

The Artillery School of the United States.

(Translation from the "Militar Wochenblatt," by Captain E. S. May, R. A.)

A few months ago the twentieth anniversary of its existence was celebrated by the Artillery School of the United States of America at Fort Monroe, in the State of Virginia.

This military college of the United States, which possess in addition to it, we may note in passing, an Infantry, Cavalry, and Engineer school as well, is properly intended for the technical and higher education in general of Artillery officers only, but somewhat trespasses nevertheless, as is the case with the German Artillery and Engineer School also, in its rather extended course of instruction, on the curriculum of the "War Academy." The "batteries of instruction," which are intended for the education of the Artillery, are in connection with it in the same way as is the case with our Service—i. e. Germany.

It is true that ever since 1824 a practical School of Gunnery has been in existence at Fort Monroe, which was intended for the instruction of such cadets of the Military Academy at West Point as had gained commissions in the Artillery on entering the Army; but what it affected in the way of imparting theoretical knowledge or even practical training was very slight indeed, chiefly because the school had repeatedly to be broken up owing to wars and disturbances amongst the Indians. It was not till after the War of Secession, when such mighty changes and improvements were brought about in the case of firearms generally and Artillery armament in particular as demanded a far greater knowledge and training from the officers of the Artillery, that the institution was reorganized on its present basis.

The staff of the Artillery School is as follows: The Director, who is styled "Commandant"; three staff officers, who instruct the several classes, and the regimental officers who are ordered there.

The batteries for educational purposes are furnished by the five regiments of Artillery, one from each, are sent there for an indefinite period, and are not often changed. Although the Artillery of the United States is divided into five regiments, the Field Artillery do not form separate regiments by themselves, but each regiment has a certain number of "mounted batteries," which remain an integral part of the "Artillery regiment" to which they belong. The officers commanding these batteries are made use of as instructors for subalterns, of whom two lieutenants and two sub lieutenants from each battery are detailed for a two years' course at the school. Officers from other corps are also allowed to go through the course on application. Since 1868, 287 officers have gained certificates.

The system of education is partly practical and partly theoretical, and is divided into four parts—namely, Engineering, Artillery, General Military Knowledge, Military Law.

The course commences on September 1 of each year with instruction in Engineering. This subject includes field and permanent fortification, bridging, the construction of railways, military plan drawing, and topography. Much importance is attached to instruction in field fortification, and the execution of field works and building of siege batteries are carried out practically with the aid of the gun detachments. In permanent fortification special stress is laid on the subject of coast defences, towards which attention in the United States is naturally particularly directed. Military sketching is also carried out practically in the field, the system adopted being that every officer under instruction is mounted and detailed to a particular district in the neighbourhood, of which he has to make a reconnaissance with reference to a given idea in a week, when he has to furnish a sketch of the ground and also a report dealing with "communications," "forage and supplies," and such like information.

The Artillery course, which is the one next entered on, includes ballistics, Artillery exercises, and general military science. Under the head of this latter subject we find military history, the method of construction and employment of *matériel*, and ammunition, while telegraphy, photography, and signalling are likewise taught and practised.

Ballistics are studied very closely and attentively. The detachments of the batteries already mentioned are told off for Artillery exercises into four classes, according to their various knowledge and acquirements, and officers are detailed to each. During these exercises not only is a certain specified course of drill carried out with field and siege guns, but there is a course too for guns used in flanking ditches, etc., and for those intended for coast defence. Finally, repository exercises, transporting, embarking, and mounting guns are also taught. In the months of July, August and September, gun practice on a large scale is entered on.

The first series, which lasts for ten days, includes practice with guns intended for coast defence at targets both at anchor and in movement. (Fort Monroe is situated on the coast.)

The natures of ordnance coming under this heading are the 10 inch and 15-inch guns, the 100-pounder of the Parrott system, and the 10-inch

and 14-inch mortars for coast defence, all of which are muzzle-loaders and unrifled.

A course of instruction is next entered on, which includes practice with field-pieces, revolving cannon, and the Infantry rifle, when the subjects of trajectories and dispersion of shrapnel are demonstrated, and the use of ballistic apparatus for determining the muzzle velocities, times of flight, and piercing powers of projectiles taught.

The weeks following are utilised in musketry instruction with the Springfield rifle, with which the Infantry, and latterly the Artillery also, are armed. (The German Foot Artillery are, in the same way, put through the Infantry course of musketry.)

On October 15 of the second year the course of instruction in the Artillery department is brought to a close, and the remainder of the year is occupied in the study of subjects of general military science, such as military geography, strategy, tactics, the duties of the general Staff, and military history. Finally, lectures are likewise given on law, which embrace civil, military and international law. Indeed, the Americans appear to attach great importance to this subject, since even at West Point instruction is given therein. In the month of June an examination takes place, which is conducted by a board of officers nominated for the purpose by the Commander-in-Chief, and after this is over the lieutenants are allowed to return to their regiments. The names of those who have especially distinguished themselves are notified to the Commander-in-Chief, together with a report stating for what nature of employment each officer is recommended, the object of the institution being not only to turn out capable gunners, but rather to give these officers such a grounding in general knowledge also as may qualify them for any situation in which the exigencies of a soldier's career may place them. The syllabus which has to be got through in the two years is a most formidable one, considering that the ordinary regimental duties with the batteries have likewise to be carried out without interruption.

The mode in which the course of study is sub-divided is quite original, since the various subjects are not taught concomitantly, as is usually the case, but are taken up for prolonged periods consecutively.

The text-books in use are either translations of well-known military authors, or more usually, the English standard works on the subject.

Rivalry to the National Rifle Association.

(Volunteer Record.)

An attempt is being made to get up a rival to the National Rifle Association, on the ground that the Brookwood decision unmistakably proves that the interests and convenience of the Midland and North Country Volunteers are, simply, "Hecuba," to the governing body of the aforesaid N.R.A. It is proposed, therefore, in certain quarters, to utilise the Cannock Chase site for the purposes of a "Northern Rifle Association," and to leave the parent institution to the tender mercies of the Southern Volunteers, and of others whom it may concern. This attempt is to be regretted on the common ground that failure invariably awaits a house divided against itself. It would, we frankly admit, have been better, had the Council of the N.R.A. been able to see their way towards fixing their new local habitation in the direction from which a very large proportion of the interested competitors flock to their annual shooting carnival. There can be no doubt that the strong northern contingent of shooting men who, year by year, fight the bloodless battle of Wimbledon, is somewhat severely handicapped as regards both distance and expense; but even the most ardent Northerner will, on reflection, be the first to admit that, although London is not exactly England, it is somewhat difficult to realise a "National" movement with London left out. Besides, the facilities for rapid travelling are now such that time and space are practically annihilated, and the Scottish Volunteer who can compass, say Edinburgh to Brookwood, in about nine hours, cannot, reasonably, have much to growl about in this direction. It should be remembered too, that the attempt to bifurcate has been made before, and signally failed, as those guarantors will readily admit, who gave it not only their names, but also good slices of their ready money some years ago at Altcar, where the fiasco occurred. As before observed in these columns, we are not absolutely enamoured of Brookwood, and we go so far as to say that a better and a more comeatable site could have been got for the due and proper asking. At the same time, we hold that the choice having been made, it is the bounden duty of the Volunteers to loyally back up the Council in their endeavours to extract the greatest good possible from the new venture. The experiment will assuredly be a costly one, and the available reserve fund will, at the finish, have but little of that "bloated" character, which has so exercised the minds of a small section of the shooting men of the Force, who can see a good deal, but who apparently cannot see much, as the saying is, "before their noses." The prospects of the National Rifle Association, and of the National movement it is supposed to represent,