

Balgreen FINAL COMMAND



Balgreen Final Command, pictured at Grant's Farm in 1955 or '56, has been described as "a big horse with a beautiful set of pasterns and feet on him. From a horseman's standpoint, there really wasn't much to criticize. The quality was there. He left his stamp on all that came after him."

THE BEST POSSIBLE HORSE AT THE WORST POSSIBLE TIME

by Jim Emmons

Since the 1850s thousands of Clydesdales have been exported from Scotland. The earliest exports of size were to Australia. Starting in 1880, large numbers started to come to North America. Two of the best to arrive here in that era were Cedric and MacQueen. The export

trade all but ended in 1892 due to a large economic depression. By 1900, it started to pick up again. From then until World War I, export

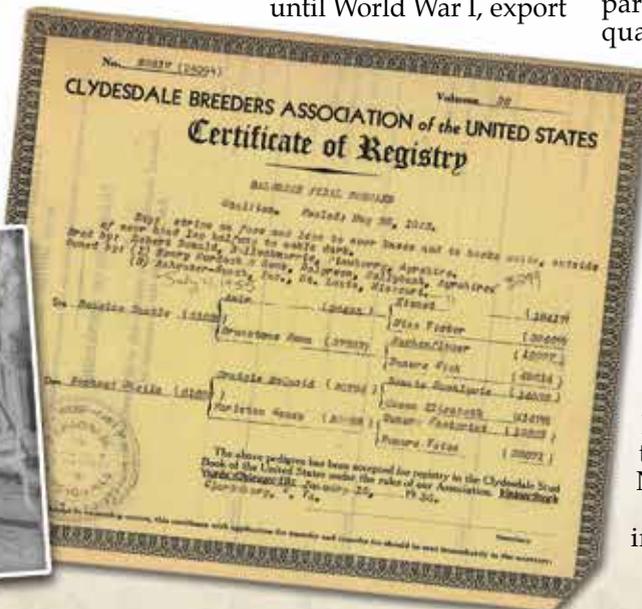
numbers were the highest in history. Between World War I and World War II, export numbers were modest compared to earlier years. However, the quality of the Clydesdales sold for export was at an all-time high, as most of these animals were intended for the show ring, as opposed to upgrading the native stock for work purposes.

In 1940 August A. Busch Jr. purchased eight mares and three geldings from James Kilpatrick of the famous Craigie Mains. The 11 head were shipped in September on the S.S. Salaria. The ship was torpedoed by a U-boat and the horses were all lost. Understandably, WW II effectively ended the export trade to North America.

In 1953, Busch decided to import some mares and a stallion

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Pictured as a yearling.



Balgreen Final Command continued

in order to raise replacements for his famous Budweiser eight-horse hitch. He bought eight mares and the stallion Commandodene. Two years later, he had hired Elmer Taft, well-known for his success with the Lynnwood Farms Percherons in the 1930s and '40s, to manage the Clydesdale breeding operation. Mr. Busch decided to bring over more breeding stock to add to the breeding herd. He told Taft to buy the best bay stallion in Scotland. After visiting the leading Clyde firms in Scotland, Elmer wired August Busch that he had found the right horse for the job, but he was 12 years old. Busch wired back, "Buy him!"

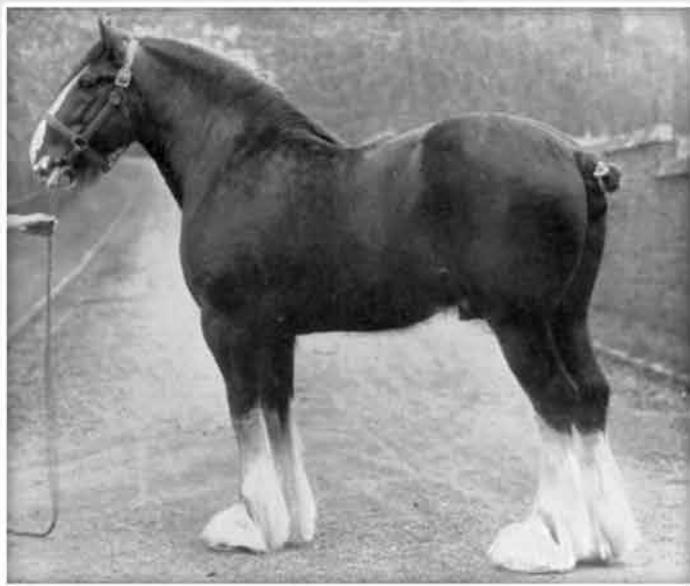
The old horse was Balgreen Final Command. Of the thousands of Clydesdales to leave Scotland, he might have been the greatest ever.

The most coveted Clydesdale trophy in Scotland is the Cawdor Cup. It was first put up for competition in 1892. Stallions competed for it at the Glasgow Stallion Show and mares won the Cawdor Cup at the Highland Show. The first yearling to win the Cawdor Cup was Moira, by Baron's Pride. She won it in 1909. That's her in the northeast corner of Final Command's pedigree. Her son, Kismet, won in 1918. In 1926, competition for the Stallion Cawdor Cup was moved to the Highland Show. Up until this point, no yearling stallion had ever won it. From 1926 to 1939, it was won eight times

by yearling stallions. Why? The Highland Show was held in the summer, when most of the best stallions, aged three and over, were serving mares—so they were not in top show shape.

In 1940 the Highland Show was cancelled due to the war. Competition for the Cawdor Cup was moved back to the Stallion Show. Then, in 1944, the Cawdor Cup for mares also moved to Glasgow. The winner that year was Chapelton Colleen. But the big news that day at Glasgow was that a yearling stallion, Balgreen Final Command, not only won the Cawdor Cup, but was also the first yearling to be named Supreme Champion at the Stallion Show.

The sire of those two Cawdor Cup winners was Douglas Castle. In the late 1930s and early '40s, he stood second on the list of successful sires behind Craigie Beau Ideal. Douglas Castle sired five winners of the Cawdor Cup. As a show horse him-



Douglas Castle, the black sire of Balgreen Final Command, was the property of Henry Murdoch, Balgreen, Hollybush, Ayr.

self, he won the Brydon Shield at the Stallion Show. This was presented to the best stallion three years of age or over. From 1926 to 1939, a strong case could be made that the winners of the Brydon Shield did more for the breed than did the winners of the Cawdor Cup.

The dam of Balgreen Final Command was sired by Craigie McQuaid, a great show horse who won the Cawdor Cup in 1924 and is best known as the sire of the great Craigie Beau Ideal. Balgreen Final Command's third dam, Dunure



Commander, a son of Final Command, appears in the right lead of Budweiser's 8-up, pulling the City of St. Louis' entry in the 1967 Tournament of Roses Parade, a long-standing tradition for the Bud Clydes. Commander was a tremendously good-moving hitch horse.

Voice, was sold in 1920 for £1,050. Her sire, Apukwa, was probably the best breeding son of the great Hiawatha. The maternal granddam of Dunure Voice was sired by Prince Sturdy. He was a son of Cedric and bred by Robert Holloway, Alexis, Illinois, who sold him to A&W Montgomery in Scotland.

Balgreen Final Command bred exceptionally well in Scotland. As much fun as it would be to talk about all of his offspring, let's take a broader stroke focusing on this side of "the pond."

From a North American point of view, his most important sons and daughters bred in Scotland were: Brougham Charm; Knockiebrae Queen; Ballochmorrie Mist; Clifton Nellie Dean; Commander; Salchrie Prince Philip; and Dunsyre Footprint.

Brougham Charm was foaled in 1948. As a 2-year-old, she was imported by Nathan Goff, of West Virginia. Goff was just about the only man importing Clydes for those first six or seven years after the war. At the 1950 Chicago International, Charm was Junior and Reserve Grand Champion Mare.

Knockiebrae Queen was significant because she was the dam of Doura Perfection. He was foaled July 4, 1955, just 18 days before his maternal grandsire left for America. Perfection was first in his class at the Stallion Show three years in a row, starting as a 2-year-old. He was also Reserve for the Cawdor Cup in 1957. He would go on to sire four Cawdor Cup winners. He was the best breeding horse in Scotland until his death in 1965.

Ballochmorrie Mist won the Cawdor Cup in 1952. Her daughter Hayston Lady Luck, was Reserve for the Cup in 1963. She was imported by Bill Taylor, Grand Valley, Ontario, Canada. In his hands, she produced two winners of the August A. Busch Jr. Trophy for Best Canadian Bred Clydesdale at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair (RAWF): Clydeslea Flashback Renown in 1969; and Clydeslea Flash Nipper in 1972. Ballochmorrie Mist was also the dam of Dalfoil Donella, Junior and Grand Champion at the 1969 RAWF for Wreford Hewson. Donella was used in the lead of Hewson's six-horse hitch throughout most of the 1970s.

Clifton Nellie Dean was foaled in 1955. Wreford Hewson imported the mare in 1962—just after she topped the Yeld Mare class at the Highland Show. She was Grand Champion at Toronto for Hewson on five occasions: 1962, 1964, 1966, 1968 and 1971.

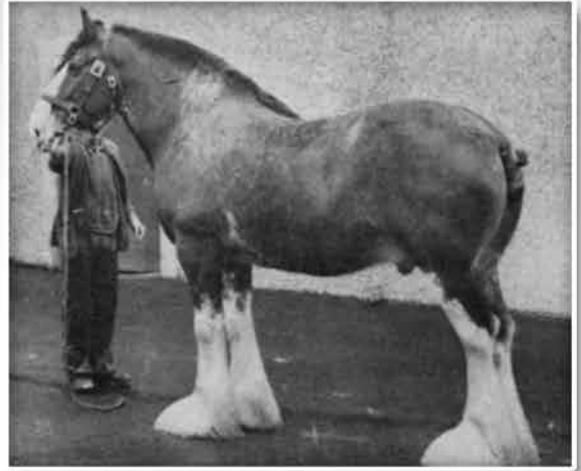
Nellie Dean was also shown successfully in the hitch classes. She was the dam of Bardrill Rosa, first place 3-year-old mare at the 1964 RAWF. She produced two daughters that won the Canadian Shield for Best Canadian Bred Mare at the Royal: Barcrest Princess in 1973; and Barcrest Rosalee in 1970.

Commander was foaled in 1956. As a 3-year-old he was imported by Nile Schantz of Plattsville, Ontario. He was Reserve Champion Gelding for Schantz at the 1959 Royal. He was then sold to Anheuser-Busch. He won his class for his new owners at the 1960 Chicago International. Commander was a great moving horse. He was in the lead of the famous Budweiser eight-horse hitch all through the 1960s and into the '70s. He never missed a class or exhibition.

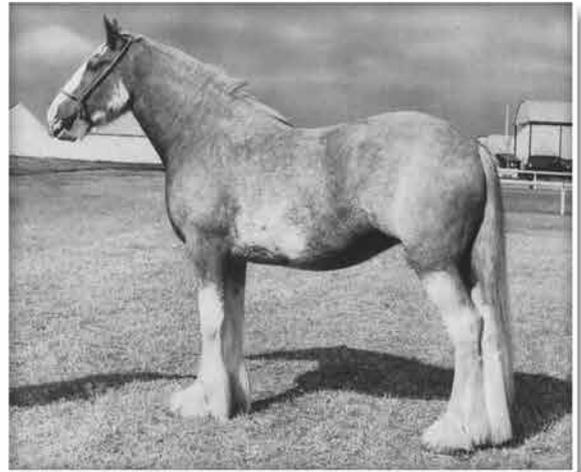
Salchrie Prince Philip was foaled in 1947. As a yearling, he was Reserve for the Cawdor Cup at Glasgow. As an aged horse, he spent several years in England breeding mares—Clydes as well as other varieties. Several of the resultant offspring made tremendous big hitch geldings that found their way to North America.

In 1964, Manor Morag, by Dunsyre Footprint, had a colt foal by Prince Philip that was named Doura Excelsior. He was both a great show horse and a great breeding horse. He was Supreme Champion at the Stallion Show in 1967 and 1969. He also received the Cawdor Cup in 1967. No fewer than eight of his offspring won the Cawdor Cup. They were sold into Canada, Australia and the U.S. His most famous daughter was Kirklandhill Queen of Carrick, the Cawdor Cup winner in 1969. At the RAWF, she was Grand Champion Mare 14 times: 1970, 1972-1980, 1982-1985! She was Reserve Champion

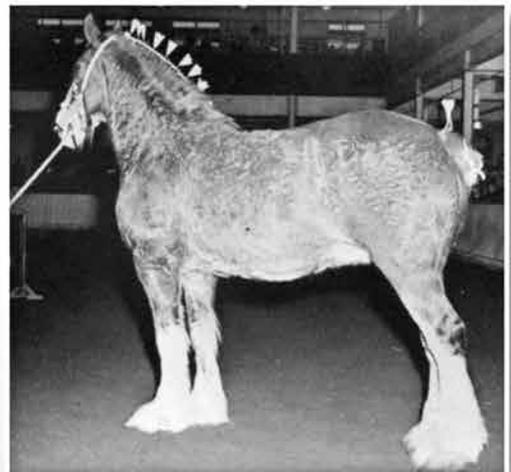
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Doura Perfection was the sire of three Grand Champions at the National Clydesdale Show: Bardrill Sunset in 1966; Bardrill Logie in 1968; and Bardrill Gypsy in 1969.



Ballochmorrie Mist, the 1952 Cawdor Cup Champion, she was bred and owned by Robert Donald, the breeder of Balgreen Final Command.



Grand Champion at the Royal Winter Fair in 1962, 1964, 1966, 1968 and 1971, Clifton Nellie Dean was also a very good mare in harness.

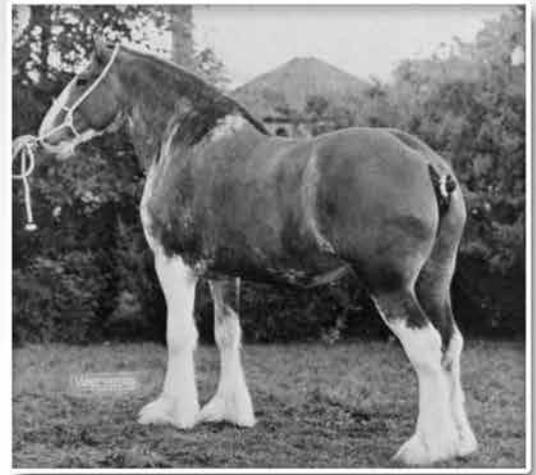
*Balgreen Final Command
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three times: 1969 (to Dalfoil Donella; 1971 (to Clifton Nellie Dene; and in 1981 (to Queen of the Shamrocks). Donella was a Final Command granddaughter, Nellie Dene was a daughter and Queen of the Shamrocks went back to Balgreen Final Command four times. Doura Excelsior also sired three sons that were crowned Grand Champion Stallion at the RAWF a total of eight times: Doura Perfect Motion in 1974, 1976 and 1977; Doura Royal Scot in 1978, 1980 and 1982; and Greendykes Excelsior Again in 1979 and 1981.

Dunsyre Footprint won the Cawdor Cup in 1952 as a 3-year-old. He had been Reserve to Muirton Sensation the year before. Footprint sired two sons and a daughter that all claimed the coveted trophy. His daughters made great broodmares. One, Westerton Fiona Footprint, was Junior



Doura Excelsior, a grandson of Balgreen Final Command on the top side, and a great grandson on the bottom, he won the coveted Cawdor Cup in 1967. He and Doura Perfection were both owned by John W. Young.



A correct and powerful mare, in six years Command's Mabel was twice Grand Champion and four times Reserve Grand Champion at Wisconsin.

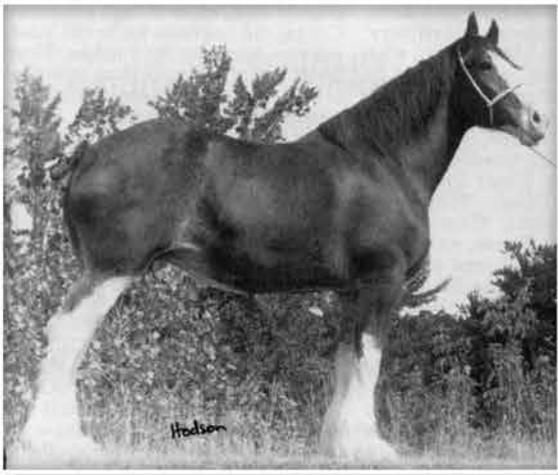
and Reserve Grand Champion at the 1959 RAWF for Bill Taylor. Bill had a son of Dunsyre Footprint, Broomley Blue Print, that was Grand Champion Stallion at Toronto in 1957 and '58. Blue Print did a good job as a sire.

Dunsyre Footprint left many good geldings. Chieftain was Champion at Toronto for Nile Schantz in 1956. Another Dunsyre Footprint geld-

ing, Dan, was Grand Champion at Chicago in 1960, '61 and '62 for Wilson Meat Packing Company.

Dunsyre Footprint's best son might have been Gleneagle, who won the Cawdor Cup in 1954 as a yearling. Unfortunately, he died that fall. Two other sons were the full-brothers Dunsyre Double Star and Dunsyre Benefactor. Double Star sired





Grand Champion at the National Clydesdale Show in 1977 and 1978, Collessie's Mable Footprint wasn't just a successful show mare—she was also an exceptional broodmare.



The Cawdor Cup Champion in 1952, Dunsyre Footprint was one of the best breeding horses in Scotland. His death in September of 1957 was a huge loss for the breed.

Bellmount Ideal, Grand Champion Stallion at the RAWF in 1961, 1963-'66. Dunsyre Benefactor was Reserve for the Cawdor Cup in 1958. Among his offspring were Dunsyre Silver King, Grand Champion at Toronto for Anheuser-Busch in 1967, and Bardrill May Morn, Grand Champion at the National Clydesdale Show in 1967. Both were out of Dunsyre Footprint mares.

Dunsyre Footprint, Dunsyre Benefactor and Dunsyre Double Star were all dead by the end of 1959. This was a huge loss for the Clydesdale breed.

One son of Dunsyre Footprint who, fortunately, did survive longer was Newton Viceroy. He came over on the same boat as his grand-sire, Balgreen Final Command. He was used successfully at stud at Anheuser-Busch for several years and was then sold to Aubrey Toll, Blyth, Ontario, Canada. Toll sold him to Parke Brown, Tangier, Indiana, on the way home. Viceroy sired several good mares for Anheuser-Busch that they sold to Toll. He continued to breed well for Browns, as well as for Frank Martin, Plymouth, Indiana. Frank raised two winners of the Busch Award for Best American bred Stallion from the horse: High Hat in 1968; and Caradoc the following year.

Balgreen Final Command was first used at the Budweiser Breeding Farm in the spring of 1956. For whatever reason, he only left one foal in 1957—a son registered as Final Command Jr. In 1958, six fillies were foaled by Final Command. One of them, Woodland Queen Mary, was bred and

owned by Parke T. Brown and sons. She was a very good broodmare. A son, Woodland Glenord, was Reserve Grand Champion for Parke M. Brown at the 1975 and '76 National Clydesdale Shows. One of the Final Command daughters, Command Daffodil, was sold to Harold Clark, of Meadow Brook Belgians fame (Harold liked a good horse of any breed). She was later sold to the Browns and developed into a very large mare.

Floyd Jones, Bangor, Wisconsin, had raised and shown Clydesdales all of his life. After WW II, the draft horse business was all but dead and Jones was one of the few men to keep Clydes to work and show. By 1958 he was down to just a few Clydes. He and Elmer Taft had been good friends for years. Elmer told Floyd about three fillies that Anheuser-Busch had for sale. They were big and they were all good movers, but they had too much white to suit Mr. Busch. Floyd bought all three on Elmer's word. They were Command's Sally; Command's Queen and Command's Mabel. A year later, Floyd got another Final Command filly—Command's Rose. All four developed into very big hitchy mares. Commands Mabel stood over 18.1 hh and weighed over 2,200 lbs. in show-shape. Command's Sally was even bigger.

In those days, there were very few shows offering Clydesdale classes—Of the Midwest's state fairs, only Wisconsin's and Michigan's offered a venue for the breed.

At the 1959 Wisconsin State Fair, Floyd showed the top three yearling

her sister, Command's Sally. After the 1964 show Mabel was sold to Floyd Conger of Pecatonica, Illinois. In 1967, Emerald Busse, Garden Prairie, Illinois, purchased the big mare. In 1970, Mabel raised her second foal, Mabel's Commander Footprint. He was sold to John Hall, Waterville, New York, where he sired several good hitch horses. In 1972, Mabel produced her first filly, Collessie's Mable Footprint. Busse sold her to Floyd and Dan Jones (Floyd's son). She was Grand Champion at the National Clydesdale Show in 1977 and '78—she was one of the top show mares in the U.S. until she was in her teens. She was also an exceptional broodmare (For more on this great mare, see "Collessie's Mable Footprint—Queen Mother of Her Tribe," *DHJ*, Spring 1989).

In 1974, Busse sold Command's Mable to Paul Cooper, Mukwonago, Wisconsin. In 1976, she produced a filly foal named Heather Perfection. She is the maternal granddam of Green Leaf Prestige, a more recent National Show Champion (1999, for Nebergall Bros., Arthur, Illinois).

Command's Rose was Grand Champion for Jones at the 1966 Wisconsin State Fair. Mabel's son, Little Ceasar, was Grand Champion there in 1963, '64 and '65. In 1966 and '67, Marcus, by Little Ceasar, and out of Command's Rose, was the Grand Champion Stallion. The best daughter of Little Ceasar was Portia, out of Command's Queen. She was Grand Champion at Wisconsin in 1968 and winner of the Busch Trophy for Best

fillies. Command's Queen was first, Junior and Grand Champion Mare. Mabel was second and Reserve Grand Champion. In 1960, Mabel was Junior and Reserve Grand Champion. The next year, as a 3-year-old, she raised her first foal, Little Ceasar. She was again Reserve Grand Champion. In 1962 and '64, she made it to the top. In 1963, she was Reserve Grand to

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*Balgreen Final Command
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American Bred Clydesdale at the 1969 National Clyde Show. Julietta, by Little Ceaser, and out of a daughter of Command's Rose, was Grand Champion at Wisconsin in 1969. Bred to Ideal Selector, a son of Bellmount Ideal, she produced Ideal Scotty. He was Grand Champion at the National Show in 1972 and again in 1975.

Jones Farm dominated the mare hitches at the Wisconsin State Fair in the early 1960s with big daughters of Balgreen Final Command. Of them, Command's Queen was probably the best driving horse. She was an exceptional lead horse.

Command's Empress Melba was another double-bred Balgreen's Final Command mare that became a very good broodmare. She was by Little Ceaser and out of Command's Empress. Melba was bred by V. Raymond Emmons, Galesville, Wisconsin, and foaled the property of Fred Dunn, Alexander, Manitoba, Canada. She raised her first foal for Fred as a 3-year-old. He was Riverview Benefactor Ideal, by Torrs Benefactor. At the big Centennial show at Brandon in 1967, he was the top Clyde foal, while Melba won the broodmare class. Riverview Benefactor Ideal was never a great horse in the show



Little Ceaser was Grand Champion at Wisconsin in 1963, 1964 and 1965. He can be found in the extended pedigrees of many of today's Clydesdales.



Portia was crowned Best American Bred Clydesdale at the 1969 National Clyde Show, and Grand Champion at Wisconsin and Michigan in 1968. She was a very good mover.

ring, but he was a very good breeding horse. One of his best sons was Solomon's Commodore. He was Grand Champion at the National Show, as a yearling, in 1978 for Dick and Dell Wegner, Clinton, Michigan. At the International, he was Grand Champion Stallion in 1979, 1981 and 1982 when he gave Doura Sensation a very rare defeat. He was also Grand Champion again in 1985.

Bill and Wayne Moore, MacGregor, Manitoba, Canada, got Melba from Fred Dunn after the 1967 Brandon show. In 1971, she produced a colt foal for them named Melba's Aspiration. At Toronto that year, he won the Busch Award for Best Canadian Bred Clyde Stallion. He was later gelded and became an outstanding hitch horse. At the 1981 RAWF, Moores won the Clydesdale six-horse hitch. Four of their six horses went back to Melba, including a daughter in the lead, and a son in the wheel.

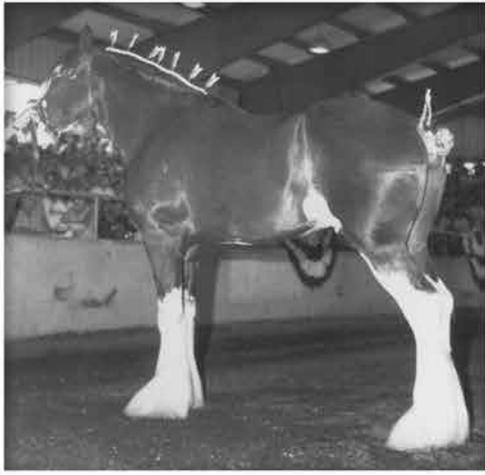
The last foals left by Balgreen Final Command came in 1959—seven fillies and one colt were registered. The colt was Belleau Commander. He was a full-brother to Command's Queen. As a 3-year-old he was Grand Champion at the 1962 National Clydesdale Show. The Champion Mare was Mabel McDonald of Belleau—a full-sister to Command's Mabel. She and her foal are on the cover of the Summer 1973 *DHJ*.

The best of the 1959 Final Command foals would have to be Leading Lady of Belleau, also known simply as "Queen." She was sold to Aubrey Toll in 1962. Early in 1963, Toll sold her to Floyd Conger. Queen developed into a huge mare with exceptionally good feet. Very few horses were as large as she; fewer yet had her size AND athletic ability.

In 1964 Conger took Queen and three Clyde geldings that he'd also purchased from Toll to the National Dairy Cattle Congress in Waterloo,



Leading Lady of Belleau, on the far right of this lineup, was a massive, good-moving mare and a great hitch horse, she was many times a Champion.



Northwest Glenord's Shea pictured as a 2-year-old. He was Grand Champion at the 1991 National Clyde Show and the 1993 Royal Winter Fair.



The 1986 Cawdor Cup Champion, Ayton Perfection was one of the most important breeding horses in the last 30 years.

Iowa. In those days, all breeds competed together in both the hitch and halter classes there. It was a very strong Belgian show, yet Leading Lady of Belleau ended up the Grand Champion Mare over all breeds. Floyd drove her in the mens cart and won that too. Before it was over, he'd also won the four-up with Queen and her mates.

In 1965, Conger purchased Command's Mabel to drive with Queen. Together they would have weighted over 4,500 lbs. and they could move! At Waterloo that year, Queen won the yeld mare class and claimed another victory in the mens cart. Then Conger won the unicorn and four-horse hitch with his daughters of Balgreen Final Command in the wheel.

In 1966, he took the mares to the Illinois State Fair. There were no Clydesdale breeding classes, so Queen and Mabel showed in the grade mare class ... and took first and second. They also won the class for team of mares, beating Meadow Brook Farms, who stood second. Waterloo was just as rewarding—Queen was once again crowned Grand Champion Mare over all breeds and won the mens cart—a class consisting of 25 entries. Conger also won the unicorn and four-up.

In 1967, he showed at Wisconsin for the first time. Queen was Grand Champion and won the trophy for Best of Breed. In harness, he topped the team and four-up competitions. At Waterloo, Queen retained her Grand Champion title while Conger won the mare team, unicorn and four-up.

At the Wisconsin State Fair the next year, Queen failed to win her class for the first time since Conger had owned her. She was beaten by daughters of Little Ceaser and Command's Queen. In the hitch classes, Queen and Conger remained undefeated at Milwaukee and Waterloo. The National Clydesdale Show was held in Waterloo that year (in conjunction with the Cattle Congress) and August A. Busch gave awards for the Best American Bred Clyde Stallion and Mare. The top animal between those two would receive the magnificent Busch Trophy ... and Leading Lady of Belleau won it for Conger.

Queen returned to Milwaukee in 1969 where she won her class and took her place in the winning team and unicorn. At the National Show (in Waterloo again), she was Reserve Grand Champion to a daughter of Doura Perfection. But she came up with blues again in the team and four.

In 1970, Queen was transferred to the ownership of Jim and Betty Groves, Pecatonica, Illinois. They had been renting Conger's farm for several years and had been very active helping him show. Floyd was well into his eighties by then. Jim and Betty tried their best to get Queen in foal but unfortunately, their efforts were not met with success. Leading Lady was Grand Champion for the Groves at Wisconsin in 1970 and again in 1972.

The influence of Balgreen Final Command on the modern Clyde breed is enormous in both Scotland and in North America.

Dunsyre Footprint, a son, was

one of the top sires in Scotland in the 1950s. Doura Perfection, a Final Command grandson, was the best breeding horse in Scotland until his death in 1965. A few years later, Doura Excelsior, a double-bred Final Command, dominated the show rings with his offspring. In 1977, Paul Cooper imported Doura Excelsior. His maternal grandson, Doura Masterstroke, traced back to Final Command four times. Masterstroke was the most popular stallion in

Scotland in the late 1970s and into the late 1980s. His best son, Doura Sensation, traced back to Balgreen Final Command seven times. Ayton Perfection (featured stallion, *DHJ*, Winter 1998-'99), one of the top stallions of the 1980s and '90s, traced back to Final Command four times.

At the RAWF, every Grand Champion Clydesdale Stallion since 1962 traces back to Final Command, except one—Aspiration, in 1973. In the mares, every Grand Champion since 1967 is a descendant.

At the National Clydesdale Show, all of the Champions, save two, since 1965 had Balgreen Final Command in their pedigrees.

At the 1993 RAWF, Northwest Glenord's Shea was the Grand Champion Stallion. He was shown by Live Oak Plantation, owned by Bill and Sharon Dean, and was bred by Edwin Henken. Shea was the first Clyde stallion bred in the U.S. to win top honors at Toronto since Green Meadow Footstep back in 1925. Balgreen Final Command appears in his pedigree 17 times.

When Balgreen Final Command came to America, the Clydesdale breed was all but dead here. His offspring helped lead the way to its recovery. Certainly there were other stallions who also played roles in this turnaround during the 1950s and '60s, but none had the influence that he did. 