

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, JULY 23, 1916.

Copyright, 1916, by the Sun Printing and Publishing Association.

"WE'RE PREPARING, UNCLE SAM!"

Twelve Hundred Lads in Camp at Plum Island Respond to the Call to Be Ready for Nation's Defence

By JOHN WALKER HARRINGTON
TWELVE hundred boys having the time of their lives getting bronzed and hale in the salt air which comes with invigorating tang from Sound and ocean—1,200 boys growing each day snappier and more alert—1,200 boys radiating the health and spirits which come from manly exercise, clean living and wholesome diet—this is a sight to make one believe in the future of the United States.

Take then into consideration that the 1,200 are being intensively trained to be good soldiers—that they are cadets of a condensed West Point who are gaining the ideals of military discipline under an inspired leadership—and the pulses of any man will thrill as he sees the eight companies at drill and play on Plum Island, N. Y., at the eastern entrance of Long Island Sound.

The experiment of this juvenile Plattsburg by the Sea has been such a success that it is to have its immediate encore. The committee of patriotic citizens which launched this movement for the training of the younger generation in the art of war in cooperation with the Military Training Camps Association and helped it by precept and example and funds has already arranged with the Government for a second camp, which is to open on August 12 and close on September 9. Its city headquarters at 475 Fifth avenue is even now receiving applications and those who wish to have their sons join had better lose no time, for the boys of the present camp are enthusiastic over the idea that many of them are asking for the second instalment before they are half through with the first.

This camping out with Uncle Sam is certainly a great sport for the youngsters, and they are enjoying every minute of it. The reservation is at Plum Island. If it were not given over to Fort Terry and a garrison, would serve Robinson Crusoe or the Swiss Family Robinson or be the theatre of adventure for a Kirk Munroe story. It is about 3 1/2 miles long, made up of pine and hill and tangle and lianes and is scalloped into coves and bays. The breezes from the ocean play over it and even a few hours of the salt and the ozone vitalize the human system so that one can feel the effects for days. It would be just the place to run away to for adventure and life in the reservation is a fine, big adventure in itself.

There are two camps—the East Camp, where 750 boys are living, and the Hill Camp, which accommodates 450. The War Department regulations require that wherever the citizens are Government ground for drill they shall be with regular troops—so there is a detachment of the 133d Coast Artillery at the East Camp and one from the Forty-third Coast Artillery at the Hill Camp. At the far end of the island are the fortifications and the batteries of the great guns and mortars, and at the other is the large parade ground where the boys get infantry tactics. There is a hike of a mile and a quarter between the two camps.

The Government furnished the canvas shelters in which the young regiment is living. Most of the tents are of the pyramidal form. They rise conelike into the sun and are square at the base, so that it is easy for the eight cots of a squad to be arranged inside and at the same time to give plenty of elbow room. Each tent has a wooden floor, thanks to the donations of the committee, and the drainage is so perfect that there is no danger of dampness. The pole of the tent is braced with steel and about its top is a vent.

There is a full grown electric light plant blooming under the dark casements at Fort Terry and from it comes the current which supplies the bulbs in every tent. On the Sound side of the island are the well built shower baths, containing rows and rows of nozzles, and here also are the faucets from which fresh water can be drawn for washing the hands and face. All that modern sanitation can do has been done at this camp to insure the health of the cadets. Each camp too has its mess halls, built of stout timbers and well screened against flies and duties, for everything is burned as soon as possible. To make sure of having enough furnace room the incinerators were enlarged after the boys arrived. There were plenty of stones along shore and with lines of willing young assistants who made a thousand foot chain along which the bundles passed from hand to hand there was no trouble at all in getting all the building material needed. There is not along these coasts an island more spick and span than is the one which is now the home of the twelve hundred cadets. Not a scrap of paper is permitted to take its wayward course; the company streets of the camps are models of good policing.

This is by way of describing the setting in which there are now passed so many busy and happy days by this legion of thoroughly alive boys. They come from all parts of the United States. Practically every State is represented, and there are several from Honolulu and other far away corners of the American dominions. That is one of the great advantages of the camp—the bringing together of boys from all sections of the country in such a way that it broadens their individual horizons. The Eastern



Manual of arms drill.

boy learns of the great resources of the interior, the boy from Illinois gets the Eastern viewpoint, and more than all else he senses the need for coast defence as he stands by the ponderous guns and watches the ships come in from sea.

The movement which has made the Plum Island Camp such a success started at St. Paul's School at Concord, N. H., where most of the students belong to prominent and wealthy families of the East. The Rev. Dr. Samuel Smith Drury, the principal, had at first a summer military camp near the school. It was thought best to bring the boys more in touch with the regular army, and it was proposed that they camp at a regular post. The idea broadened and a committee was organized in New York at the University Club, where it had the assistance of Major-Gen. Leonard Wood, Commander of the Eastern Department of the United States Army, and the experiment at Plum Island, which has proved such a success, was begun.

The New York office was opened where applications were received from students all over the country. The present contingent represents about three hundred institutions. The boys range in age from fifteen to eighteen and in the next camp the age limit has been raised to nineteen. The cadets are from private schools, public schools, academies and high schools, and the authorities have seen to it that there are no social distinctions made. The spirit of Plum Island is democracy. There are of course many boys there who have all the spending money they wish, and due care is taken that they do not wish much beyond what is provided for in the regular fare.

Some of the best young soldiers there, have been aided financially by the committee, but in such a way that nobody knows about it but the two parties to the transaction. Some of the cadets have had their way paid entirely by private subscription, but that makes no difference.

Just as soon as the loads of youths were landed from the Greenport and the New London boats they were told off into the companies five at a time. By the time the post commander, Lieut.-Col. Andrew Hero, Jr., had completed his work practically every tent on the island contained eight boys at nightfall, none of whom had seen the others before and did not know whether his tentmates were rich or poor—whether they could afford to buy everything in sight to be sold, which by the way, isn't so very much—or whether they had not a cent with which to bless themselves. Even had this levelling process not insured the fine spirit of democracy which rules this encampment, youth itself would probably have asserted it. New friendships were formed almost instantly and the cadets began their new life together like comrades in arms.

The immutable schedule of the camp fell rather heavily upon them the first two or three days, but now they follow it with joyous and clocklike precision. The bugles sound the first call to reveille at a quarter of 6 o'clock every morning except on Sunday, when there is a leeway of half an hour. Most of the buglers are cadets, for search was made at the start for all who could play on musical instruments, and it was with triumphant joy that several of the boys volunteered to get up extra early so that they might be the means of routing the others out of bed. There is a keen zest in the notes of the bugles, therefore, shortly after the sun glints on the Plum Island dunes. Ten minutes after the first call comes the real reveille, which sounds in the ears of youth hurrying through ablutions and struggling into cotton breeches. Assembly is at 6 o'clock—fifteen minutes to dress is something of a tug—and then come ten minutes of setting up exercises. Round shoulders cannot exist under such brisk treatment as this. When I went first to Fort Terry the morning calisthenics had been in full blast for ten days, and in that time they had accomplished wonders in soldierly bearing. The mess call at half past 6 o'clock finds no jaded appetites. The

heavy stoneware cups brim with good coffee, the cereal goes round, and the hearty fare disappears in short order. After breakfast comes "Stick Call," the period in which the young soldiers have the opportunity of stating any misgivings they may have about their health. Unusual care has been taken by Major F. M. C. Usher of the Medical Corps and his assistants, First Lieuts. Fitch, Hunter and Hunt, to see that not only shall the cadets describe their symptoms but that there shall be constant inspection all the time. There is a fine modern hospital at the post, the greater part of which has just been completed. It has a capacity of fifty beds, and the Major would only be too glad to have some of them tried. At this writing there have been only two cadets in the hospital—one who was suffering from a nervous breakdown through conditions to which he had been subject for several years and the other had a sore throat and was placed in the isolation ward for observation. The final diagnosis was tonsillitis. In view of the infantile paralysis epidemic in New York city a rule was made that no cadet once

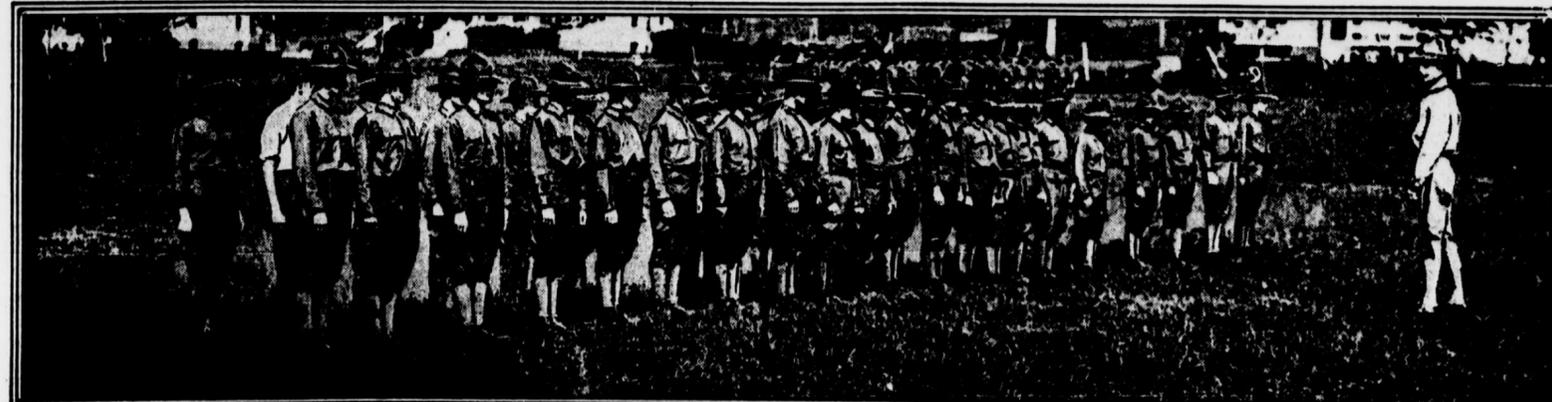
Lieut.-Col. Andrew Hero, Jr., and Capt. A. H. Barkley.

leaving the camp would be permitted to return. Children less than 16 years of age are not permitted to land. Dr. Usher was surprised to learn that one of the cadets had written home that there had been several cases of ptomaine poisoning. For ptomaines please read pickles. The cured cucumber impregnated with vinegar has been found when in unhalloved combination with ice cream to produce collywobblers. Several of the cadets who were doubled up for an hour or so had gone from a gorge of pickles to the post exchange, where they had partaken of ice cream. Such a state of affairs will not develop again, for Lieut.-Col. Hero issued an official order to the effect that hereafter no ice cream or candy or cake or any sweets whatever can be purchased on the island until after half past 2 o'clock in the afternoon. The collywobbly squad was called up and required to state on honor as to its opinion of the cause of its troubles. They answered, "Pickles and candy" or words to that effect. The caterer is sad, for ice cream could be had in the morning before the hand of military authority fell upon him.



Burnishing up their guns.

Cleaning up a company street.



Cadet Reeder drilling a squad that will soon be out of the awkward class.

Days of Sport as Well as Hard Work for the Youngsters Who Are Being Trained to Be Good Soldiers

portant positions in various professions, have given their time freely in order to help in the movement which should one day spread throughout the nation. There is a missionary enthusiasm in the attitude of the men who have been drilled at Plattsburg which is positively contagious. The same spirit which is being inculcated at Plum Island by precept and example will, in the opinion of experts, spread the Plattsburg idea throughout the country, and in each boy who is now in training at the island encampment there may be in embryo an officer of a citizen army.

The boys in these summer days drill in as simple a uniform as possible. The blouse is not worn in hot weather at all. They appear in the olive drab shirt, breeches of brown cotton, suspenders, cartridge belt, the regulation canvas leggings, shoes of tan leather built mostly on the universal last designed by Major Munson, the campaign hat about which is the combination red, white and blue cord which is always identified with Plattsburg. The boys are using the approved type of Springfield rifle. With the exception of a few minor details their equipment is such as the best equipped regular would have.

The eight companies are a few beyond actual war strength, which is 150 men, and the young soldiers thus have the opportunity of going through the various evolutions just as they would if being prepared for actual fighting. The unusual feature of the camp at Plum Island is that it gives the boys not only the best infantry drill, but also gives the chance to learn much about the coast defences of the United States. The cadets from the inland States have been especially impressed by the fortifications and the big guns, and when some of them from our coast States are asked to give their opinion on the matter, they are not stinting; the appropriations for coast defence. In the afternoon they put on their denim jumpers and overalls and go out to the mortar pits and the batteries and learn how to work the giant artillery which is ready to repel the invaders from our coasts. The intricate details of plotting and finding the range and all the elaborate calculations connected with landing a shell on the deck of an enemy war ship are not lost on them.

"Say, fellows," exclaimed one of the students of war the other day, "after this me for math every day in the week."

The enormous flashlights on the island, by means of which the ocean can be searched for miles on the darkest nights, radio telegraphy and numerous other branches of science can be studied in the most practical fashion at the camp, so in the afternoon many of the boys are following elective studies which in later years should prove of incalculable benefit.

These are growing boys at Plum Island—some of them still have growing pains, and therefore the reins of authority relax at times and there is no dearth of amusement. The afternoon swimming hour brings out hundreds of young Neptunes to the cove, and as soon as they get out boats take their station just beyond the life lines so that instant help may be given should any of the swimmers get a cramp. The rules forbid going beyond certain buoys and to parts of the coast where there are dangerous currents.

Baseball, tennis and other athletics are kept up to the best standards. The Government has been much aided in the sports schedule by the Young Men's Christian Association, which has a secretary on the ground. The association also provides moving picture entertainments.

The religious services on Sunday reach all religious denominations. There is a Roman Catholic service and also one by the Episcopalians, besides a general service held by the Young Men's Christian Association. The services are held on the gentle slopes amid the fortifications, where a natural amphitheatre is afforded. Parents who might think that their sons would get into some kind of mischief at Plum Island need give themselves no concern—they can take the boys' word for it on that score. Every day is so full of duties that when the final call for lights out at half past 9 o'clock comes the boys roll over and go to their rest like soldiers. Saturday afternoon is given to polite correspondence and to leisure and visitors are received both on Saturdays and Sundays.

They receive no less inspiration from the example of several West Point cadets who have already given up their furloughs in order to spend two months in drilling the rookies, and there are also Lieutenants assigned to the companies who have studied at Plattsburg. There is no better illustration of the value of the Plattsburg idea than the fact that these Lieutenants, men of large business affairs or holding im-

There has been so much doing that the boys have been rather remiss in their correspondence, so much so that in order to save so many inquiries the post commander issued an official order that every cadet would have to write home at least once a week.

It will be seen then that no phase of instruction which makes for a well rounded life is omitted at Plum Island. The story of what is done there would not be complete without a list of those who have done so much to make a success the work to which so much effort has been given by the committee headed by T. Douglas Robinson, a nephew of Col. Theodore Roosevelt, and his associates, Gerald Chittenden, Dr. C. Ward Crampton, John G. Milburn, Jr., J. H. Prentice, J. Hagen Rhodes, Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., Horace C. Stebbins, Frederick Wallace and James D. Williams.

The camp, as already given, is in command of Lieut.-Col. Hero. The adjutant is Second Lieut. H. C. McLean, Twenty-ninth Infantry, and the quartermaster First Lieut. H. H. Sumner, C. A. C. The camp treasurer is Second Lieut. E. C. Halbert, C. A. C., and the camp mess officer Capt. George L. Wertenbaker, C. A. C. The ordnance officer is J. P. Hogan, C. A. C.