

Horses the stars for the day

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — Hundreds of people thronged the City Hall mounted unit headquarters at Bandar Tun Razak today to celebrate the 15th Federal Territory Day.

The occasion coincided with the launching of City Hall's enforcement directorate's mounted unit which consists of 31 officers including four women.

Children especially pushed their way to get a closer view of the officers and horses despite warnings not to come near.

They clapped and cheered as the officers led the horses in performing several stunts — walking in rhythm to music, jumping over a ring of fire and a sketch on the efficiency of the mounted unit.

Earlier, Datuk Bandar Datuk Elyas Omar presented certificates to the officers for passing the basic training.

In his speech, he said the mounted unit would not only help in enforcement duties, but would also be a tourist attraction.

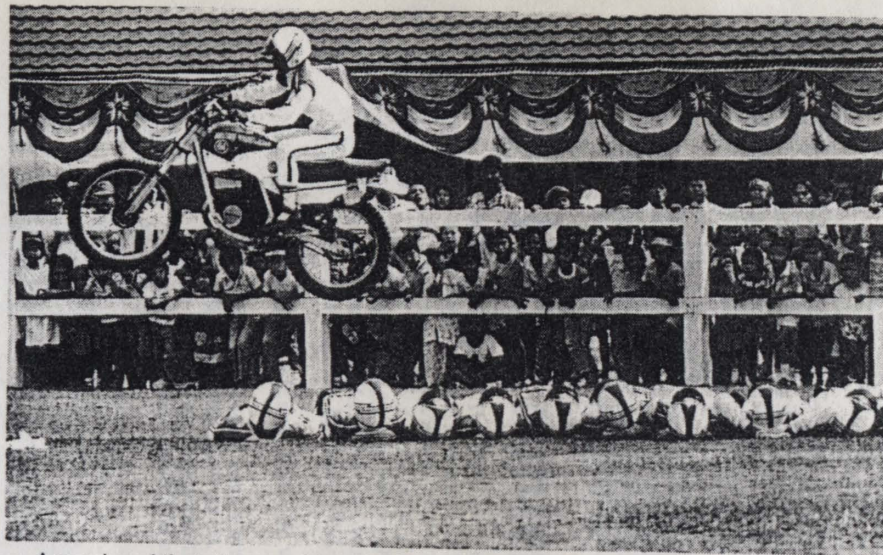
He added that members of the unit should prove that they were just as good as other mounted squads in the developed countries.

"They should always live by their motto 'Confident, brave, patient and dedicated' to serve members of the public efficiently," he said.

The formation of the mounted unit was suggested by Datuk Bandar in 1985.

Twenty-four horses, aged between four and seven years old, were bought at between \$8,000 and \$10,000 each.

The City Hall enforcement directorate tattoo squad later had the crowd on its feet with its motorcycle stunts.



A member of the tattoo squad jumping over nine officers on the ground.

Mounted unit shows its paces

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — City Hall's mounted squad swung into full action today, appropriately making the 15th Federal Territory Day a memorable one.

Just a few hours after Datuk Bandar Datuk Elyas Omar launching the first batch of the 31-member mounted squad, four of them were already on patrol at Taman Tasik Titiwangsa.

The mounted unit comprises 60 mounted officers, including nine women, and had undergone training at its Bandar Tun Razak headquarters since February last year.

Their commander, Megat Suhaimi Megat Abdul Manan, 33, said two men and two women would be the first batch to go on duty in the city.

The best trainee was Encik Abu Bakar Derauh, 32, from Malacca who trained the horse, Bee Bee, bought from Australia.

The youngest member in the squad, Ruzalina Zainal Abidin, 20, did not want to lose out to her seniors in training.

"When I was young, I used to watch a lot of cowboy movies and imagined myself being one of them. But then, I never thought I could ride a horse as horse riding is normally associated with rich people.

"It was like a dream come true when I was offered a place on the mounted squad," she said.

Ruzalina handles a horse by the name of Wan Empok, a temperamental and unpredictable spotted white.

It doesn't like to be approached from the back and she has to talk to the horse every time to get it familiar with her voice.

"It is like a human being. It needs to be coaxed and talked to. It is not easy to train a horse and

we have to be very patient.

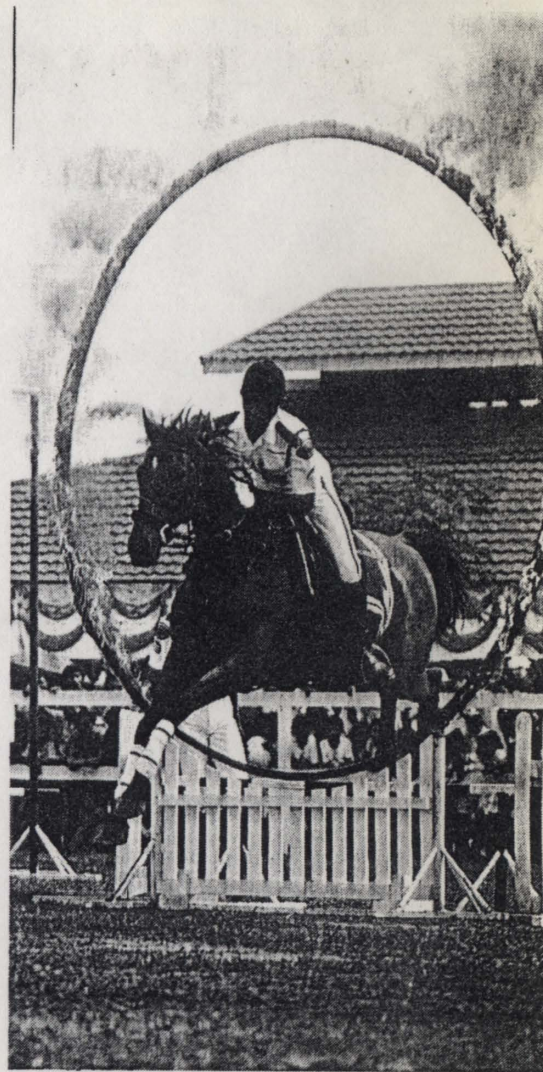
"Can you imagine me wishing the horse 'good morning'? It sounds silly but it sure works as it understands me," said Ruzalina.

Yesterday, she fell from the horse while attempting to jump over a fire but she persevered and was out today, performing in front of Datuk Bandar and the guests.

Ruzalina was one of the 12 officers who were given the *sayap* award, a recognition as a qualified rider. Her team mate, Anida Baharin, 21, also received the a similar award.

"I did not even know how to mount a horse before I joined this squad," she said.

"I fell several times but it made me more determined to train harder and I am looking forward to patrolling at the gardens soon," she added.



An officer jumping over a ring of fire.