

School to Train Sharpshooters for the United States Army

Special Correspondence
WASHINGTON, D. C., 1918.

WAR today apparently takes little heed of the individual. Divisions figure in the battles where in other wars companies and regiments made the charge. Thousands of machine guns, each equivalent to a hundred riflemen, pour forth death where in previous times ragged volleys of rifles punctuated the engagements. Yet the individual, if he be an expert marksman, can be of inestimable value to the side on which he fights. Just as this war has developed the military aviator, who from his battleplane sends down sudden death in a rain of bombs, so it has developed the highest form of rifeman, the sniper, who, with his specially equipped rifle, lies hidden in cunningly concealed posts, to pick off enemy officers and men at long ranges.

So well recognized has the need for snipers become among all the warring nations that the training of these men forms an important part of all war programs. Germany, when she opened the conflict, had a distinct branch of her military establishment comprised of snipers. And so effective was their work that it is said that this was one cause of the growth of the art of camouflage. Today, however, no army but has its picked men, who represent all that is to be desired in the rifeman. And now the United States has taken official cognizance of the need for snipers, and on May 23 a school was opened at which instruction in rifle and pistol shooting will be given to officers and enlisted men of the National Army.

The school, "The Small Arms Firing School for the Instruction of Officers and Enlisted Men in Rifle and Pistol Shooting," has another aim than merely the training of snipers for war abroad. In fact, its primary object will be the training of men picked from the different divisions of the National Army in the use of the military rifle and pistol, who can then return to their respective organizations and systematically train in marksmanship, developing their instructors and putting into effect a uniform and efficient course whereby every man in the National

Army will, when he starts for overseas duty, be qualified to handle his service arm in an effective manner. In other words, the establishment of this school is the fulfillment of the appeal sent months ago by Gen. Pershing, and which in this country received strong backing from the National Rifle Association of America; many of whose officials are now identified with the big shooting camp on Lake Erie, that every man be given a thorough training in marksmanship before being sent on overseas duty.

In addition to training men who will later train members of their respective divisions, there will also be turned out men who are qualified to become American snipers, who will take up their work on the far-flung battle lines of Europe, with the crack shots of England and Canada, there to harass the Hun and destroy the morale of the enemy.

More than 500 officers have already entered the school for a month's intensive training, and within less than two weeks another body of men, more than 500, will report for instruction. The school has been established at Camp Perry, Ohio, the largest rifle range in this country, and among the largest in the world. Prior to being taken over for government use this range included a tract of 1,000 acres, but already additional ground has been used with a view of fitting it up for government use for the term of the war. Camp Perry lies on the shore of Lake Erie, within sight of Put-in-Bay, where Commodore Perry fought his famous fight. It is because of this fact that the camp was so named.

Steps have been taken by the government to insure to the men coming to the school for instruction the best that can be given in every phase of rifle and pistol knowledge. The commandant of the school is Lieut. Col. Morton C. Mumma, one of the best military shots of this country. In recent years closely identified with rifle and pistol shooting in the Army, Col. Mumma, in 1913, was captain of the Palma team. Each year, prior to the war, there was held an international match, at which gathered men from the crack shots with the military rifle in their respective countries. The Palma trophy represents the most coveted prize which can be won by a team in the world, and to be a member of the Palma



CAPT. W. H. RICHARD, A well known rifle shot who is one of the instructors of the new school.

team means that a man must be even more than an expert marksman. Maj. Smith W. Brookhart of Iowa, who is among the foremost exponents of rifle practice in this country, has been appointed chief instructor. Some time ago nearly a score of premier riflemen were mobilized by the government for duty in connection with popularizing the new service rifle with which the National Army is to be equipped. These men in every instance are expert riflemen, and with the establishment of the Small Arms Firing School they were detached from their previous work as "rifle demonstrators," and sent to Camp Perry, where they will serve under Maj. Brookhart.

Every man who reports at Camp Perry will receive a month's intensive training, which will cover every phase of military rifle and pistol shooting, as well as a thorough knowledge of the weapons themselves. The first week will be devoted to necessary preliminaries and gallery practice, calculated to fit the student for work on the outdoor range. The second and third weeks will be given over to short and mid-range practice with the service rifle. The remainder of the course will be spent in putting the finishing touches on the education of the student as a rifeman and will take him into long-range practice and the statistical office of the school, and upon the completion of the course will be transmitted to the head of the division from which the student was sent.

Whatever importance attaches to the work of teaching every man in the National Army the lesson of straight shooting, and the most vital lessons they have to learn, there is no gainsaying that there is a glamour surrounding the work of the sniper.

The sniper does not fight in large numbers, nor does he make his advance under cover of a barrage. Instead, he fares forth alone, or with a single companion as observer, into the contested territory of the shattered battle front. There he finds him shelter and waits, perhaps an hour, but more likely a day or two days, before he pulls trigger to his rifle. For it is not the duty of the sniper to send a hail of rapid fire into the ranks of enemy patrols. His task is to wait until some member of the enemy, more adventurous than his fellows, dares peep above the shelter of his parapet. Then is the bullet of the sniper loosed, sure death for the objective. For the real work of the sniper is more than merely accounting for so many lives. The sniper has a far greater duty—the breaking down of the morale of the enemy. By the constant picking off of individuals, day and night, he becomes a more terrible factor than the shrieking shell from the seventy-five or the explosive hail from the Stokes trench mortar. His bullet must come from nowhere. Yet it must invariably find a billet.

Toward the making of a sniper must go much more than merely the ability to shoot straight. Patience untold must be combined with the art of the hunter and the skill and craft of the poacher. An expert rifeman

may so lack the other necessary qualities as to be useless in the role of a sniper, while some other soldier of less ability may be fitted in every other way, and can, with practice, add to his qualifications the art of shooting.

The sniper is sent into the field to protect his own trenches and all approaches to them, and to harass the enemy by keeping the enemy fire down to a minimum, by obtaining information about enemy works. But he also must discourage the operations of the enemy, both offensive and defensive. This the sniper does by installing into the enemy's ranks and on one side of the opposing line, he must patiently wait for an opportunity to send swift, unerring death to him who shows himself even a few brief seconds. It is such work as this which tends to break down individual nerve in the enemy rank and file just as the constant dripping of water striking monotonously upon the same spot on the forehead of a tortoise victim, he counted upon to drive him hopelessly insane within a few hours.

The active life of the average sniper is not long. Yet his training is both long and expensive, while his weapon must be the finest. That, perhaps, better than anything else, indicates the importance of the sniper in the world war.

When the sniper goes forth to duty he must know the lay of the land in that portion of the battle front where he expects to work. He may find protection in a previously planned position, or he may make his post in no man's land, or in a room of some ruined house. But, if necessary, the sniper must also be able to create cover where none exists, and create it in such a way that it will defy detection.

Once a sniper has taken up his post, there are innumerable things he must do and must be prepared to do. He may remain undetected by the enemy. If his post is in a house, he always stands at the back of the room when firing. When shooting through a small aperture in brickwork, the sniper always waters the opening, thus preventing the gas from the explosion from blowing out any dust and betraying the spot whence the shot came. In constructing a new loophole, in earth, the sides are always boarded or otherwise protected to prevent the explosion from blowing dust. In constructing new loopholes they are always "gagged" at front and curtained behind. Before



LIEUT. COL. MORTON C. MUMMA, Commandant of the new school.

removing the "gag" the sniper always drops the curtain, to prevent light striking through the loophole and thus betraying his position. When a new sniper's post has been constructed, it is always left unoccupied for a day or two and kept under observation, to see whether or not it has been spotted by enemy snipers and is being fired upon. Once a used sniper's post has been discovered by the enemy, a sniper leaves it as soon as possible, but not before he had posted a "dangerous" sign that those who follow him may read.

The sniper of today is a highly developed prototype of the "sharpshooter" of days gone by. Nor is the art of sniping itself entirely a product of this war, although the rules that govern sniping today are entirely different from those ever used before. Sniping originated in the Crimean war in the British army, was employed to a considerable extent during the civil war, and sporadic instances cropped up in the Indian mutiny. No organized efforts in this direction, however, had been made. Probably the first organized system of sniping was established by

Germany. Long before the Huns invaded Belgium, the staff officers of the Kaiser's army had given much most thoughtful attention to the subject of sniping and snipers' weapons. As a result Germany sent into the field a well trained corps of snipers equipped with rifles fitted with the finest telescopes obtainable. And it was because of this excellently equipped, thoroughly trained body of men that the British were forced to match the accuracy of the German snipers' rifles with the cunning of camouflage, at least while they were fitting men of their own to fare forth and wage war in the same way. Today the British are known to have surpassed the Germans in the quality of the snipers they are turning out.

It is generally conceded today that a telescope sight is essential to successful sniping. This form of sight is a telescope differing not very greatly in construction from the ordinary spyglass, except that "cross hairs" which are often made of spider web, divide the lens at right angles, and that it is possible to raise and lower the glass to get changes in elevation for different ranges and an adjustment to right or left to offset the force which wind exerts upon the flight of a bullet. This telescope is mounted on the barrel of the rifle, and when it is properly adjusted, the sniper, looking through the scope, places the intersection of the "cross hairs" on the object which he wishes to hit, and in this way takes aim. Telescope sights for snipers use usually are of what is known as from four-power to six-power glasses, although the power is sometimes even less. A four-power glass is one that magnifies the target by four diameters, and, consequently, by bringing the target closer and making it clearer, materially aids the rifeman in shooting at an indistinct or carefully concealed enemy. It also aids him in making observations of enemy positions which may be of considerable military value. In addition to these benefits, it permits the sniper to shoot during the first few minutes of morning light, when the enemy is beginning to stir about, and to continue his work of slaughter after twilight has fallen, feats which are totally impossible when ordinary rifle sights are used. Another advantage of the telescope is that the sniper can prepare his post at a greater distance from the enemy lines than otherwise, relying upon the power of his glass to make effective work possible, and whenever a sniper can establish himself far behind or away to one side of the lines of battle the chances of the enemy discovering his hiding place are materially reduced.



TYPE OF RIFLE USED BY AMERICAN SHARPSHOOTERS.

ON THE FIRING LINE AT CAMP PERRY.

Peat May Relieve the Nation's Shortage of Fuel During War

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INDUSTRY as to coal conservation still continue, and with reason. A substitute vaguely talked of heretofore is now being investigated thoroughly and estimates made upon its value from several angles. This is peat. It has been described as a "dark brown or black residuum produced by the partial decomposition of mosses, sedges and other vegetable matter in marshes and like wet places." Its origin, therefore, lies in soil which is never dry, and the Atlantic coastal plain is dotted with many valuable deposits.

It is much emphasized in some quarters that commercial development of these practically untouched peat deposits would give unimagined relief toward solving the fuel shortage in the United States. We have never really needed it before, because coal has been abundant, but Europe is old in the lore of peat. Those whose reading as children covered the work and play of the imagination, for they were the homes of will o' wisp, and it held one to think of carving out a piece of the earth with a knife, then taking it home to put in the kitchen stove.

France before the war did not use much of her great peat deposit, because of the trouble digging and transporting it, but the change in economic conditions and the shortage of other fuel made the usage of peat a necessity. The beds not entirely decomposed afford the best fuel, after being dried properly. They have plenty of heat and little smoke according to the illustration of February 16 last. Black peat has not much fuel value, says the same writer, adding that the best peat will be found to give out 5,000 calories of heat to the kilogramme, as against 8,000 calories for coal and 4,000 for seasoned wood. These comparisons are interesting, if the United States is to do much with her vast peat deposits in the neighborhood of the Atlantic.

Also that peat in France has been of wide service to the military authorities, and that much of the coal-



CULTIVATION OF PEAT-MOSS. A HILL OF BURNING PEAT.

ing in the field is done with it where it is available, may be a wise hint. The army in Alsace, in the Vosges and in the Jura and the Haut-Saone use it for this purpose. The securing of peat and its preparation are simple and not arduous, so that French peat beds are employed in certain peat beds in the Alsatian districts. In other beds the French soldiers are utilized, but it is the German prisoners who are depended upon for the chief output.

Sweden, it is said, could not survive the reduction in coal imports if it were not for the possibilities now considered as lying in her peat bogs, though these deposits are inferior and 95 per cent water in many places. Like the usage of wood as coal conservation the immediate vicinity of a

Swedish peat bed should utilize such fuel as can thus be obtained. The largest bogs are to have plants located nearby, and the desperate condition facing Sweden next winter it is hoped may be brightened somewhat. The riksdag voted a large appropriation last winter for the thorough investigation of the value of Swedish peat.

If this is true, and the American peat deposits are so rich in fuel value, we need have no fears of certain fuel famine. The failure here to manufacture peat fuel on a commercial basis with success appears to have been due

to inexperienced operators and mis-luck in engineering. If an authority in Boston is to be believed, he says that peat which is air dried by machinery is only slightly inferior in point of calories of heat to the lignite coal, and that such fuel can be produced at from 15 cents to \$2.50 a ton, depending upon the facilities of the plant. The United States geological survey in a bulletin on peat as a means of present relief. According to estimates there are more than 11,000 square miles of swamp land in this country containing peat beds of good quality. The total available fuel product would amount to more than 12,000,000,000 tons. This source of fuel in states, largely, which have no

could in winter and require for their manufacturing industries a large amount of coal, with the amount constantly increasing in demand that Minnesota, from that state's geological survey report, might furnish more than 6,000,000 tons of air-dried peat fuel. Wisconsin and Michigan—all the region of the great lakes—have peat bogs. The bogs of Maine are quite well known. The governor of Maine and Massachusetts have sent messages to their legislatures recommending investigations local peat deposits.

Canada, having vast deposits of peat practically untouched, has gone so far in her investigations that men have been sent to Europe to see how the peat industry is being conducted there. At Alfred, Ontario, a peat plant was operated for about two years, and the output placed in Ottawa, in order to familiarize the people with its use in the future. When the war broke out the plant shut down. About 175,000 acres in Canada consist of peat bogs. Twenty-five of these are in Ontario, twelve in Quebec and several others in Manitoba and the coastal provinces.

Canadian experts, realizing that the average heating plant is suitable only for coal, believe that the best results will be obtained in the burning of peat through by-product recovery producer gas plants and the gas piped to buildings. Canada has organized the American Peat Society at Ottawa. According to reports from the Department of Commerce, 216 peat machines were in operation in Norway in 1917, almost 200 more than in 1913. Two particularly good machines required only two men each for the turning out of from thirty to forty tons of fuel. The ordinary process is described as consisting in the thorough maceration or pulping of the freshly excavated peat and the spreading of the resultant mass on a portion of the bog prepared for drying purposes. When the pulped peat has spread on the ground to a thickness of two inches it has sufficient moisture to be cut transversely and longitudinally into blocks, which, when the moisture has been removed, have approximately the dimensions of the ordinary building brick. For agricultural purposes peat has been in use in this country for some time. Its high nitrogenous quality enriches poor land to a high degree. It is a source of nitrates, too. It is used in certain forms as a deodorizer and disinfectant around farms. It has also been used frequently as a source of charcoal and coke of various qualities from coke retorts. Peat has been making clothing from peat since the war started. Peat moss contains fibers easily adapted

to spinning. A certain kind of yarn has been made of peat moss and shoddy and Swedish wool. Chevrolet is being woven of this yarn.

Peat, chemically prepared, is being used as a dressing for wounds in various parts of Europe, and is said to be a good substitute for medicated

FOOD CONSERVATION IN PRINTING PLANT LUNCHROOM

The United States Food Administration has repeatedly warned the country to curtail its consumption of food. Just now there is being conducted in one of our most important government bureaus a restaurant where the program of the food administration is being carried out in a masterly manner.

This lunchroom covers about 60,000 square feet of space on the top floor of the bureau of engraving and printing. About one-half of this area is used for a dining hall, divided into two sections, one side for men and the other for women. Owing to the great increase in the number of employees, even this amount of room has become inadequate, and a part of each one of the two big roof gardens has been furnished to accommodate the overflow.

The workers in this important branch of the government service now number about 7,000, and they are compelled by the very nature of their work to remain within the confines of the building from the moment of their entrance until the completion of their daily tasks. Most of them are engaged on exhausting and laborious duties which require a great amount of physical endurance. This of necessity means a well nourished body. These facts led to the establishment of the Bureau Co-operative Lunch Association, whose treasurer, J. A. Brown, in his latest financial statement, reports sales for the month amounting to \$17,000, with resources and liabilities balancing.

cotton. This fact, related to what is known for years in Europe, are many square miles of this kind of peat in the upper midwestern states of the United States.

From 15,000,000 to 20,000,000 tons of peat are used in the war zone for fuel.

appetizing salad, a dainty custard or a hunk of war time cake can be bought for 5 cents.

The present manager, Mr. Tucker, who has had wide experience in the lunchroom business, states that everything so carefully planned and prepared so judiciously prepared that portions are about all that is thrown away. Every form of supply purchased for consumption by the employees is of the best quality, the selection believing this to be the first essential in food saving. All the beef used is boneless, which costs less than a pound, but is more economical in the long run. Anywhere from 150 to 200 pounds of meat are consumed at each meal.

The 350 loaves of bread, an equal number of pies, not to speak of corn bread, oatmeal, and cakes, are baked daily on the premises. At present the pies and cakes are being made of corn and barley meal, with but a small percentage of wheat flour. Potatoes, which the food administration advises the people to make a staple use of, owing to their present abundance, are here served at every meal. Three barrels of potatoes, each barrel furnishing about 500 portions, are used every day. They are usually served mashed, which has been found to be the most popular and least wasteful method of preparing them.

Some time ago, when it became impossible to obtain cut sugar, the management tried various methods of sugar saving, but always endeavoring not to deprive the employees of the quantity sufficient to sweeten their food. It was decided to use the sugar bowl, ever an inducement to wasteful usage and which it was now being a problem to fill, must go. Finally a plan was tried and adopted. It was not only solved a question of sugar saving, but also one in sanitation. During rest periods one can see several girls carefully measuring out sugar, allowing one tablespoonful for each person and putting it in tiny paper bags. These bags when closed are put in hampers and placed in the lunchroom, where one is put on one's honor not to take more than the allotted portion. By this method the amount of sugar consumption has been reduced from 220 to seventy pounds a day.