

Chapter I - The Cavalry General

Chapter I - The Cavalry General begins with the importance of seeking divine favor before assuming the duties of a cavalry commander. Sacrifices to the gods are viewed not as formality, but as essential acts to secure success in military leadership and civic responsibilities. Divine support is considered critical to gaining loyalty, inspiring bravery, and ensuring the cavalry's lasting contribution to the city. In Athenian society, where religion and politics were deeply connected, piety elevated a general's legitimacy. The belief was that those who honored the gods would be granted clarity in judgment and fortune in battle. This early emphasis frames the role not just as military but spiritual, with moral and societal expectations woven into leadership.

Following spiritual obligations, attention turns to logistical realities. Achieving the proper number of cavalymen is a foundational task, with additional horses kept in reserve to prevent combat fatigue or disruptions from injury. Maintaining a surplus of remounts ensures continued readiness during extended campaigns or unexpected losses. Horse quality is central to this strategy—animals must be conditioned to endure long rides, respond promptly to commands, and traverse uneven terrain with ease. Particular attention is given to hoof health, since even minor injuries can render a horse ineffective. Proper shoeing, hardening on cobblestones, and allowing natural movement are recommended to build durability. The general must constantly inspect and supervise these areas, as a weakened cavalry cannot be saved by strategy alone.

The riders themselves must also be trained beyond ceremonial display. Each trooper must be physically fit, able to mount quickly, and maintain control under pressure. Skills in riding, maneuvering across varied terrain, and using weapons from horseback are fundamental, not optional. To ensure effectiveness, these abilities must be practiced routinely in different conditions. Only through repetition can riders develop confidence and coordination. A cavalry force that drills consistently will respond better

to shifting battlefield demands. Moreover, gear for both horse and rider must be balanced—light enough for mobility but protective against injuries. Proper fitting of armor and bridles improves control and minimizes strain during movement. These details distinguish a disciplined unit from a disorganized group.

The general is not only a commander but also an administrator, responsible for managing the cavalry's affairs with the support of legal institutions. Cooperation with tribal captains (phylarchs) and the city senate is essential for resource allocation and discipline enforcement. Strategic speechmaking and persuasive communication are needed to inspire both peers and subordinates. Through thoughtful dialogue, the general can gain support for reforms, funding, or policy enforcement. Public backing strengthens authority and morale within the ranks. If the cavalry is viewed as an institution of civic pride, its members are more likely to respect orders and uphold standards. This connection between military leadership and civic engagement reflects Athens' broader values of shared responsibility in public life.

Recruitment also falls under the general's scope, and it requires more than issuing summons. Persuasion plays a key role in attracting the most capable individuals, with appeals to honor, public recognition, and practical rewards for service. If persuasion fails, legal recourse can ensure participation by those otherwise eligible. Strengthening the cavalry's quality involves not only selecting better riders but ensuring only fit horses remain. Unruly or poorly conditioned animals must be replaced. Formal notices can be used to organize regular drills and monitor overall preparedness. Exercises across rough terrain and long routes train both man and horse in stamina and responsiveness. Such methods reduce failure during real deployments.

Troopers are advised to pursue personal improvement through ongoing practice. Training under a variety of weather and ground conditions builds resilience and adaptability. Cavalrymen who drill in discomfort will perform better in unpredictable environments. Marches that include uphill, downhill, and uneven tracks simulate the challenges of real battlefields. Fitness and focus are sharpened through physical effort, making the cavalry not just prepared—but mentally strong. The phylarchs play a key

role in overseeing these routines, including skill-building in javelin use. Organizing friendly competitions encourages both camaraderie and constant improvement. Rewards for top performers serve as motivation, just as in earlier parts of the chapter.

Ultimately, this chapter presents a detailed vision of what cavalry leadership entails in Athenian society. Success depends not only on military skill but on piety, strategic planning, and a deep understanding of both men and horses. The cavalry general is responsible for readiness at every level—from hoof health to battlefield formation. His authority is strengthened by cooperation with civil bodies and by promoting the cavalry's value in civic and religious life. The force he oversees is not just a weapon of war—it is a public institution shaped by discipline, duty, and shared cultural identity. This holistic approach to command reflects a society where every role, from general to trooper, contributes to the greater strength of the state.