

EASTERN PLATOON LEADER'S CLASS—1935—RESERVE

BRIGADIER GENERAL T. HOLCOMB, U.S.M.C.

Commandant, Marine Corps Schools

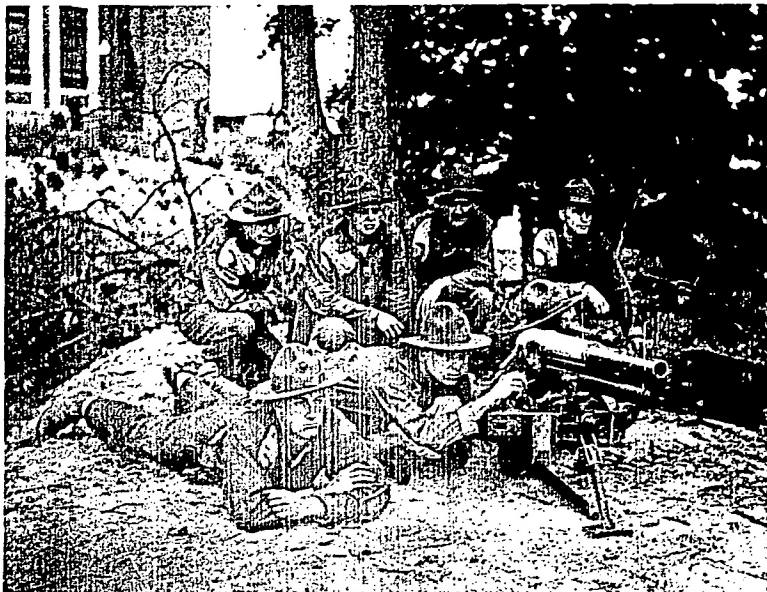
■ In accordance with legislation passed by Congress, the first Platoon Leader's Classes were assembled, at Quantico, and San Diego, to commence their training on July 8, 1935.

The purpose of this legislation was to supply the Marine Corps with a reserve of young, carefully selected, and well trained platoon leaders, available to be called to the colors promptly, in the event of mobilization for war. The Marine Corps does not have time to select and train platoon leaders between a declaration of war and its first active service.

The plan contemplated taking selected under-graduates of a large group of colleges in which there are no R.O.T.C. units. This avoided competition with the Navy and the Army. The young men were to be enlisted in Volunteer Marine Corps Reserve and appointed privates first class. Funds were provided for 250. Of these, one half, constituting the "Senior Division" were to be selected from students who had just completed their junior year at college; the other half, "The Junior Division" from those just completing their sophomore year. The period of active duty training was to be six weeks. Those who successfully completed the training and were recommended, were to be commissioned second lieutenants in the Volunteer Marine Corps Reserve upon graduation. For the first year, the senior division would have only one summer's training. Thereafter, all would have two summers, that is twelve weeks training, prior to being commissioned, each year's junior division returning next year as the senior division. Of the total 250, 200 were to be assigned to Quantico; 50 to San Diego. Very logically the duty of training the Quantico contingent was placed on the Marine Corps Schools. In the late spring officers were sent to the selected colleges to explain the plan to the college authorities and to establish contact with interested students. An effort was made to interest the best type of student, and to give him as accurate a picture of the life he would lead and the work that would be expected of him, as well as that life and work could be visualized. The Commandant, Marine Corps Schools, furnished the Reserve Section at Marine Corps Headquarters with the School's picture of the training. The

scouts were carefully indoctrinated, and results show that in nearly all cases the young men did arrive with a reasonably accurate idea of what was ahead of them.

It was only natural, in the initiation of a plan which was entirely foreign to our peace time experience, that the procurement and transfer to the training station of these young men was not unaccompanied by administrative complications. These difficulties could perhaps not have been foreseen in each case; and next year everything should move more smoothly. It might be mentioned that of the 195 transferred to Quantico, 2 were by oversight not enlisted at the recruiting stations, and in the case of one man this was not even discovered for one week. The men themselves were in a bewildered state of mind with regard to the question as to whether or not they had been sworn in; and the service record books were not always a safe guide. Some came without orders, having mistaken a cordial wave of the hand on the part of the scout for orders on which a hard boiled quartermaster would pay



Watching One-Pounder Kick Up Dust

travelling expenses. However, we live and learn.

The Schools proceeded to organize themselves for the task. Desks, maps, and other school paraphernalia were banished to the basement; class rooms became squad rooms; the hitherto unused galley was put in commission; the training staff was assembled and their indoctrination commenced. The training schedule was prepared by the schools staff, working with the officer who was to be in direct charge of the training (Lieutenant Colonel Clifton B. Cates, who had just graduated from the Senior Class of the Schools) and was improved and approved at Marine Corps Headquarters.

The candidates were due to report on Monday, July 8. Realizing that some would come earlier, provision for their reception was made. Two arrived on Saturday, and twenty-two on Sunday. All trains were met and the reservists were escorted to the Schools.

Monday was taken up with assigning the men to organizations, and to bunks and lockers, and the issue of clothing and equipment. Like those that were to follow, it was a busy day. Every conceivable precaution was taken in the fitting of shoes, this work being done in the presence and under the close supervision of the medical officer, the division commander, the platoon leader, and the platoon and section sergeants and corporals. In spite of every precaution it later became necessary to change the shoes of nine men. These youths belong to a motor-

mind generation which never learned to walk. Seven hours a day pounding the sun-baked parade ground with rifle and combat pack, spread the feet so that in nine cases larger shoes had to be issued.

Drills commenced at 0700, Tuesday, July 9, and were carried on, practically without interruption from the weather, during the ensuing six weeks. So far as could be arranged, out door work ended at 1000 and the next hour and the period following the noon-day meal, devoted to instruction that could be given indoors, thus avoiding so far as practicable the worst of the heat.

Unfortunately, but necessarily, there was quite a little interruption to the training due to time consumed in giving typhoid inoculations, vaccinations, finger printing and taking photographs.

There was naturally much time devoted to close order drills at first. Effort was made to keep these from being unnecessarily tiring, periods of close order drill being alternated with other instruction, such as nomenclature of the rifle and B.A.R.; lectures on Courtesy and Customs of the Service, navy regulations, hygiene and sanitation; extended order drill and combat principles. The work became, day by day, of a more obviously practical nature. In the second week, instruction preliminary to going on the range commenced. The use of the ranges was secured for the third week, a regrettably short period for this most important work. During that week the men fired the .22 and .30 caliber rifles, the B.A.R., the caliber .30 machine gun, the pistol, the Thompson sub-machine

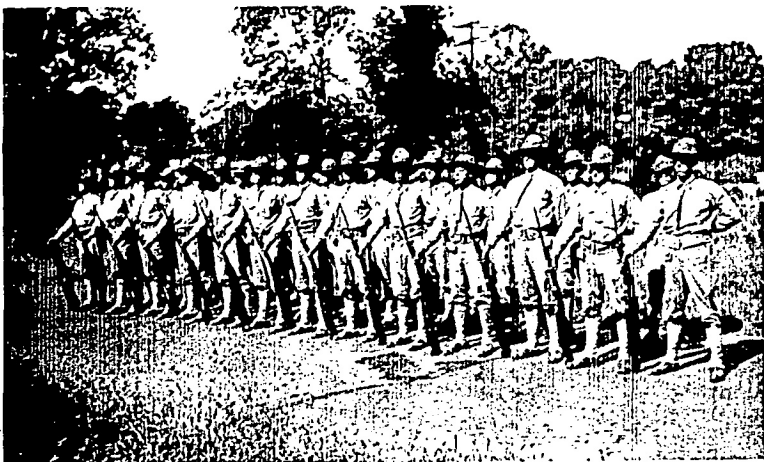
gun, the rifle and hand grenades! No one could seriously pretend to give anything like adequate instruction during such a short period. However, when this year's junior division comes back next year, this deficiency can be partly remedied. As a matter of fact even with this short period, surprising results were accomplished, due to the great interest of the men and their quick perception. All hands, instructors, classes and range personnel alike, worked during that week without regard to hours.

The course included the ceremonies of guard mounting and parade. Naval law was covered by lectures and a moot summary court. Each day's work started with a thorough troop inspection. When marching to and from the training fields units always marched at attention and were exercised in the manual on the march and close order movements.

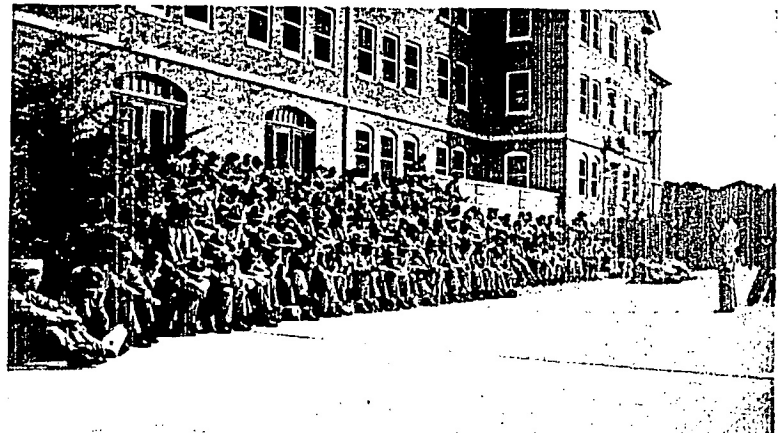
In topography, there were eight hours class room instruction covering scales, conventional signs and military symbols, coordinates, azimuth, direction, distance, ground forms and relief. There were four hours practical sketching with compass and sketching case.

It was continually kept in mind that these young men were to be trained as platoon leaders. To that end all received some training in giving commands. At company close order drill and ceremonies platoons were habitually commanded by the reservists. Next year this idea can be carried out more fully.

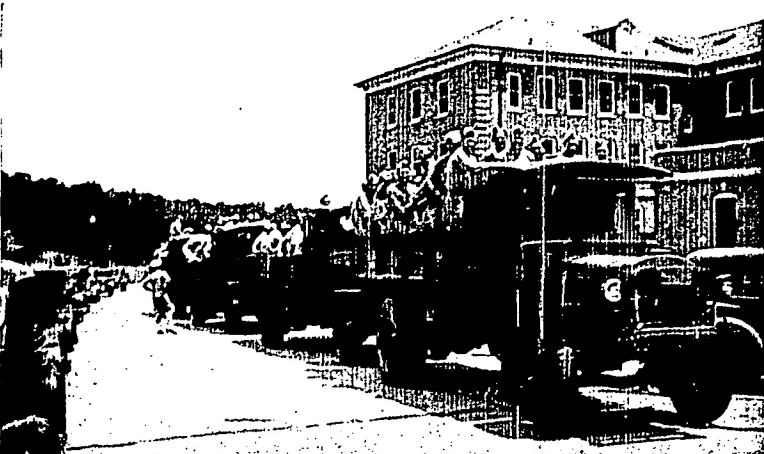
Fortunately some of the instruction and lectures could be given by specialists from the staff of the Marine Corps



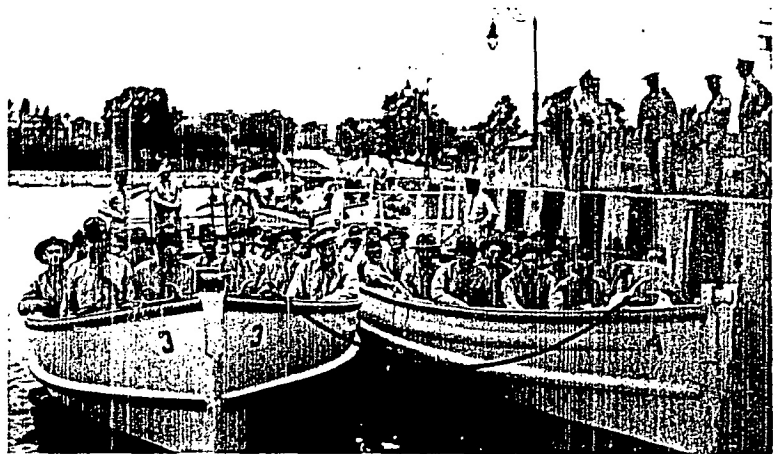
Good Enough for the "Movies"



Receiving Words of Military Wisdom



Sight-Seeing Party off for Mt. Vernon



Starting Down the Potomac on a Picnic

Schools, other than those attached to the unit.

Much thought was given to the matter of recreation. A building was made available for use as a recreation center. The Post Exchange operated a tobacco shop there; games, papers, magazines, writing facilities, a radio, and a barber shop were provided. The unit had a section of chairs reserved for its use at the motion pictures. With the cooperation of the Fleet Marine Force, every one was given an indoctrination flight in the planes of Aircraft One. The officers' mess was made available for two dances, which were highly successful. A boat trip was arranged on the Potomac. The entire unit visited Mt. Vernon, the fees being remitted with the kind cooperation of the authorities; boat transportation was furnished and a picnic supper provided. The men were afforded the opportunity of riding horses from the post stables; the golf association extended the courtesy of its course on Wednesday afternoons, and there were baseball, play ground ball, tennis, hand ball and swimming.

The conduct of the men was all that could be desired. In no case was disciplinary action necessary. Of the 195 men who reported, all completed the course with the exception of six. Of these only two were obviously misfits, a remarkably low percentage, and a fact which speaks volumes for the under-graduate bodies of our colleges. Of the other four, one left to go to West Point, and three to accept positions which turned up unexpectedly and which would give them the necessary financial assistance to continue their education. Many of these lads were working their way through college.

The division commanders were from the staff of the schools; the Fleet Marine Force furnished the 6 platoon leaders and the 24 sergeants and corporal instructors, and a splendid lot of men they proved to be. The Fleet Marine Force also put on a landing demonstration and loaned their motion picture films of the maneuvers held at Culebra last winter including those showing the gun fire.

Wherever possible red tape was cut. The constant and unfailing cooperation of the Reserve Section at Marine Corps Headquarters saved many an hour and made possible sudden and unforeseen changes of plans.

As of possible interest, a list of the colleges from which the Quantico contingent came, follows, arranged in no particular order:

Washington and Jefferson	Washington and Lee
Ohio University	Duke
Centre	University of Virginia

Tulane
Rochester University
Colgate
Miami University
Toledo University
University of N. C.
National University

Dartmouth
Tufts
University of S. C.
Rensselaer
Bucknell
University of Colorado
Roanoke College

The following summary of the training schedule indicates the scope of the training and the number of hours devoted to each subject:

SUBJECTS

DISCIPLINARY—Total Hours Available 70

1. Organization—Physical Inspection—Issue of Clothing, Equipment and Text Books	7
2. Organization and Duties of Marine Corps	1½
3. History of Marine Corps	1½
4. Navy Regulations	1
5. Customs of the Service (Military Courtesy)....	1
6. Troop—Manual of Arms, Drill, Close-Order	34
7. Drill Extended Order	8
8. Hygiene and Sanitation	1
9. Physical Inspection, Turn in Equipment, etc.	4
10. Ceremonies (Including Guard Mounting, Inspections, Parades and Reviews	9
11. Naval Law	1
12. Athletics	3

TECHNICAL—Total Hours Available 94

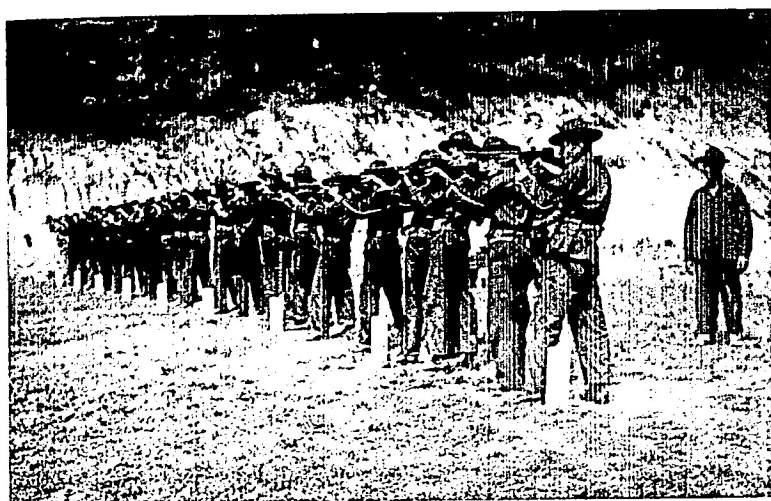
13. Pistol	1
14. Rifle and Bayonet	2
15. Infantry Weapons	9
16. Grenades	2
17. Tent Drill	2
18. The Pack	1
19. First Aid	1
20. Gas Defense	1
21. Field Fortifications	3
22. Military Topography	12
23. Musketry	12
24. Marksmanship, Rifle and Pistol	43
25. Scouting and Patrolling	4
26. Communications	1



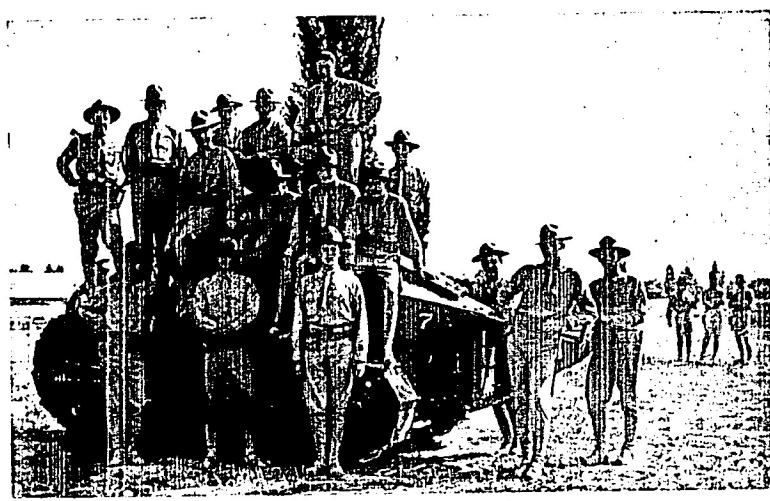
Attack With Heavy Brownings



Returning From a "Hop"



Getting Acquainted with Semi-Automatic



Getting Dope on Tanks

TACTICAL—Total Hours Available 46

27. Combat Principles, Squad	8
28. Combat Principles, Section	8
29. Combat Principles, Platoon	8
30. Marches and Camping	8
31. Night Operations	4
32. Defense Against Aircraft	1
33. Landing Operations	3
34. Tactical Employment of Infantry Weapons	4
35. Communications	2

NOTE: Instruction was given in Range Estimation and Combat Signals during the hours allotted for Extended-Order Drill and Musketry.

All officers connected with this work are unanimously of opinion that two summers of six weeks are too short to give the reservists the training that they should have, if they are expected to train and lead a platoon in battle with little other preparation. Therefore it has been

recommended that hereafter the course should consist of three summers training, following the freshman as well as the sophomore and junior years. If funds can be obtained this should improve the quality of the graduates to a marked degree. Their third summer, after about two weeks refresher course, can be devoted to giving the reservists the opportunity to command and instruct the two junior divisions, of course under the close supervision of the regular personnel. Thus they will become real platoon leaders, with the necessary knowledge and self confidence.

This plan of obtaining platoon leaders can be definitely pronounced a success. The experience, for the regular personnel, was refreshing. In an age when there is much talk of pacifism, socialism and even communism, where one gains the impression or yields to the fear that the old order is changing, the ideals of the older generation being cast aside, this experience renews one's faith in the youth of his country, and in the permanence of those qualities which have made our country what it is. One may reasonably hope that the country will endure.

THE OLD BEAR OF THE NORTH

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER F. J. BIRKETT

United States Coast Guard

(Concluded from August Number)

■ In August, 1912, it was the pleasure of those on the *Bear* to have Vilhjalmur Stefansson as a passenger from Point Barrow to Nome, a distance of about 800 miles. He had spent four years in the Far North living with the Eskimos, in the manner they are accustomed to live, and carried on his scientific work. Stefansson was the first explorer to demonstrate it is possible to depend entirely on the natural resources of the country for food and fuel; he coined the expression "The Friendly Arctic." Later he penetrated regions where Eskimos had never been and were unwilling to go. He found the natives' predictions that he would starve in the unknown lands, for lack of game, unfounded. Being an excellent hunter, he pene-

trated, by means of long trips over the ice never before attempted by "Living Off the Country," as far east as 90° longitude and as far north as 85° latitude. He discovered three new lands and the much discussed "Blonde Eskimos" which he describes as the Copper Eskimos. Stefansson's exploration methods differed from those of Peary, Amundsen, McMillan and Nansen, in that they carried many provisions and primus stoves for cooking. They of course took advantage of game, but they did not live entirely off of it.

REMARKABLE OCCURRENCE

A remarkable happening occurred in 1916. McMillan, the explorer, after spending a winter at his base on the Eastern shore of Ellesmere Island, during the summer of 1916 made a noteworthy trip over land and sea to the northwestward, covering areas never before trod by man. Strange as it may seem, at nearly the same time Stefansson, while working his way back to the southwestward, following his discovery of new lands, traversed King