CHAPTER XIII

1st Cavalry Division

Q: Thank you, Sir. You'd mentioned earlier that you left the War College to go to the 1st Cavalry Division. I recall reading that you made the comment that you were being transferred to an Assistant Division Commander position because that was the next step you had to take in order to get a well-rounded career.

A: I think that's probably true. I'll tell you this because I think it ought to be on the record for the people who will read these manuscripts, so I'm not pulling any punches. I've omitted a couple of names, but other than that, I've told you already just about everything I'm going to tell you. I went to Tokyo and reported to my old friend and supporter, General Ridgway, then occupying MacArthur's old desk, and I said, "I hope you're sending me straight to Korea, General." He said, "No, I'm not. I'm going to send you north to the 1st Cavalry Division as Assistant Division Commander." I think the day I got there that there might have been some thought that I was going to the 24th Division in Sendai. Whether that was the case or not, it was determined immediately first, that I was not going to Korea, and secondly, that I was going to the 1st Cavalry Division. I reported to the 1st Cavalry Division, then commanded by General Harrold, who was a friend and acquaintance of mine from West Point days. General Jark was the Artillery Commander, and General Eddie Post was the Assistant Division Commander, being transferred to the 24th Division. I replaced him. I remember my impression on that early March day amidst the heavy snow of Hokkaido, to have a review given for me when the 7th Cavalry passed by on skis, snow shoes, akios, and weasels. I saw shades of the old Cavalry then; the old boys would have fallen off their horses if they could have seen this one. It was a picturesque scene, a great experience, and a fascinating year on Hokkaido. We had great opportunity to get around the island and getting around was hard; it was particularly hard in the winter and this was March 1952. There was only a dirt road between headquarters and Chitose, 25 miles away, and it took an hour and a quarter to get there by road. However, for the first time, I ran into the helicopter. We did have helicopters in 1952.

This division was just coming out of Korea after a year and a half in combat, so any concept that they might have about proper conduct, appearance, etc., in garrision life was purely coincidental (as they would say in the movies). It was a ragtag, battle-scarred bunch of men, and they needed a lot of shaping up. They needed a lot of whipping into shape as far as peacetime soldiers were concerned, or soliders on garrison duty, or soldiers anywhere, except when they're scattered around in trenches and mud and dirt where the problems are so different. One of the first things that was apparent was that there was going to be a problem with V.D. because at that time the 187th Airborne under Westmoreland moved out of Kyushu to Korea. When they moved out, some 5,000 gals of the Rose Society promptly moved from Kyushu, I guess under their own steam, to Hokkaido. While that wasn't on the ratio of one per soldier, it was a pretty fair number of females on that island and, needless to say, we did have our problems. With some work, we got some excellent support out of the local police, the village mayors, and authorities. It was quite surprising. I don't mean that there was anything in the way of total absence of sexual relations, but they did take some very drastic steps -- which I was surprised at -- to improve the situation as it existed on the island, to control these gals and all the problems that went with that. Our training was very good; we had a lot of it, it was interesting, and we tried to keep the men plenty busy.

Also from my standpoint, going around the island, getting acquainted with the people and building respect for the American flag and the American troops was very important. Of course, after I'd been there for a few months, General Harrold was moved away to a logistics job down in Yokohama (around the 6th of July), so I acquired the division early. I was still a brigadier, and I wasn't promoted to two stars until about September. That didn't make any difference. I was commanding the division and Bill Bradley came in as Assistant Division Commander and a very good one: old Armored Cavalry type, and just a great guy throughout; we had the finest relationship. Jark was still with me and was an equally fine professional and friend. I couldn't have done better as far as my senior officers and an excellent staff were concerned.

It was certainly interesting dealing with the Japanese. About this time -- in fact, I think in