

# Oman's Royal Cavalry

**THE AWARD WINNING DESERT PAGEANTRY: The Royal Cavalry of Oman by Henry Dallal is a photographic celebration of the cavalry world and the beautiful horses that it hosts. The magnificent collection of photographs captures the magic and spirit of the Royal Cavalry, as well as the true culture of Oman. Durrah speaks with Henry Dallal about his work and passion for equine photography.**

Passionate about travel and adventure, photographer Henry Dallal has been armed with a camera since a young age. Born in Iran in 1955, he made London his home after moving from Colorado in 1994, and the photographer frequently travels to remote areas to pursue his interests in mountaineering, adventure and experiencing different cultures. Besides nature and landscapes, the world of horses has particularly captured Dallal's imagination and he has specialized in equine cultures and pageantry.

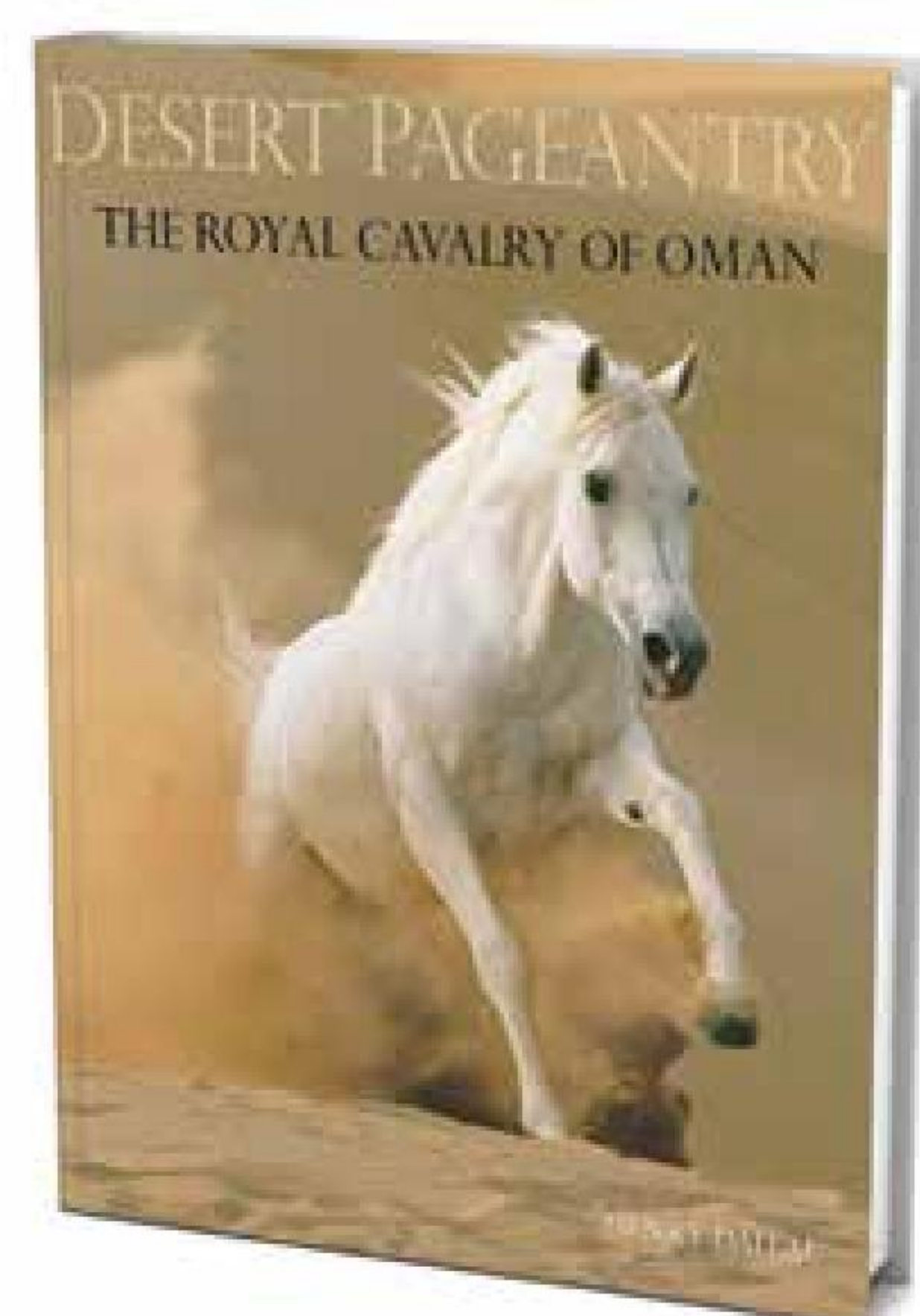
Throughout his career, Henry has been honoured with commissions to photograph HM Queen Elizabeth II, HRH Princess Royal, HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum and HRH Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein of Jordan. His photography has been exhibited in Blenheim Palace, Kensington Palace, and Windsor Castle, amongst other locations.

His published books include Horse Warriors: India's

61st Cavalry, Desert Pageantry: The Royal Cavalry of Oman, and Pageantry & Performance: The Household Cavalry in a Celebration of Pictures. He has also contributed to other books and publications, and continues working on several more. All of Henry's photography is done as he sees it without digital manipulation, and his prints are high quality archival cibachromes using traditional photography.

Desert Pageantry: The Royal Cavalry of Oman depicts the opulence of the cavalry world at the Royal Cavalry and the beautiful horses that take part. Dallal worked for several years capturing the breathtaking images, which portray the vitality of the daily work within the cavalry and also showcase the international participations of the Royal Cavalry around the world. The book has received much praise and recognition, including being awarded the 'Most Outstanding Design' at the 2013 Independent Publisher Book Awards.





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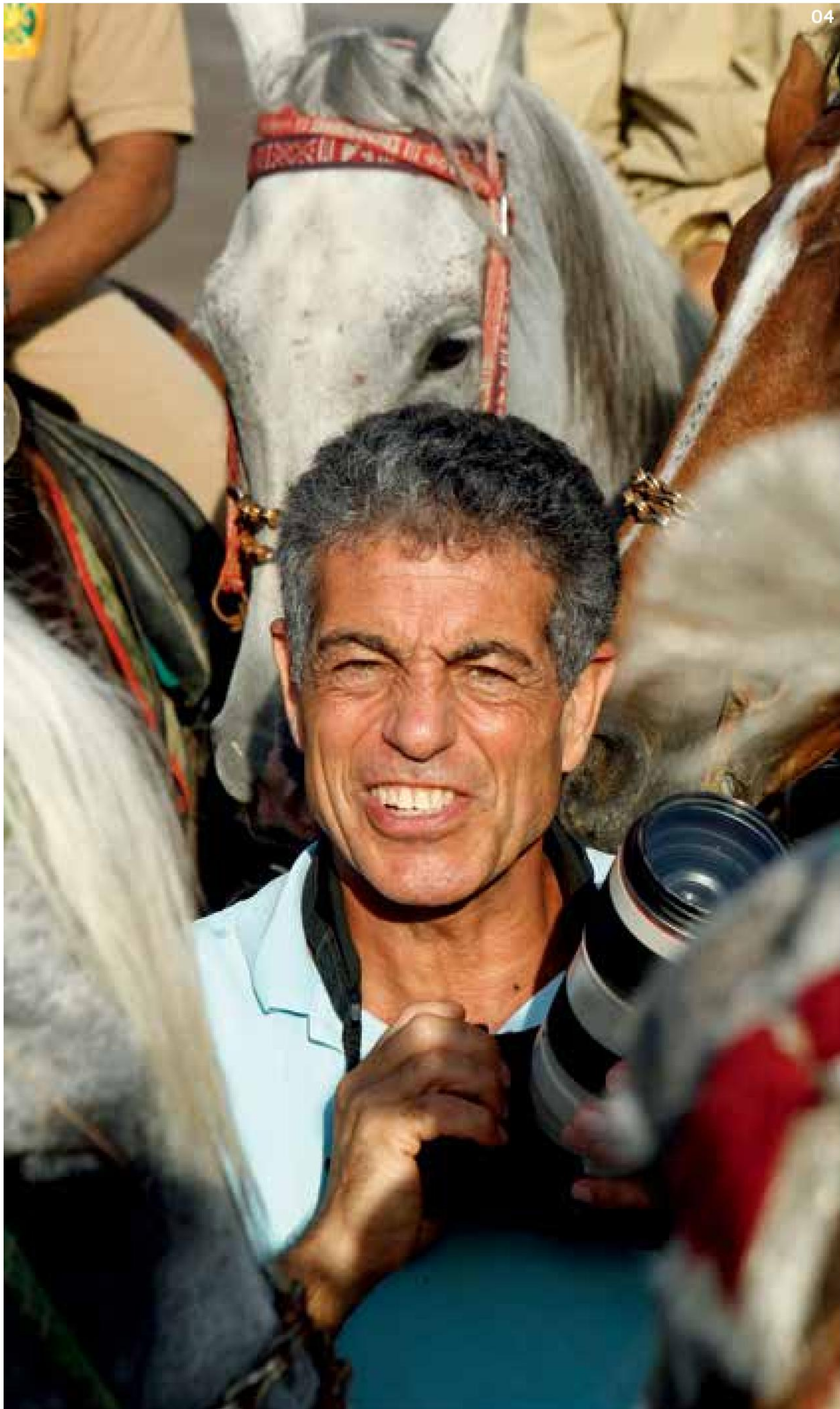




- 01 Many attempts were made to capture this image, in order to catch the magic of the water and the horses' power
- 02 Taken during the magical Khareef in Salalah
- 03 The Royal Cavalry in official ceremonial splendour parading for His Majesty Sultan Qaboos and other guests
- 04 Portrait of Henry Dallal



## Interview with Henry Dallal



When did you first develop an interest in photography?

My father gave me a box brownie camera when I was 9 years old and I have been taking photographs ever since. It's not something I learned, but I always thought of it as a way of life and a way to record my favourite moments of my life.

What do you think makes a good photograph?

A good photograph can be either a reportage that tells a story as you see in the news, or as an art form. I strive to create photographs that are both art and still try to tell a story. Whatever the photograph or subject, it has to have some kind of effect on the viewer and it has to provoke a thought, a feeling; happiness, sadness or something. It has to capture the viewers' imagination somehow. To make this all happen, the biggest ingredient is light and how light interplays on the subject itself. Hence, it is the light that is the magic, and how light is formed on the subject makes it either a great or a mediocre photograph. In my style of photography, if I am able to capture this in a fleeting moment of reality then I feel a real accomplishment, since I do not manipulate my photographs. The same rules apply to beautiful paintings; it is always how the light plays. But in painting again the author can manipulate the light with his paint brush, but in a photograph captured on film you cannot, and that is the challenge for me.

As having photographed the British Royal Family on more than one occasion, have you developed a particular style for these shoots?

I have had the honour and privilege to have been able to do several portraits of Her Majesty The Queen and other members of the Royal Family on several different occasions over the years. Some are formal portraits and some are informal, and some are

alongside a shared love of the horse. Equine Pageantry being one of my specialty subjects of course, has the Sovereign and Commander in Chief, so it is within the world of the horse that I take photographs that include also royal families from other countries.

The primary focus of your work is shooting horses and equine culture; what inspires you about this?

This is a good question. I love horses, so it is easier to be creative with my camera lens focused on a horse as opposed to something that I do not have a special feeling for, such as photographing school buses. However every subject can be a subject of art and will have a photographer with his speciality being able to photograph it. Having said that, everyone in the world today can take photographs, even with mobile telephones. But to take really cutting edge photographs, one needs good knowledge of the subject and to have a special feeling for it, as well as an element of occasional good luck to be able to take a great image.

What are some of the biggest challenges that come with photographing animals?

Access and approachability.

Do you have any favourite shooting locations?

I love travelling the world and being in remote places and in different cultures.

What do you hope to capture in your book, Desert Pageantry: The Royal Cavalry of Oman?

My aim was to celebrate the country of Oman and give a sense of appreciation and wonder amongst the viewers. I tried to encompass the culture, the Arabian horse and horses in general, the customs and the rich heritage of the region. I hope I was successful. I wanted to create the best photographs that I could



**05** Mounted female members of the Royal Cavalry in traditional costume, looking down on the camera lens

**06** A lone horse of the Royal Cavalry in desert dunes

challenge myself to create, using transparency film. These were used to put together a very high quality book with the best materials, after a very careful edit both in terms of photographs and text.

**How was the experience of shooting for the collection in this book?**

To me it would be the best book I have ever done to date.

**What is the selection process like when putting a book together?**

To get started is the most difficult, in thinking what the flow of the book should be. But once started it is a continuous flow, although it takes many edits later to have the perfect book, as one can always make improvements. I am quite pleased with the whole outcome.

**In the past you have spent time working in Bahrain, can you tell us about this?**

I was thrilled to be in Bahrain and would love to return. At the time it was as always a thrilling new experience for me. I thought Manama was a lovely city, particularly the nature of the island, which I yearn to have more experiences in.

**Do you have any future projects on the horizon?**

If I did not have more projects to look forward to then I would give up my passion for travel, adventure and experiencing new places, and I feel I have a long way to go. Hence there are several projects on the horizon, some closer than others. These include: Horse Cultures of the World, The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (of Canada), The King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery, and The UN Climate Change conference process, which is to be launched at the UN General Assembly meeting this coming September.

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