

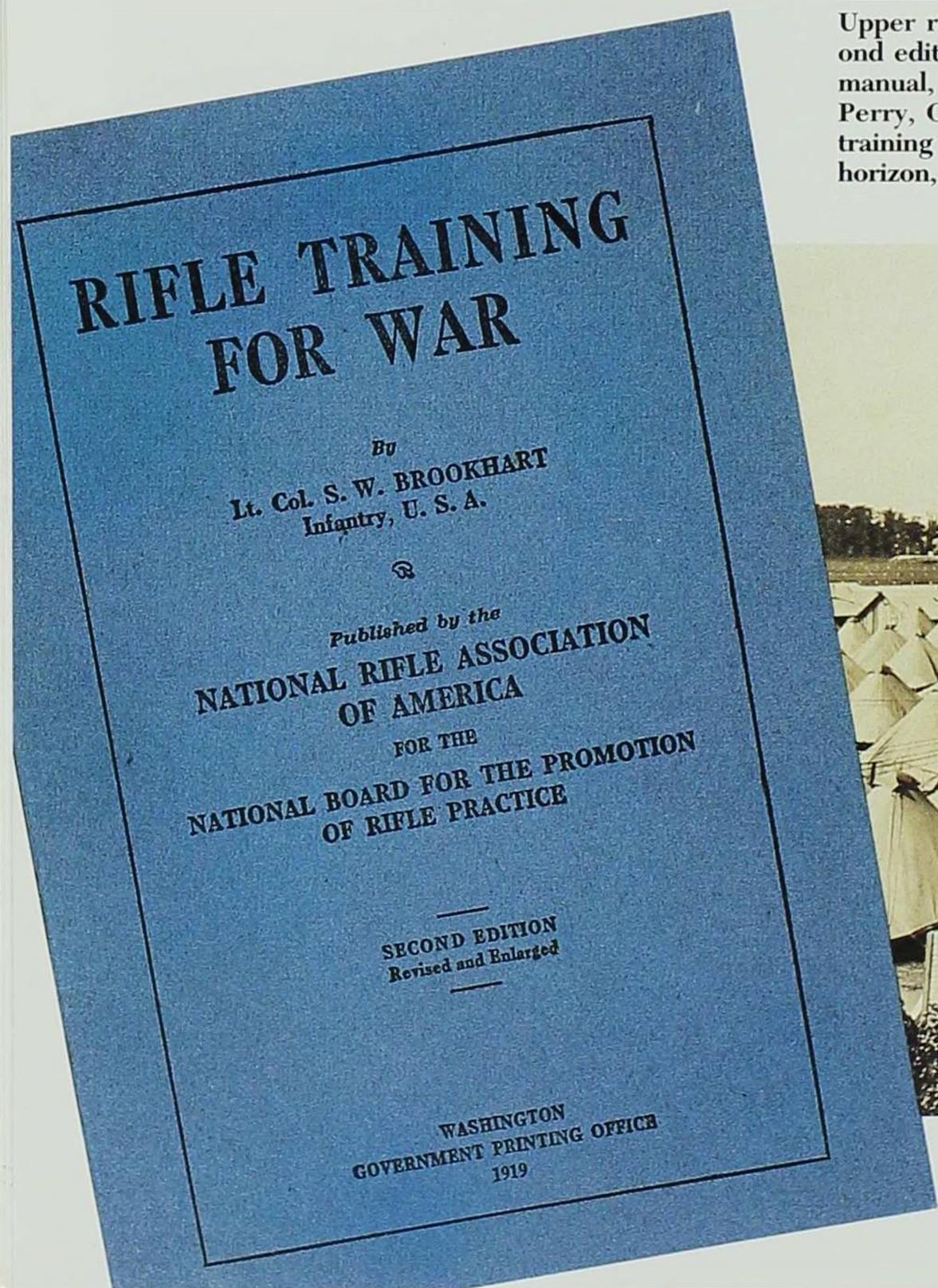
# Smith Wildman Brookhart

## The Man Who “Taught the Army How to Shoot”

by George William McDaniel

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Upper right: Smith Wildman Brookhart. Below: second edition of Brookhart's pocket-sized rifle-training manual, used by the army during World War I. Camp Perry, Ohio, site of national shooting matches and training schools. Row of targets is just visible on the horizon, where the camp bordered Lake Erie.



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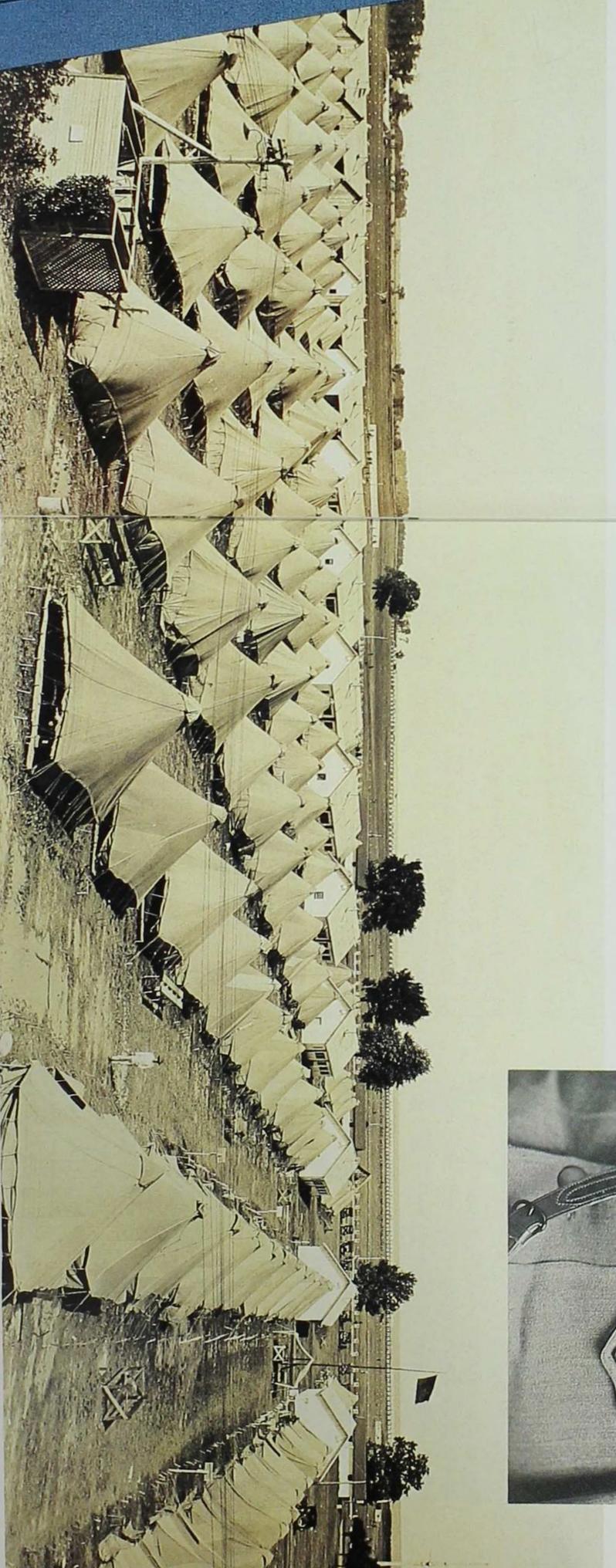
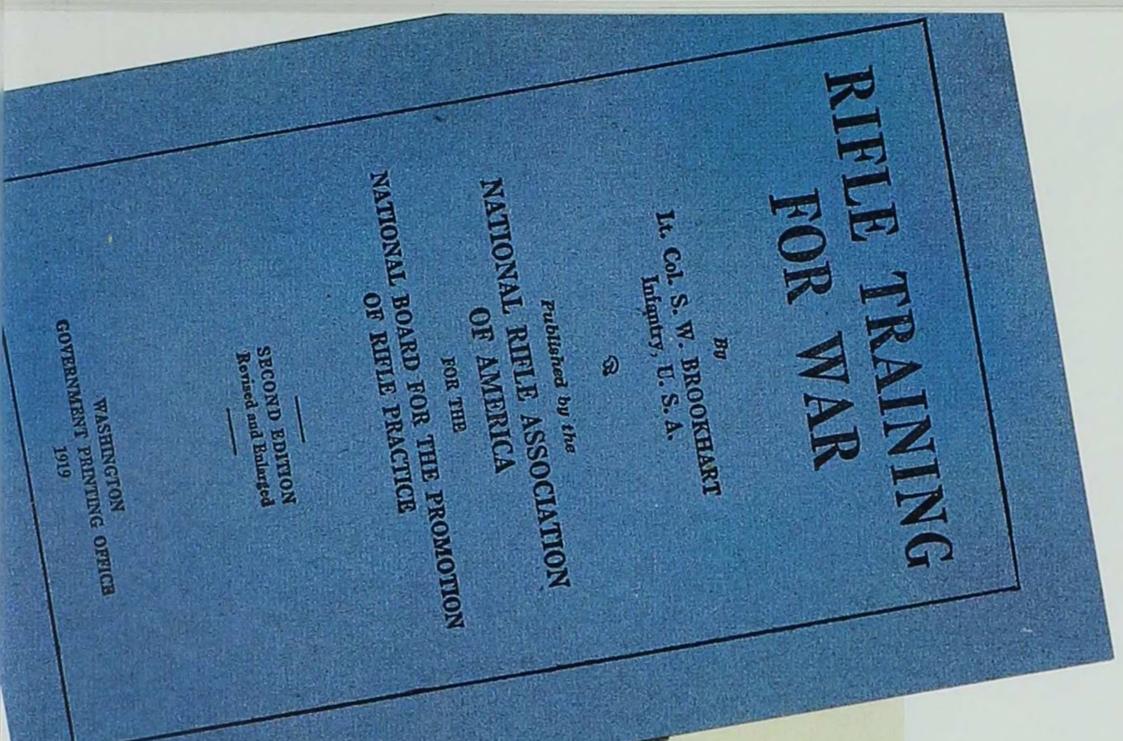
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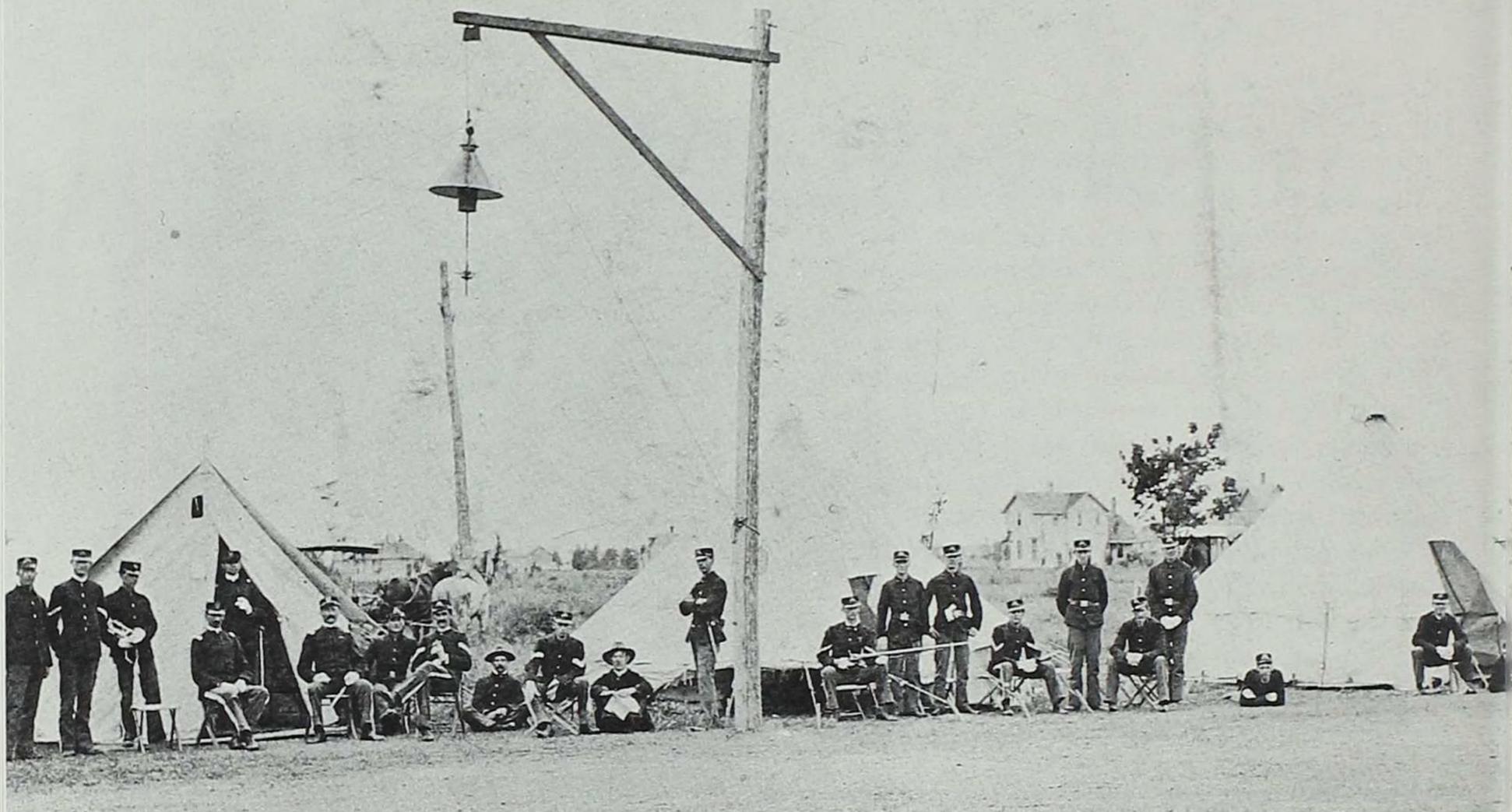
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Camp Glasgow in Washington, Iowa, 1897. Here Brookhart began his military career in Company D, the local National Guard unit.

within a year was promoted to corporal. National Guardsmen elected their officers, and in 1897 he defeated two other candidates to become a second lieutenant. His election by the men confirmed the opinion of the local *Washington Evening Journal* that Brookhart was "one of the best posted men in military tactics in the business." The military tactic that most interested him was rifle marksmanship, which many considered vital to modern warfare.

Marksmanship had not been particularly important in the Civil War, given the weaponry and the battle tactics. Although the standard muzzleloaders lacked precision, the rows of soldiers advancing side-by-side did not. If the musket ball missed one soldier, it would probably hit someone else down the row. But after the Civil War, new breech-loading guns could be much more accurate in the hands of a trained shooter. This launched a movement for riflery training, headed by militant journalist William Conant Church, founder of the National Rifle Association (NRA) in 1871.

Although several former Union officers helped found the NRA, the U.S. Army ignored their call for rifle training; sharpshooting would

encourage individualism, an undesirable trait in enlisted men. Instead, the NRA focused on training interested citizens and National Guardsmen. With the help of the New York legislature, the NRA built a hundred-acre rifle range called Creedmoor in Long Island and began to sponsor competitions. By 1874, in its first international match, the American team hit the bull's-eyes a half-mile away with amazing accuracy, and beat the reigning champion from Ireland.

Building on this success, the NRA sponsored numerous competitions and trained guard units. "Rifle clubs and ranges popped up at an astonishing rate across the country," according to Osha Gray Davidson's history of the NRA. But the popularity of rifle competitions began to fade, and the NRA lost state funding of Creedmoor matches.

**C**OMPANY D, the National Guard unit in Washington, Iowa, was first organized in the 1870s and over the years had built a tradition of prize-winning rifle marksmanship teams. In the 1890s, when Smith Brookhart enlisted, the company and

former members often competed against each other. These were neither formal nor regular competitions, but rather occasions for bonhomie and good-natured wagers. One time, for example, a challenge in the local *Washington Evening Journal* read: "From Co. D, to the fossilized shooters of the city." The next day the "fossilized shooters" chided the young team for "trying to get out of [its] class" by challenging them. On another occasion an oyster supper was the prize; the younger team lost and had to treat the winners. "Some of the boys," the paper commented, "when the feast was ended, looked like the Irishman's stone wall—he built it four feet high and six feet wide, so if it tumbled over it would be higher than it was in the first place." Good-natured banter was typical for the Washington sharpshooters.

Brookhart participated in local competitions, but with no distinction. In a shoot in Muscatine, for example, he scored 124 out of a possible 225. Another time he hit a telegraph pole and a nearby window, but rarely the target. Eventually his scores improved; in 1897 he qualified for the sharpshooter's medal. But he would never become a great shooter. His real skill was in pressuring for training programs and in articulating a philosophy and methodology.

Brookhart believed that diligent practice was essential, of course, and that the shooter must take into account factors such as wind, temperature, humidity, distance, and body position. Brookhart knew, however, that shooting was much more than a mechanical process. The shooter had to believe in himself and to believe that he could hit the target. For Brookhart, the necessary mental attitude was: "A belief in straight shooting. An enthusiasm for straight shooting. A pride in straight shooting."

Equally important was one's physical condition, what Brookhart termed the "normal condition." In fact, he would admit, "I am a crank for the normal condition." Brookhart's "normal condition" was based on, first, a proper diet of water, milk, and plain foods in moderate quantities and without strong seasoning. Tobacco and other stimulants should be avoided. "The proper attitude of mind will give every man more pleasure in conquering a habit than in submitting to it. To win over the smoking habit

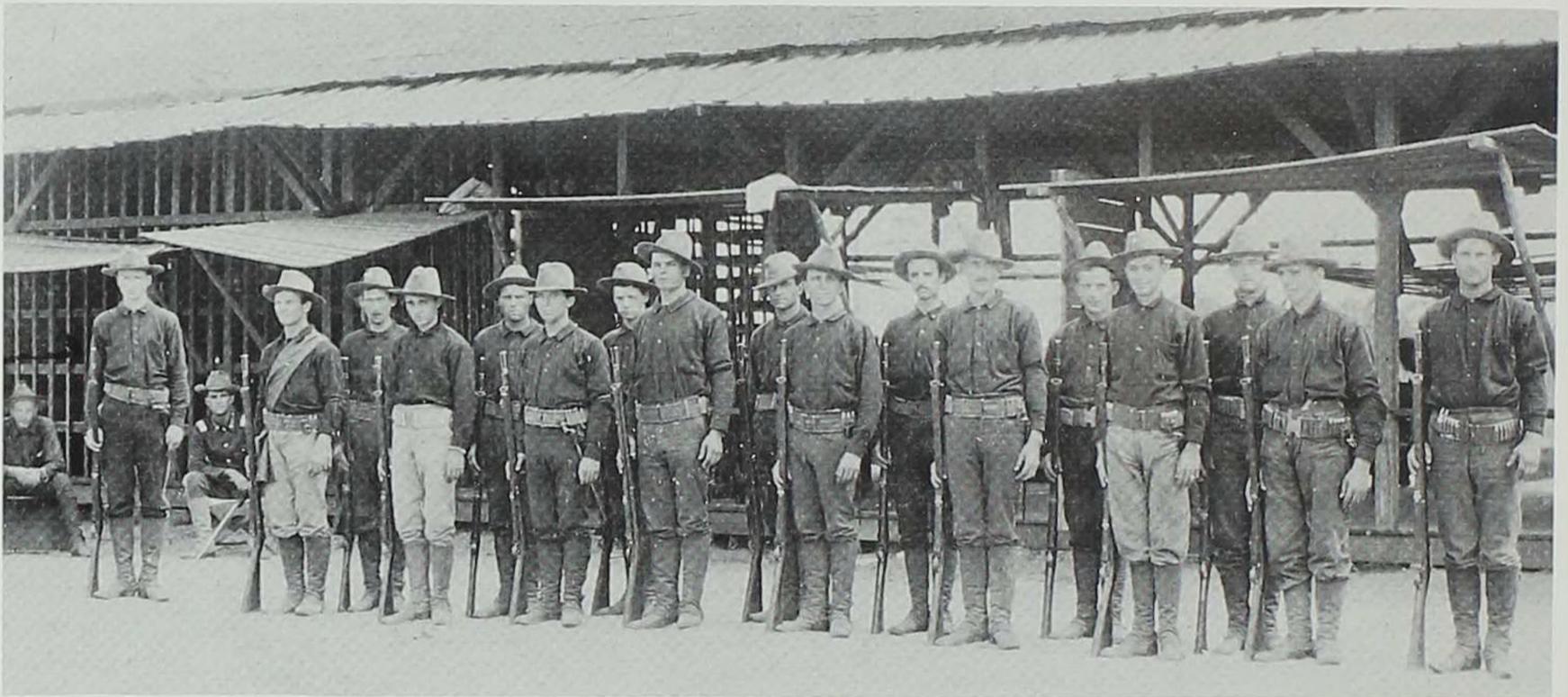
is an achievement of which to be proud," Brookhart would write, "and it improves the scores."

Finally, Brookhart, a life-long prohibitionist, expected Company D to avoid alcohol. He refused to overlook the occasional use of alcohol in camp and considered it a "capital offense." Usually, however, he fought a losing battle; more men went to town for liquor than stayed in camp to drink the lemonade he provided. As a shooting instructor, he used his clout to occasionally drop a shooter from the team for drinking. He even forbade temperate use of alcohol; any man who needed a drink to steady his nerves was unfit to be on a rifle-shooting team. "Total abstinence, bone dry," he preached, "is the only safe rule."

In rifle shooting Brookhart found an activity that was a perfect complement to his own personality and predilections. The elements were uncomplicated (aim, pull the trigger, hit the target), and study and discipline would pay off in success. He neither smoked nor drank and his habits were simple. In other words, he was what he advocated—a man in "the normal condition." He believed that the normal condition made for "efficiency" in shooting, in the military, "or in any other line of human service."

**W**HEN THE Spanish-American War broke out in 1898, Company D and the rest of the Fiftieth Regiment, Iowa Volunteer Infantry, was stationed at Camp Cuba Libre near Jacksonville, Florida. The Fiftieth neither saw battle nor even left Florida, and in the abundant free time Brookhart took his men to the nearby rifle range for practice. But he had been issued only thirty rounds of ammunition per man for practice. What could a guardsman learn with thirty bullets, he wondered. Frustrated, he knew he "couldn't train anybody to be expert at anything doing it 30 times."

Once the Spanish-American War had ended, Company D was mustered out of service, and the company was dissolved. After an anticlimactic six months battling first boredom, then incessant rain, and finally typhoid and malaria, the men eagerly resumed their civilian lives in Washington, Iowa. But not Brookhart. Within



Spanish-American War troops in Jacksonville, Florida, 1898. Brookhart is seated, second from left. To fill time, Brookhart took his men to the rifle range, but practice ammunition was limited to thirty bullets per man.

days he had inquired about organizing a new company, and within two months had supplied Iowa's brigadier general with names of Washington men, both veterans and new recruits. By late January local interest was revived and forty-four men had enlisted.

Unanimously elected as captain, Brookhart set about equipping and training the new company. By May new Springfield rifles had arrived from the Rock Island Arsenal, and Brookhart immediately ordered extra drills with the new weapons to prepare for the local Decoration Day parade.

Brookhart discovered 18,000 rounds of ammunition requisitioned by a previous captain but never expended. Here was something to work with! He set up a rifle range on land two miles west of town. A thirty-foot bluff bordering the site would absorb stray bullets. On June 7 he wrote Iowa's Brigadier General Melvin H. Byers, reporting that the range was finished, and that he needed fifteen dollars reimbursement and targets so the men could begin rifle practice. The range served the company for two years; then Brookhart built a longer range so the men could use larger weapons and practice charging.

The order and discipline of the military appealed to Brookhart's own sense of discipline. Military rules and protocol became new

subject matter for him to study and master. He worked hard to improve Company D and to acquire the best equipment available. At one point he used his own money to purchase a building in the hopes of remodeling it into an armory. When that did not come about he sought state appropriations for a local armory.

Moreover, Brookhart knew the political "currency" of the National Guard. He had grown up in an era when Civil War veterans had kept their titles and used them as a means of entry into politics or the community power structure. Ambitious for other political office once his term as county attorney ended, Brookhart knew his position in the National Guard would keep him in the public eye.

Yet most of Company D lacked military or political aspirations and did not share their captain's enthusiasm for drill and discipline. Although some were Spanish-American War veterans, most were new recruits. For many of them the guard's obligatory two-hour drill each week was really "a night out with the boys," and the August encampment was a chance for adventure. Although they welcomed their pay of ten cents an hour, they resented Brookhart's strict leadership "by the book," and in time his natural zeal for discipline and order caused dissension. At the same time Brookhart's other interests demanded more of his time. His law

practice was developing, he was a candidate for district judge, and he and his wife, Jennie, had begun a family. In May 1902 he resigned from the company.

**F**OR THE NEXT five years Brookhart concentrated on politics, his law practice, and other business interests, but he also maintained his interest in rifle shooting. In January 1907, Governor Albert B. Cummins, as commander of Iowa's National Guard, appointed him Inspector of Small Arms Practice, with the rank of colonel. Brookhart was in charge of rifle marksmanship for all National Guard units in Iowa and of preparation of an Iowa team for national competition. The appointment recognized Brookhart's work and expertise in rifle shooting. The *Washington Evening Journal* noted that he "is a man who goes into his work thoroughly and conscientiously always, and friends and political antagonists alike will be pleased to hear of the honor that has so worthily come to him." In Des Moines, Brookhart set out at once to create a

state rifle range on land the state had recently acquired north of Des Moines. He began to select an Iowa team for the national matches at Camp Perry, Ohio.

National competitions had started up again soon after the turn of the century, and the NRA was again flourishing. Marksmanship owed its new popularity to the guerrilla Afrikaners in the Boer War: They had not defeated the British, but their sharpshooting had impressed them enough that the British military began to emphasize target shooting. Canada, and then the United States, picked up on the trend, and the NRA pressed again for training programs and governmental support. In 1903 the U.S. War Department founded the National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice to encourage rifle practice and to produce qualified marksmen in the event of war. Quasi-governmental, the National Board was instructed to stage shooting competitions, build and maintain rifle ranges, and "create a public sentiment in respect to the necessity of rifle practice as a means of national defense."

The national matches at Camp Perry were

COURTESY OF JOHN YOUNT



Iowa team at Camp Perry matches. Brookhart is in the middle of the second row.

cosponsored by the National Board, the War Department, and the NRA. First held in 1903, the matches brought together state National Guard teams, military teams, and private shooting clubs for competition and instruction. Iowa had participated since 1904, when it placed 15th out of 19. More teams entered, and Iowa improved, staying consistently in the top half. By 1907, Brookhart's first year, Iowa placed 21st out of 48. By 1910 his team finished 4th, bringing home a congressional medal and prize money.

Brookhart's emphasis on practice meant that he saw any shooting competition as an opportunity for instruction. Here he could instill his ideas in the officers who attended, who would then take them home to their men. In these "schools of instruction," the step-by-step basics of rifle shooting were taught by Morton C. Mumma, who would head the military program at the State University of Iowa in Iowa City from 1909 to 1912, and again later in the decade. He and Brookhart soon became close friends. "These schools were not only pleasant and enjoyable," Brookhart recalled later, "but they also brought out the most practicable and scientific instructions the Iowa National Guard has ever received."

**B**ROOKHART'S greatest honor as a coach was his selection by the NRA and the National Board to lead the American team at the Palma Trophy competition. The Palma had once been a truly international competition, dating back to 1876, when the United States won against teams from Ireland, Scotland, Australia, and Canada. Participation had dropped off throughout that decade, and the contest was not revived until 1901 and then only sporadically.

Now, in 1912, the United States would take on the Canadian team in Ottawa. Brookhart chose Mumma as his adjutant, and together they arranged try-outs for the twelve-member team. Excited to be the captain, Brookhart was nevertheless disappointed when a Company D shooter, John Jackson, withdrew because of illness in the family.

On September 10, the omens in Ottawa were not good. The team arrived but not their lug-



Morton Mumma (left) and Brookhart, at the 1912 Palma Competition in Ottawa. Brookhart's team beat the Canadians.

gage. A chill wind blew, sure to affect shooting accuracy. The next day lightning struck one of the trolley cars carrying the U.S. team back from practice. Saturday, the day of the competition, was warm but cloudy. In the first half, the Canadians led by five points. Mumma watched, chewing up "a perfectly good two-bit perfecto." Brookhart, according to the same observer, "just wore that same old satisfied grin of his and made figures on a pad. His self-control was something to wonder at."

In the second half, the Americans pulled ahead and finally defeated the Canadian team by eight points. World records were broken that year by both teams, and Brookhart telegraphed the victory news to President William Howard Taft, who sent back "hearty congratulations."

But perhaps the most touching tribute for

Brookhart was a local one a week later. Working in his Washington office late one night, Brookhart was surprised by the arrival of fifty men there to celebrate his triumph in Ottawa. Aware of Brookhart's pride in having strictly enforced local prohibition laws as county attorney, they joked with him that they were thirsty. He joked back that he couldn't comply "on account of certain arid conditions that have existed in this community," the newspaper related. The men offered their congratulations and the Washington band, apparently waiting in the wings, entered to play a few tunes. The last speaker was one of Brookhart's old political mentors, John Alex Young, who had always rejoiced in the accomplishments of a Washington boy and now wished Brookhart continued success.

**B**ROOKHART'S SUCCESS would indeed continue. His reputation as a rifle expert now extended beyond Iowa. A life member of the National Rifle Association, in 1911 he had published the first of many articles in the NRA's national magazine, *Arms and the Man*. His annual trip to the Camp Perry matches brought him in contact with shooters from across the nation. And although the 1912 match had been canceled because of the Olympics and other international matches, a Company D shooter, John Jackson, was on the Olympic rifle team and won a bronze medal. And now Brookhart's American team had won the Palma. September 1912 brought yet another honor: he was elected to the NRA's board of directors. Over the next thirteen years he would serve on the executive committee and as second vice-president and finally, from 1921 to 1925, as president.

A year after his election to the NRA board, Brookhart joined the National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice. Now he was on the boards of the two groups most responsible for rifle-shooting competitions in the United States. No doubt Brookhart was pleased to see the participation of National Guard teams increase, and their records improve. He realized that the Camp Perry matches could effectively develop qualified shooters who could

become instructors in their own communities. To him, the annual match was "the greatest school of rifle practice in the world." The U.S. Army saw it differently.

Except for 1912, the Camp Perry matches had been annual events since 1903. At the January 1916 meeting, the National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice adopted Brookhart's enthusiastic motion that the match "be held this year and every year." But the War Department refused, citing the expense involved and time lost by regular army personnel in administering the matches.

Worried that this would "discourage rifle practice in the National Guard," Brookhart protested to Secretary of War Newton Baker and asked for a hearing. Baker explained that the army could not participate but that he had been "assured" that the matches could still be held without army participation. In the short term Brookhart's side prevailed, and the War Department hastily scheduled the matches for December 1916. But areas of disagreement between Brookhart and the army remained.

Funding for the matches was part of a long-standing tension between the regular army and the National Guard. According to the army, the state forces did not maintain proper standards of training or operation, and were of little use anyway. The army didn't believe that the matches were helping the guard improve their shooting and was reluctant to "waste" its money on the national matches when the army had plenty of uses for the funds.

Brookhart interpreted the army's reluctance to fund the matches as part of what he saw as its larger goal—namely, to weaken, if not destroy the National Guard. As a populist, Brookhart strongly supported the idea of a citizens' army of volunteers, who devoted part of their life in service to the country. Militias had served the nation well since the American Revolution, Brookhart reasoned. Although he recognized the necessity for regular army officers at the highest level, he believed officers should come up through the ranks; in guard units, the men were equals who elected their officers in democratic fashion. The current army system, Brookhart alleged, had created an elite caste of career officers, trained by military academies to feel inherently superior to the

men they led. Such a system, Brookhart contended, "makes a snob and autocrat of every officer." He also disdained the practical training West Pointers received, claiming that they had "150 official hours of dancing and 30 hours on the rifle."

Brookhart also had a standing quarrel with the Ordnance Department about the necessity of rifle marksmanship. The "old school" of professional soldiers had long believed that marksmanship in the heat of battle was not possible. In their view, the soldier had only to scatter as many shots in the direction of the enemy as possible, on the assumption that some would find their target. It had worked in the Civil War. This view had been developed in Germany, adopted by West Point instructors, and disseminated through the ranks of professional soldiers. According to the army, therefore, rifle marksmanship—as advocated by Brookhart, the NRA, and the National Board—was a waste of time and money.

Brookhart said flatly that the "German theory is all wrong," claiming that it used resources inefficiently and endangered soldiers' lives. It was not enough to simply fire at random and hope to hit something. Furthermore, rifle training and matches were not recreational, he maintained. They were integral to the training of soldiers and guardsmen alike. Soldiers were not being trained to win sharpshooter prizes but to protect their own lives, and they deserved the "best possible training in the use of their weapons."

He was also outspoken in criticizing the army in other matters. The army insisted on spotless weapons that would pass a white-glove inspection. Soldiers spent considerable time in cleaning their guns, sometimes using an abrasive that Brookhart believed damaged the weapon. "They would shine all right; they were beautiful inside," Brookhart said, but they would not shoot accurately. On another occasion he rejected some reconditioned rifles that the army had sent to the Iowa Guard. Brookhart said the guns were "worn out and worthless" and should never have been repaired in the first place. His men would "not be able to hit anything with them."

In the spring of 1916, the army made a critical move by changing the composition of the

National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice. Acting on a request by the General Staff and War College faculty, Secretary of War Baker expanded the board from nine to eleven members and filled the new positions with army representatives. Brookhart's term had expired at the end of 1915 and in the reorganization he was not reappointed.

**E**VEN AFTER Congress declared war in April 1917, the United States was slow to enter the war in Europe. But as General John J. Pershing toured battlefields and conferred with allied commanders, he became convinced that rifle marksmanship was necessary. In September, and again the next month, he cabled his superiors in Washington that "infantry soldiers should be excellent shots." Pershing recommended that instruction in small arms begin immediately.

The NRA greeted Pershing's message with relief. An editorial in *Arms and the Man* announced that the American commander intended to fight the war based on "American ideas" to "insure an American victory in an American way." When the War Department proposed bringing European instructors to train army riflemen, however, the NRA pointed out that the War Department had invested a great deal of money over the years in the national matches. These matches had produced more than enough expert American riflemen, like Brookhart, who were capable of training the soldiers. "The fact now stands out clear and plain that our men must be taught to shoot," the NRA agreed—but Americans should do the training.

Like thousands of other National Guardsmen, Brookhart had asked to be called into service. But as an outspoken critic of the army, he had been blacklisted (a story he would often tell years later), and only the collusion of two old friends had gotten him on active duty. An old ally, Colonel Ira L. Reeves, had become

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**Right: American troops march through London in June 1917. By September, American commander Pershing would cable Washington to launch small-arms training because "infantry soldiers should be excellent shots."**

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assistant chief of the Militia Bureau and found a list with Brookhart's name at the top. When his superior was out of the office, Reeves submitted a list of names, including Brookhart's, to the assistant chief of Ordnance. This man, also a friend of Brookhart's, waited until his chief was out of the office and then issued the orders to put Brookhart on active duty. Both officers neglected to inform the personnel section until Brookhart had reported for duty. Protests were made about the procedure, but ultimately the judge advocate general ruled in Brookhart's favor. At long last he was in the army. "After I was in," he would recount years later, "it was harder to put me out than it was to keep me from coming in."

In mid-November in Des Moines, Brookhart was mustered into service with the rank of major. Soon in Washington, D.C., he reported to the Chief of Ordnance, who assigned him to the Small Arms Division. Brookhart remained in Washington long enough to write a report, with his old friend Col. Morton Mumma, recommending that the army establish rifle-training camps.

Next he was sent to New Haven, Connecticut, for ten days. There he toured the Winchester rifle plant and worked on its assembly line to get a better sense of the rifle.

His stay in New Haven reveals much about his no-nonsense approach to life. First quar-

tered in the Taft Hotel, he switched to thriftier accommodations in a Yale dormitory available to the army. He purchased a meal ticket for the campus dining room, preferring its forty-five-cent meals over the dollar-and-a-half meal at the Taft. On Thanksgiving he strolled through the Yale University museum. Its famous collection of Greek vases he dismissed as the "oldest collection of kitchenware" he had ever seen. Two pianos reportedly played by Haydn and Beethoven did not impress him; when he plunked out "Yankee Doodle" on one, he found it so out of tune that it "sounded like a Russian constitutional convention." Brookhart was a utilitarian, with little sense of the aesthetic. Thus Greek vases were "kitchenware" and pianos were useful only if in tune, no matter who had played them or owned them. He wrote home that his solitary afternoon in the museum was spent "without interference, obstruction or enlightenment."

**B**ROOKHART WAS SOON ordered to report to Camp Dodge in Des Moines to train rifle shooters in the 88th Division. He stopped in Washington, Iowa, on December twenty-first. Despite the approaching holidays he stayed only three days with his wife and six children. He reported for duty on the day before Christmas, only to find that most of the officers were away from camp for the holiday. Brookhart would have to wait until December 26 for his students.

Over the next three weeks he instructed over two thousand officers in rifle marksmanship. The original schedule had called for officers to attend only one hour a day at their own discretion. Most of the officers stationed at Camp Dodge were regular army, so Brookhart expected a cool reception. He was pleased and surprised when he was cordially received. Many officers went beyond their scheduled one hour and spent the entire day honing their rifle skills, only to return for further work at night. He concluded that perhaps opposition to marksmanship in the regular army had come from officers in the bureaucracy and not those



FROM JOHNSON BRIGHAM, IOWA, ITS HISTORY AND ITS FOREMOST CITIZENS (1918)

At Camp Dodge in Des Moines, Brookhart's training program in January 1918 was well received.

in the field. Brookhart considered this the busiest month of his life, but he regretted leaving because of the new friends he had made.

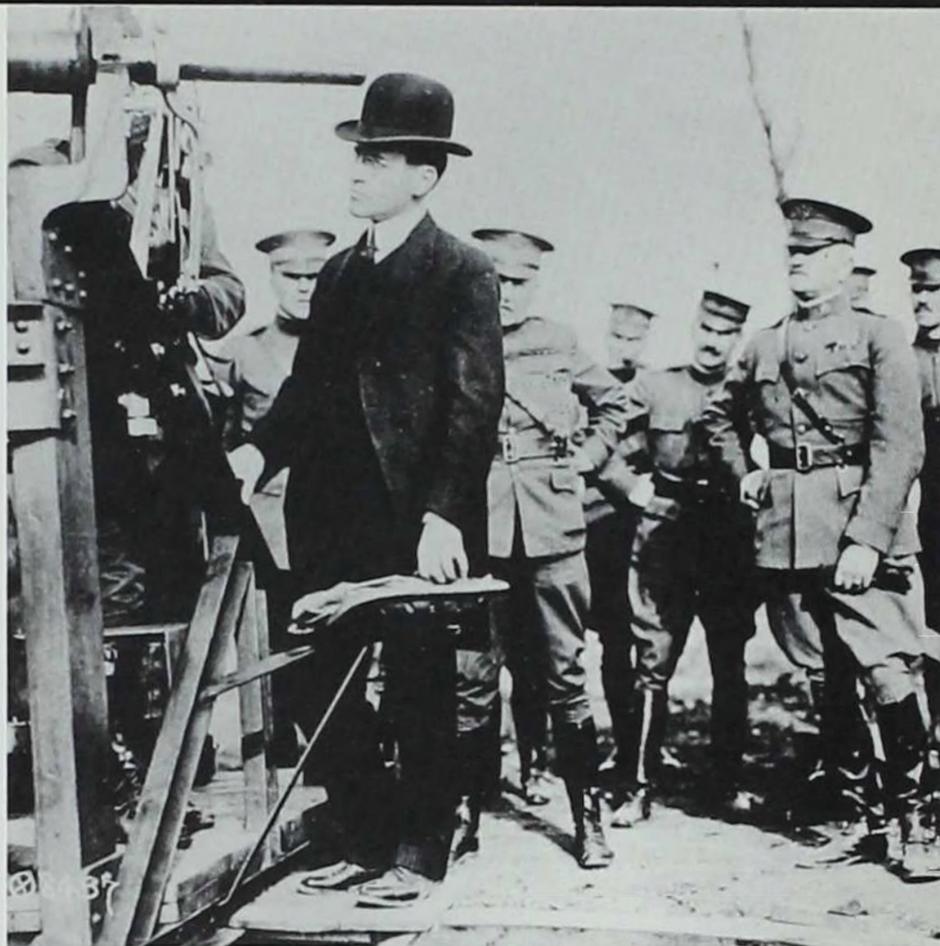
Back in Washington, Brookhart prepared a report of his activities at Camp Dodge. The report found its way to the desk of Secretary of War Baker, who ordered Brookhart to come see him. Since Baker's reorganization of the National Board, General Pershing had kept up the pressure for rifle instruction, and now Baker wanted Brookhart to explain his theories.

Brookhart repeated again why the German theory of marksmanship was wrong and why its supporters (the War College and Ordnance generals) were wrong. He explained why he was no longer on the National Board, and how the War College memorandum to Baker had precipitated the board reorganization and shift of power. Reportedly this angered Baker—who hadn't realized he had been a pawn—but Brookhart reassured Baker that recent appointments, which included Mumma, had helped restore balance. Finally, when Baker asked him about rifle training for the army, Brookhart outlined a plan for a rifle school that could serve the whole army and be taught by a ready-made corps of marksmen trained at the national matches.

Baker had heard enough. He ordered that planning begin. On April 15 orders were signed to establish a small-arms school at Camp Perry. Classes would begin in late May.

Mumma was put in charge of the project, assisted by other national match shooters and Brookhart. Meanwhile, Brookhart tested rifles at nearby Camp Meade and wrote a series of articles for the NRA's *Arms and the Man*. The six-part series, "Rifle Training in War," would appear in April and May of 1918.

**T**HE ARTICLES gathered in one place the ideas Brookhart had used so successfully since the late 1890s. Here he articulated his emphasis on the shooter, not just on his weapon. He restated his ideas on alcohol and tobacco. He detailed the problems of flinching and being gun-shy (called "buck fever"). His constant theme was that the



Secretary of War Newton Baker (in black bowler) and General John Pershing (right foreground) inspect anti-aircraft gun in France. Only limited supplies of anti-aircraft and machine guns were used in World War I; Brookhart and others still pushed for rifle sharpshooting.

shooter must be in complete control of himself and his weapon.

There was nothing new in the articles; Brookhart had been teaching these same ideas for years. But now the timing was right; the war gave his ideas added weight. "We are now going out to shoot at targets that will shoot at us first if they can," he wrote. "The importance of fire discipline, fire direction, fire control and fire distribution, is brought home to us with a personal meaning." The NRA and the National Board reprinted the articles in a pocket-sized *Rifle Training in War*. This became the army's standard rifle manual during 1918.

As chief instructor at Camp Perry, Brookhart reminded his students that they were not training for rifle matches but for war, a "great test of liberty of the world." "Preliminary training, if done right, means finished training," he cautioned. "You make haste by starting slowly." The students settled quickly into a routine of daily instruction and practice on the ranges. To remind them of the fundamentals, Brookhart wrote up the "Ten Commandments of the Firing Point," a checklist about gripping the weapon, breathing, and squeezing the trigger. He had these printed on small cards and

required all instructors and students to wear them pinned to their sleeves.

The Small Arms Firing School was a success. In July the army instructed Mumma to extend the project to other army bases. Mumma immediately appointed Brookhart to the planning committee. Camp Perry instructors would select likely students as instructors at the new sites.

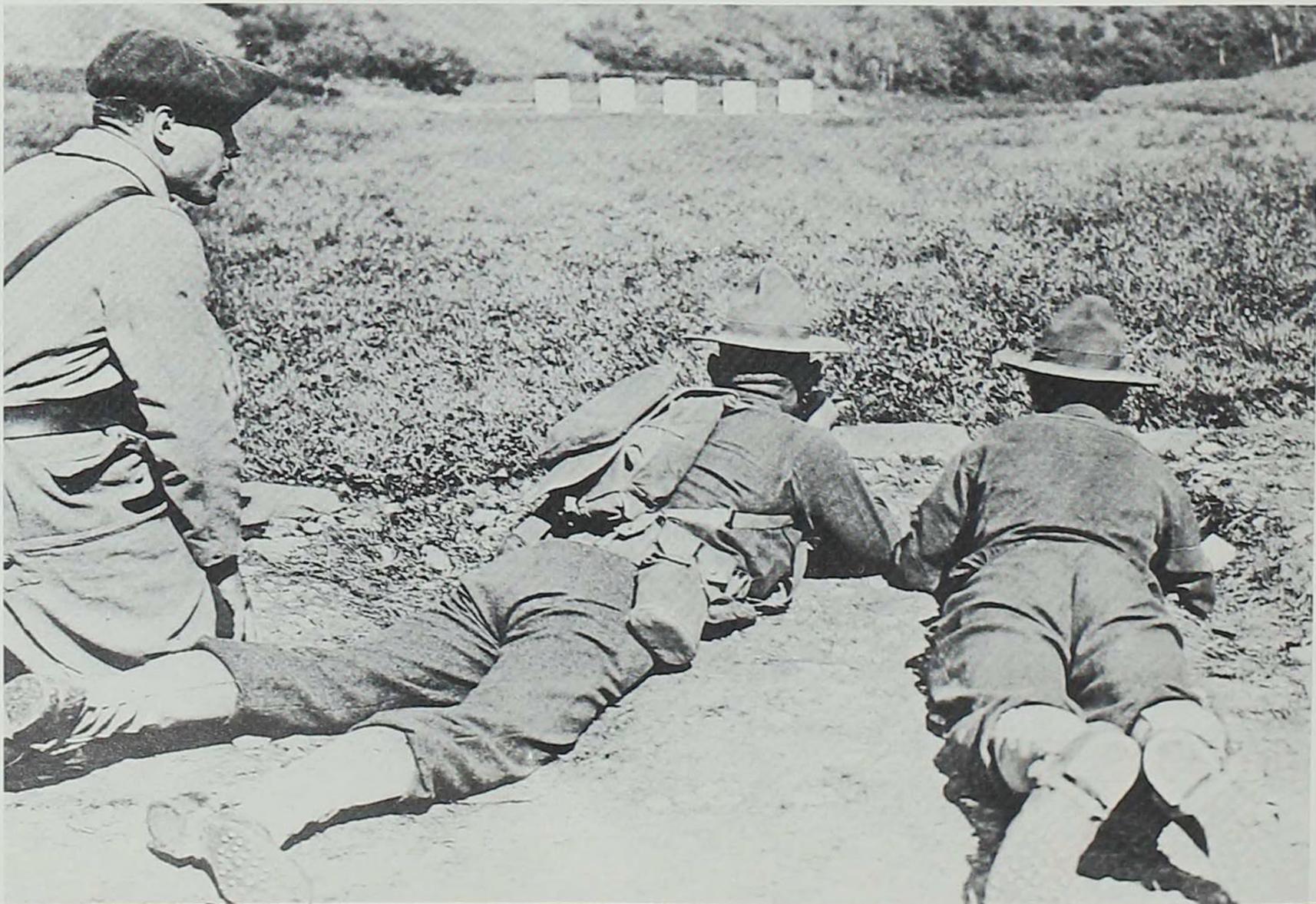
That summer at Camp Perry, the National Board decided to hold the annual match in September. Certainly this was a victory for Brookhart; the army could have protested that the matches would divert time and money from the war effort. But Brookhart wasn't satisfied. He pushed for the creation of a department of Small Arms Practice within the army. Under the current system all small-arms training was a specialization that required the soldier be sent away from his unit. The strength of Brookhart's proposal was that small-arms training would now become an integral part of all army duty and would allow men to stay with their units. The National Board adopted Brookhart's proposal, but the idea did not take shape.

**A** **NOTHER ITEM** of business at the board meeting was the eventual closing of Camp Perry. Situated on the banks of Lake Erie, the camp was of no use once winter weather set in. Mumma proposed that the riflery school be moved to Jacksonville, Florida, at the end of November. Instead Congress appropriated money to build a new facility near Columbus, Georgia; this would become Camp Benning (and later, Fort Benning). In the interim, Camp Perry instructors were reassigned. Brookhart, newly promoted to lieutenant colonel, was sent to Camp Dodge near Des Moines.

Camp Perry had served well. Nearly six thousand officers had graduated from the school in just over five months. Years later Col. Harry L. Cooper, war-time commander of the 88th Division, acknowledged "the benefit of training under such men as Colonel Brookhart."

The new Infantry School of Arms at Camp Benning did not open its doors until February 1919, three months after the war ended. As the army began to scale back, some of the instructors returned to pre-war jobs. In February

American marksmen "prove their prowess" before French instructor, according to caption of Committee on Public Information photo, released in March 1918.





Standing amidst church ruins, March 1918, Secretary of War Baker and Major-General Charles T. Menoher, commanding officer of the 42nd "Rainbow" Division. Within a month, Secretary Baker's order for small-arms training would be carried out.

Mumma resumed his position in the military program at the State University of Iowa, where he would stay until 1928. Brookhart remained in Georgia for a few months as head of the marksmanship department. That summer, however, he was stricken with influenza and in the

fall he left the army to return to Iowa.

In the years following the war Brookhart continued to push for proper rifle training. As NRA president from 1921 to 1925, he spoke even more forcefully in support of the annual matches. The NRA presidency was the "great-

est honor accorded in the shooting game," Brookhart stated, and he promised to "represent the riflemen of America, and to aid them in developing the shooting game, wherein knowledge is power, just as it is in any other field of effort." Elected to the U.S. Senate in 1922, he exerted influence to ensure that Congress continue appropriations for the national matches.

Never content to sit on the sidelines, Brookhart joined Mumma and others to teach shooting techniques at matches at Camp Perry. The goal, as Mumma described it, was still to "provide instruction for the uninstructed in the use of arms," thereby "increasing their effectiveness as potential soldiers." In 1920, 842 shooters entered the school; within three years the number of entrants exceeded 1,000.

Yet the costs were mounting. By 1926 an economy-minded secretary of war eyed the \$500,000 price tag and refused to provide the funds. The match was held, but on a much smaller scale. The 1927 match faced the same problems.

The NRA and National Board lobbied for legislation that would mandate the War Department to fund the matches. The first attempt was a bill introduced by Ohio congressman John C. Speaks. The Speaks bill

passed in the House of Representatives, but when it reached the Senate Brookhart added an amendment to enlarge the National Board. These added members would be appointed by governors of the states (who commanded the National Guard), an obvious attempt to tip the board balance away from the army. The president vetoed the bill because governors would have been appointing members to a federal board, thus violating the division of powers between the states and federal government.

A new bill was immediately introduced. Brookhart agreed not to offer his amendment, and the bill passed quickly and was signed by President Coolidge. The continuation of annual matches now seemed assured. But in 1931 the Great Depression did what match opponents had been unable to do. The matches were dropped.

**I**N THE LAST fifteen years of his life, Brookhart ran unsuccessfully for the Senate in 1932 and 1936, served as a foreign-trade advisor in the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, and practiced law

"Sharpshooter with the United States Marines in France Equipped with the Latest Telescope Rifle Sight" reads the caption of this official World War I photo.



