

1952

**Where:** A Seoul, Korea racetrack, home to Flame, a small female racehorse who's about to join the Korean War.



## Horse Power

Reckless with Sgt. Joseph Latham

Three **Marines** have just purchased **Flame** for \$250. A Korean stableboy, the mare's owner, agreed to the deal because he needed the money to buy an **artificial leg** for his sister.

The horse, renamed **Reckless**, quickly fit into Marine life. She ate whatever horse-friendly food could be found — oatmeal, rice straw, and carrots—but she also gobbled up the regular Marine chow. Scrambled eggs were a favorite,



in addition to peanut butter sandwiches, mashed potatoes, and chocolate bars. She washed it all down with coffee, cola, or sometimes a beer.



The Marines let Reckless come and go as she pleased. She wandered into tents to watch poker games or to sleep next to the stove on cold nights. The men moved aside to make room.

Her main job was carting ammo to the **recoilless rifles** (shoulder-held weapons) the Marines used in the field. Ignoring explosions all around her, Reckless trudged over long, twisting trails to deliver up to eight of the 24-pound (10 kg) shells at a time. And get this—she did it alone. A Marine would show her the way, then leave her to do her work, all day long. She often carried wounded soldiers back on her return trips.

Her most impressive day came on March 26, 1953, during a battle to retake a hill the Marines called

**Vegas**. Reckless made 51 trips, totaling more than 35 miles, carrying nearly five tons of recoilless shells. **Shrapnel** (metal pieces from exploding enemy shells) tore into the flesh above her left eye and flank, but she continued on.

In 1953, **General Randolph Pate** officially made her **Sergeant Reckless**. She lived the last 14 years of her life at **Camp Pendleton** in California.

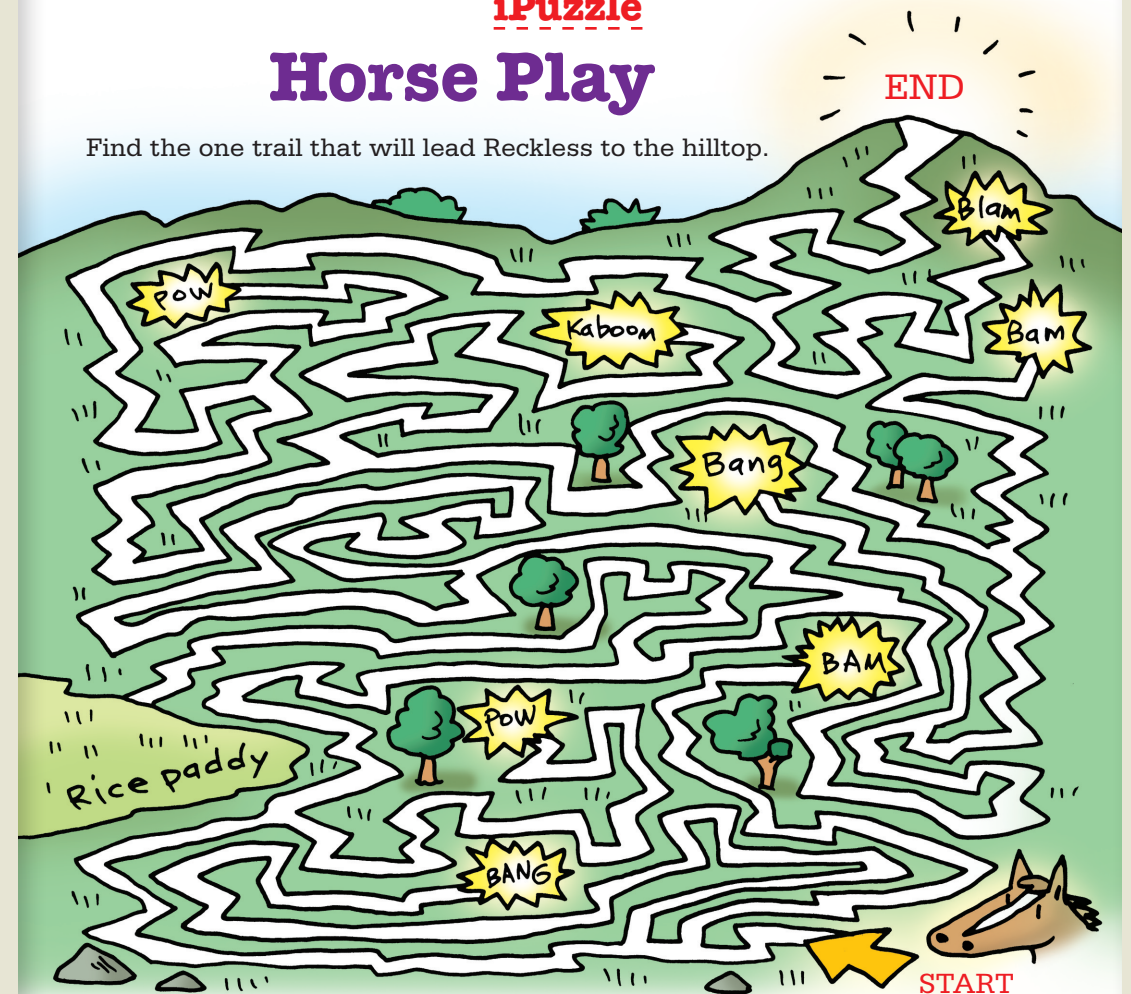


U.S. Marine Corp photo, circa 1952

iPuzzle

## Horse Play

Find the one trail that will lead Reckless to the hilltop.



**A Piece of Cake:** After arriving in the U.S. on November 10, 1954, Reckless was the guest of honor at a celebration of the Marine Corp's 179th anniversary. She rode an elevator up to the 10th floor of the Marines' Memorial Club in California, then took her place at the head table. Cake was served, but that wasn't enough for Reckless. After finishing her piece, she gobbled up the flower centerpiece.



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On November 10, 1989, the first race at New York's Aqueduct racetrack was named "The Sgt. Reckless."