

FINE MARKSMEN IN THE ARMY

Use Sam's Soldiers Win Medals by Good Work on Rifle Range.

TEACHING SOLDIERS HOW TO SHOOT

How the Competitions Are Arranged and Carried Out, with Some Stories of Results Obtained in Former Years.

The infantry rifle competition just concluded at Fort Leavenworth, is the first to be held under the present organization of the army by which the headquarters of the Department of the Missouri were located at Omaha, but it is not by any means the first in which the troops stationed at or near the city have taken part, and at army headquarters there is the liveliest interest among officers and men as to the result of this contest.

The competitions were first authorized long before the civil war, but they did not reach their present state of perfection until afterwards, when the officers in charge found that the men required something more than the ordinary drill to instill in them a love for practice at the target. The desire on the part of the officers for a high state of skill in marksmanship on the part of the enlisted men was the prime reason for the establishment of the annual competitions in the departments, and the results have shown that, coupled with the general use of firearms in the United States, these annual contests with their subordinate contests between the members of the various companies of the regiment have the best individual marksmen in any of the armies of the world, now that the army of the late Bear republic has been disbanded.

General Bates an Enthusiast.

The present regulations are somewhat different from those in force during the greater part of the time the contests have been held, for the reason that the introduction of the magazine gun made the rules which applied to the operation of the Springfield rifle inapplicable. On the board which framed the present regulations for the contests was Major General John C. Bates, commander of the Department of the Missouri, than whom no man has taken a greater interest in the marksmanship of the enlisted men. As colonel of the Second regiment General Bates not only took great interest in the target practice, but also gave his men every opportunity to perfect themselves in rapid and sudden firing at moving objects. It is related of him on good authority that when commanding a post in Montana, just before the beginning of the Spanish war, he not only permitted but insisted upon his men taking part in the hunting which was carried on to a great extent in that part of the country, said an officer who was at the post at that time: "The general never refused the application of a man to go upon a hunting expedition, and he has been out on the prairie a mile or more from his company. The result was not only that the post was supplied with more than enough deer and antelope to run it, but the men had learned to see the object of their pursuit before the pursued saw them and that is about all that is necessary to make a man a good scout in time of war."

Confidence in Hunters.

Another illustration showing the high confidence that General Bates placed in men having experience as hunters is shown by a conversation between him and Captain Wassels of the Twenty-second, now at the rifle competition at Fort Leavenworth. The Twenty-second was part of the command of the general in the Philippines, and it was apparently crippled for weeks or months. The general met the captain and asked him if he had no scouts in his company.

Advantage of Competition.

Speaking of the advantage of individual competition, General Bates has said: "Such practice not only raises the efficiency of the army, but it gives the men confidence in themselves. If they know that the chances are that they will hit the enemy at whom they shoot, they are not so apt to become panic-stricken as if they were in doubt of the result. In warfare, such as we have carried on against the Indians and such as the Philippines have forced upon us, this is especially valuable, as in engagements with concealed enemies."

SILENCE!

The instinct of modesty natural to every woman is often a great hindrance to the cure of venereal disease. Women shrink from the personal questions of the local physician, which often leads to a delay in treatment. The thought of examination is repulsive to them, and they will do anything to avoid it. All correspondence is held as strictly private and all secretly confidential. Address Doctor 2 V. Pierce, Buffalo, N. Y.

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enemy, where it is every man for himself, the men are likely to become separated, and when alone defend themselves in the of the utmost importance that the soldier may not only be able to shoot straight, but that he should know that he can. This was forcibly illustrated by the experience of a Kentuckian who was in one of the regiments in my command in the Philippines. The man was separated from his squad and set off by a band of insurgents. He was out three days before he was rescued by a party sent to find him, and at that time he killed forty Filipinos, according to his own statement, and the Philippine of the party admitted when captured that they had buried eighteen of the men at whom he had shot. The man said that when he found himself alone with the insurgent band between him and his rifle he fired three shots which did not take effect. Then he became aroused at his situation and from that time on, he said, he did not miss once. At the time the rescue party appeared he believed that the shooting meant a renewal of the rush upon the hole in which he had concealed himself, and resolving to sell his life dearly he braced himself against a tree and shot at the nearest of the enemy. At that moment the Americans broke through the lines and the Kentuckian fainted in the arms of his comrades.

Result of Experience.

Not only the general, but other officers of the army, say that such deeds could only be performed by men who had had experience not only in the ordinary duty of their life, but at the target, where they learn exactly what they can do with the guns which they carry.

With this high idea of the benefits to be derived from individual practice and competition, which creates interest in the practice, it is not strange that when called upon to sit on a board to prepare rules for the competition, the general paid great attention to the work, and was one of the men who arranged the present regulations, which are considered the best which have ever been prepared.

The rules were not only changed to allow for the difference in guns, but an important innovation was made in separating the officers and men in the competitions. Speaking of this innovation a former enlisted man who has taken part in several competitions said:

"On the last of the enlisted men there was a feeling that the officers had a little the better of it when it came to the competitions. To illustrate what I mean I will relate an incident which took place at Wingo, Ariz., in the '80s. A captain, who is now a major, wanted to represent the company at a departmental contest at the Bellevue rifle range. He was already a 'distinguished marksman' and so was I. A rule had been promulgated that during the competition of the regiment no one would be permitted to practice except at the times specified in the rules. At that time we shot in the morning only. The struggle was at the skirmish firing, as I was weak in that target was over, would load the skirmish targets on a wagon and with a number of men, including a bugler detailed from the company, would go out on the prairie a mile or more from the post and practice all afternoon. The soldiers could not do this, and did not think that officers should be permitted to."

Tended to Weaken Discipline.

Not only did the superior advantages of the officers appeal to the board changing the rules, but some of the members of the board believed that the competition between officers and men on equal terms tended to weaken discipline. In this connection a story is told by one of the old guards. Shortly after the war, when the competitions were resumed, Generals Sheridan and Sherman were present at a range where a captain and a private were shooting side by side at a target. Little Phil turned to the private who had matched the sea and said:

"What would the generals of the old army have said had they seen such a mixing of ranks?"

"If 'Old Bull' Sumner had seen it," replied General Sherman, "he would have had us all arrested for permitting it."

It was the co-operation of both of these thoughts which caused the board to provide separate competitions for the officers and men. As it is of more importance that the men be good marksmen with the rifle than that the officers be good marksmen, the opportunity for the men is given the widest scope. The officers who are to take part in the competition are placed in charge of the competition of the army and after the men have decided their relative ranks as marksmen, the officers' competition takes place. The officers who are to compete are selected by the colonels of the regiments, while for the competition of the enlisted men the captains of companies make the selection.

How to Get on the Team.

In selecting them to take part in the annual competitions the captains are not solely governed by the ability of the men as marksmen, the regulations requiring them to take into consideration the man's record as a soldier. With this provision the men who take part in the contests are not only good marksmen, but they are the best specimens of the American soldier. There is a great desire on the part of every good soldier to represent his company at the departmental competitions, and this has no small part in keeping the record of the soldiers clean.

After the men have been selected for the contest their names are sent to the adjutant general or inspector of small arms practice of the department, and they are enrolled. The department commander appoints an officer to take charge of the competition, selects one as chief range officer, another as statistical officer, and another as cashier and quartermaster of the range. In addition to this, eight range officers are selected, the latter being generally lieutenants, while the other officers are of higher rank. The officer in charge has general control of the range and the competition. He is empowered to rule on points not specifically covered by the regulations, to fix the hours of firing and to enforce police regulations upon the grounds. The range officers attend to the marking and scoring of the shots. They see that the competitors observe the regulations and inspect the work of the men in skirmish firing. The statistical officer assigns the men to targets and to order of firing, verifies the scores made by the score keeper, and prepares the announcement of the results.

Details of Competitions.

In the competition there are two forms of firing, one at rectangular targets, placed at 200, 300, 400 and 500 yards, and what is known as skirmish firing. In the latter the distance to the target is not known. The men start at the firing point, and at the sound of a bugle they begin to advance upon the target's firing at command. In the skirmish firing there are three targets, one representing a man standing, the second a man kneeling and the third a man crouching. The men are given twenty cartridges to be fired at the figures, ten while advancing and ten while retreating from the nearest distance. Striking the recumbent figure counts five points, striking the kneeling figure counts four points and striking the standing figure counts three points. Under these circumstances it is only the beginners who wait about at the standing figure, and only in extreme cases and at the longest distance does the expert shoot at any but the recumbent figure. Elaborate schemes have been prepared for deciding the tie in the competition. If the total for two men is the same, the score is analyzed and the man making the best record at the longer distance, or as a last resort, after re-hauling a dozen methods of analysis, the men are permitted to shoot off the tie.

"Gunsling" Davidson.

At army headquarters and among the retired soldiers as well, as at the different posts, stories are told of the remarkable scores made by men when the Springfield rifle was the gun of the army, and from the tales recounted the warriors certainly giants in those days. In and around Omaha the men are seldom weary of speaking of the record and style of R. N. Davidson, who because of his peculiar method of handling his gun at skirmish firing was given the name of "Gunsling Dave." This method of handling the rifle was by some means to place the leg of the soldier between the gun and the leather strap, by which it could be slung on a saddle in such a manner that when the competing marksmen fell prone to make a shot he could at the same time move the leg and have both hands to manipulate the lock of the gun, the breach and the cartridges. It was generally understood that "Gunsling Dave" was the originator of this method, and hence his name, being according to W. W. Stay of this city, a man who was among the "distinguished marksmen" of his day in the army, the inventor of this method of handling the gun in skirmish firing was Sergeant Weeks of the Sixth infantry. The sergeant came to Omaha one time to contest for a place on the department team which was to go to Fort Snelling to take part in the division competition. He had tried every method to improve his record, but failed to make a place on the team. At that time he was experimenting with the leg and aiming method, and when he returned to his post in the northwest he practiced for a year with the result that the next year at Omaha he carried off every prize he shot at by reason of his efficiency at skirmish firing.

Rapid Fire Results.

The method "caught on" among the men who desired to make high scores at skirmish firing and by Sergeant Weeks of the Sixth infantry was probably developed to a higher degree of efficiency than by any of the other men. It was said by men familiar with the army that a year after the introduction of the magazine gun, "Gunsling Dave" could load and fire twenty shots from his Springfield rifle as rapidly and as accurately as the average soldier could shoot twenty shots from the magazine rifle. So far as known the actual test was never made, but timed. Sergeant Davidson has fired ten shots in considerably less than twenty seconds and struck the target as rapidly as a revolver. His reputation as one of the crack shots of the department.

THE OMAHA DAILY BEE: SUNDAY, AUGUST 10, 1903.

You Are Invited....

We have determined to dispose of every sample piece of furniture that has been on our floor beyond a certain time—\$6,000 worth, including Dining Room, Parlor, Bed Room and Library Furniture. Not one piece but what will be much less than cost and many at half cost. All go on sale Monday, Aug. 11th at 8 o'clock. This is positively the greatest price inducement we have made customers on furniture. A partial list herewith—

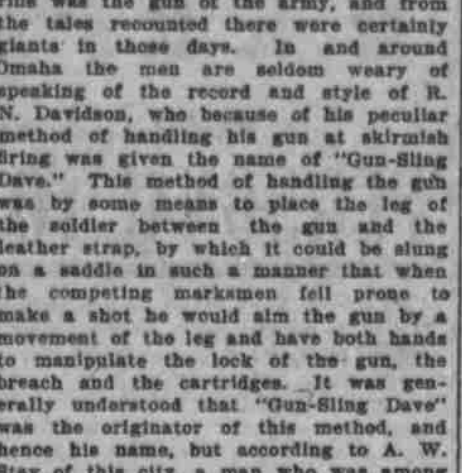


Table listing furniture items and prices, including Bed Room Suites and Dining Room Suites.

Monday morning at 8 o'clock be on hand promptly. The above is simply a partial list of the hundreds of pieces in this sale.

Orchard & Wilhelm Carpet Co.

1414-16-18-20 DOUGLAS STREET.

Local Record for Army. The first competition of the Department of the Platte was held at Omaha in 1851. If the government offered any prizes that year they were not sufficient to satisfy the demands of the officers or men, and the late General Guy V. Henry, who was then in charge, went among the business men of the city and secured prizes in merchandise and cash which were added to the government prizes. The result of that competition was that a team was selected to represent the Department of the Platte at the division contest. This team was made up in defiance of the regulations, having seven men from the Ninth infantry, including A. W. Stay, then sergeant of Company F. By a ruling of the general of the army it was permitted to enter the competition of the division, and made a good record for the department.

Year of Big Scores. But it was in 1891 and 1892 that the Department of the Platte was most interested in the work of its rifle team. The former year at the Bellevue range "Gunsling Dave" had won the first place in the contest. His method was novel and caused much comment and his work at skirmish firing was certainly remarkable. The combined record of the department marksmen was ahead of that of any department, and when the army competition was held many persons never before interested awaited the news from the range. That year was the third that Sergeant Davidson won a medal and

he went on the "distinguished marksmen" list. He stood third on the list of winners, being preceded by V. H. Sweinhart of the Third infantry and O'Rourke of the Fifteenth, both of whom were from another department. That year the team of the Department of the Platte made the best team record, the aggregate points being 5,710, nearly 400 more than that made by any other department.

The last army competition was held in 1898 and the last departmental contest in 1897. The next year the war with Spain began and since that time the soldiers have been so busy that they have not been able to meet in competitions. For this reason the competition at Fort Leavenworth at this time is in the nature of a revival and officers are watching it with considerable interest. Speaking of this an officer of the department said:

"While our system of training the men in individual marksmanship has been ahead of that of any of the other nations, England has adopted a new system which promises to beat ours. The new system is a result of the Boer war. In addition to the rectangular and skirmish targets in use with us they have introduced moving targets which come upon the soldier at unexpected places, a squad will be marching over a field when at an unknown range a target shaped as the upper half of a man's body will spring into view and sink to the ground in a moment. The soldier is expected to have put a bullet into the target before it disappears. Again, as he marches, the figure of a man running will emerge from concealment and at rapid rate disappear behind an obstacle. These targets are

so arranged to appear at different places and run in various angles. As I understand the system, if carried out, it will make marksmen who will be unexcelled. "The United States is not considering the introduction of these moving targets at this time. The War department is anxious to establish the present system of competition in all departments and to awaken in the officers and men a keen interest in the work, improved and made to conform in a closer degree to the targets offered in actual warfare."

FRATILE OF THE YOUNGSTERS.

"I never went to a circus when I was a little boy," said the fatherly parent. "Was that because your father wouldn't let you go unless you would be good?" asked the youngster, in entire innocence.

He was having a good time at Lake Geneva, where the Swiss watches come from, but he did not forget to say his prayers. "Oh, Lord," he said, as he knelt at his bedside one evening, "make me a good little boy. I asked you the other day to do it, but you didn't."

Teacher—And what is that part of the face called that extends from the bridge of the nose to the roots of the hair? Tommy—It's—why, it's—er—I dunno. Teacher—Brother, isn't it? Tommy—What if it roots of yer hair is at de back of yer neck, like my Uncle Bill's?

Annie was late, and, like a sensible child, she recognized the fact and stopped running, relates the New York Sun. Not so, Johnnie. He belonged to the class that never knows when it has enough of either joy or trouble, so he kept up his laborious trot until the school door was reached. There he leaned dejectedly and breathed heavily. Annie eyed him with a scorn that grew as she looked. Later on they stood in the office looking like a set of illustrations for a new version of the "Lives of the Hunted," and Johnnie was talking. "I couldn't mean it," he sobbed. "It was my big sister Katie's fault. She made me eat three eggs, an' me madder so I can't hold that much till I'm 2 years old, and— He would have laughed on indefinitely, the tears rolling off his face. That young lady had a passion for acrobatics, so without further ado she acquired Johnnie's scores. "I ate too many eggs, too, and it made me late," she explained. "Indeed," said the principal, "and how many did you eat?" Annie's lips curled scornfully as she remembered Johnnie and his miserable three eggs. "I ate seventeen-four," she replied blandly.

Advertisement for Orchard & Wilhelm Carpet Co. featuring a large list of furniture items for sale at reduced prices, including dining room and bed room suites.

Advertisement for Dr. McGrew's medicine, highlighting its effectiveness for various ailments and its status as a 'Specialist' in treating diseases.

Advertisement for Dr. McGrew's 'Specialist' medicine, featuring a testimonial from a patient and a list of ailments treated.

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