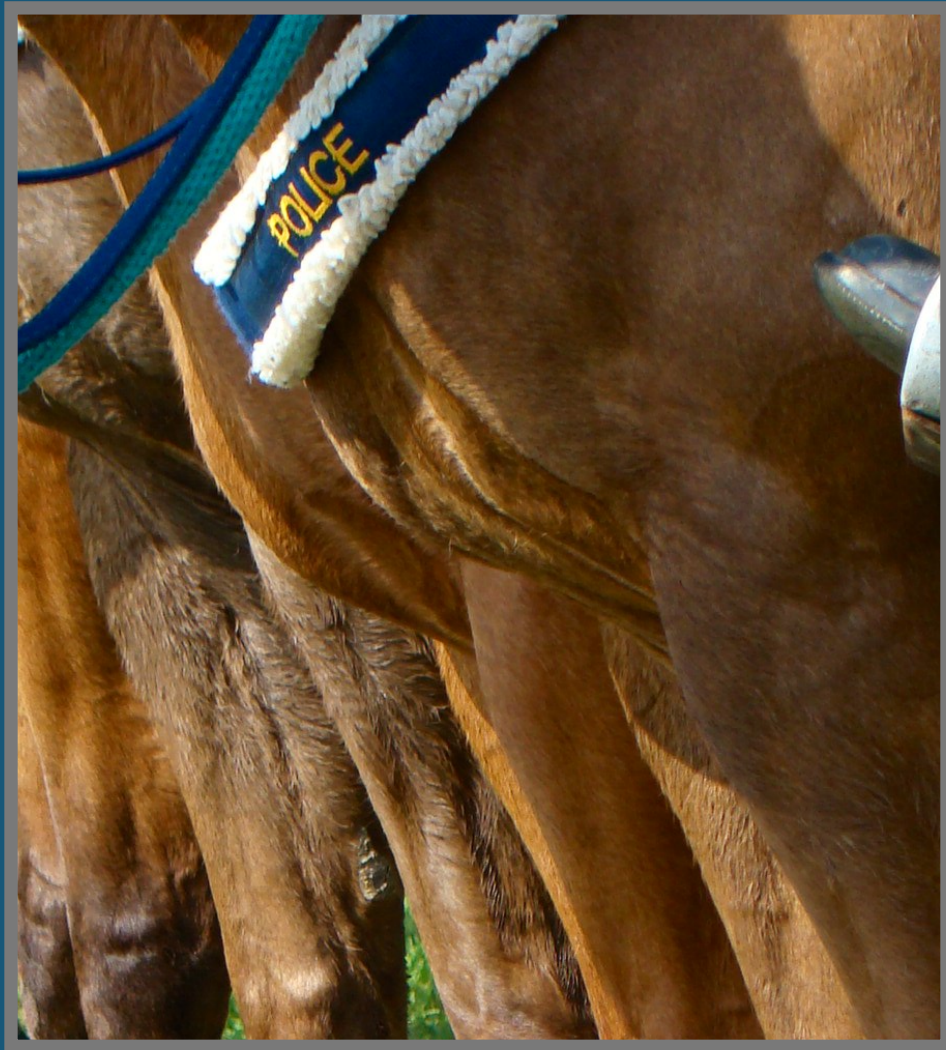


# MOUNTED POLICE



## WHY YOUR CITY CAN AND SHOULD HAVE MOUNTED POLICE



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Dr. Bruce Nock, MS, PhD

Senior Police Officer Scott Berry, BAAS, MSSL

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# Why Your City Can and Should Have Mounted Police

Dr. Bruce Nock, MS, PhD

Senior Police Officer Scott D. Berry, BAAS, MSSL



*Liberated Horsemanship, LLC* was established in 2003 by Dr. Bruce Nock, career scientist and professional horseman. *Liberated Horsemanship, LLC* provides high-quality training and services to horse enthusiasts and professionals through carefully selected experts.

# MOUNTED POLICE

## Why Your City Can and Should Have Mounted Police

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Published in the United States by

***Liberated Horsemanship, LLC<sup>TM</sup> Press***

P.O. Box 546

Warrenton, MO 63383

Contribution #26 from *Liberated Horsemanship, LLC<sup>TM</sup>*.

Photographs by Senior Police Officer Scott D. Berry, Houston Police Department Photographic Services, and others. Officer Berry's Biosketch photograph by Debbie Labry.

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Cover Picture by Senior Police Officer Scott D. Berry

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**A B O U T**  
**A U T H O R**  
**D R . B R U C E N O C K**

**B**ruce Nock, M.S., Ph.D., has been a scientist for 40 years. He is a tenured faculty member of multiple departments at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Missouri. He is a subject of biographical record in both Marquis' Who's Who in America and Who's Who in Medicine and Healthcare.

Bruce has published numerous articles of original research in leading scientific journals on diverse topics including learning theory, wild horse behavior and stress physiology. Currently, his research is funded by the United States National Institute of Health and focuses on transgenerational and epigenetic effects of morphine.

Bruce has a deep practical and academic knowledge of animal behavior and related topics. He has a Master of Science degree from a psychobiology program at *Bucknell University* that focused almost entirely on animal behavior and related subjects. He earned a PhD from the world renown Institute of Animal Behavior, Rutgers University, and continued with four years of post-doctoral studies that focused on behavioral neuroendocrinology. The best part is, he can relate what he knows to horse management and use and communicate it in straightforward, understandable terms.

Bruce is an avid horseman—a dressage and trail rider. He has been helping people train and ride horses for many years through books, articles, clinics and private lessons. Bruce is the author of the acclaimed books *Ten Golden Rules of Horse Training: Universal Laws for all Levels and Riding Styles*, and *Ride For Tomorrow: Dressage Today* and the highly



regarded series of articles entitled *The Biology of Natural Horsemanship*. Bruce has also published numerous articles in leading scientific journals and the popular press.

In addition to *Liberated Horsemanship, LLC*, Bruce serves on the faculty of *The Kerulos Center*—a non-profit organization which finds science-based solutions to pressing questions and concerns that affect the lives of animals. He is also a member of the *Advisory Board of the American Wild Horse Preservation Campaign* (AWHPC), a broad-based coalition representing over 10 million supporters. Bruce has written a series of science-based articles for the AWHPC on how Bureau of Land Management practices negatively impact the long-term health and welfare of America's wild horses. He has also written a number of declarations to support legal actions by advocate groups against the government's management of our wild horses.





A B O U T  
A U T H O R  
S C O T T B E R R Y

Scott Berry, Senior Police Officer, Houston Mounted Detail, grew up in the San Joaquin Valley in California. A horse stable was located not more than 200 yards away. He became instantly curious and captivated by the horses. Those emotions haven't faded away yet.

Scott has worked for the city of Houston since the summer of 1984 till the present. From 1984 till the fall of 1989, he was employed at the *Houston Zoo* as a zookeeper. At the zoo, he worked with a wide variety of exotics ... and horses. From the fall of 1989 till the present, Scott worked for the *Houston Police Department*. Since 1995 has been with the *Mounted Patrol Detail*.

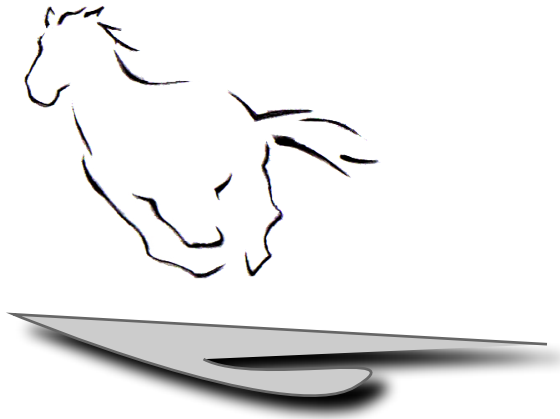
The first horse Scott owned was purchased about the same time he started with the police department. His herd has slowly increased in size ever since then (horses and children). Scott started out doing a lot of riding for pleasure which evolved over the years into an interest in driving horses as well. He says, "I have probably learned far more from the horses I've worked with than what I enthusiastically attempted to teach them – which is perhaps a good thing."

While working at the zoo he worked with a Shire filly, Scott was hooked. His attraction to draft horses evolved into a carriage business—to supplement his hobby. Scott now has operated the *Cypress Creek Carriage Company* in the Houston area since 1998—the horses have been barefoot for almost all of those years.

Scott is a natural hoof care professional and instructor currently working with *Liberated Horsemanship* to develop natural hoof care training and support programs for other interested mounted units. The present article and our efforts to help cities retain / reactivate / develop mounted police divisions is one off-shoot.

Scott has a BAAS (applied arts and sciences) degree from *Midwestern State University* and a MSSL (science in strategic leadership) degree from *Mountain State University*.





# Mounted Police

**P**olice departments all over the country are in a state of instability. The prolonged economic downturn affected them just like the rest of us. Many police departments are now operating on reduced budgets. Mounted police units have been hit particularly hard, as cities struggle to find ways to maintain basic law enforcement services. A number of cities have even eliminated their mounted patrols to save money.

But the economy is only part of the problem. City managers sometimes view mounted police units as obsolete ... a traditional law enforcement branch whose duties can be carried out more effectively and efficiently using modern approaches and innovations. It isn't surprising, all things considered, that two out of three mounted units have shut down since the early 1980s.<sup>1</sup> Many of those remaining are fighting for survival.

But it's not all bad news. Many towns and cities across the country still have mounted police units. In some cases, new and innovative ways have emerged to fund them. The Seattle Police Department is one example. Seattle has had a Mounted Patrol Unit for over a hundred years. When budget constraints put the Mounted Patrol in jeopardy, the Seattle Police Foundation<sup>2</sup> stepped up to help preserve this important arm

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<sup>1</sup> Jennifer Levitz: *Budgets Clip Mounted Police Units*. [com/article/SB124865228119382429.html](http://com/article/SB124865228119382429.html), 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Police Foundations are typically non-profit entities. Their purpose is to facilitate law enforcement. They are typically composed of and supported by local businesses, organizations and individuals.

of law enforcement.<sup>3</sup> Other cities have followed a similar path.<sup>4</sup>

The Houston Police Foundation Mounted Patrol *Adopt-A-Horse Program*<sup>5</sup> is a great example: The program was launched in 2012. It is meant to “provide for the operational needs of the Mounted Patrol while promoting public relations between the police department and the community.” Specifically, the program encourages businesses and organizations to make a \$5,000 tax deductible donation to the Houston Police Foundation by sponsoring a mounted police horse. The sponsorship covers “all of the operating expenses for one horse for one year.” In return,

- Sponsors can name the horse sponsored. The name is displayed on the saddle pad worn on patrol duty.
- A plaque stating “Proudly Sponsored By (company and/or organization logo)” is displayed on the horse’s stall.
- The company and/or organization’s contribution is acknowledged and their logo displayed on the Houston Police Foundation and Mounted Patrol web pages.
- The Houston Mounted Detail provides studio quality photos of the sponsored horse and sponsor designated personnel.

The first sponsor for the *Adopt-A-Horse Program* was the “Downtown District.” Currently there are 31 sponsored horses out of a total of about 40. That comes to \$155,000 donated. The renewal rate for sponsorship has been 100%. It is an impressive start for a very well designed program. To learn more watch the video of the program announcement.<sup>6</sup>

More good news: In addition to, and sometimes in conjunction with, the emergence of innovative ways to fund mounted police divisions, some cities, like Philadelphia, have reevaluated their decision to eliminate their mounted police units. Philadelphia has the oldest municipal police force in the United States. It was formed in 1887 and disbanded in 2004 due to budget cuts. The unit was reactivated in 2011 using private

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<sup>3</sup> *Save Our Horses: Seattle Police Mounted Patrol*. <http://saveourhorses.net/>. 2013.

<sup>4</sup> e.g. See <http://www.kcmo.org/police/BoundaryMap/MountedPatrolSection/index.htm>.

<sup>5</sup> *HPD Mounted Patrol*. <http://www.houstonpolicefoundation.org/mounted>.

<sup>6</sup> *HPD Adopt-A-Horse Program* (Houston Police Department, HPD Video Productions, MD, EM). <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zvfqUuLPcKo>. 2012.

funds.<sup>7</sup> Atlanta, Washington DC, Chicago, Cleveland, Houston, St. Louis, Toledo and Bethlehem, a city of less than 72,000 people in eastern Pennsylvania, also restored their mounted patrol units after shutting them down for a period of time.

The question is “why?” Why have some cities gone against the tide by reactivating their mounted police divisions? The answer is really pretty simple. Those cities learned they lost a very valuable, and in some cases irreplaceable, asset when their mounted units shut down. Then, they found creative ways to help fund them.

The purpose of this article is to encourage other cities to retain/reactivate mounted police units. In the following pages, we give an overview of the important services a mounted detail can provide. Then, we discuss the cost of starting and maintaining a mounted police division and compare it to the costs and potential problems associated with the lack of a mounted division. Finally, we suggest several modern horse keeping strategies that are better for horses than more traditional approaches and, importantly, are also more cost effective.

## WHAT MOUNTED POLICE CAN DO FOR A CITY

### Public Relations

Mounted officers are highly valuable for improving and maintaining good public relations. People are fascinated by and their attention is attracted to horses. Deputy Commissioner Paul J. Browne of the New York City Police Department called mounted officers “tremendous ambassadors of good will,” adding, “I’d hazard to guess that our horses are photographed more often than Kim Kardashian.”<sup>8</sup>

While members of the public may not always see police officers as approachable, most people like and are curious about horses. Horses naturally attract positive attention. Adults and kids alike ask mounted officers all sorts of questions about their horses ... “may I pet him,” “what’s his name,” “how old is he,” “what does he eat,” “does he bite,” “why does he have boots on,” “what kind is he,” and so on. It’s a terrific opportunity for informal discussions that can help officers form a close, healthy

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<sup>7</sup> Martha T. Moore: *Philadelphia To Trot Out Mounted Police Again*. USA TODAY, [http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2011-02-08-phillycops08\\_ST\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2011-02-08-phillycops08_ST_N.htm). 2011.

<sup>8</sup> Michael Cooper: *Police Horses Are Diminished in Number, but Not Presence*, New York Times, 2011.



relationship with the community they serve. There is no doubt people are much more willing to talk with an officer on horseback than one on foot or in a vehicle. Here's how it was said in a National Criminal Justice Reference Service abstract, "The presence of mounted patrol solved the problem of officer's isolation from their communities and encouraged voluntary citizen participation in crime prevention."<sup>9</sup>

Mounted officers are also effective for issues that require civility, like dealing with the homeless. Here's what one Ocean Beach homeless man said to San Francisco Mounted Sgt. Phil Downs: "Man, you horse cops have got like a totally different vibe than the cops down in the Tenderloin."<sup>10</sup>

The Houston Mounted Police take public relations even further. Their facility is open to the public seven days a week. As many as 200 groups of senior citizens, schoolchildren and Scouts tour the mounted police facility each year. You can even have a birthday party at the facility. Here's what one visitor



<sup>9</sup> Marshak, L.: *Mounted Patrol. Municipal Police*, 1979, <http://www.ncjrs.gov/App/Publications/abstract.aspx?ID=56002>.

<sup>10</sup> Delfin Vigil: *Trotting A Beat In San Francisco*. San Francisco Chronicle. <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2005/10/02/PKG6CEU8GT1.DTL>. 2005.



posted, “Of all the things to do in Houston, my young son's favorite is feeding carrots and apples to the horses at Houston Police Stables at 5005 Little York. Entry is free. You must only sign in with the two pleasant ladies in the Administration Building. After that you can feed all horses two carrots or one apple. You can stay as long as you want. The stable workers and mounted police are usually happy to talk with you about the horses as well.”<sup>11</sup>



Houston mounted patrol officers are also available to do demonstrations at their facility or at other locations. They will travel anywhere within the Houston city limits or to an adjacent county to meet with groups. For the youngest enthusiasts, it's mostly just looking at and petting the horses. Teens can get information about responsible horse and pet ownership, horse care, tack, feed and so on. Adults interested in horses can hear about training and riding and that sort of thing. Of course, there are always stories about the remarkable horses, their adventures and what they did before becoming a mounted police horse. And everyone gets to touch and pet the horses, regardless of age. It's fun for everyone.



The mounted officers of other cities likewise do presentations and demonstrations for public groups. All-and-all mounted patrol units are unrivaled as liaisons between a city's law enforcement branch and the community it serves.

Mounted units are a powerful resource for creating goodwill without the outlay of funds for an advertisement campaign. They create a positive public image as they go

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<sup>11</sup> *Spend Wisely Texas: Living Well and Spending Less in the Lone Star State. Houston Police Stables – Visit and Feed the Horses.* <http://www.spendwiselytexas.com/2009/07/houston-police-stables-visit-and-feed.html>. 2008.

about their daily duties. They also represent police departments well during ceremonial functions, parades, funerals, inaugurations and so on. Public relations alone may be a sufficient reason for a city to maintain a mounted unit. But mounted officers can effectively do much more than that.

## Crowd Control

Mounted police are peerless when it comes to crowd control.<sup>12</sup> Philadelphia Police Commissioner, Charles H. Ramsey, asserted, "One horse is worth ten people<sup>13</sup> when it comes to crowd control." Commissioner Ramsey went on to say, "When you've got police officers on foot marching in a skirmish line trying to move a crowd, what do you have? You've got tension, you've got conflict, you've got people that are back and forth and then you've got a scene. You've got a problem. You take that same crowd, on horseback, you form a skirmish line, and you start moving the crowd, they turn around and they leave. ... It's just different." Recent "flash mobs" which resulted in near-riots highlighted the city's need for mounted officers, Ramsey added.<sup>14,15</sup>



In Houston, mounted police units were proven indispensable during Superbowl XXXVIII week. Large groups of people attempted to force their way into private pre-game parties up and down Main street. The police department's crowd control officers, who were on foot, were quickly overwhelmed even though they were highly trained and outfitted from head-to-toe in modern riot gear. The mounted patrol was called in

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<sup>12</sup> Lt. George Smith, Philadelphia Police Mounted Patrol. *Police Horses*. Video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKVIJrqtIDM&NR=1>. 2009.

<sup>13</sup> Martha T. Moore: *Philadelphia To Trot Out Mounted Police Again*. USA TODAY, [http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2011-02-08-phillycops08\\_ST\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2011-02-08-phillycops08_ST_N.htm). 2011.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Also see Commissioner Ramsey's Video Blog at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gWBjrsrnvw>.

for assistance and five or six mounted officers quickly pushed back the rowdy crowds and regained control of a number of potentially serious situations. Years later, mounted police officers who responded to the emergency still get thanked by crowd control officers “for saving their backsides.”<sup>16</sup>

Mounted officers have distinct advantages under such circumstances. Not only are people more eager to get out of the way of an officer on a 1,300 pound horse than one on foot, but face-to-face confrontations between police and citizens are eliminated. The riot gear worn by officers on foot looks antagonistic and together with their coordinated shoulder-to-shoulder advance toward a crowd can



unintentionally create an atmosphere for conflict. A group of horses, on the other hand, elicits very different sentiments, reverence and awe, for example, and a different reaction ... “Wow! I better move before I get stepped on.” Lt. Raymond Evers, a Philadelphia police spokesman, put it this way, “Sometimes people don't want to listen to the cops, but they'll listen to a horse.”<sup>17</sup>

Mounted officers can also hear and smell things officers in patrol cars can't. More importantly, at eight to ten feet above the ground, mounted officers can see and be seen at greater distances than officers on foot, in cars, or riding motorcycles/bicycles. From the



<sup>16</sup> Houston Senior Police Officer Scott Berry, co-author of this article. Officer Berry was one of the mounted officers called in to help the police on foot.

<sup>17</sup> Kia Gregory: *Newark Police's Loss Is Philadelphia's Equine Gain*, The Philadelphia Inquirer, [http://articles.philly.com/2011-01-10/news/27020228\\_1\\_police-horses-horse-trailer-police-unit](http://articles.philly.com/2011-01-10/news/27020228_1_police-horses-horse-trailer-police-unit). 2011.



back of a seventeen-hand horse,<sup>18</sup> an officer has a panoramic view of the surrounding area. It allows them to react and diffuse potential “situations” before they develop into something more serious.

But mounted units are useful for crowd control under more peaceful conditions too. They are far more effective at keeping pathways open during special events and festivals or at escorting ambulances through crowds at concerts and sporting events than officers on foot or bicycles, for example.

The United States Park Mounted Officers also earned their crowd management “Gold Medal” at the 1996 Olympics:

“The Unit's reputation and expertise led to a special invitation to provide 25 Horse Mounted Officers to patrol Centennial Park during the 1996 Olympics held in Atlanta, Georgia. Sadly, it took a tragedy to show what the unit could do in a very demanding situation. A Unit Award for Excellence of Service from the Secretary of the Interior showed the quality of their work. "Naming each officer involved, Secretary Babbitt noted how, after the pipe bomb exploded and killed two people, the Park Police officers immediately moved an estimated 60,000 people outside the park perimeter." The officers did so while dozens of injured people were given medical attention. He believed crowd control of this type would have been impossible without the horse-mounted patrol. The Secretary also said the officers "clearly proved to be the most effective public relations unit and the most favorable method of crowd control at the games".”<sup>19</sup>

## **Patrol Duties**

Mounted police can be used in the same manner as other patrol officers. In fact, they may be the most effective proactive crime deterrent in downtown areas. They provide a high-profile police presence in targeted crime areas and, by doing so, give a sense of security to residents, shop owners and people using public areas. At the same time, by adding a quaint, nostalgic tone to the atmosphere, mounted police also increase the attractiveness of revitalized, historic downtown shopping/tourist areas.

Horses returned to the Houston central business district in 1984 after a decade long

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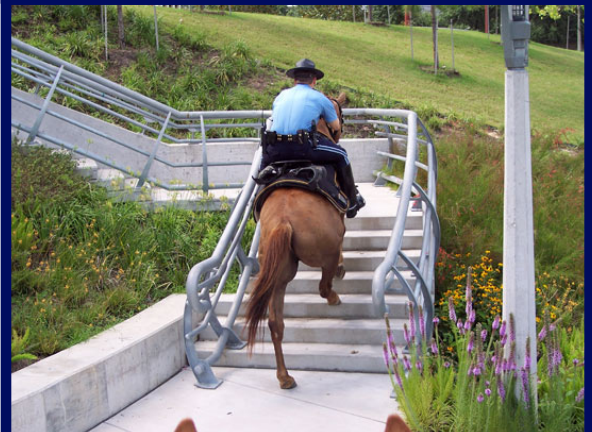
<sup>18</sup> Horses are measured in “hands” from the ground to the top of their withers. The “withers” are the highest part of a horse's back, lying at the base of the neck above the shoulders. One hand equals four inches. So, the top of the withers of a seventeen hand horse is 5'8” above the ground. An officer in a saddle extends another three to four feet above that.

<sup>19</sup> United States Park Police: Horse Mounted Unit. <http://www.nps.gov/uspp/fhorsepage.htm>

hiatus. The downtown area was having problems with crime. The city and the central business district association thought mounted patrols might be the solution. They were right. A significant reduction in crime quickly followed the restoration of mounted patrols to the downtown area.

In a downtown area, mounted officers can do most things and, in some cases more than, an officer on foot or in a vehicle. Their height advantage lets mounted officers see pickpockets, car busters, and other potential criminals that one on foot might miss, especially on a busy street. They can chase suspects very effectively. They can even enter buildings and climb stairs if necessary. What's more, a mounted officer can easily handcuff suspects and write tickets without dismounting. In 2010, the Houston mounted detail made 656 arrests and issued 6,504 citations.<sup>20</sup> In Dubai, the mounted division nabbed four times more criminals than patrol vehicles in 2010. They caught 501 suspects compared to 125 rounded up by patrol cars.<sup>21</sup>

Mounted units also have an advantage in bad weather ... weather that can bog down other patrols. Horses do just fine in rain or snow, for example, conditions which can compromise the effectiveness of an officer on foot or riding a bike or motorcycle. They can



<sup>20</sup> *Mounting Deficits Versus Mounted Patrol*. Law Enforcement Today. <http://www.lawenforcementtoday.com/news/view/9675>.

<sup>21</sup> Michelle Sutton: *Crime Busters: High On Horsepower*. Gulfnews.com, <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/uae/crime/crime-busters-high-on-horsepower-1.816221>. 2011

even negotiate snow deep enough to bog down patrol cars or even four-wheel drive mobile units.

Horses also do well in extreme temperatures. Officers on foot or riding bicycles do the best they can in the heat of summer or the frigid temperatures of winter. But realistically, they can't be expected to perform optimally or cover as much area as a horse under such conditions. Horses are designed to travel 20 or so miles a day under rugged conditions. With proper precautions, they can execute their duties quite well under almost any weather conditions.



**Police Inspector and Liberated Horsemanship Instructor, Kevin Glenister, riding in the snow.**

### **Support Role**

Mounted units can provide unique support for other, unmounted police and emergency units. There are plenty of examples. Here's one as told by Senior Officer Scott Berry of the Houston Mounted Detail: "There was a shooting that occurred in one of the clubs on Main street where over 100,000 people had gathered for pre-Superbowl festivities. The only way Emergency Medical Services could get into and out of the location was with a group of horses making a pathway through the wall-to-wall people blocking the street."





## Search and Rescue

Mounted units can be a significant asset for search and rescue missions. Retired teacher and coach, 63 year old Mike King, can attest to it. King ran into trouble while hiking on the Skyline Trail in the mountains above Palm Springs. He's safe today thanks to the Palm Springs Mounted Police Search and Rescue unit that came to his rescue.<sup>22</sup>

Horses can go places where cars or bicycles can't go and they can cover more ground than someone on foot. They are particularly effective in parks, wilderness areas and in rough terrain. Horses truly are all-terrain vehicles. And again, a mounted officer on a search and rescue mission has a great vantage point from which to scan the surroundings.



## The Environment

Horses are the ultimate "green" vehicle. You don't need fossil fuels to make them go. They don't add to air pollution. They don't add to noise pollution, especially if they are barefoot or wearing performance boots (see below). Finally, by-products are natural and biodegradable. And, despite what people unfamiliar with horses might think, because horses are vegetarians and not carnivores, their by-products are relatively innocuous too ... at least in an olfactory sense.

## ARE MOUNTED PATROLS WORTH WHAT THEY COST?

It would be hard to argue that mounted police aren't valuable to a city. There are many more very good reasons for their continuation as an arm of law enforcement than just nostalgia. Some services mounted police provide can be satisfactorily discharged by other officers. Nevertheless, there are definitely important law enforcement functions that mounted units do exceptionally well, especially public relations and crowd

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<sup>22</sup> Patrick Stumbaugh: *Hiker Calls for Help, Uses Rescue Box*, News Channel 3 Producer, KESQ.com. <http://www.kesq.com/news/28062023/detail.html>. 2011.



surveillance/management, and they can effectively do many of the same things other patrol officers do too.

But are mounted patrol units worth what they cost? That's not an easy question to answer. It's more complicated than it may initially appear. There are intangibles which should be given consideration in addition to the hard cash. But let's break the issue down into the two major issues ... value versus cost.

### **Value?**

There is insufficient information to give a firm dollar and cents answer to the question of how much the services of a mounted police unit are worth. The answer is likely to vary from city to city and may even vary over time for a city. The best we can do is to derive a general impression by working through two related questions: 1) How much does/would it cost a city to effectively maintain the same level of services without a mounted division and 2) How much might it cost a city if law enforcement services are less effective due to the lack of a mounted unit?

### **What does it cost to replace the services of a mounted police division?**

Law enforcement officials seem to agree each mounted officer is worth ten officers on foot for crowd control. It may be hard for a lay person to believe but that's what law enforcement officers like Philadelphia Police Commissioner, Charles H. Ramsey estimate.<sup>23</sup> Some experts put the number even higher.<sup>24</sup> Where do the additional officers come from when crowd control is needed and mounted units are not available?

The city could hire more police. But that would be ridiculously expensive. It is certainly an untenable solution if the city budget is already tight. It seems more likely officers would be asked to work more hours ... overtime, to pickup the slack. Let's take a look at what that might cost a city.

The median salary for a patrol officer in the United States is about \$50,000 per year<sup>25</sup> or approximately \$24/hour based on a 40 hour week. Time-and-a-half for

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<sup>23</sup> Lt. George Smith, Philadelphia Police Mounted Patrol. Police Horses video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKVIJrqtlDM&NR=1>.

<sup>24</sup> The US Parks Police Horse Mounted Unit. <http://www.nps.gov/uspp/fhorsepage.htm>.

<sup>25</sup> [www1.salary.com/police-officer-Salary.html](http://www1.salary.com/police-officer-Salary.html).

overtime comes to \$36/hour or an additional \$12/hour/officer over regular pay. Then multiply by ten because at least ten officers on foot are needed to effectively replace a mounted unit ... *just one*. That comes to \$120/hour or \$960/eight hours of overtime. That's the estimated cost to replace just one mounted policeman for a day-long crowd control event. It would be twice that, \$1,920, at double time. And how many events that require crowd control does a city have per year? That, of course, depends on the city, but most medium to large cities have concerts, festivals, professional or college sporting events, parades, protests, demonstrations and so on that require some level of crowd management. Crowds leaving bars at closing time and some large parties can also require attention. The price tag for overtime could quickly add up.

The thing is, many police departments are reluctant to/can't pay overtime. Instead, officers are given compensatory time off, "comp time." But this strategy comes with its own problems. In particular, who decides when the comp time is taken? The employer, i.e., city or law enforcement officials? Or the officer who earned the comp time?

The answer depends on who you ask. Officers generally argue they should be able to take the comp time when they want, on demand. Cities have balked at that idea though, citing manpower/staffing concerns. And what if granting comp time requires another officer to work overtime? Or do police departments just go under staffed when someone takes comp time? These are important issues which have been wrestled with by our judicial system all the way up to the U.S. Supreme Court and still have not been satisfactorily resolved.

Overtime also has the potential to affect an officer's motivation and job satisfaction. It takes time away from family, friends and leisure activities. Injury rate also increases with the number of hours worked. "Working in jobs with overtime schedules was associated with a 61% higher injury hazard rate compared to jobs without overtime."<sup>2</sup> At the same time, effectiveness is likely to decrease with number of hours worked. Who would you want managing an unruly crowd, an officer working normal hours who is relatively fresh and focused, or one at the end of a 12 hour shift? It's a rhetorical question. Obviously, anyone working with the public in a potentially hazardous situation should be at the top of their game, not mentally or physically fatigued, conditions associated with reduced performance and mistakes.

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<sup>26</sup> AE Dembe, JB Erickson, RG Delbos, SM Banks: *The Impact Of Overtime And Long Work Hours On Occupational Injuries And Illnesses: New Evidence From The United States*. **Occup Environ Med** 2005, 62:588-597

The bottom line is, there may not be a satisfactory way to effectively replace a mounted unit when it comes to crowd control. It can be expensive, compromise other law enforcement services, and even result in internal conflict between city officials and the police union.

Consequently, the city might decide or the budget might dictate to just do the best they can at crowd control without the help of horses or without extra patrol officers on duty. That's a risky way to go. It could cost the city dearly. Remember, in Houston even well-trained and fully equipped crowd control officers on foot were quickly overwhelmed during Superbowl week. How much does it cost a city if an officer gets hurt? What about property damage? That can get into the tens of thousands of dollars and much more if crowds become riotous. Damage to local businesses exceeded \$100,000 during the Seattle Mardi Gras riots in 2001, with widespread brawling, vandalism, and weapons being brandished.<sup>27</sup> And what happens to the crime rate when other patrol duties are abandoned for crowd control?

Then, there are the intangibles we alluded to above. What is the cost of a damaged city image if a crowd gets out of control? How does it affect the quality of life and psychological state of residents and local businesses? Does it affect the long-term viability of local businesses or the likelihood of new businesses starting in the city? How does it affect the potential for future events in the city? And so on. One event that gets out of hand could literally cost a city millions of dollars in property loss and future revenues. And if citizens get injured or killed because of inadequate crowd control measures ... well, that's "game over" for a city.

What about other services a mounted unit can effectively provide besides crowd control? It's hard to put a price tag on most of them. The value of mounted units for things like search and rescue and everyday services, like normal patrol duties, is situational. It depends on circumstances and conditions. Under normal circumstances such duties might be carried out satisfactorily by officers on foot, riding bicycles or in patrol cars. But horse patrols are particularly effective in targeted high crime areas and parks. In such cases, they are a high-profile, crime deterrent that can be particularly effective. Again, high-crime areas can be costly to a city. It can impact the city's image, the mental state of residents and the viability of businesses.

Finally, let's not forget how valuable mounted units can be for public relations.

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<sup>27</sup> *Seattle Mardi Gras Riots*. Wikipedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seattle\\_Mardi\\_Gras\\_Riots](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seattle_Mardi_Gras_Riots)

Having a close and harmonious relationship with residents and business owners is invaluable to a city and its police department. It can help foster valuable financial support for law enforcement in general and a mounted unit in particular, as exemplified by the efforts of the Houston's *Adopt-A-Horse Program* (see page 9).

### **How much does a mounted police detail cost?**

We are not accountants and we don't have access to city budgets. We are horse owners though and one of us is a senior mounted patrol officer with nearly 20 years of experience. Together we have first-hand knowledge about what it costs to keep a horse and what is involved in maintaining an effective mounted unit. Below we derive a general estimate of how much a mounted division might cost, independent of officer salaries which is not a cost specific to a mounted unit.

In the St. Louis metropolitan area you can board a horse at one of the best commercial facilities in the area<sup>28</sup> for \$625/month, \$7,500/year. The facility has one indoor and two outdoor lighted arenas. One of the outdoor arenas is all-weather. There is also an all-weather quarter mile track. There is an outdoor jump field with a grand prix hill. A round pen is available for training. There are six wash racks, one with hot water. Boarders are assigned a locker and saddle rack in a tack room protected by an alarm system. There is a facility manager on property. Horses get fed a sweet feed mix balanced with trace minerals and vitamins<sup>29</sup>, along with high quality grass hay. The boarding fee includes stall cleaning and five turnouts/week. All of the routine horse care is done by the facility. All a boarder has to do is show up, saddle up, jump up and ride or load the horse onto a trailer and go. Pretty simple. All for \$7,500/year.

We are not saying mounted police horses should be boarded in a privately owned commercial facility, although it is an option cities should consider. Some boarding facilities may even reduce the fee for boarding a police horse as a public service or to have a police presence in their facility. This is an area where innovative agreements between the city and a boarding facility might be possible. At the least, having a police presence might provide a subtle promotional avenue and/or it may give regular boarders a perception of increased security, allowing the facility to charge a bit more to

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<sup>28</sup> Ridgefield Arena, 1410 Ridge Road, Wildwood, MO. See Images on next page.

<sup>29</sup> We do not endorse feeding sweet feed to horses. For most domesticated horses a good quality grass hay available 24/7 is likely to be sufficient. Supplementation should be done cautiously.

make up for a reduced fee for police horses. Everyone wins.



But for our purposes the cost of keeping a horse in a commercial facility is a good place to begin estimating the cost of maintaining a mounted police unit. Commercial facilities like the one described above provide all of the basic necessities, riding and training areas, etc and their fee includes the costs associated with the property and facility too. On top of that, a commercial facility is meant to make a profit. So, for simplicity, let's start our estimate at \$7,500/year/horse ... the cost of keeping a horse in one of the best commercial boarding facilities in the St. Louis metropolitan area.

Veterinarian bills for the Houston Mounted Detail have averaged about \$1,000/horse/year since 2000. Farrier costs run next to nothing at this point because the entire division rides barefoot horses.<sup>30</sup> Before they changed to barefoot horses, farrier fees ran about \$1,667/horse/year. So, let's use that figure since other mounted units may be less progressive than the Houston Detail and still ride shod horses. But this is an area where significant savings are possible while improving the welfare of the horses as we discuss below (see page 29).

So, if we add hoof care and veterinarian expenditures to the amount for board at a commercial facility, it comes to \$10,167/horse per year. That number includes all of the routine boarding costs at commercial rates, plus veterinarian and farrier fees.

Vehicles and trailers to get mounted units to and from their posts is another major

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<sup>30</sup> Houston Mounted Officers Scott Berry and Danny Pryor are natural hoof care instructors for Liberated Horsemanship and have attend many Liberated Horsemanship Advanced Topic Clinics for hoof care continuing education credit. In some case they have attended the same clinic multiple times because they continue to learn new things critical to good hoof care each time. Houston Mounted Officer Gregory Sokoloski attended the *Liberated Horsemanship Kick Start Program in Natural Hoof Care* hosted by the *Parsons Mounted Cavalry* at Texas A&M University. Houston Mounted Officer Robert Hunter attended the five day *Liberated Horsemanship Gateway To Natural Hoof Care Clinic* in Missouri.

expense for a mounted division. The initial outlay is likely to be expensive. But, for our purposes, i.e., calculating the cost of maintaining a mounted unit, those expenditures should be amortized over the life of the conveyance.

The best strategy for transportation is likely to depend on the city's needs and circumstances. But let's assume for the sake of this discussion that the mounted unit has dedicated towing vehicles and sufficient trailer space for every one of its horses. And let's not worry about different trailer sizes, although in some cases a large, e.g. eight horse trailer (see sidebar), might be more suitable and economical than smaller trailers. But let's just figure the costs for a two horse trailer and a truck suitable for towing it.

You can buy a new good quality aluminum two horse trailer for \$12,000.<sup>31,32</sup> Dividing by two equals \$6,000 per horse. A good quality aluminum trailer should last at least ten years. Amortizing across ten years the cost comes to \$600/horse/year. Maintenance costs on aluminum trailers are negligible. But let's add an additional \$200/year, \$100/horse/year, bringing the total cost for the trailer to \$700/horse per year.

The Houston Mounted Police Detail has a number of trailers. Their oldest is a 20 year old 8-horse trailer that is schedule for deactivation. Two new 8-horse trailers (≈\$40,000 each) will replace it. Large trailers can save money over the long run because only one truck is required to transport eight horses rather than four trucks to pull four 2-horse trailers. But the size of the mounted division and distribution of the patrol units should be considered to determine which option would be more suitable.

The cost to buy a new truck to pull the trailer is going to depend on the extras and whether it's a regular, extended or crew cab. Either way, a good quality truck able to pull a two-horse trailer should not run more than \$35,000, and probably \$5,000 less than that even with a towing package. But let's stick with \$35,000. Dividing by two comes to \$17,500 ... because it will be used to pull a trailer for two horses. Amortize over five years and you get a bottom line of \$3,500/horse/year. Then, there's gas and maintenance costs. The US Internal Revenue Service allows \$0.50/mile or so to cover that. It will be more for a truck pulling a trailer loaded with two horses. Let's double the allowance, \$1.00/mile, and calculate for 5,200 miles

The Houston Mounted Detail uses only diesel trucks which last much longer, maybe twice as long or more, than gas engines. They put about 200,000 miles or more on them before they are deactivated. Three of their current eight diesels are 'seizure' vehicles which negates a purchase cost.

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<sup>31</sup> <http://www.trailershowroom.com/sndnr-sportman2hbp.htm>.

<sup>32</sup> <http://trailertraders.com/184-New-2010-Circle-J-Lightning-aluminum-2-Horse-Trailer-For-Sale/details.html>.

per year to take horses to and from their post. That comes to \$5,200 divided by two, since it will pull a two horse trailer. That comes to \$2,600/horse per year. So, the total cost for the truck including gas and maintenance comes to \$6,100/horse/year. That's a big number, but keep in mind the cost of a patrol car would be considerable as well, and foot and bicycle patrols have to be transported to and from their patrol areas too. So, actually only a portion of \$6,100 is extra, that is, specific to the cost of maintaining a mounted unit. But let's err on the extravagant side and go with the entire \$6,100. Truck and trailer costs together come to \$6,800/year/horse.

Finally, waste, i.e., bedding and manure, removal should also be calculated in. The City of Key West estimated eliminating that cost saved their three horse division about \$4,500 a year or \$1,500/horse/year. Let's use that figure for our calculations. But, as we discuss below, there are more economical and environmentally friendlier ways to deal with waste than hauling it away.

Add it all up and **the bottom line is \$18,467/horse/year** (see spreadsheet summary below) for board at commercial rates, transportation, waste removal, and veterinarian and farrier fees. **Let's round it off to \$19,000** to account for miscellaneous costs. Not a small amount. Nevertheless, don't forget other law enforcement divisions, likewise, have unique costs too. In addition, our calculated board cost was based on a first-rate commercial facility which provides maintenance personnel along with food, bedding, all of the basic necessities, and many more amenities than a mounted unit really requires. We also tried to err on the liberal side for all of the other costs we estimated. Finally, we followed a traditional horse keeping model which may not be the best for

Expenses (see text for more detail)	Annual Cost Per Horse (see text for derivation)
Board	\$7,500
Veterinarian	\$1,000
Farrier	\$1,667
Trailer	\$700
Truck	\$6,100
Waste Removal	\$1,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$18,467</b>



the welfare of horses and may be more expensive than necessary (see below).

Here's the thing, **some cities claim shutting down mounted units save them much more than what we have estimated for the cost of maintaining a mounted unit:**

Charleston's police chief, Gregory Mullen, reported that shutting down the city's mounted unit saved the city \$250,000 a year. There were six horses in the unit.<sup>33</sup> Simple deduction tells you their mounted unit cost the city on average \$41,667/horse/year, nearly 2.2 times our generously estimated \$19,000/horse/year.

Portland Mayor, Sam Adams, reported the city's mounted detail cost the city \$1,000,000 annually.<sup>34</sup> That included the salaries of the seven officers assigned to the detail. For the sake of argument, let's say the salary of the seven officers was 50% higher than the national average which is about \$50,000/year for patrol officers. That would come to \$75,000/officer which, admittedly, may be a bit of an overestimation. Nevertheless, let's go with it for now. Then, let's add another 20% for fringe benefits. That brings the total to \$90,000/officer/year. Using that figure, the total salary for all seven officers comes to \$630,000/year. Subtract that from the \$1,000,000 Mayor Adams claimed their mounted unit cost the city and you get \$370,000. That's the cost of maintaining the mounted unit without officer salaries. Assuming one horse per officer the mounted unit costs Portland about \$52,857/horse/year, 2.75 times as high as our generous estimate of \$19,000/horse/year. And remember we came to this figure for Portland based on officer salaries 50% above the national average.

Sheryl Goldstein, Director of the Mayor's Office on Criminal Justice in Baltimore, reported it costs \$200,000 to maintain the six horses in the city's mounted unit. The figure includes care of the horses, veterinarian bills and horseshoes [i.e., farrier fees we assume], among other things, she said.<sup>35</sup> That figure comes to \$33,333/horse/year, 75% more than our generous estimate of \$19,000/horse/year.

The Philadelphia mounted unit was reactivated in 2011. Back in 2004 when it was disbanded its 19 horses cost the city between \$400,000 and \$500,000 annually in room, board, and grooming according to Phil Goldsmith who was the managing director at

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<sup>33</sup> *Police Departments Downsize, From 4 Legs to 2* by Michael Cooper, New York Times, February 14, 2011.

<sup>34</sup> Teresa Blackman & Michael Rollins: Portland Mayor Proposes Cutting Mounted Police To Balance Budget, Oregon News, May 7, 2010.

<sup>35</sup> Jeff Martin: *Mounted Police Losing In Budget Battle Across The Nation: The Cuts Reflect A Trend That Has Been Growing In Recent Years*, USA Today, February 14, 2010. <http://www.policeone.com/Grants/articles/2003756-Mounted-police-losing-in-budget-battle-across-the-nation/>.

that time. Grooming? Seriously? Now we're talking pennies. In any event, the claim is that it cost Philadelphia between \$21,053 and \$26,316 to keep a horse for a year.<sup>36</sup> Let's use the average of the two figures, \$23,684 for our purposes. That figure is much closer to ours but still 25% more than we estimated. And, keep in mind, Mr. Goldsmith's estimates were made nine years ago.

Shutting down the San Diego seven horse mounted unit was reported to save the city \$282,000/year<sup>37</sup>, i.e., \$40,386/horse. More than twice as much as our generous estimate of \$19,000/horse/year.

If you are a horse owner, the numbers cited by these cities are probably puzzling. Horses are expensive. Those of us who own them can attest to that. But the amounts cities claim they save by shutting down a mounted division, which presumably is synonymous with how much the division costs the city to maintain it, are ... well, staggering. Remember, a \$5,000 donation to the Houston Police Foundation Mounted Patrol *Adopt-A-Horse Program* (see page 9) covers "all of the operating expenses for one horse for one year."<sup>38</sup>

Perhaps cities somehow included officer salaries in their estimates? However, we calculated salaries out of the equation for Portland and still ended up with an astoundingly high sum for the cost of keeping a mounted unit. In addition, most officers appear to be reassigned to other duties when a mounted unit shuts down. A small number may be laid off. However, a reduction in the size of an active police force is a general matter and not one specifically related to a mounted unit.

Alternatively, perhaps some mounted units have been mismanaged, resulting in extravagant expenditures—maybe for the purchase of horses, which we didn't include in our cost estimate. That doesn't ring true either. Most horses used by mounted police are donated to the city. All of the horses in the Houston Mounted Detail, with the exception of a small number the city bought years ago, were donated, for example. There is no line budget for buying horses. There are typically more horses available for donation than the mounted detail can use. It's partly a sad consequence of the economic

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<sup>36</sup> Kia Gregory: *NJ Mounted Unit Moves To Philly*, The Philadelphia Inquirer, January 10, 2011. <http://www.policeone.com/Grants/articles/3165759-NJ-mounted-unit-moves-to-Philly/>.

<sup>37</sup> Johnny McDonald: *Mounted Police Units Will No Longer Patrol Local Beaches*, San Diego Newspaper Group. [sdnews.com](http://sdnews.com).

<sup>38</sup> Kate Withall, Elmore Public Relations: *Help the Downtown District Name a Horse as Part of the Adopt-A-Horse Program*. 2012, [http://downtownhouston.org/news/press\\_release/help-downtown-district-name-horse-part-adopt-horse-program/](http://downtownhouston.org/news/press_release/help-downtown-district-name-horse-part-adopt-horse-program/).

downturn. People just can't afford their horses any longer but they can't sell them either. So, to cut expenses they give them away, preferably to a non-profit organization, so the loss is at least tax deductible. In any event, there is no reason we can see for a city to spend extravagantly to acquire the horses themselves. But there are others ways budgets can be mismanaged.

In any event, we cannot offer any reasonable or legitimate explanation for the huge discrepancy between what we have estimated it costs to maintain a mounted unit and what cities claim they save by shutting them down. One can't help to wonder whether the numbers reported by cities might be the product of "creative accounting" meant to justify the elimination of what some city officials may believe is an outdated mode of law enforcement that can be easily replaced with more modern equipment. This is an erroneous presumption as we discussed above. Mounted police continue to be a valuable law enforcement asset, as cities like Houston and Philadelphia discovered after operating for a period of time without them.

## IMPROVING HORSE WELFARE WHILE CUTTING COSTS

Houston's mounted detail is one of the most progressive and innovative in the United States. When it was reactivated in 1984, it started with fourteen horses, one shift and fairly limited resources. But it has grown with success. Now, with 40+ horses and two working shifts, the Houston mounted division is second in size only to the New York City Mounted Police Unit.

In recognition and support for their valuable services, the city of Houston built a brand new, eight million dollar facility to house the unit. The facility sits on 15 acres in Harris county and includes meeting rooms and amenities for the officers, provisions for the horses, and a first-rate covered riding arena for the officers to practice riding, and to train and exercise their horses. It is a remarkable facility city officials, Houston citizens, and the officers themselves are rightfully proud of.<sup>39,40</sup> No wonder so many individuals and groups tour the facility each year. But let's talk cost cutting. Not every town and city can afford a facility like the one in Houston.

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<sup>39</sup> HPD Mounted Patrol and K9 Units Move Into New Facility. Video of opening ceremony at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U5FJZ4LFn2Q>.

<sup>40</sup> The K9 Detail shares the facility with the Mounted Detail.

Over the past decade or so there has been a revolution ... or maybe we should say revelation ... in horse keeping. Aspects of the traditional model of horse management have been questioned and abandoned by many horse owners and equine professionals. Hoof care is a good example.

### **Barefoot: Healthier and Better For The Budget**

Horse shoes are an ancient invention. They have been popular for 1,000 years or so. Through the ages people have gone happily upon their way putting shoes on horses, following the crowd, without a second thought. That's changing.

The thing is, in some countries horses have never been shod. Even today, barefoot horses continue to be used for transportation and work in countries like Mongolia. Then, there were those horse cultures of the past, like the Huns, Mongols and Native Americans, that did amazing things on the backs of barefoot horses. The Peloponnesian wars between Athens and Sparta were fought on barefoot horses. Obviously, shoes aren't necessary for riding.

Horses don't "need" them either. Wild Horses of the United States Great Basin and the desert of Australia travel long distances every day of their lives over rugged terrain without shoes. Technically, they are feral horses, the descendants of domesticated horses that were turned loose or escaped. There is no evidence to suggest they are genetically different from or genetically superior to today's domesticated horses. They are not a special breed. Yet they do just fine without shoes under very rugged conditions because their hooves wear into a strong compact form. That wear can now be mimicked with the same result through consistent proper trimming in conjunction with good management and use practices.

Shoeing horses became popular/necessary during the middle ages when management and use practices were suboptimal. As a result, hoof quality deteriorated, making shoes obligatory. Improve management and use practices and trim so that the hooves grow in to a strong compact form and shoes are no longer needed. Doubt it? The entire Houston Mounted Police Detail now rides barefoot horses. Their success using barefoot horses is world renown.

If you are operating on a tight budget, the good news is barefoot horses are generally healthier than shod horses. Barefoot horses are less prone to foot problems, injuries and other health issues that require expenditures for veterinarian care. Here's

what Dr. Robert Cook, FRCVS, PhD, Professor of Surgery *Emeritus* at Tufts University has to say about it:

“All horses' hooves are healthier without shoes, and barefoot horses are healthier than shod horses. They live longer, happier, less painful lives. Barefoot is a requirement for health and should be accepted as a condition for keeping a horse. Humane management is not just preferable, it is nonnegotiable. The foot evolved to function unshod. Nature has developed the perfect design for grip and slide in all conditions and provided for unsurpassable shock absorption. The foot cannot expand and contract with each step when clamped. Blood supply to the foot is impoverished and horn production becomes deficient. When the foot is prevented from functioning correctly, the pastern, fetlock, cannon, and knee are also placed at risk. This leads to bone, joint, and soft tissue injuries.”<sup>41</sup>

Here's how Dr. Tomas G. Teskey, DVM puts it:

“Forcing the flexible hoof to function when restricted by a rigid, steel shoe is a powerful prescription for promoting the hoof's deterioration. It results in deformity of the hoof and other nearby tissues, disrupts physiologic processes, and leads to harmful overgrowth of the hoof capsule. When a shoe is finally removed, the overgrown hoof is trimmed in a manner designed to ensure the retention of the next shoe (rather than comply with the physiology of the hoof); thus, additional harm follows. Such trims do not respect the shape conducive to optimal hoof performance.”<sup>42</sup>

Dr. Teskey goes on to say:

“In my practice the incidence of limb disease and injury is 70% higher among shod horses. Shod hooves cannot adequately dissipate forces of torque and concussion. Instead, these forces harm the hoof and are also referred up the limb to assault other structures that have not evolved to withstand these stresses and strains. The resultant harm to the horse's flesh and bone is both predictable and inevitable.”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> As reported by Marcia King. *Barefoot vs. Shod*. The Horse.com: Your Guide To Equine Health Care. August 01 2008 Article # 12778.

<sup>42</sup> Dr. Tomas G. Teskey, DVM: *The Unfettered Foot: A Paradigm Change for Equine Podiatry*. Equine Foot Science. 2005(25), page 78.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

Some people even say barefoot horses are mentally healthier and happier than shod horses. Dr. Cook alluded to it when he said barefoot horses “live longer, happier, less painful lives.”<sup>44</sup> We believe it too. Here’s what Officer Scott Berry wrote in a previous article about the barefoot Houston police horses:

“A horse that used to protest to having shoes nailed on now freely picks up his/her foot to be trimmed. The mental health of a horse is something that can’t easily be measured, but it is pretty obvious to those of us who spend time with our horses that there has been improvements there too. Walk around in some constricting, unyielding shoes for twenty four hours a day and see if it makes you a tad grumpy.”<sup>45</sup>

The benefits don’t end there. Barefoot horses can easily negotiate footing that shod horses cannot. For example, in the same article Officer Berry wrote,

“There are granite and marble sidewalks downtown that were as slick as ice when the horses were shod. It is no longer an issue with barefoot or booted horses. And, there is no longer the damage a Borium tipped steel shoe does to exotic stone walkways.”<sup>46</sup>

Finally, it is far less expensive to trim a barefoot horse’s hooves than it is to shoe them. How much less expensive? Well, before the Houston Mounted Detail changed to barefoot horses, farrier fees ran about \$1,667/horse/year. That comes to about \$200 per shoeing, assuming the horse is shod every six weeks. That’s a reasonable amount for a large horse, which is what mounted police tend to ride. On the other hand, other cities pay much more than that ... for reasons that are not apparent to us. For example, the Seattle Mounted Patrol Unit spends \$30,000 per year to shoe seven horses. That comes to over \$450 per shoeing.<sup>47</sup> If you own horses, you are probably dumbfounded by that amount.

In any event, a proper barefoot trim done by a qualified, certified hoof care

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<sup>44</sup> As reported by Marcia King. *Barefoot vs. Shod*. The Horse.com: Your Guide To Equine Health Care. August 01 2008 Article # 12778.

<sup>45</sup> Mounted Police Officer Scott Berry. *Barefoot Police Horses: How the Houston Police Department Became a Barefoot Herd of Hard Working Horses*. Liberated Horsemanship Press. 2010.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Alison Morrow: Seattle Police Department Horses' Shoes A Costly Necessity, KING 5 News, <http://www.king5.com/news/local/Seattle-PD-Horses-Shoes-A-Costly-Necessity-235672581.html>, 2013

professional generally runs between \$40 and \$80 per horse, or, using the average of \$60, \$520 per year. That's a considerable saving over the cost for shoeing, even if you are paying reasonable farrier fees.

But, a unit can save even more if the officers themselves or a designated officer within the unit learns to do the trimming. That's how the Houston Mounted Police do it. The Houston unit has a number of qualified trimmers: Mounted Officers Scott Berry and Danny Pryor are natural hoof care instructors for *Liberated Horsemanship, LLC* and have attended many Liberated Horsemanship clinics.<sup>48</sup> Houston Mounted Officer Gregory Sokoloski attended the *Liberated Horsemanship Kick Start Program* in natural hoof care hosted by the *Parsons Mounted Cavalry* at *Texas A&M University*. Officers Sokoloski, Berry and Pryor were instrumental in transitioning the units horses from traditional metal shoes to barefoot. Houston Mounted Officer Robert Hunter also attended the five day Liberated Horsemanship *Gateway To Natural Hoof Care Clinic* in Missouri. It takes an hour or less with experience to trim a horse's hooves and it should be done every four to six weeks.

Some opponents of mounted patrols have suggested that horse care takes officers away from patrol duties for too long, e.g., "Officers in the mounted unit, by necessity, spent a couple of hours of each shift getting their horses ready, traveling with their mounts to their posts and then getting them bedded down."<sup>49</sup> This is a misleading exaggeration. Getting a horse ready to ride and "bedding" him down should take an officer 45 minutes at most per duty day. And every officer, mounted or not, has to travel to his post. Adding an additional hour every four to six weeks for hoof care wouldn't be a significant detractor from normal law enforcement duties.

Performance boots should be available for extra protection when needed. Here's what Officer Berry wrote in a previous article:

"Boots are available for all of the horses—they hardly ever need them. We do make sure they have them on for large demonstrations and assignments where there is the possibility of broken glass and debris on the ground. The boots protect much more of the hoof than shoes."<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Liberated Horsemanship maintains a no fee for return visits policy. That is, attend a clinic once and return as often as you want for no additional registration fee.

<sup>49</sup> Michael Cooper: Police Departments Downsize, From 4 Legs to 2. New York Times, February 14, 2011.

<sup>50</sup> Mounted Police Officer Scott Berry: *Barefoot Police Horses: How the Houston Police Department Became a Barefoot Herd of Hard Working Horses*. Liberated Horsemanship Press. 2010.



**SIMPLE Boots by Cavallo  
worn by an unshod  
Canadian Mounted Police Horse.**



### **Fewer Stalls in Smaller Stables: Better For Horses; Better For Budgets**

Let me put this as succinctly as possible. You do not need a stall for every horse in a mounted police unit. You might want a stall or two available in case of an emergency—if a horse gets sick or injured. That's it. Even then an arrangement might be made in advance with a local boarding facility or a private horse property for stalls to accommodate such rare occasions. The mounted unit itself does not have to maintain stalls in a city facility even for emergencies.

If you don't need stalls for every horse, then, it follows, that a stable large enough for stalls for every horse isn't necessary either. All-in-all this can add up to considerable savings in startup and maintenance costs. On top of the obvious savings associated with a smaller, less complex facility, fewer stalls means fewer stalls to clean, ergo, fewer maintenance personnel or less time taken from an officer's law enforcement duties. It also means less bedding to dispose of.

In addition, living outside with the freedom to move around and interact with other horses at-will is far healthier for horses than spending hours standing motionless and

bored in dark, dingy stalls with unhealthy air quality. The boredom, loss of control over movement and activity, and inability to satisfy psychological needs that go along with hours spent in stalls are powerful stressors that can take a toll on long-term mental and physical well-being. That means more veterinarian bills. It is now estimated that up to 90% of all of our visits to primary care physicians are stress-related in one way or another.<sup>51</sup> It is the bane of our time. Stress is likely to be just as harmful to horses. It pokes and prods, finds weaknesses and turns them into pathologies.

We are not saying horses should and can be kept outside with no consideration for their safety and comfort. Definitely not. It is imperative to manage horses in ways that fulfill as many of their psychological needs as possible by providing equine companions, room to move naturally, free choice forage 24/7, and opportunities to control their own movements and activities. At the same time, it's important to avoid creating situations that intensify natural instincts and pervert their consequences, like creating a situation where horses compete for resources under conditions where movement is unnaturally restricted and avoidance is obstructed.

Domesticated horses living in captivity should also have shelter available for protection from extreme weather conditions. Free roaming wild and feral horses do just fine in all sorts of weather with no stalls to protect them. But, free roaming horses have an advantage in this regard. There are natural elements in the environment, like ravines, tree stands, and such, they can use for protection when needed. Domesticated horses should have structures available that take the place of those natural elements. The shelter doesn't have to be fancy or expensive to build. A run-in shed, lean-to or just a wind block is often all that is needed. An open area of a barn that the horses have free access to can also work.

## Composting

Waste materials associated with horse keeping can be a challenge to manage. You have to do something with it—spread it over pastures, put it in a ravine, or haul it away to an official dump site. But all of these traditional ways of dealing with it come with their own problems, especially if the horses are kept within the inner city.

Composting is a potentially better solution worth consideration. That's what the city

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<sup>51</sup> Dr. Bruce Nock, M.S., Ph.D: *The Biology Of Natural Horsemanship*. Liberated Horsemanship Press. 2007.

of Key West now does. Twenty volunteers donated a Saturday to build a composting shed for the police departments three horses. The project was funded with private donations. It saves the city about \$4,500 a year. “But the big-picture value, city staff said, is that the animal waste will now be turned into nutrient-rich soil available for free to residents and local outfits such as the Key West Botanical Gardens.”<sup>52</sup>

With modern innovations in composting the turn around time from animal waste to rich, high-quality soil is just 30 to 60 days. In addition,

“The O2Compost method destroys pathogens, parasites and weed seeds in the finished compost and eliminates impacts from odors, flies, rodents and birds. This approach to composting also reduces the release of volatile organic compounds (odorous emissions) as well as green house gases.”<sup>53</sup>

Composting systems don’t have to be unsightly either (picture below<sup>54</sup>).



## THE BOTTOM LINE

Mounted police: An outdated mode of law enforcement that is excessively expensive, or an irreplaceable arm of modern law enforcement? Obviously we believe the latter to be true. The evidence seems indisputable. Mounted police continue to be an effective, indispensable instrument of law enforcement that excels in areas like public relations and crowd control while holding certain advantages in other areas of police work too. The value of a mounted detail to a city clearly outweighs the cost of maintaining it by our estimates, especially in view of innovative funding mechanisms and modern strategies of horse management which are less expensive and healthier for

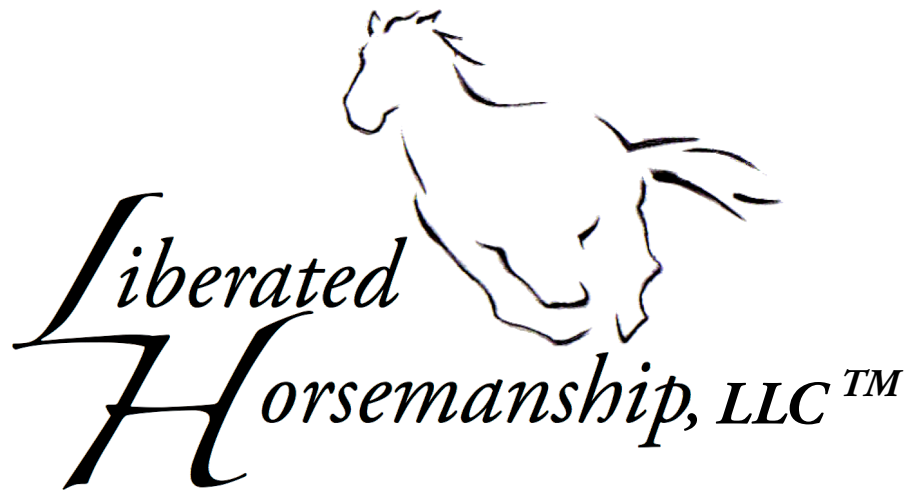
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<sup>52</sup> Gwen Filosa: *Volunteers Start Building City's Composting Shed*, Citizen Staff. Florida Keys News - Key West Citizen, August 19, 2013.

<sup>53</sup> *O2Compost: Compost Systems and Training*, [www.o2compost.com/o2-systems.aspx](http://www.o2compost.com/o2-systems.aspx).

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

horses than traditional management models. We encourage cities with mounted divisions to continue to maintain and support them and cities without to consider their potential value to their community.



**Acknowledgments:** The authors wholeheartedly thank Jean Nock and Ann Corso for their helpful comments on an early version of this manuscript.

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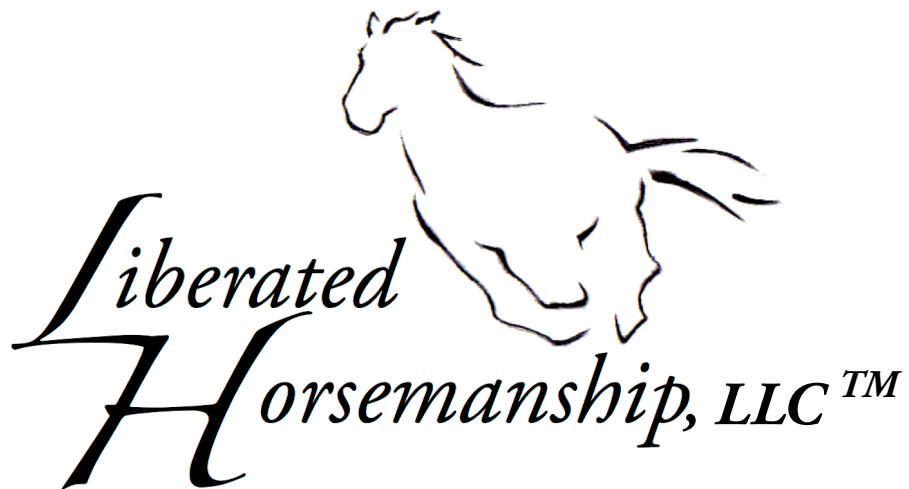
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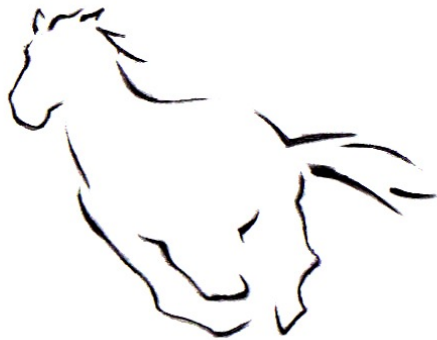
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