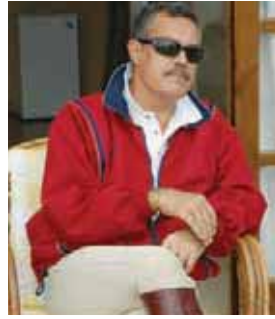


HORSES ARE SMART AND PHYSICALLY STRONG CREATURES THAT HAVE LOTS OF PRIDE. THEY HAVE TAUGHT ME PATIENCE AND THE ABILITY TO FACE OBSTACLES



HORSES & CELEBRITIES

By Khaled Assem

Q & A

with Gen. TAREK YOUSRY

*Assistant to the Minister of Interior
President of the Police Academy*

When was the first time you rode a horse?

I started at quite a young age at the Alexandria Sporting Club, and some of the new rising stars were Andre Sakakini and Tarek Kabbani Hammad. At the end of the 50's, Andre was five years old and I was ten. I continued riding while I was in university, along with Dr. Hisham Sadek who was in charge of the riding team at the University of Alexandria back then.

What has riding, or dealing with a horse, taught you in life?

Horses are smart and physically strong creatures that have lots of pride. They have taught me patience and the ability to face obstacles; while working with a horse one develops very special communication skills, you realise that words are just one form of communication amongst many more. You learn to respect this animal who could give you so much only if he feels that bond between him and his rider.

Which riders have left special impressions on you?

Gen. Gamal Harris was someone who left a very special impression on me; he is a very honourable man and a very special rider. He is the perfect example of a genuine horseman.

In what way did Gen. Gamal Harris affect your riding?

Gen. Harris proved to me that nothing is impossible. If the rider insists on achieving his goals then he will, he just has to be persistent enough to learn well and realise that learning and practise will lead to success. He also taught me how to be gentle with the horse because harmony is the key to perfection; riding is a continuous dialogue with the horse through ones hands, seat and legs - and riding is about refining this symphony everyday.

How do you see show jumping developing within the police force?

I hope the police sports union recovers its prestigious and glorious history in show jumping. When we were young, horses were more exclusive to the army forces and the police. There were limited numbers of horses available and the expenditures for maintaining them were high. Not a lot of civilians were able to get into such a sport due to its high expense; top competition was mostly between military ranked individuals and police officers. Currently, just like everything changes, civilians are replacing military personnel and I still hope to see some change within the police academy again so we can witness potential champions that in return could represent our image. If we take previous Olympic participations, we saw riders such as Gen. Gamal Harris, Gen. Elwy Ghazy, and Ahmed Mazhar who were



Gen. Tarek Yousry ►



▲ Gen. Gamal Harris & Gen. Tarek Yousry



▲ Sherif Tarek Yousry

not civilians. The scenario has changed now; we have national and international tours with much higher participations from civilians and very few officers.

In what way do you see that the equestrian sport has changed?

There has been a change worldwide; sponsoring companies and firms have come into the sport and put in a lot of money so riding has become a profession. It is not just a sport anymore, it is an industry. Moreover, it is not simple to assess if that change is in the best interest of the sport; after all, we are teaching our children about honour, horsemanship, and bravery versus an industry that circulates around money. Well, I suppose a regulated mixture of the two might turn out to be beneficial for the time being.

Does your son ride?

Yes he does, and believe it or not Sherif is a civilian. He has inherited the passion from me and competed in various tournaments, but he currently works abroad.

What can you tell us about your daily routine?

I leave home to the Ferousia club at the academy, and I start my day with riding. If my day doesn't start with that, then it probably won't be a great day! Riding helps me relax and takes away any residual stress within, which in return helps me become more tolerant during my day. HT