



Citizen Photo

Vet's fortune: time and adventure

Paul Bell, who as a young man patrolled the border with the U.S. Cavalry, now is confined to a wheelchair. Bell lives alone in an adobe house he built on the back road to Arivaca.

Horse soldier fading, but memories remain

By SAM NEGRI
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Cradled now in the hands of time, Paul Bell sat in his wheelchair talking of his days in the U.S. Cavalry.

It was a tough life, he said, but not as tough as he finds old age.

Now 83 years old and arthritic, Bell spends his days looking from the window of his old adobe house at the land he patrolled between 1911 and 1914 as a soldier with Troop F, 5th Cavalry.

He lives south of Green Valley, not quite as far as Tubac, in a mesquite thicket on a back road to Arivaca. He is three miles from the 660 acres he homesteaded in 1930, waiting.

"My time is up and I'm just waiting to die," he says. "I usually stay in bed 'til noon so I don't have to stay in this chair too long. I

six men on patrol with me, and we had to go door to door asking people to give up their weapons. I heard that one man had a rifle, I recall, and I went to his house and surrounded the place. Then I knocked on the door and asked him if he had a gun. He said no. So I pushed back the door a little bit and sure enough, there was the rifle leaning against a wall."

Bell said the man relinquished the rifle. "He had no choice. I had six men surrounding that cabin," he said with a smile.

For weeks on end, Bell and his comrades lived in their saddles. "I'd see those infantry boys with sore feet," he laughed, "and somehow that seemed worse than a sore rear."

Taken as a whole, he said, life in the cavalry was an experience he could never forget. "There was a great amount of pride being in the cavalry. I felt I was doing something for the country. We didn't get paid for it."

6,000 Viets repairing rails

SAIGON (AP) — Six thousand Vietnamese are "working on the railroad," the Revolutionary Government says.

They are working to repair South Vietnam's war-shattered rail system and link it with North Vietnam, another step toward reunification of the country. The government says the railroad project has been given top priority.

680 acres he homes headed in 1930, waiting.

"My time is up and I'm just waiting to die," he says. "I usually stay in bed 'til noon so I don't have to stay in this chair too long. I read a book or the papers, watch some television, get myself something to eat. Time goes by."

Bell talks without bitterness, knowing that his life has been long and diverse, and memories still can produce a spark of enthusiasm.

Bell's memories are unique.

In 1911, when he was 18, he left his native Germany, working aboard a transport ship that was bound for New Jersey.

Before he was in the U.S. a year, he made his way through various jobs in Detroit, where he enlisted in the U.S. Cavalry. He was, possibly, the only recruit at that time who spoke more German than English.

Soon afterwards, he found himself on horseback at Fort Leavenworth, and eventually was assigned to Fort Huachuca. Most of his days were spent patrolling the U.S. border with Mexico.

"At one point," he recalled, "while we were still at Fort Leavenworth, we were sent out to a place near Trinidad, Colo., to help the National Guard. There was a lot of violence between the Wobblies and the mines there, and we were called in to collect all arms."

(Wobblies were members of the Industrials Workers of the World, a union founded by militant socialists, who employed sudden strikes and sabotage in their conflicts with the capitalist system.)

"I was a corporal at that time and I had

Taken as a whole, he said, life in the cavalry was an experience he could never forget. "There was a great amount of pride being in the cavalry. I felt I was doing something for the country I'd adopted. I loved it.

"I got a great kick out of riding horseback, especially when a 2nd lieutenant would come along with white gloves and run it along a horse's back, looking for dust, and if his glove found dust, that was it. You did the horse all over again."

When he left the service in 1914, World War I was beginning, and Bell tried to enlist in the Army again.

"I went to Nogales to enlist and they wouldn't take me 'cause I was born in Germany and listed still as an alien. I tried to tell 'em that when I left the Kaiser I was through with him."

Still, he wasn't accepted. So he married a woman who had three children from a previous marriage, had a fourth child, and spent his life building a home.

For the 63 years he has been in Arizona, Bell has existed by doing odd jobs, repairing cars, moving furniture, prospecting in the Diablo Hills and often living off the small herds of pigs and cows he kept.

In more recent times, he and his wife, who died five years ago, ran a spartan saloon in the living room of their house — the only drinking establishment between Cow Palace and Arivaca. The room is barren now, and the paint faded.

Bell says, a bit wistfully, "That's the way it went, through the years."