

## SPORT

# Action man comes home

AN action-packed career in the United States has seen former Blairgowrie man, Tek Marciniak, serve in Vietnam, and with a number of police departments, run a private investigations agency and gain a BSc in archaeology.

But he will return to Blairgowrie next week as one of the foremost mounted police instructors in the US.

During his stay, Tek will conduct two two-day mounted police training seminars for civilian horses and their riders at Glenmarkie Guest House Health Spa and Riding Centre in Glenshee.

Before emigrating to the USA in 1966, Tek was a police officer in Dundee.

He is a native of Blairgowrie and a former pupil of Lawside Academy.

His career in the US has included a three-year stint with the US Marine Corps, including a tour in Vietnam, before he was honourably discharged with the rank of sergeant.

He then had a spell with Tampa Police Department as a patrol officer, then as a homicide detective.

In 1975, Tek started his own private investigative agency and by 1990 it was the largest privately-owned detective agency in Florida, providing armed uniformed security personnel as well as plain clothes agents.

After selling the agency in 1990 and having gained his US Coast Guard Captain's Licence in 1985, Tek formed Gypsy Star Charters and Sailing School, and spent five years teaching off-shore and blue-water sailing on his 50ft Gulfstar sailing sloop in the waters of the Gulf of Mexico and the Western Caribbean between Florida, Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras.

In 1995, he re-entered law enforcement as a volunteer deputy for the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office where

he formed a mounted sheriff's patrol.

He became certified as a State of Florida police instructor, a police firearms instructor and a nationally certified mounted police instructor.

"My experience as a police officer coupled with my equestrian background was a natural segue into the mounted police field," said Tek.

"My love of horses came from my grandfather, David (Bunt) Beedie.

"At the age of three, I rode on my granddad's Clydesdale as it ploughed, hauled logs and made deliveries.

"In Blairgowrie in the late 1940s, horse-drawn commercial vehicles were still a common sight and it was not until my arrival in the United States that I began to learn the art of the equestrian."

Starting with basic English and Western equestrian lessons, he went on to become an avid fox hunter and has hunted all across the United States and in England and Ireland.

After attending polo school at the University of Virginia, Tek became a founding member of the Tampa Bay Polo Club.

In addition to his equestrian pursuits, he has participated in cross-country endurance racing.

Tek obtained a BSc degree in archaeology from the University of South Florida and his archaeological pursuits took him to the Yucatan Jungles of Mexico and the Peruvian Andes.

Experiences like crossing the Andes on horseback and traversing the Yucatan in search of Inca and Myan ruins allowed him to gain an insight into how to make a horse more accepting of hazardous situations.

This, coupled with extensive formal training in mounted police techniques, allowed him to develop his own programme of sensory training for horses.

After forming his own Mounted Police Academy, Tek found

that a great number of civilian spectators expressed an interest in having their private horses exposed to such training.

That resulted in the programme now being offered on Tek's return trip to Perthshire.

In addition to his many accomplishments, Tek is also a licensed airplane pilot and scuba diver.

In 1997, he started the first Tallahassee Scottish Festival and Highland Games at his plantation home outside Tallahassee.

The first year's attendance of 3000 people was a great success but nothing to compare with the 15,000 who attended the 2002 games when Tek was honoured as the founder of the event.

Tek now resides in Ocala, Florida - the horse capital of the world - where he operates the Mounted Police Academy, bringing officers from across the US and overseas for training.

He also operates a Mounted Police Equipment Company and two other operations centring on supplying police equipment to motor cycle officers and riot troops.

Tek's parents, Janet and Kazik, still reside in Dundee and he has many close relatives in Blairgowrie.

"I look forward to renewing friendships, especially with Jimmy Neave, Emile Filipczak, and Neil Kennedy," Tek added.

He has conducted his certification courses throughout the United States for police departments in Nevada, Texas, New Orleans, Cincinnati, and Los Angeles and utilises sensory training methods to overcome horses' natural fears.

**HORSE ACE:** Tek Marciniak will be back in Scotland next week for his mounted police training courses.

