

A LOT TO REMEMBER

McComb Army Officer Big Part In Kennedy Funeral

By KENNETH TOLLIVER

The military orders governing President Kennedy's inauguration filled a manual containing 84 pages, but, according to a McComb Army officer who helped conduct the President's funeral, the orders for that ceremony covered 100 pages.

Actually the orders covering both rituals have been passed down with certain changes, since George Washington was president," stated Capt. Richard C. Cloy.

Capt. Cloy, who until recently was in command of the Headquarters Company of the First Battalion, Third Infantry Division, was a member of the military staff which revised the manual regarding honors due to a deceased chief of state.

Capt. Cloy, who graduated from McComb High School in 1956, was in charge of the casket section which carried the President's coffin, the saluting battery which fired the 21 gun final salute and the file and drum corps which marched with the cortege.

"We were preparing the actual funeral arrangements less than an hour after the president was shot," Capt. Cloy said while he was in McComb on leave. "We were in a state of readiness and had just finished a funeral rehearsal because there was grave concern for President Lincoln's health. But we never expected that our practice was preparing us for President Kennedy."

The captain, who rose from

the enlisted ranks to a commission in 1958, said that although his command was ready for the state funeral, the actual site for the burial was not known until the day before the ceremony.

"We issued all orders prior to being informed that it would be at Arlington, so that we would be prepared to conduct the rites either in Washington or Boston," Capt. Cloy said.

OBSERVATIONS

When asked about his personal observations during the funeral, Capt. Cloy reported that he had never seen such genuine sorrow or such splendid cooperation from both the crowds and officials involved in the ceremony.

"It was so silent on the streets, that I could clearly

hear the bugle sounding taps at Arlington while I was nearly a mile away," he said. "The mass of mourners were so quiet that orders could be passed to the men at a whisper and still be heard."

When queried about any special requests that Mrs. Kennedy may have made, the captain said that she had requested the accompaniment from the caparison horse.

"The caparison horse," Capt. Cloy explained, "was the riderless mount which was led in front of the cortege. He is 16 years-old and is named Black Jack. He is not broken to saddle and by tradition has never been ridden."

CLOY DELIVERED THEM

The accoutrements such as the saddle, boots, sabre and bridle were delivered by Capt. Cloy to the White House following the funeral.

"Another wish of Mrs. Kennedy," he recalled, "was the Irish honor guard, which we had to fly in for the funeral."

Capt. Cloy said that the First Battalion is called the "Old Guard" and that they conducted most of the ceremonies of state in Washington such as guarding the tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

"One duty we did not have," he said, "was protecting any of the officials. That job was in

Jackson, Miss CLARION-LEDGER

Feb. 21, 1964

the hands of the Secret Service.

When asked about special problems which arose concerning the state funeral, the captain said that making sure that all the official mourners arrived at the various points at the proper times caused him the greatest concern.

"There were so many cars that they were still loading at the White House when the cortege was at the grave side."

Capt. Cloy's command took charge of the president's body from the moment it arrived in Washington and at least one officer was in constant attendance until the grave was filled. "Even then," he commented, "we supplied the guard over the grave."

"My men worked hard," he said. "We had to change the in the rounds every 30

minutes and each guard had to be supplied a clean and freshly pressed uniform everytime he returned to his post. Besides that, the day of the funeral it was utterly impossible to relax or tend the sentries lined the parade route for over 12 hours."

When asked how the men took the arduous duty, Capt. Cloy stated that he never heard a single complaint and that on the contrary, he heard some of his men say that they felt honored to have the chance to be a part of the ceremony.

Capt. Cloy, who is en route to his new assignment with the general staff of the Third Infantry Division in Germany, showed several mementos that he had obtained from the ceremony.

He had saved two of the cartridge cases from the guns

Friday, February 21, 1964

which fired the final 21 gun salute for President Kennedy and he had obtained one of Black Jack's harnesses when the horse was released following the funeral.

"I wanted something for my children to remember the event by," he commented.

Capt. Cloy's wife, Anne, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Hurt of Summit and they have three children, Michael, 6, Russell, 4, and Steven, 18 months.

Mrs. Cloy said that the funeral was one of the most moving experiences of her life and that

The Clarion-Ledger 3

she was impressed with the kindness of everyone involved and the consideration shown the late president.

Capt. Cloy said that he and his wife felt great sympathy for Mrs. Kennedy.

"She kept showing up at the rotunda without notice and at all hours. Often the White House would call us at the cemetery and say that they believed she was on her way to the graveside and when we would look up from the phone she would be already standing at the gate."

