

LOCAL & STATE

THE DAILY UNION, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2007

HISTORIC INK

Retired Colonel Ed Ramsey (seated) autographs a print Friday depicting him in the last horse cavalry charge in U.S. history. The print was presented to Bill McKale (left), director of Fort Riley's U.S. Cavalry Museum. Also pictured is retired Brigadier General Philip Bolte, president of the U.S. Cavalry Association.



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THE DAILY UNION

COLONEL RECALLS LEADING LAST HORSE CAVALRY CHARGE FOR ARMY

By **LAURA STRODA**
The Daily Union

FORT RILEY — When retired Colonel Ed Ramsey was a young lieutenant fighting in the jungles of the Philippines, he never dreamed he'd wind up leading the last horse cavalry charge in U.S. history.

And he ended up with the job almost by accident.

"I did the one thing they tell you to never do in the Army — I volunteered (for the mission)," he told Fort Riley Garrison Commander Colonel Richard Piscal Friday at the U.S. Cavalry Association headquarters on main post.

Piscal and others were on hand Friday morning to watch as Ramsey signed numbered prints of the famous cavalry charge that took place more than 55 years ago.

Ramsey was a 24-year-old lieutenant in command of a platoon of Filipino scouts, members of the

26th Cavalry Regiment, and said he wouldn't be alive today if it weren't for those soldiers.

"They were probably as fine, if not the finest, regiment that the U.S. Army had," he said.

He managed to escape

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captivity on the Bataan peninsula and stayed in the Philippines for three years as a commander of the guerilla forces fighting against the Japanese.

"The Filipino civilians were just as loyal and wonderful as the soldiers were," Ramsey said. "When I escaped from Bataan, I figured I had maybe 30 to 90 days to live. The peasants in the fields would take their last chicken to feed my troop commander and I, and they would give us the last thing they had to keep us alive."

The Filipino people influenced Ramsey so much that he decided to call it home for nearly two decades. Ramsey said the admiration has gone both ways, though, and said he's been deco-

rated by every president of the Philippines since World War II.

As wars and the military evolved after World War II, so did the horse cavalry regiments. The trooper-and-mount units transformed to armored cavalry units and eventually to air cavalry units.

Ramsey said the change was "necessary" but still thinks horse regiments could be functional in today's military.

"We could see it was coming even then. We would put our horses in trucks ... and took them to the areas near where combat was expected," he said.

"But I think they should have always kept at least one or more regiments of horse cavalry because there's parts of the world where you can't take vehicles into. You can take a helicopter, but you can't maneuver like you can on a horse."
