

# Can You Say **WHOA** in **GERMAN?**



Meet Rappi, an American horse taken prisoner during the World War and still living in Germany, and his master, Lorenz Bernwieser. The medal on the bridle bears the Iron Cross and the word "Kriegskamerad," meaning war buddy

**A**MERICAN prisoners of war are still being held in Germany, eighteen years after the armistice ending the World War was signed. Preposterous, you'll probably say. But it's true notwithstanding the provisions of the Hague War Regulations that govern the parole or exchange of prisoners.

Before your indignation and patriotism rise to such a degree that you sit down and write a letter of protest to the President or to the Secretary of State, let us hasten to explain that these prisoners of war are horses—animals that served well with the A. E. F. and fell into the hands of the enemy. One of these equine veterans, with his present German master, is shown in the accompanying illustration. The photograph came to us from Legionnaire Edward H. McCrahan of 1785 Columbia Road, N. W., Washington, D. C., as did this interesting story:

"The World War, now over many years, still holds many a story that has never been written and, I dare say, never told. As we know, it takes all kinds of men, animals, equipment and so on to make up an army and all of us cannot be heroes, but each and every one plays his own particular important part.

"I have read many interesting stories about heroes of the war and interesting accounts of pigeons, police dogs, etc., but very little about the horses that served. Nineteen



1903 U.S. Cavalry Saddle



1904 U.S. Cavalry  
Sadddle Bag



## WHOA!

years ago horses, like our soldiers-to-be, were leading normal lives in cities, villages or on farms. When war was declared, thousands of these animals were drafted into service, rushed to camps, trained and taken overseas—finally working their way to the front with the officers and men they served so faithfully.

“Only the boys in the thick of it can appreciate the part our horses played and how they looked to the boys for attention, not being able to understand what it was all about when they were wounded. Many of them were even taken prisoner by the Germans, taken back into Germany and exhibited in their American harness and equipment. After the Armistice, immediate plans were made to return the men to their native country, but the equine warriors were forgotten by the Government—something few people know about even today.

“There are still in Germany thirty-two American horses that



*1908 U.S. Cavalry Bridle Buckle*

had been captured. They have had to learn a new language and to serve new masters. The present German government has given these ex-American war horses the same kind treatment as the German horse veterans. Each of the German horses and the thirty-two American horses that served in the war wears an especially cast medal on the left side of its halter or bridle, thus designating it as a war hero. At the top of the medal is a reproduction of the German Iron Cross—under it, the inscription ‘Kriegskamerad,’ which means war buddy or comrade.

“Most of these horses are in the kind care of German war veterans and in such cases the medal is somewhat larger than the usual one in order to designate that the master as well as the horse saw war service. One of these American horses is shown in the enclosed picture with his master, Lorenz Bernwiefer, who served during the entire four years of the war. The animal is reported to have served with an American artillery regiment. I wonder which one it might have been. The horse now bears the name of ‘Rappi.’ Bernwiefer was wounded, has not many worldly possessions now, but he and his family are certainly proud of owning this American-bred, captured horse.

“All of these veteran horses are assured a well-balanced ration and kind treatment for the rest of their lives by the German government through the untiring efforts and personal supervision of Herr Finus, a war veteran who appreciates to the utmost the service of the horse during the World War.”

So there we learn something about some old war horses, literally speaking. Perhaps some of you can tell of instances when horses were captured by the Germans. We recall one case of a general officer of our Army who blithely rode right into the German lines north of Romagne, although the story is he had been warned that the enemy was ahead. Probably his mount is now one of the honored horses wearing the special insignia. Perhaps others of you—since-the-war tourists to Europe—may have seen these decorations on horses’ bridles and wondered what they signified. Tell us some more about our equine prisoners of war.

Incidentally, just after the St. Mihiel drive, we had occasion to ride a German horse that had been captured. Because he didn’t understand English and our German was halting, knees, hobnails and reins had to be used to guide him. To answer the question propounded in the title, we had to resort to a German dictionary, and we learn that “Whoa!” takes the form of “Brr! Halt!” (with a roll of the r’s, doubtless) in German. How about “Gee!” and “Haw!”? Anyone know?

