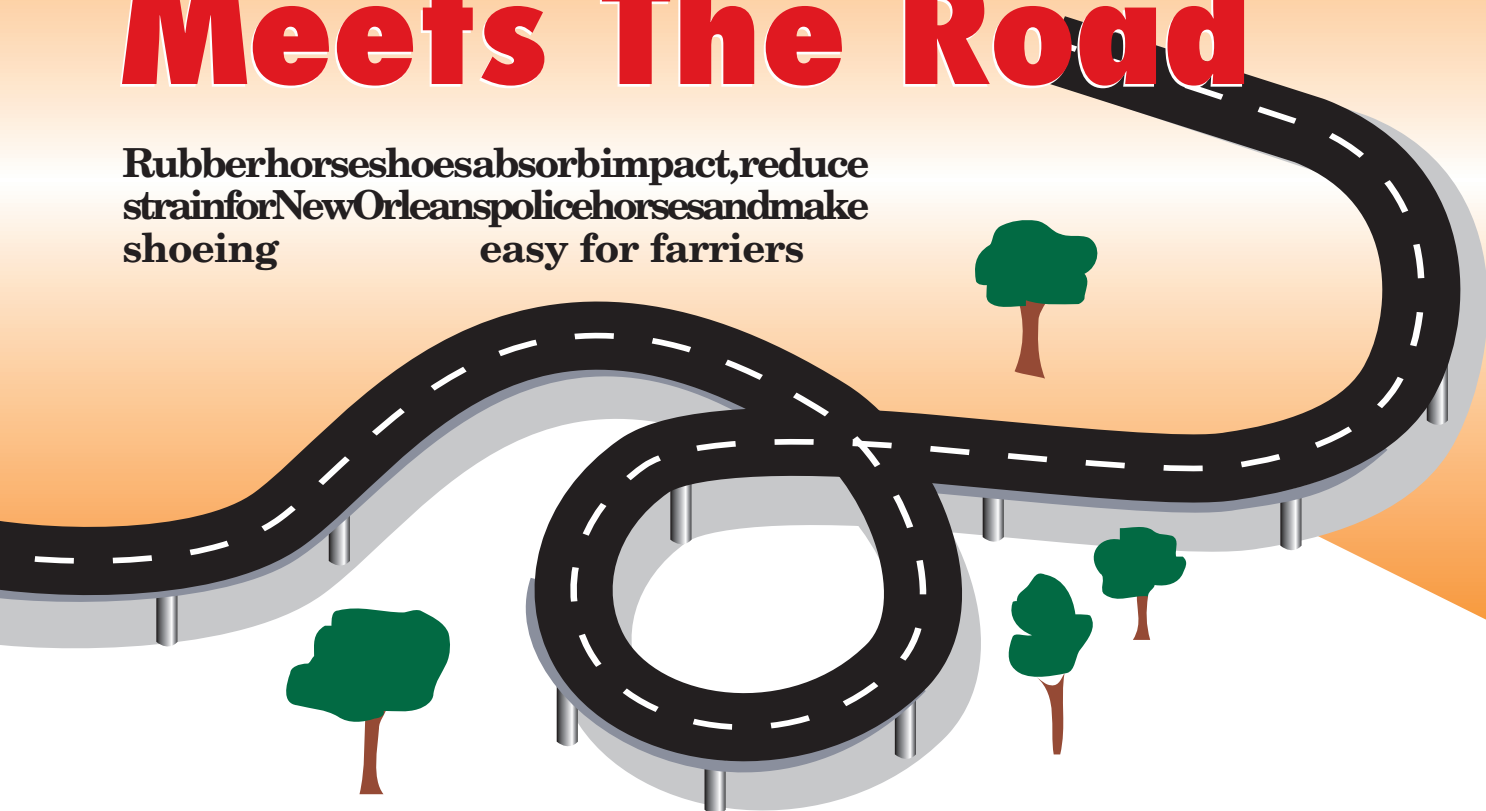


Where The Rubber Meets The Road

Rubber horseshoes absorb impact, reduce strain for New Orleans police horses and make shoeing easy for farriers



By Darrell Bruggink, Managing Editor

NEW ORLEANS is famous for entertaining residents and visitors alike. Sometimes, those being entertained can get a little too rambunctious. That's where the mounted patrol of the New Orleans Police Department plays a key role in restoring order.

"People don't fear policemen riding in a car. They know that officer isn't going to run over them," says long-time police horse farrier Johnny Argus. "But they have respect for a horse when it comes walking toward them. They don't know what that horse might do."

For nearly 37 years, Argus has shod these special law enforcement officers. For 30 of those years, he has teamed with Milton Reggio, a former police officer turned farrier, to trim and shoe the police horses. That entire time, the farriers have used rubber horseshoes.

Argus first began shoeing the department's horses with Crescent City

farrier Lawrence Leonardi, who influenced many of the current-day veteran New Orleans area farriers. Argus and Leonardi used Fruin rubber horseshoes.

Today, Argus and Reggio use both Remuda and Smooth Walker rubber horseshoes. Both are designed similarly to Fruin shoes.

Shoe For Hard Surface

Rubber horseshoes are certainly not for every horse.

"You certainly don't want to jump with them and they will make a horse carry its foot a little different," Argus says. "But on blacktop or hard surfaces, I don't think there is anything better. They absorb shock.

"When they take these horses out for Mardi Gras for three to four weeks, they work hard and these shoes really help them stay sound."

Keeping police horses sound is a big consideration since some of these horses came to the department with less than

ideal conformation. The city receives most of its horses through donations.

Rubber shoes do not work particularly well on wet grass or in muddy conditions. You'll find them mainly on circus horses, parade horses, some endurance horses, theatrical horses and buggy horses.

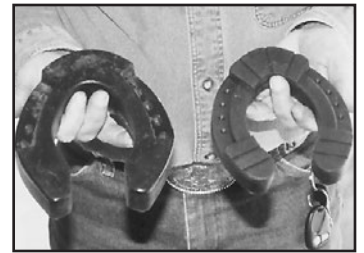
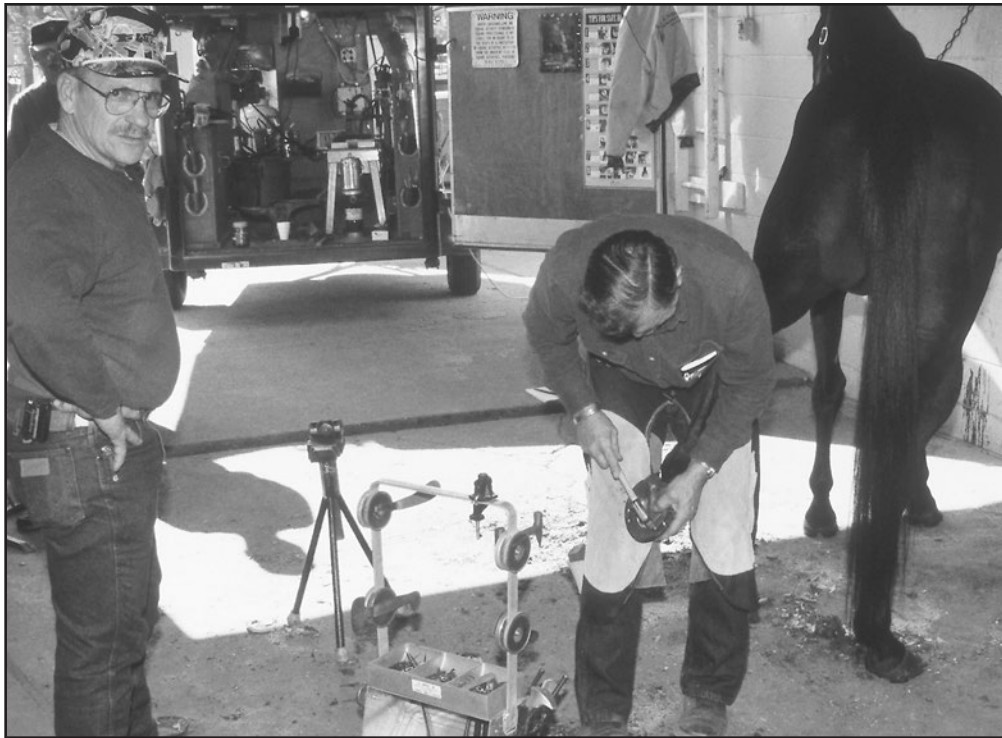
"We may keep them off a horse that will not be used for a while and will be let out to pasture," Reggio says. "We don't want them to bust up the foot."

However, the rubber shoes are also designed to provide some traction when the horses leave a hard surface temporarily.

On the ground surface of the shoe, the heels and toe are slightly raised to provide traction. A flat shoe surface would not provide any traction.

What Shoe To Use

In using Remuda and Smooth Walker shoes, the farriers consider factors that cause them to choose one over the other.



STAYING SOUND. At left, for more than three decades, farriers Milt Reggio (nailing shoe) and Johnny Argus have shod the horses of the New Orleans Police Department with rubber shoes. Both farriers like the shock-absorbing qualities of rubber and credit the shoes with keeping horses sound. Above, the shoers use Remuda shoes (left) on larger horses for extra durability and Smooth Walker shoes on smaller horses for extra shock absorption.

"Both are good," Argus says. "Remuda shoes are a little harder. They are made of polyurethane and last longer. It's a real good shoe on bigger horses because they hold up a little better."

"We use the Smooth Walker on the smaller horses. These shoes are a little

softer and they absorb concussion a little better, so I like them for that reason."

Weight Is A Factor

Though the rubber shoes will last six weeks, the New Orleans police horses receive new shoes every 30 days. The horses will wear out a set of shoes more quickly during Mardi Gras when work is a little more strenuous.

To maintain the horses' feet in top condition, the farriers shoe at the police barn every Tuesday and make a point to check every horse in the stable whether a horse is due to be shod or not.

The rubber shoes have a steel core with rubber molded around the steel shoe. Their thickness at the heels and toe is approximately three times that of a normal steel shoe and they are much heavier. They are not designed for a horse that will run much.

Trust Your Nails

Since rubber shoes are different from conventional steel shoes, it takes experience to get used to the feel of working with them.

The hardest part is nailing shoes to the foot due to the thickness of the shoe and the unusual feel of driving a nail through rubber, the farriers say.

"It's a different feel and it scares

people. You can't see the white line, so you have to be careful and have a little more confidence when driving a nail," Argus says. "It's like shoeing in front of a large group of people. You get nervous."

Adding complexity to the unusual feel of driving nails is an edge on the shoes that you need to avoid when driving nails. A square-head hammer, Argus points out, is beneficial for hammer clinching. It is also helpful to have a long head on the hammer.

Since some police horses have weak hooves, the farriers use a hammer and clinch block to clinch nails and avoid compromising wall strength.

Two-pound, dead-shot hammers work well for striking rubber shoes. The hammer has a plastic head containing bird shot that keeps the hammer from rebounding when striking the rubber shoes. However, both Argus and Reggio work without dead-shot hammers.

Argus prefers the nail holes in the Remuda shoes because they are punched. The Smooth Walker shoes have round holes.

No Fire Needed

An advantage both Argus and Reggio appreciate is the fact it doesn't take a fire to modify these shoes—



CREATIVE SOLUTION. Milton Reggio demonstrates an easier way of opening the heels on a rubber shoe with the help of a bolt cutter.



TAKING PRECAUTIONS. When shoeing horses with weak hooves, farrier Milton Reggio uses a hammer clinching technique.

something that's important in the midst of New Orleans' hot, humid summers. The shoes fit well with few modifications. A bolt cutter is used to open the heels to the needed fit.

"We used to use a bar with a lever you would pull to open them up and you would strain and strain to open the heels," Argus says.

"One day, there was a prisoner watching us straining to open the heels and he says, 'You sure like to work hard, don't you?'"

"I asked him what he knew about horseshoeing and he says, 'I may not

know much about shoeing horses, but I do know how to break into a house with bolt cutters.' That's how we learned an easier way to open the heels."

The bolt cutter didn't work for opening the heels of larger shoes, but the farriers added a sleeve to the bolt cutter to remedy that dilemma.

Shaping The Heels

Modifying heels requires another approach, Argus says.

"On these shoes, you can't drop the heels," he says. "You have to turn them over and use the round part of your ham-

mer. You don't need an anvil to hit the shoe. Plenty of times, you can hit them against the floor and they work fine."

More often than not, hooves will be narrower than the shoes, requiring farriers to rasp the shoes to fit the hoof.

"The nice thing about rubber shoes is they are easy to rasp and they are a lot easier on the rasp," Reggio says.

Use Toe Clips

Remuda shoes can be ordered with either toe and quarter clips or both. However, the farriers prefer only toe clips.

"I like toe clips better on rubber shoes because they are already placed and it's easier to shape the shoe to fit the hoof," Argus says. "It's hard for me to shape the rubber shoes to get a good fit with side clips."

Give Heel Support

The farriers are impressed by Remuda and Smooth Walker shoe designs because they provide much

CAVALRY ROUNDING HAMMER

1 1/2 lbs

Call your dealer today

• JUST THE RIGHT WEIGHT
FOR SHAPING ALUMINUM
SHOES

• GREAT FOR HOT FITTING
KEG SHOES

NC Tool Company Inc
6568 Hunt Road
Pleasant Garden, NC 27313
800/446-6498

REMUDA TIRE COMPANY

NEW!

← **REMUDA • Nail On Shoe**

- Features A Steel Horse Shoe Encapsulated In Polyurethane
- Specifically Made For Commercial Driving Horses
- Fast And Easy Shoeing

← **REMUDA • Bolt Together Shoe**
"MOST VERSATILE STREET SHOE EVER MADE!"

- Normal Steel Shoe You Shape And Nail On
- Bolt-On Shock-Absorbing Polyurethane "Tire"

(303)280•0049
999 East 160th Avenue Broomfield • CO 80020

Circle Reader Service No. 896

Circle Reader Service No. 890



HEEL MODIFICATION. When it comes to dropping heels, Johnny Argus turns the shoe over and uses the round part of the hammer.



TRUST YOUR ABILITIES. The thickness of rubber shoes means you can't see the white line when driving nails and creates an unusual feel. Johnny Argus says you have to trust your abilities to overcome the uncertainty that comes when first using rubber shoes.

needed heel support. Some of the horses shod on this day had broken-down ankles, perhaps sidebone and other mechanical or conformational problems, but they stay sound with the use of rubber horseshoes.

"The one thing you'll always have with rubber shoes is heel support and that's important to horses that have physical problems," Argus says.

Benefits Outweigh Cost

The only disadvantage to using the rubber shoes is the price. They cost \$50 to \$80 a set.

While Argus and Reggio shoe most horses beginning at \$70, they charge a minimum of \$125 for a shoeing job with rubber shoes.

"The cost is a disadvantage, but don't let the cost outweigh what's good for the horse," Argus says.

"I don't like to use wedge pads on these horses because I find the wedge pads crush the heels. I just like to put more heel on the shoes for these horses."

New Additions



- Keratex Feed Supplement
- Keratex Mud Shield Powder
- Keratex Nail Hole Disinfectant

Join the Keratex Line Of:
Keratex Hoof Gel
Keratex Hoof Putty and
Keratex Hoof Hardener...

Keratex - Offering
All-Around Hoof Care

Advance Equine
P.O. Box 54 • Versailles, Kentucky 40383

Toll Free: 888-GLU-SHOE
Phone: 606-873-5543
Fax: 606-873-6589

Circle Reader Service No. 810




EASY ON RASPS. When it comes time to rasp, rubber shoes are easy to rasp and aren't as tough on rasps as steel shoes, Johnny Argus says.

Another popular shoeing method for horses that work on hard surfaces is a steel shoe with Borium.

Many of the criminal sheriff's horses in New Orleans are shod this way, as well as the local carriage company that uses mules.

While the cost to the client may be less, using Borium for traction requires heating up a forge, a real negative for a farrier in a Southern climate. The technique also takes more time to apply than rubber shoes.

Alydanny, a half-brother to the famous Thoroughbred Alysheeba, is one of the city horses shod this day. This one-time \$50,000 horse that had a lackluster career on the track had ankle problems like some of the horses in the stables.

But the ability of the rubber shoes to absorb impact when horses walk on hard surfaces has kept Alydanny sound. That's the best reason the farriers find to use these shoes over steel with Borium. 

EasyCare Hoof Pads



Choose from a variety of styles.

EasyCare Hoof Pads are an excellent basic hoof pad with an innovative difference. Rather than compromise on performance by using an inferior material, EasyCare chooses to make each pad from tough, durable, shock absorbing, urethane. EasyCare goes one step further to ensure quality and uniform composition from pad to pad by using new urethane in each batch of pads.

Not willing to compromise on quality, EasyCare chooses to use new urethane in all hoof pads to ensure consistent, shock absorbing performance from one pad to the next. If you always thought all plastic hoof pads were the same, think again. EasyCare Hoof Pads allow you to make a smart, conscientious choice without compromising on quality. Choose ten styles of premium quality hoof pads at a competitive price.



EasyCare

EASycare, INC. 1600 E. HANLEY BLVD., SUITE 136 • ORO VALLEY, AZ 85737
VOICE 520-297-1900 • FAX 520-297-9600 • E-MAIL easycares@primerenet.com

ITEM FRONT & SIDE VIEW	ITEM #	TYPE	WIDTH	LENGTH	THICKNESS	COLOR
	#4	FLAT	6 1/8"	6 7/8"	1/8"	BLACK
	#5	FLAT	7 3/8"	8"	1/8"	BLACK
	THINLINER	FLAT	5 7/8"	6 1/2"	1/16"	BLACK
	WEDGE 1	WEDGE	5 7/8"	5 1/8"	0" TO 1/4"	BLACK
	WEDGE 2	WEDGE	5 7/8"	5 5/8"	0" TO 3/8"	BLACK
	WEDGE 3	WEDGE	6 1/8"	6 1/8"	0" TO 1/2"	BLACK
	LONG WEDGE 2	WEDGE	6 3/8"	6 7/8"	1/8" TO 3/8"	BLACK
	BAR WEDGE 3	BAR WEDGE	6"	4 1/4"	0" TO 1/4"	BLACK
	BAR WEDGE 4.5	BAR WEDGE	6"	4 1/2"	0" TO 3/8"	BLACK
	BAR WEDGE 6	BAR WEDGE	6"	4 5/8"	0" TO 1/2"	BLACK

Circle Reader Service No. 838