

# Animals in wars

Innocent victims of human stupidity  
and cruelty

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Visegrad Vet Plus Spring Meeting 2019

Strunjan, 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2019

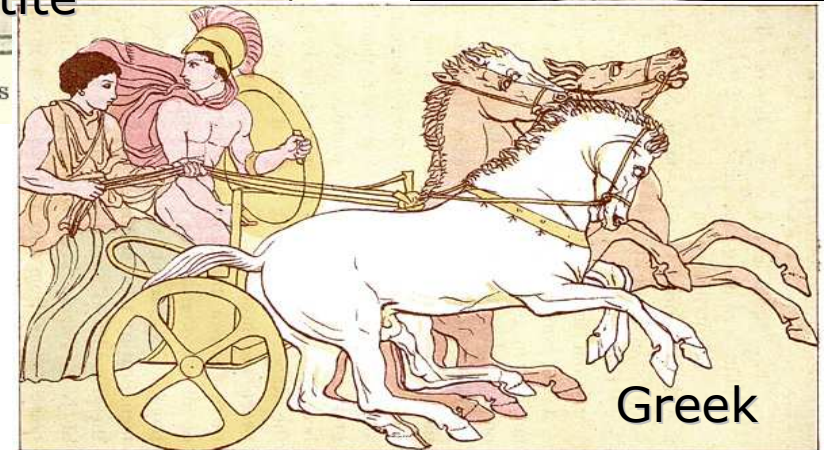
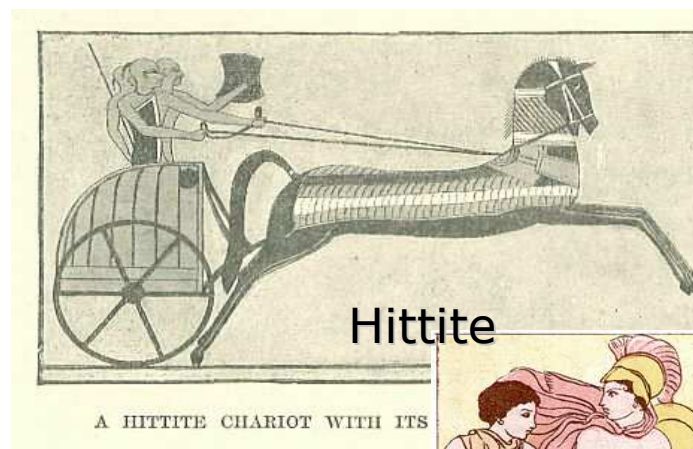
# War

- war is ...
  - ... the father of all things (Heraclitus, 540–480 BC)
  - ... sweet for those who never tasted it (Pindar, 522–443 BC)
  - ... ruler's favourite and the most noble occupation  
(Louis XIV of France, 1638–1715)
  - ... continuation of the politics by other means  
(Carl von Clausewitz, 1780–1831)
- war is a state of armed conflict between states, governments, societies and informal paramilitary groups, such as mercenaries, insurgents and militias; generally characterized by extreme violence, aggression, destruction, and mortality, using regular or irregular military forces

- appearance of the war in the history of mankind ?
  - permanent settlement,
  - invention of the agriculture,
  - domestication of the animals,
  - origin of the private property & the class society
- the earliest recorded evidence of war – prehistoric cemetery Jebel Sahaba, cca. 14,000 years old; 61 individual skeletons at least 28 (45 %) died of violent wounds
- between 3500 BC and the late 20<sup>th</sup> century: 14,500 wars, 3.5 billion lives, only 300 years of peace
- until the invention of technical devices, army combat capacities (mobility, transport, communications) depended on animal abilities (strength, velocity, senses, instincts)

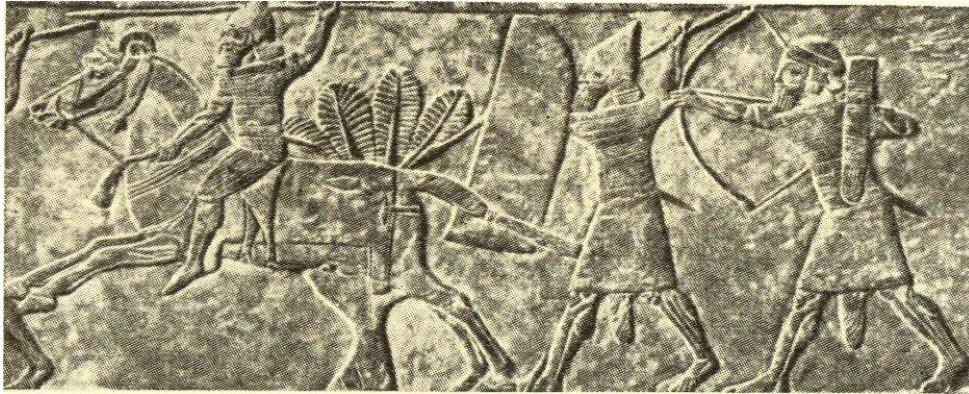
# Animals in ancient wars

- **Horses in combat chariots:** from bronze age (Iliad, 12<sup>th</sup> cent. BC) till the Roman-Celtic wars 390 – 50 BC (De bello Galico; Caesar 58–50); Hyksos, Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Hittites, Persians, Greeks, Thracian, Etruscans, Kelts, Chinese, Indians





- first **ancient cavalry** – (most probably) invented by Assyrians (cca. 9<sup>th</sup> cent. BC); later on accepted by other ancient peoples; soon replaced combat chariots



Ashurbanipal's cavalry



A scene from Vače situla



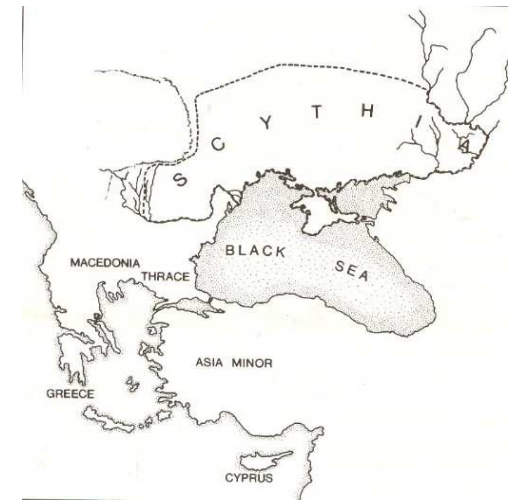
The Greek cavalry



A Roman cavalryman



- **stirrups** first used by Scythians in today Ukraine (8<sup>th</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. BC)
- not accepted neither by Greeks nor by Romans



Scythian cavalrymen



Roman cavalryman



Greek riders

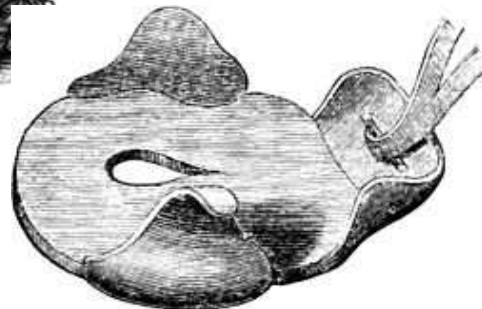
## Hooves protection

- Greeks used *hyposandals*, shoes made of straw, rod, leather fixed on the hooves
- Romans invented *solea ferrea* (*iron sole*), iron plates with wings and straps, fixed on the hooves; medical treatment of hooves?
- horse shoeing:
  - Celts in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC; roman cavalry accepted Celtic horseshoeing where in contact with the Celt inhabitants
  - Chinese cavalry in the 1st century BC

Hoof protective device made of rope (Japan, 19th c.)



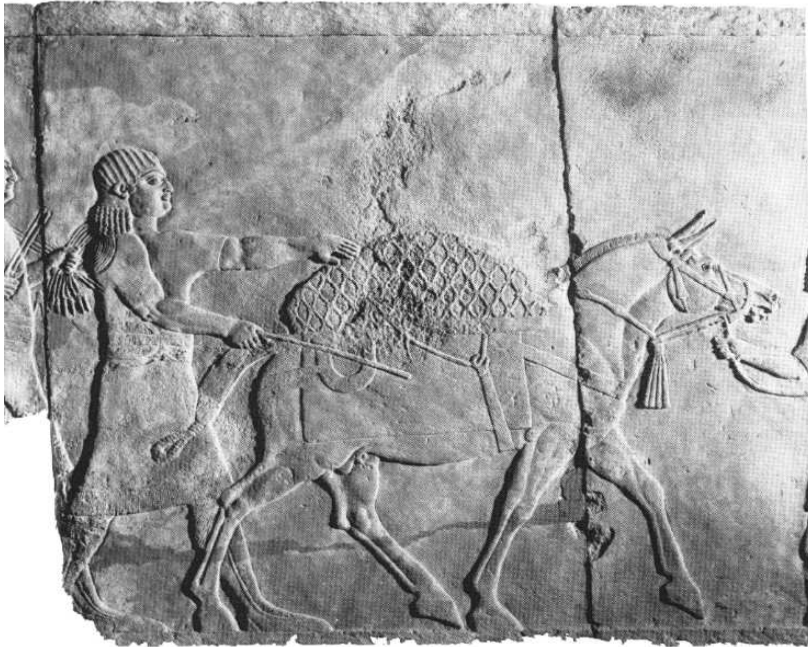
Iron sole



Celtic horseshoe



- **mules** and **hinnies** as pack animals were used by all ancient peoples
- Sumerians were using **hemions** or **onagers** (*Equus hemionus*); Asian wild donkeys; temporary domestication



Mules from Ashurbanipal's palace



Hunting onagers

- Assyrians bred **dogs**, similar to today's mastiffs, for hunting and (probably) combat
- searching fugitives in wars of Philip II Macedon
- guarding military camps (Greeks, Romans, Huns)
- very ferocious hybrids of wolves and dogs bred by the Celts (Pliny the elder)



Assirian hunting and battle dog

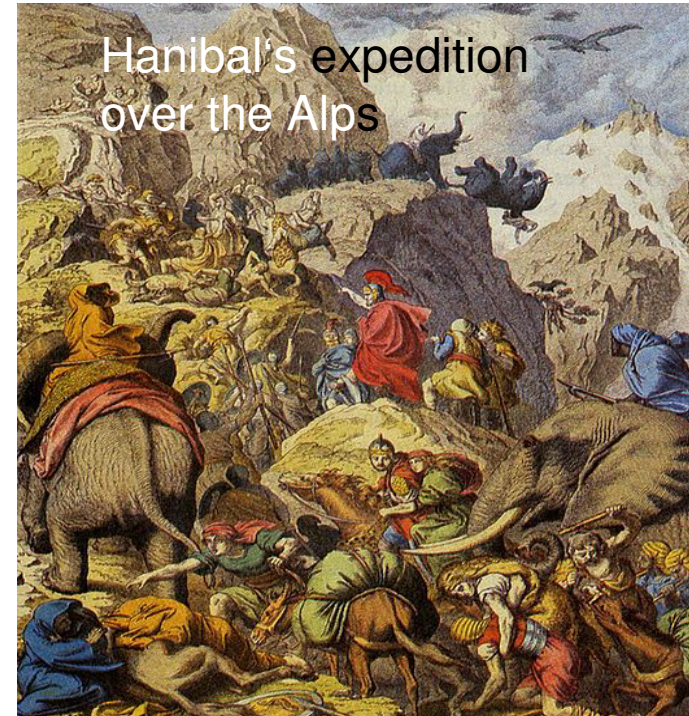




- **elephants** as support to infantry and cavalry described in old Indian **epics**
- some famous ancient battles with elephants:
  - **Gaugamela** 331 BC (the Persian king Darius);
  - **Hidaspa** 326 BC (Alexander the Great against 200 elephants)
  - Pyrrhus' battles of **Heraklea** (280 BC), **Ausculum** (279), **Benevento** (275 BC)
  - **Hanibal's expedition** over the Alps (218 BC); (*Loxodonta cyclotis*)
  - **Kinoskefalea** 197 BC (elephants used by the Romans)



Pyrrhus elephants





- in the battle of Thymbra (547 BC) – the Persian king Cyrus conquered Croesus by placing **camels** in front of the cavalry; their smell repelled the horses (Xenophon)?



- in Egypt, sailors released **homing pigeons** before coming home; Phoenicians; ancient Persians
- messengers in civil and military service in Greece (proclamation of the winners of the ancient Olympics) and Rome (Julius Caesar used pigeons as messengers in his conquest of Gaul)





# Veterinary army services in Ancient time

- the first military veterinary service organised by the Sumerian, then by the Assyrian army; clay plates from the Ashurbanipal palace (7<sup>th</sup> c. BC) describe some animal diseases and their treatment
- in India and Shri Lanka, hospitals for elephants and horses were in use in the 3<sup>rd</sup> cent. BC.
- the highest level of animal medical treatment in ancient time achieved in the Roman army in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. AD – *hippoiatros*
- after the fall of the Roman Empire in the western Europe, the ancient veterinary knowledge was lost, forgotten or much truncated, but in Byzantium preserved till the fall of the city in 1453



Hippiatrics

# Animals in the Middle Ages wars

## Heavy and light cavalry

- western-feudal, Byzantine (heavy and light)
- equestrian nations: the Avars, Hungarians, Mongols – light cavalry
- **horseshoeing** – accepted in Franconian empire and in Byzantium around **1000 AD**
- **stirrups** came to Europe in the 7<sup>th</sup> century – brought by the Avars (wood, leather, iron)



zu Costenz. LXVII  
Graff Herman von Sily.



Decorated oriental  
stirrups

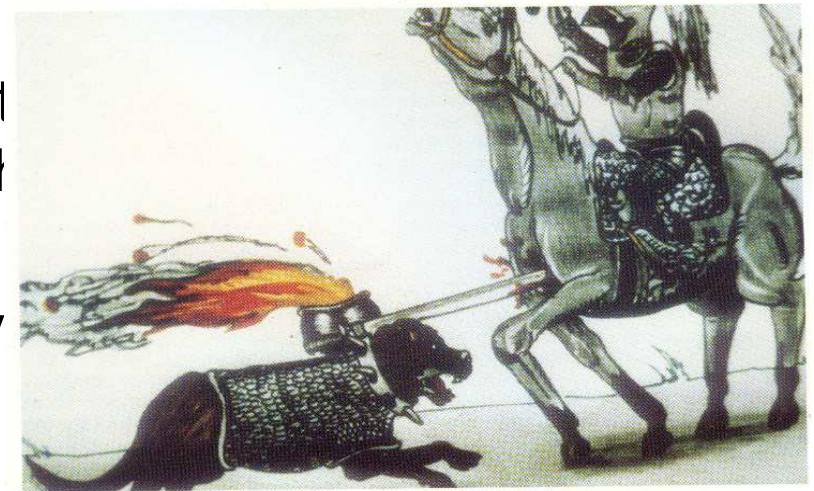


European stirrups – excavations

- state **pigeon-mail** organised in 7<sup>th</sup> cent. in Persia, in 12<sup>th</sup> cent. in Egypt, Syria, Arabia; ceased with the Mongol invasions
- in the Crusades (1095 – 1289) pigeons transferred news from besieged Jerusalem (1098) and Aka (1191)
- crusaders brought pigeons into Europe, esp. Germany
- in the Dutch liberation wars, pigeons as messenger from besieged Harlem (1572–1573) and Leiden (1574)
- the last usage of **battle elephants** – the battle of Angora 1402 (between Tamerlane and the sultan Bayazid)
- battle **dogs** against the infantry and cavalry



Battle of Angora





# Mareskalks

- in the western Europe, sick animals were treated by owners, breeders, shepherds (mixture of natural medicine, spells and witchcraft)
- on feudal/royal courts, after the invention of horseshoeing, **mareskalks** (Celtic-Germ. marh – horse, skalk/scalc – servant, stableman) become responsible for feeding, nursing, horseshoeing and curing horses
- mareskalk → marescallus → maréchal → marshal → a very high military rank





# New armies

- during the decline of feudalism feudal armies were gradually replaced by the permanent armies under the central command; process of transformation finished by the end of the 30 years war (1618-1648)
- differences between heavy and light cavalry disappeared
- 1500–1650 horsemen armed with sword and fire arms (pistols, arquebuses, carbines);
- after 1650 reinvention of cold arms (cavalry sabres, lances); only light cavalry



pistol



191



192

arquebuses



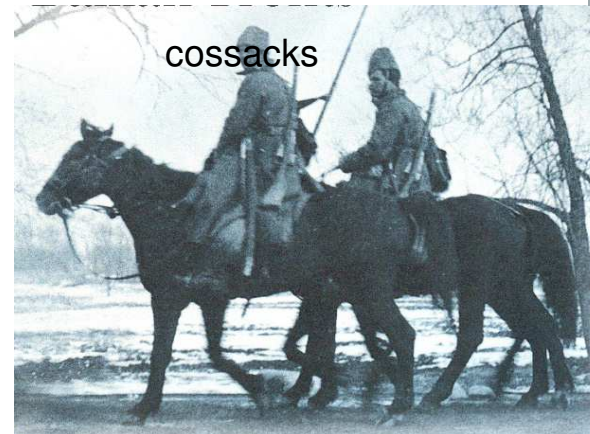
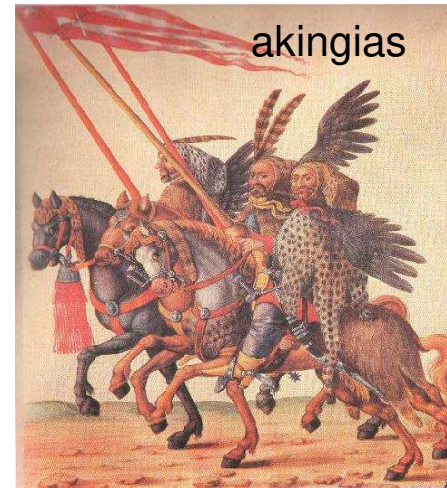
carbine



German cavalry sabre

## Cavalleries

- dragoons (successors of the heavy cavalry),
- hussars (light cavalry)
- ulans (Polish light cavalry),
- cuirassiers (successors of the heavy cavalry in French army),
- lancers (light cavalry),
- mounted infantry (riding in movement, fighting as infantry),
- cossacks (elite horsemen in Russian imperial army)
- yeomen (voluntary British cavalry)
- spahias (heavy cavalry in Otoman empire)
- akingias (light cavalry in Otoman empire)





# Veterinary service in permanent armies

- mareskalks were replaced by **farriers**; ((Fran.) **maréchal-ferrant**, (Ital.) **maniscalco**, (Ger.) **Kurschmied** – die Kur - healing, der Schmied – smith); curing and horseshoeing still performed by the same person
- knowledge empirical; transferred from master to apprentice
- 18<sup>th</sup> cent. (Enlightenment) the **first veterinary schools**: Lyon 1761, Alfort 1763, Vienna 1765, (another 14 until the end of the century)



École vétérinaire de Lyon



Pferde-Curen und Operationsschule,  
Wien

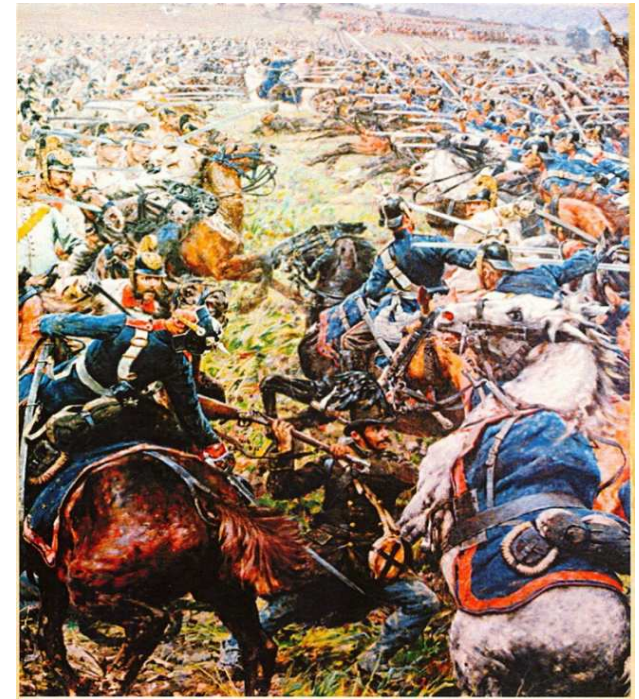
- the biggest development in cavalry – the Napoleonic Wars (number of animals, tactics); sick animals badly treated which caused enormous loss of the animals; small number of badly educated farriers, no animal hospitals

The battle of Eylau, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> February 1807 (among Napoleon, Russian and Prussian cavalries; probably the biggest cavalry battle in the history; number of dead persons cca. 20,000; number of dead horses unknown





- after the Napoleonic Wars (Waterloo 1815), cavalry remained the striking force of all armies; new weapons (repeaters, machineguns) announced its end
- veterinary service still badly organised, the same deficiency as in previous wars
- 2<sup>nd</sup> half 19<sup>th</sup> cent. – 1<sup>st</sup> WW; vet. administrative organs established in higher commands; the replacement of farriers by veterinarians; organisation of vet. hospitals, laboratories, stores; invention of stage medical treatment (first aid in the units; badly damaged or sick animals evacuated into the hospitals in the rear)



Střezetice 1866

A detail from the Crimean War  
(1853-1856)



# AH military vet. service before WW 1

- military vets – army clerks (not the officers)
  - lower vet 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> class (Untertierarzt)
  - vet (Tierarzt)
  - superior vet 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> class (Hochtierarzt)
  - staff vet 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> class (Stabstierarzt) invented in 1905
- duties: care of the horses, work in the remount commission (yearly review and substitution of the horses); meat inspection, keeping the service; administration work
- no. of vets in AH army:
  - 1889: 134,
  - 1914: 176
- cause of the small no. of vets: lower salaries than in the civil sector, military subordination, frequent transfers in different garnisons





Dragoons

# AH cavalry

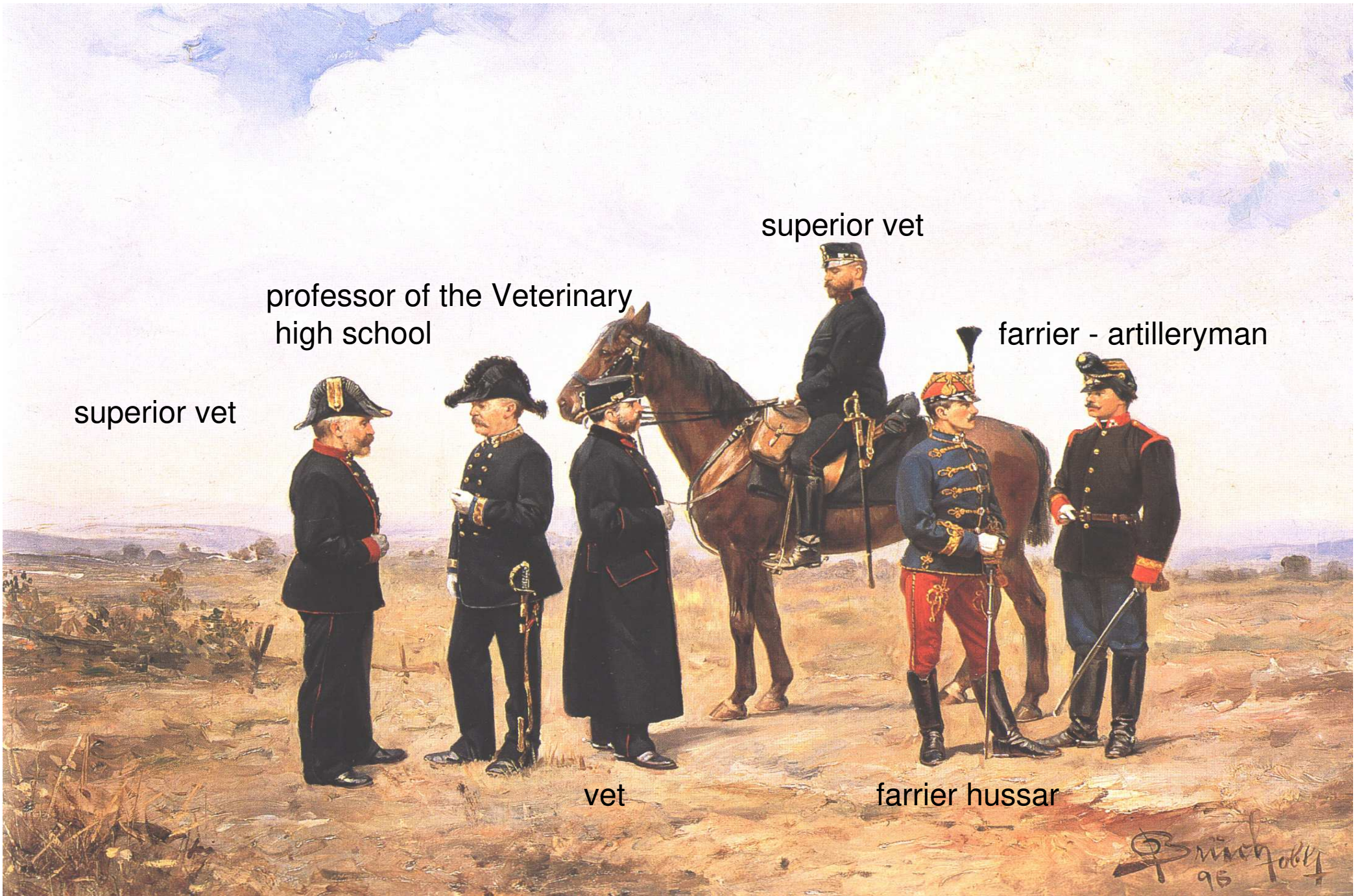
## Common army



Ulan

14 dragoon, 16 hussar, 11 ulan horse regiments





superior vet

professor of the Veterinary high school

vet

superior vet

farrier - artilleryman

farrier hussar

Stuck 95



## Education of veterinarians & farriers in AH army

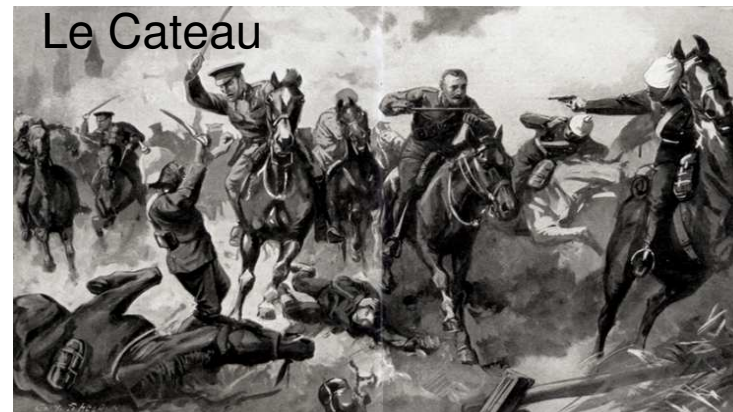
- Vienna & Budapest Veterinary High schools part of the military administration
- 1904 – 1918 Veterinary Military Academia in Vienna & Budapest
- 2-years farrier courses till the end of 1918



At the end of a farrier course 1906 – 1908

# Animals in 1<sup>st</sup> WW

- at the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> WW all the belligerent armies relied on the striking force of the cavalry – based on false calculations of war theorists
- cavalry battles in the first days of the 1<sup>st</sup> WW (Jaroslawice on 21<sup>st</sup>, Mons on 24<sup>th</sup>, St. Quentin on 26<sup>th</sup> Aug. and Le Cateau on 13<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1914 ) ended tragically for men and horses
- on all fronts cavalries did not fulfil the expectations

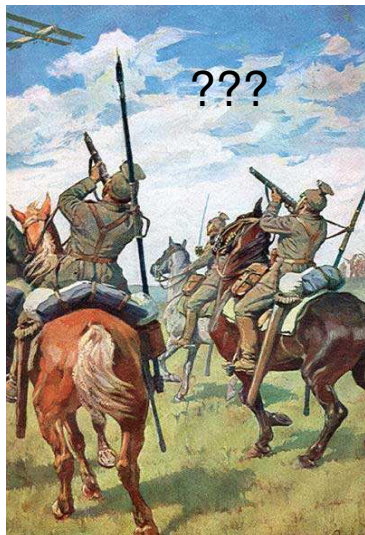




- position war, modern weapons (machine-guns, aviation, poisonous gas) made cavalries ineffective; units dismissed, horsemen included into infantry
- frequent cavalry battles on the Near East (Beersheba, 31<sup>st</sup> Oct. 1917)
- some cavalry units remained and took part in the battles at the end of the war (Moreuil Ridge 6<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1917, German “Kaiserschlacht” March 1918, Amiens Aug. 1918)



Infantry and cavalrymen



???



German cavalry 1918



On the march to Beersheba)



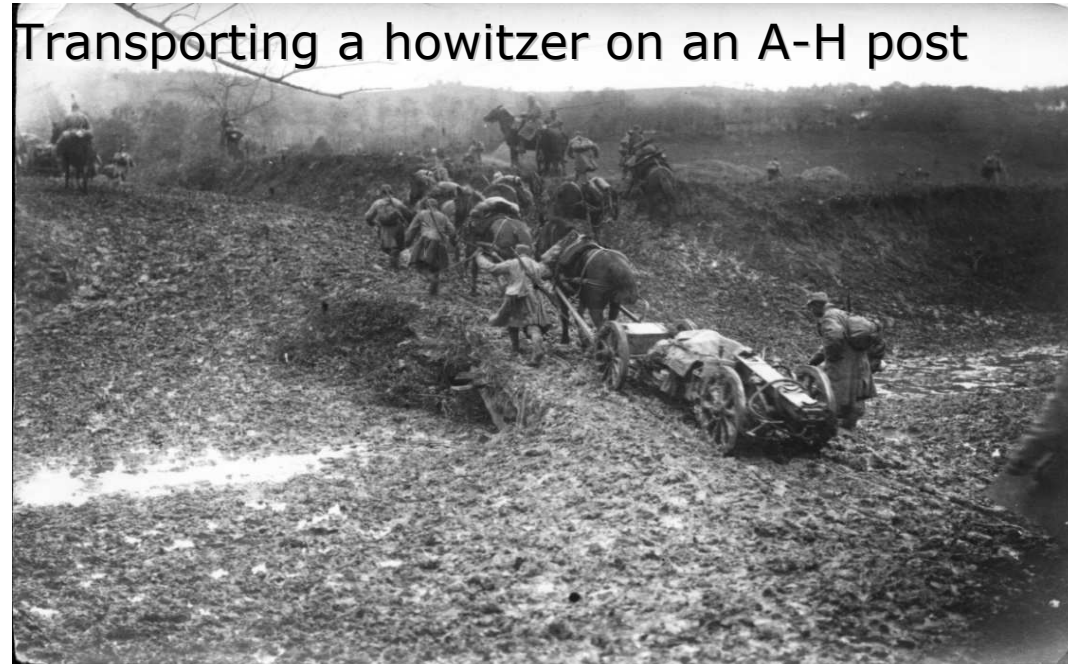


Emotional links developed between the horses and horsemen





- horses in artillery and transport

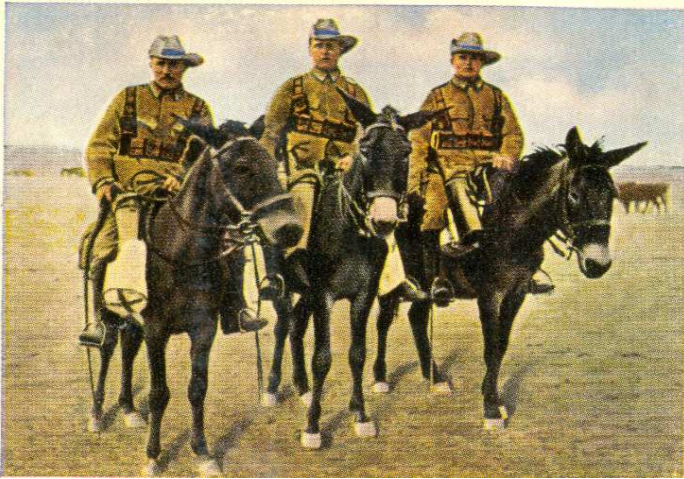


During the rest on the Isonzo front



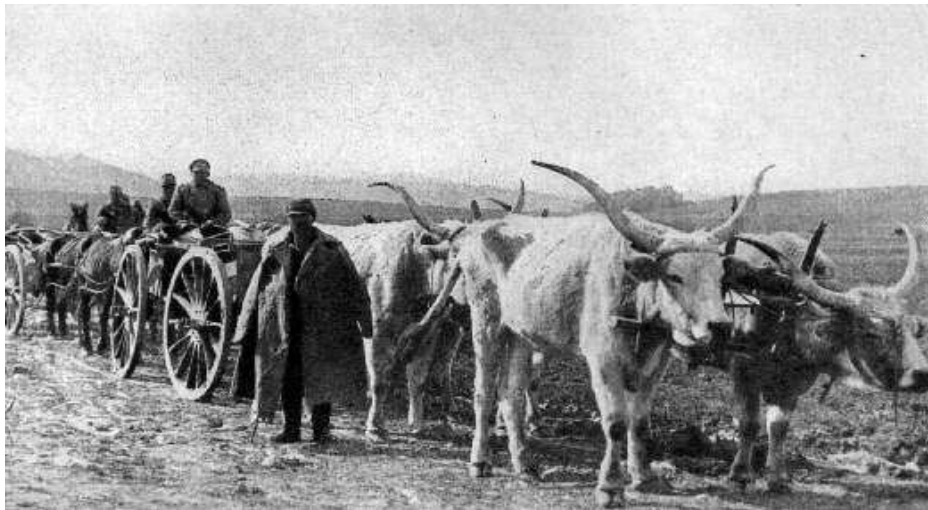


- mules & donkeys



Water transport by donkeys on the Isonzo front

- cattle & water buffalos as draught animals



On the way to Przemysł



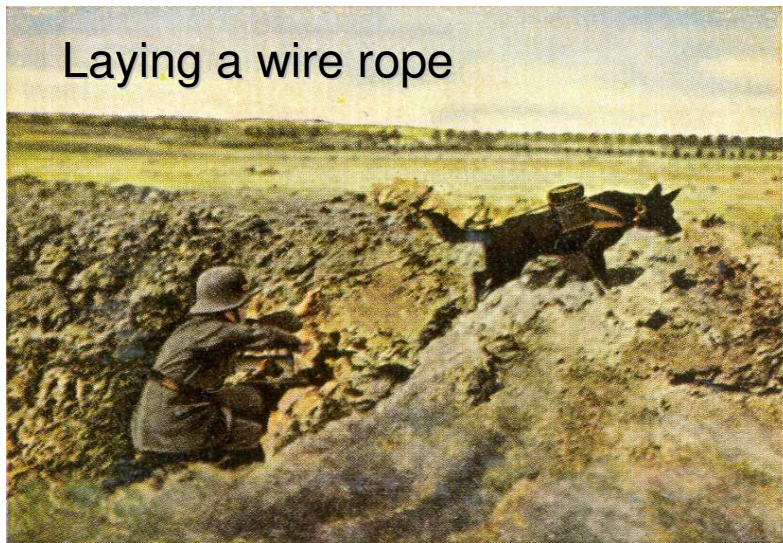
Oxen in the Serbian army

- water buffalos belonging to Russian POW were engaged on the road construction over Vršič



- in the German army: cca. 6000 **dogs** in 1914, 40,000 in 1918: other armies similar situation

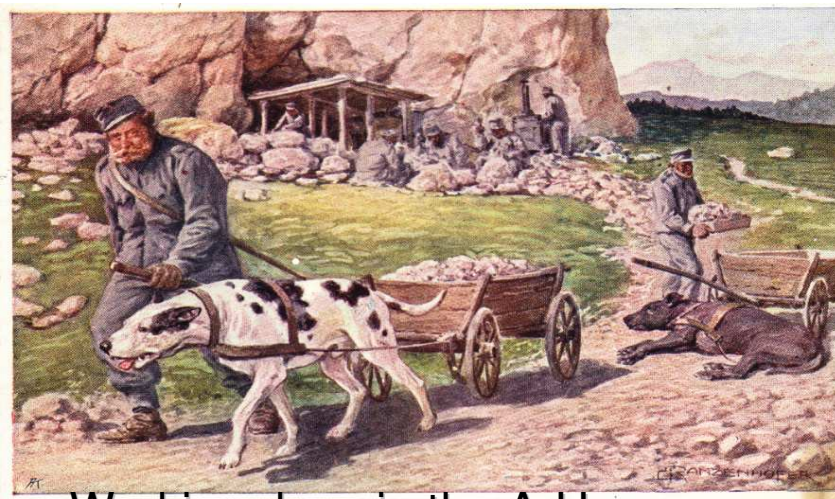
Laying a wire rope



Transfer of a message



Belgian machinegun unit



Working dogs in the A-H army





Drought dogs (Ajdovščina)

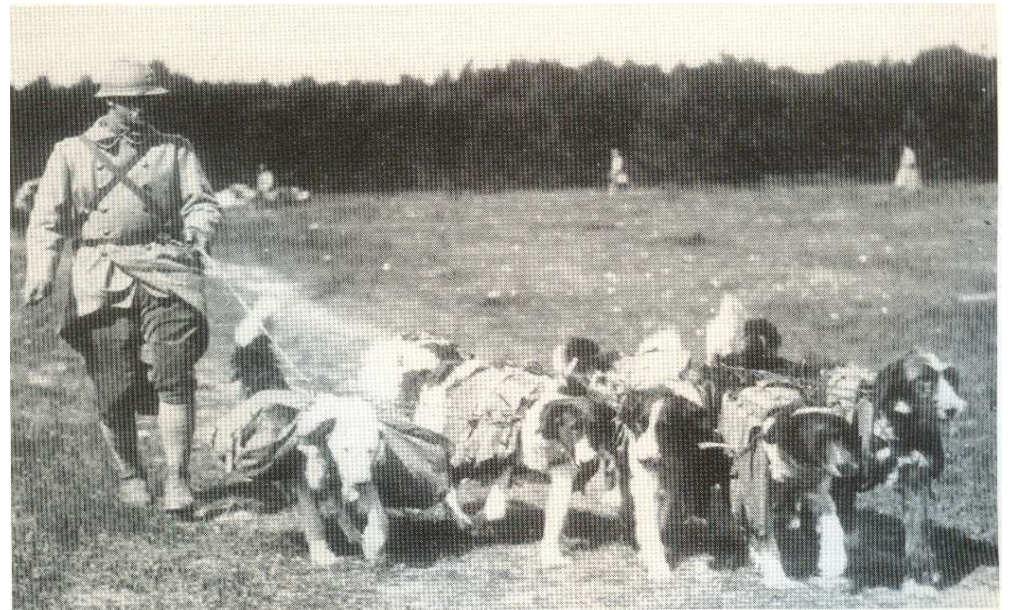


Dog transport towards the Isonzo front

A dog team on the Isonzo front



Pack dogs in the French army

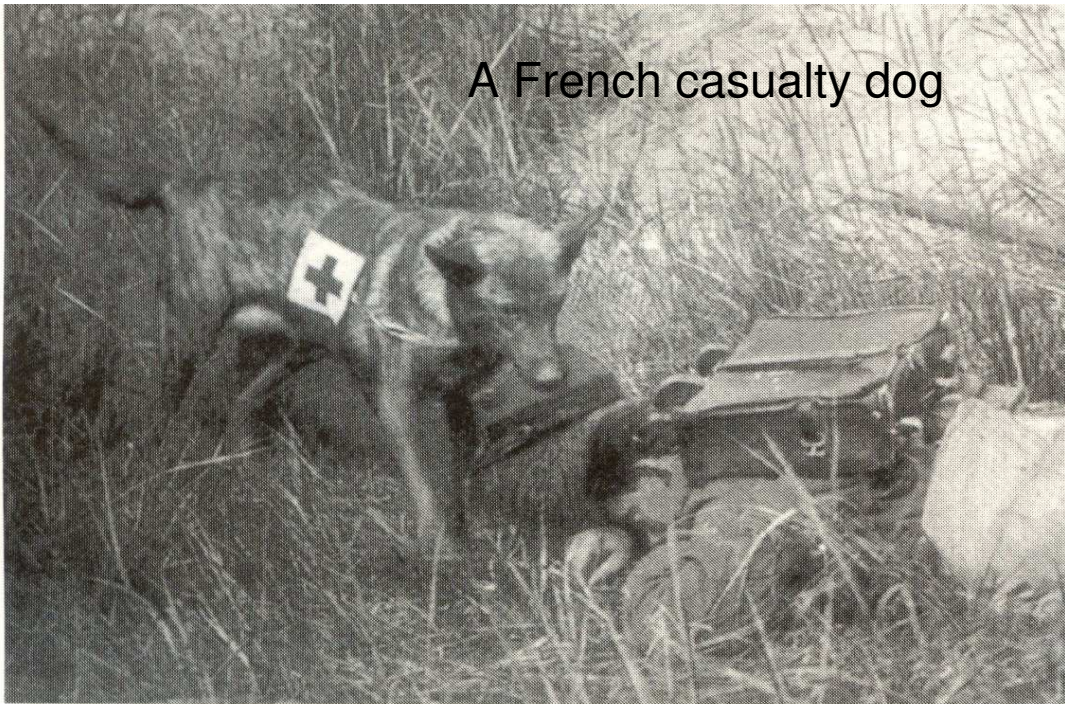




A German casualty dog



A French casualty dog



A casualty dog in the A-H army



- pigeons

Pigeons and wireless station

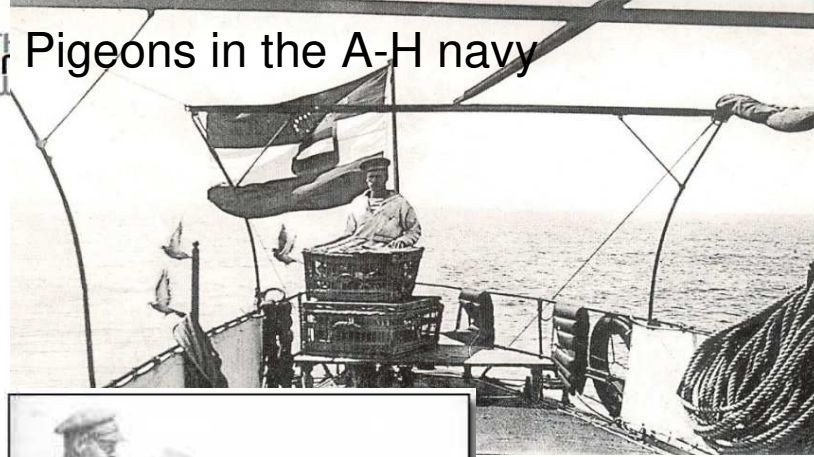


A pigeon with a camera



Pigeon gas protection

Pigeons in the A-H navy



Pigeon transport in the German army

A dovecot in Kluže



On the Isonzo front



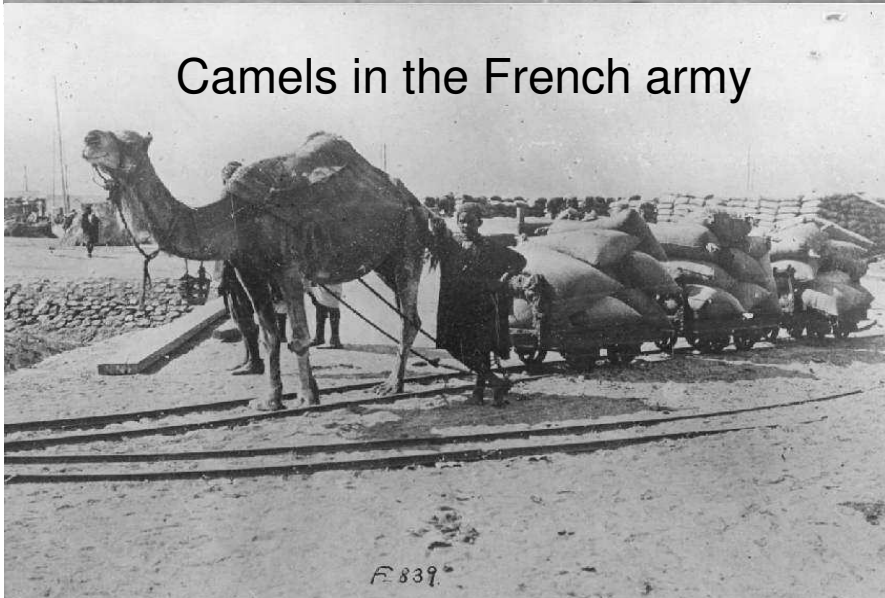
- **camels** (riding, pack, drought); Middle East; British “Imperial Camel Corps Brigade – ICCB”; battles in Libya, Sinai Peninsula, Palestine, in Arabian insurrection;



ICCB on march



After the Turkish aircraft attack



Camels in the French army

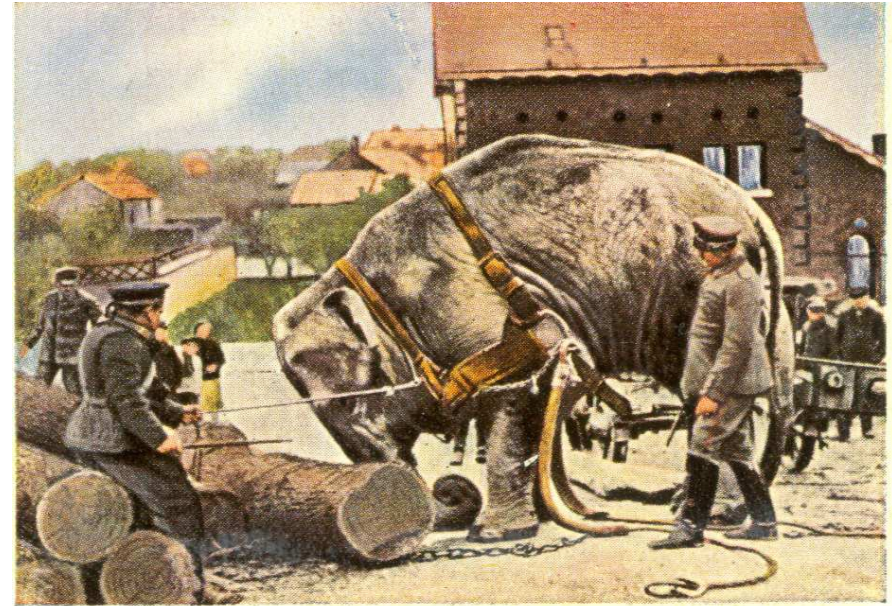


Camels in the Turkish army





Elephants of Berlin zoo



A working elephant in the German army in 1915

Working elephant Lizzie in British ammunition factory in Sheffield

**THE ELEPHANT IN THE CITY**

*Sheffield residents are being treated to a circus show every day as Lizzie the Elephant joins in the war effort.*

Scrap merchant Tommy Ward is being helped by Lizzie as she pulls up to three times a horse's haul of steel across the city.





# Military veterinary service in 1<sup>st</sup> WW

- relatively well organised, based on professional staff, hospitals, stage medical treatment
- in the German army, till the end of the war, 478 vet. hospitals treated 1,378,000 horses; losses around 68 % animals
- in the Italian army mange hospitals
- the best organised vet. service of Great Britain; Veterinary army Corps; 1914–1918 cured and returned into the units about 2,000,000 horses (74 %)
- civil organisations helping British vet. service:
  - Royal society for the prevention of cruelty to animals
  - Blue Cross Fund (helping horses without prejudice to the side which they belonged to)



# Horse casualties

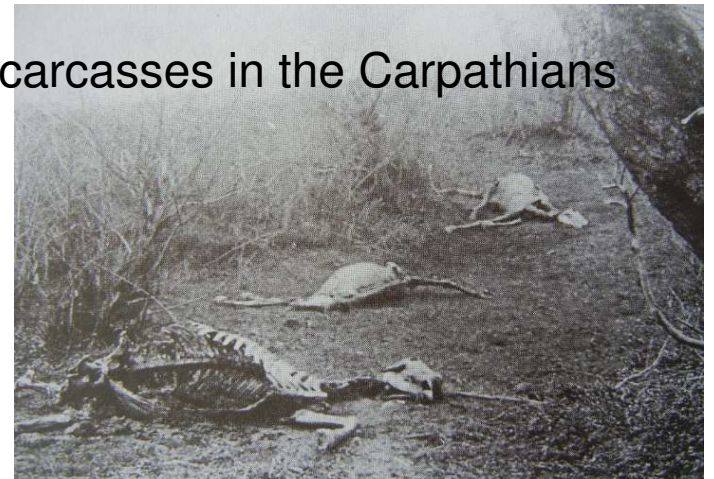
- cca. 11.6 million horses, participated in 1<sup>st</sup> WW, 5.6 – 8 million died
- **direct reasons cca. 1/4**; mostly in 1914 (frontal attacks) and in 1918 (offensives and counteroffensives)
- **other reasons (3/4)**: diseases, injuries, **unbearable living conditions** (shortage of food and water, overexploitation, inappropriate placing in cold winters); in the winter 1916/17 in the A-H army 50,000 horses died
- in Slovenia, after the war cca. 60,000 horses left behind the retreated AH army



The removal of horse carcasses



Horse carcasses in the Carpathians





# Injuries and diseases

- hyperthermia and dehydration because of water shortage
- abrasions, blisters due to badly adapted neck and breast collars, saddles (mostly on withers and back)
- mutual injuries (strokes with back legs, bites); unfamiliar animals in one, usually too small stables
- horseshoeing problems
- lameness (dislocations, luxations, inflammations of tendons, muscles, bones)
- poisonous gas: relatively small no. of casualties (1916 – 1918 cca. 2220 horses affected by gas, 210 died)



Horseshoeing  
on the Isonzo front



Horse gas mask

- all kinds of shooting wounds were cured relatively successfully (iodine powder or tincture)
- diseases of digestive organs mostly caused by rotten, mouldy or sand-polluted fodder
- infectious and parasitic diseases
  - glanders/maleus, controled by malein (since 1890); biol. weapon
  - mange
- vaccinations yet undeveloped, sera not very successful, sulphonamides and antibiotics to be discovered, antiparasitics mostly ineffective
- diminished veterinary control in civilian sector → spread of animal infectious diseases; red swine fever, swine plague, antrax, blackleg, animal veneric diseases, fasciolosis, mange



Surgical procedure on the Isonzo front



Post mortem examination of a horse with glanders



Bathing mange horses in water with sulphuric milk



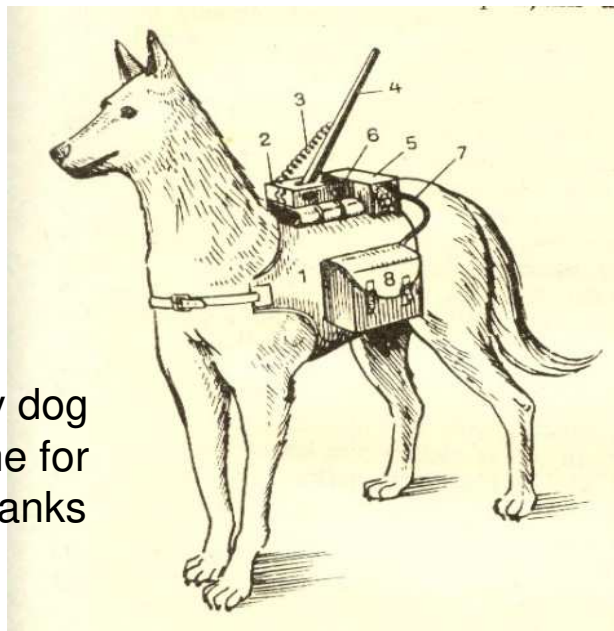
## Diseases and treatment of dogs

- small animal medicine undeveloped
- treatment in the field and in the clinics organised by clubs
- small number of data about the internal and infectious diseases



# After the Great War

- massive use of cavalry in the Russian civil war; cavalry battle between the Red and Polish army (Komarovo 1920)
- cavalry and horse transport remained in all armies, except in G. Britain and the US
- dogs and pigeons remained in armies
- veterinary service remained almost unchanged



A Red Army dog with the mine for destroying tanks

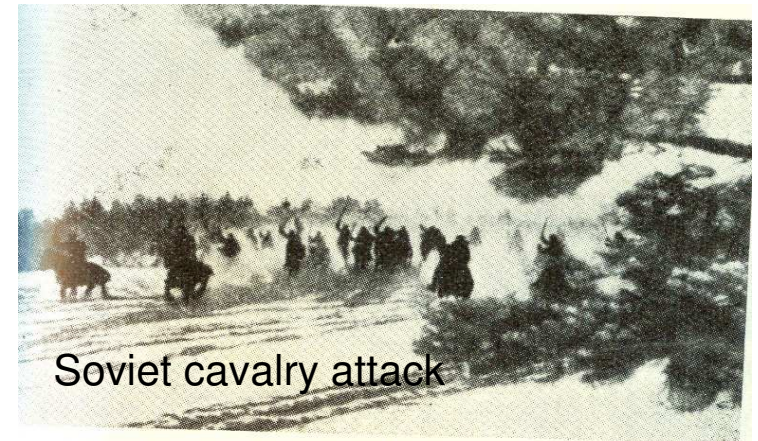


The combined attack of cavalry, armoured vehicles and aircraft during the Red army manoeuvres



## 2<sup>nd</sup> WW

- unsuccessful cavalry attacks/battles on German armoured vehicles (Poland, Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union)
- the German army entered the war with 570,000 horses, later number 1,250,000 (from occupied countries)
- January 1942: the US cavalry attack on Japan posts (the Philippines); 23<sup>rd</sup> Aug. 1942: the Italian cavalry attack on the Red army posts on the Don river
- horses in partisan movements
- dogs in all armies; similar tasks as in 1<sup>st</sup> WW
- pigeons (RAF, the US army, D-Day 7000 animals released)



# Today

UN patrol in Eritrea



A fallen horse in the Yugoslav war 1992

Dogs in the Slovenian army



An African giant pouchedrat for detecting mines



A dolphin in the Gulf War



# Too late – monumnets

- wars as the peak of human stupidity and immorality forced animals into involuntary participation; animals – the innocent victims of all wars
- animals in wars and their suffering – a dark part of the history



Hyde park, London

*This monument is dedicated to all the animals that served and died alongside British and allied forces in wars and campaigns throughout time – **they had no choice***



Střezetice



Port Elisabeth



John Simpson and Duffy

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