Criteria for the Major Howze

Jeffrey S. Wall

The Major Howze was created in order to preserve the cavalry tradition of mobility. Prior to The Major Howze mobility test all NCC events were held in the arena and it became understood by the Board of Directors that should this continue, eventually the horses employed would be great arena horses but not representative of the field horses used by the cavalry. The Major Howze is also the only team or unit event in the NCC in which all participants can participate.

In order to continue in an optimum time based format - which also minimizes personnel requirements - The Major Howze will be run as follows:

1. The course will be between 5 and 8 miles long, varying from year to year. The length of the course will be measured by one or the other or both of 2 methods - GPS and or the use of a ‘quad’ with an operating odometer.
2. The optimum time for traversing the course will be determined by the judges based on the desired pace to be maintained in congress with the length of the course, i.e. a shorter course can require a slower pace, a longer course, a faster pace. This means the required rate of speed can and will vary from year to year.
3. The range of paces will accordingly vary between 5 and 8 miles per hour.
4. The difficulty of the course will be such that it is both mildly challenging yet ride-able by all participants in the NCC. To avoid the problem created by the ‘penalty loop last year, there will be no penalty loops at all. One course for all, period.
5. The teams will not be notified of the either the length of the course or the optimum time. They will be told the pace to maintain in order to hit the optimum time. This will require the teams to know how to maintain the various rates of speed in order to make the optimum time.
6. The competitors will argue that they should know the length of the course. Some may even desire to know both the length and the optimum time. This is antithetical to what the Cavalry required of its unit leaders. It is also analogous to giving an algebra test and providing the ‘testee’ with both the equations to use and the answers.
7. What the competitors do need to know is found here:
   “A successful march is one which places the command at the required place, at the required time, and in condition to perform the assigned mission…. A commander must march his command so as to fulfill all three of the above requirements. To fail in one of them may prove disastrous… No matter what
may be the other attainments of a cavalry leader, he is a failure unless he can conduct with skill a rapid and sustained movement of cavalry troops.”¹ 
“…As a rule, therefore, [march] schedules must be flexible and must conform to the terrain. It will usually be impossible to tell beforehand just when or where to walk, lead, or trot…. Assuming the lead and walk at approximately the same rate, the problem reduces itself to how many minutes the command must trot out each hour. The following schedules give with sufficient accuracy the number of minutes’ trot required in a 55-minute march period to make the rate indicated:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rate desired</th>
<th>Trotting time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4½ mph</td>
<td>14 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 mph</td>
<td>18 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5½ mph</td>
<td>25 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 mph</td>
<td>31 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6½ mph</td>
<td>36 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Walking/lead</th>
<th>Trot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.06 miles in 1 minute</td>
<td>.15 miles in 1 minute</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the walking/lead and trotting times noted above the following is added:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rate desired</th>
<th>Trotting time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 mph</td>
<td>39 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7½ mph</td>
<td>44 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 mph</td>
<td>49 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Accordingly, it is clear from the cavalry manual that the cavalry leader was required to know how to maintain an X mile per hour pace. Thus designing the mobility phase of The Major Howze course as described above tests and preserves that capability and tradition.

8. Penalties for missing the optimum time will be one point [1 point] per second, rounded to the nearest second. The maximum score for the mobility phase is 1000 points. Thus a unit that comes in either 5 minutes fast or 5 minutes slow off the optimum time would lose 300 points. A unit that came in 4 minutes and 25 seconds before the optimum time would lose 265 points while a team that came in 3 minutes and 10 seconds over the optimum time would lose 190 points. This is a very fair and objective scoring system for this phase.

9. The scoring of the attack phase is a combination of objective and subjective scoring. The subjective evaluation is:

10. The smoothness and efficiency of the transition from the march formation to the attack formation – 15 points maximum.

11. The transition from the marching gait to the assault gait [trot to canter to gallop] – 15 points maximum.

12. The rally and report. The speed and efficiency of reforming and accounting for all personnel, horses and equipment and the reporting of same – 20 points.

13. The subjective evaluation of the attack phase is to be judged by 3 judges located at different places in the objective area. One judge is to be safely located adjacent to the right flank of the target array, another safely positioned to the left flank of the target array and the 3\textsuperscript{rd} judge safely beyond the target array. This judge will stand next to a guidon planted in the ground and is the judge to whom the unit commander reports.

There is a scoring sheet for this subjective evaluation to ensure uniformity of evaluation across the units.

The objective evaluation in the objective area is the engagement of the targets:

14. Were all targets engaged/hit? Y/N? Minus 5 points for each target not attacked/missed.

15. Were all targets effectively hit with the saber point? Y/N? Minus 5 points for each target not penetrated at least 3” with the saber point.

16. Each target correctly engaged gains the team 2 points per. Each target that is correctly engaged within the 3”x5” marked heart area gains the team 4 points per [a possible of 64 points].

17. Teams are allowed one pass only through the target array. Each team member will proceed straight through his or her lane in the target array. No team member will make a second attempt at any target. Doing so is a penalty of 150 points subtracted from the team’s score.

a. Any competitor using a sword other than the US models 1840 heavy cavalry saber, 1861 light cavalry saber or 1913 cavalry saber must present their saber at the earliest time practicable to the event director but no later than 2 hours before the start of the event so that it may be measured. Failure to do so will invalidate all targets struck with that saber; any such hits will be scored as misses.

The team that attacks any target with the edge is eliminated from the event. This is a safety violation.

Note that the emphasis is placed on the mobility phase of the event. This is as it should be. The Major Howze is the unit mobility test of the NCC. While the attack phase is important to demonstrate control and the ability of the unit to
conduct an attack, the emphasis must remain on the movement of the unit to the objective area – as the emphasis is placed in the 1935 cavalry manual.

Uniform and equipment:
1. Period appropriate field uniform
2. Pistol/saber belt with saber and pistol [unloaded]
3. Full canteen carried in the period correct manner.
4. Period appropriate saddlebags or cantle bags as used by that service.
5. Cantle pack consisting of the soldier’s sleeping blanket
6. Correct period bridle and halter with lead. The bit is left to the rider’s discretion as to what is appropriate and safe for the mount.