

Master of the Lens

*An insight into British pageantry,
as seen through an artist's lens.*

When leading photographer Henry Dallal produced 'Pageantry and Performance – The Household Cavalry in a Celebration of Pictures', he proved himself beyond doubt to be an artist.

With BAE Systems' support, Dallal included his best photographs for the book, which he published himself. In 'Pageantry and Performance', he elegantly portrays the soldier's and horse's mutual harmony and showmanship through beautiful photography.

For over six years he was virtually an honorary trooper, resulting in a unique record not only of the outward pageantry of occasions such as Trooping the Colour and the State Opening of Parliament, but 'behind the scenes' in barracks, in the field and in the stable.



King's Troop Royal
Horse Artillery



Dallal has met his challenge, capturing on film the splendour and humanity of this partly hidden yet often public world. 'Few shoppers heading for nearby Harrods,' Dallal said, 'could begin to guess the world that lies behind the barracks' high brick walls. Here is a self-contained village, home to 350 soldiers and 250 horses.' He soon found himself happily recording in natural colour this ever-changing, ever-repeating tapestry.

Dallal has spent more than six years capturing the spirit of this living tapestry that he now shares with others through his unique images. 'It is a world steeped in a rich tradition,' he enthuses. 'Everyone from the newest trooper to the highest ranking officer, including the Sovereign, takes pride in their work and dedication to duty. Few see how hard everyone labours behind the scenes. Each trooper is a highly trained fighter, as adept at riding a horse on parade, or manning a scimitar-armoured vehicle policing a war zone. Being British, they never talk about it.

'As the Household Cavalry is amongst the pinnacle of British excellence, I had to have my book resonate with that high standard,' Dallal continues.

Dallal has succeeded in his ambition in noble fashion, and it will surely spark a sense of pride for those gingerly leafing through the sumptuously produced pages. Dallal has also reached out to a wider public. Following publication, he was invited to project images from his collection as a son et lumiere spectacle onto the walls within Windsor Castle during the Windsor Festival – indeed, the very name of the festival theme was taken from his book.

RECOGNITION

BBC Radio 4/Today awarded one of his images in 'Pageantry and Performance' the accolade of 'the best view of Britain at 6am'.

The Royal Mail used two of Dallal's photographs from the book for a special mint series stamp pack, released in June 2005, to commemorate Trooping The Colour.

Dallal's great love for the horse, nature and travel leaps out in the variety of his work. Besides books and articles, he has exhibited on both sides of the Atlantic. His venues include: the Smithsonian Institute, Washington DC; the Naples Museum of Art, Florida; Kensington Palace; the Royal Geographical Society; the International Museum of the Horse, Lexington, Kentucky; and the Queen Mary 2.

An adventurer as well as an artist, Henry Dallal has travelled on horseback in regions where the horse is still king – Rajasthan, the Hindu Kush and recently Lawrence of Arabia's footsteps in Jordan. A current project celebrates India's 61st Cavalry, which he calls 'a feast of fascination'.

'A unique record' for granted: The King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery, The Lord Mayor's Show and other living treasures that continue to enrich British tradition and heritage. There is no doubt that Henry Dallal, possessing a great artist's spirit and techniques, will triumph over all of these challenges in the days ahead.



This text was compiled by Donald Miller (art critic, Naples Daily News, Naples, Florida; retired art and architecture critic, now senior editor, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania) with input from Roger Chatterton-Newman, Editor, PQ International.

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