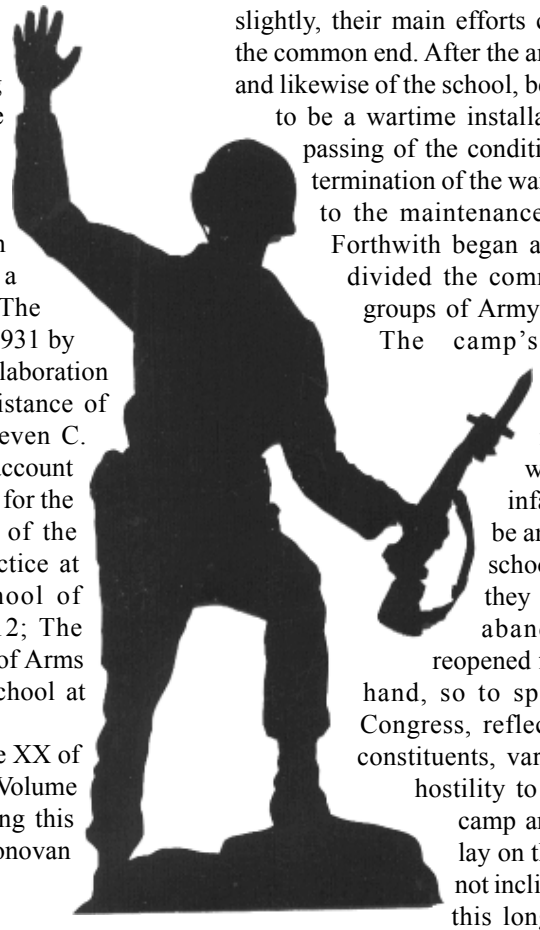
A History of the Infantry School

How Fort Benning Became 'Home of Infantry'

Editor's Note: *The following was adapted from an excerpt of an article that was first published in Volume XXIII of* The Mailing List*, which was printed in February 1942.* The Mailing List *was a predecessor of* Infantry *Magazine.*



This chapter is an extracted portion (Chapter III: Sections 1 and 2) of a manuscript entitled "A History of The Infantry School." The history was written in 1931 by First Lieutenant Leroy W. Yarborough in collaboration with Major Truman Smith and with the assistance of Major Charles A. Willoughby and Major Leven C. Allen. The history covers a full and complete account of the development of the Infantry School idea for the training of officers. It includes the details of the establishment of the Infantry School of Practice at Jefferson Barracks, 1826-1828; The School of Musketry, Presidio of Monterey, 1907-1912; The School of Musketry and The Infantry School of Arms at Fort Sill, 1912-1918; and The Infantry School at Fort Benning, 1919-present.

Chapter I of this history appeared in Volume XX of *The Mailing List* in July 1940 and Chapter II in Volume XXXII, August 1941. (The volumes containing this complete history are available through the Donovan Research Library on Fort Benning.)

Military Events Concerned with the Infantry School of Arms at Fort Sill and Camp Benning, 1918-1921

The period of three and a half years following the removal of the Infantry School of Arms to its new site near Columbus, Georgia, has no parallel in the school's history.

In the kaleidoscopic whirl of events which revolved about the school during that time there was a dramatic intensity which assumed an increasingly high pitch until its abrupt termination in an anticlimax of neglect. It began, figuratively, as the banishment of an overgrown stepchild from its home, when its too rapid wartime expansion led to its eviction from Fort Sill and its partial dismemberment and distribution, between three widely separated camps. There followed the brief epoch of urgent haste to reunite its fragments and to resume its mass production of trained manpower; then the intervention of the armistice marked a new crisis in the school's career and opened a third epoch through which the school ran a long gauntlet of hazards of uncommon variety.

Efforts to establish the school near Columbus had carried on for more than a year before it was finally moved to Camp Benning. Two classes of people were engaged in this endeavor, local citizens and Army officers. Although the motives of each group differed slightly, their main efforts coincided sufficiently to accomplish the common end. After the armistice, the status of Camp Benning, and likewise of the school, became uncertain. To some it appeared to be a wartime installation that would disappear with the passing of the conditions which created it. Soon after the termination of the war, there developed a strong opposition to the maintenance of the school at Camp Benning. Forthwith began a lengthy and heated contest which divided the community and drew into the struggle groups of Army officers and members of Congress. The camp's citizen proponents lauded it as an economic asset to the community. Its local opponents denounced it as a menace to religion, home, and womanhood. To the Army officers, the infantrymen particularly, it appeared to be an almost ideal location for an infantry school and, as it was already established, they desired to retain it. If the camp was abandoned, the school might not be reopened for years, if at all. It was a bird in the hand, so to speak. The interest of members of Congress, reflecting, no doubt, the views of their constituents, varied from downright indifference or hostility to intense favoritism. The fate of the camp and the school, as well, several times lay on the lap of the gods, and the gods were not inclined to be friendly. Its survival through this long period of attack, revilement, and neglect is a miracle of accomplishment, a monument to the indomitable spirit of those who fought in its cause. In none of the major groups, which participated in the contest over Camp Benning was there complete harmony. The aggregations of citizens and congressmen were divided into opposing factions, between which there was rank dissension, even hostility. Even in the Army group there was not complete accord, and the loose statements of some officers were quoted by foes of the camp in the congressional hearings which later enhanced the importance, if not the dignity, of the contest. But of all who engaged in the struggle to continue the infantry's school at Camp Benning, none was more diligent nor zealous than the Army group, yet the range of activities of none was more circumscribed than that of this group. Their share in the fray had to be conducted with circumspection, and their initiative of action could rarely extend beyond the limits or service routine.

As the characters of the respective groups differed, there was likewise a diversity of interests and a medley of motives inspiring their works. Most of their efforts progressed concurrently and in some cases, especially those of individuals were overlapping. An attempt to recount their activities and the ensuing results in the exact order in which they took place would produce only a maze

of words. For the sake of clarity of this most critical period in the history of the Infantry School, the roles of the principals and the delineation of the physical progress and conditions of that period are presented separately. Even this method offers an imperfect solution to the problem of clarifying the muddle of events, and there unavoidably occurs some repetition.

The Decision to Move the Infantry School From Fort Sill

The War Department's order directing the removal of the Infantry School of Arms from Fort Sill to the new Columbus site was the climax of a long series of circumstances and events which ultimately led to the selection of this locality as the one available site which was nearest to the ideal for infantry training purposes. Official cognizance of the probable necessity of relocating the infantry's school was first indicated in July 1917, and arose from conditions created by the rapid expansion of both it and the Artillery School of Fire, which taxed the limited facilities of Fort Sill beyond their capacity and led to petty friction between the two schools. In this same year, too, at least four favorable reports had been made on the Columbus region by Army inspectors or boards in the search for desirable training sites. Although none of these had to do with the Infantry School of Arms, it is not improbable that the succession of favorable reports directed official attention toward Columbus. In January 1918, General R. M. Blatchford examined the Columbus locality among others in a search for a site for a small-arms firing school, an associate activity of the Infantry School. In July the board, of which Colonel Henry E. Eames was president, designated it as second choice in case the site near Fayetteville, North Carolina, could not be secured for the infantry's school. An inspection of land adjacent to that selected by Colonel Eames' board near Fayetteville had been made in the preceding month by Colonel E. P. King, Jr., of the field artillery in a search for a training ground for that arm. Colonel King's selection of that locality was subsequently confirmed by the Secretary of War. This left the Columbus region as the best one available for the infantry, and as a result of a study made by the general staff during July and August, it was designated as the locality in which would be situated

Colonel Henry E. Eames

the Infantry School of Arms upon its removal from Fort Sill. The plan at that time contemplated the acquisition of 250,000 acres of land for a school with a capacity of 30,000 officers and men.

In the meantime, the construction division of the general staff had commissioned Majors Solomon and Gibb to select a site for cantonment in the vicinity of Columbus. On July 12 they announced their selection of a site on Macon Road about three miles east of Columbus, which lay between two main railroad lines. Later in the same month Colonel Clopton, of the tanks corps, recommended the area near Columbus as especially suited for a tank school. In September, following the Chief of Staff's approval of the recommendation that the Infantry School of Arms be removed from Fort Sill, orders were issued by the War Department on September 12 which directed the transfer of the school to Columbus. Similar orders were issued at the same time to the school's offshoots, the Small Arms Firing School at Camp Perry, Ohio, and the Machine Gun School at Camp Hancock, Georgia.

Colonel Eames arrived in Columbus on September 21 and he lost no time in preparing for the arrival of the remainder of the personnel and the reopening of the Infantry School of Arms in its new location. He at once established his headquarters in Columbus in a building at the southwest corner of First Avenue and Thirteenth Street where the offices of the construction firm which was to build the cantonment to house the school were located. One of the first matters to engage Colonel Eames' attention was that of providing shelter for the troops who were due to arrive in little more than a week. Plans for a temporary camp and the problems in connection with its construction were discussed during a conference which Colonel Eames held on September 23 with Major John P. Jones, Quartermaster Corps and representatives of the contractors who were to build the temporary camp. On the following day, Colonel Eames visited the area east of Columbus, which was then the proposed site of the cantonment, and designated the location of the temporary camp for the school. On Major Jones he imposed the responsibility of having the camp ready for the expected arrival of the troops soon after October 1.

In the meantime, representatives of the two other schools, which were to be absorbed by the Infantry School of Arms, had arrived in Columbus, and with them, Colonel Eames discussed the requirements of the consolidated school preparatory to the designation of the actual site it was to occupy. While the area east of Columbus, which had already been selected as the site of a cantonment, appeared to be satisfactory for general war-training purposes, it did not entirely fulfill the technical requirements of the Infantry School of Arms. On September 25, Colonel Eames and Majors Critchfield and Maloney of the Small Arms Firing School located an area on the southside of Columbus which appeared to possess topographical features that were more suited to the needs of the school. One of these was a site for a class "A" rifle range, an important feature of the installation of the consolidated school. Although Colonel Eames' board had originally endorsed the area near Fayetteville as its first choice, he evidently found the Columbus site, on closer acquaintance, to be the better of the two, for just a few months later he gave his unqualified approval to its superior qualifications. He said in the course of his testimony before the Senate Military Affairs Committee at that time: "The commanding generals of the Western Department, the Southern Department, and Southeastern Department were each directed by the War Department to send a board of officers into all the states comprised in their departments in order to locate a suitable place for this

school. These boards went out and spent a month or two in a careful examination of hundreds of sites, extending from California to Virginia, and in every state between. As a result of that, the three boards reported certain sites as suitable, and certain others as quite unsuitable. After a period of time, the proceedings of these boards were sent to me as president of the fourth board, and I examined them; and my board went over the territory, as I say, from the Pacific to the Atlantic looking for a site that would meet the military requirements of the school with which I was familiar; and this place at Columbus was decided upon in preference to anything we saw."

Acquisition of the Land for the Infantry School

October was a month of rapid physical development for the reunited school. On October 4 a number of instructors arrived from Fort Sill. On the fifth, Colonel Eames was appointed commandant of the Infantry School of Arms to succeed Colonel Miller, who had not come to Columbus. On the sixth, the first troops arrived from Fort Sill. These were the two officers and 503 men comprised in the Infantry School of Arms Detachment, and a medical officer, who arrived at their destination at 2 a.m. Colonel Morton C. Mumma, commandant of the Small Arms Firing School, at Camp Perry, Ohio, preceded his command by a few weeks, and arrived in Columbus on the eighth. Favorable changes in the war situation in Europe resulted in the approval by the Secretary of War on October 9, of modified plans for the Infantry School of Arms which reduced its capacity to 24,000 officers and men, and its area to 115,000 acres. This action was followed on October 19 by the Secretary's approval of an expenditure of $3.6 million to purchase a tract of land comprising 115,000 acres, the boundaries of which were left to the discretion of Colonel Eames. On the 19th also, local attention was concentrated momentarily on the temporary camp when, in compliance with a request made in September by the Rotary Club, it was ceremoniously christened "Camp Benning." Legal machinery for the acquirement of the lands for the school was set in motion on October 23 by the request of the Secretary of War to the Attorney General of the United States to institute condemnation proceedings on behalf of the Government. The arrival on October 26 and their assignment to the Infantry School of Arms of 40 officers and 700 men of the Small Arms Firing School, completed the transfer of personnel and ended the brief career of that institution. On October 28 the contract for construction of the camp was awarded.

Construction work for the new camp, and local condemnation proceedings to acquire the 115,000 acres of land comprised in this area, were both started on the second of November and began what promised to be a month of rapid progress in the reestablishment of the school. But in little more than a week came the armistice. The effect of this momentous event, which ended the greatest conflict the world has ever suffered, was not immediately apparent at Camp Benning. The construction work at the new site proceeded as rapidly as the contractors' facilities permitted, and the school, on December 2, enrolled a class of about 100 recent West Point graduates and resumed its courses of instruction as if nothing had happened. It was, of course, a matter of general knowledge that the war's end would ultimately affect conditions at Camp Benning but to what extent was not known. However, the construction division of the general staff was even then working on a revision of the plans of the school on a peacetime basis, and on December 26, the modified plans which reduced the school's capacity to 10,000, were completed. At the end of the year the school had two sites, but it had yet no home and its personnel of approximately 125 officers and 1,200 men were still occupying the temporary camp east of Columbus.

The Struggle Begins to Keep Benning/Infantry School Open

For Camp Benning and the Infantry School of Arms the arrival of 1919 marked the advent of a long period of uncertainty and hazard. Vague apprehensions disturbed those to whom the future of the infantry's school was a matter of concern. Rumors that the camp and the school were to be abolished reached Columbus. Already opposing interests were marshalling their forces for the contest which was to decide the fate of the camp.

On January 9 the Assistant Secretary of War issued orders which directed the suspension of construction and land acquirement and the salvaging of all materials and construction work, either wholly or partially completed.

Since its relocation to the Columbus site, the school had undergone a series of reductions in area and training capacity. Originally intended as a school for 30,000 officers and men, its personnel capacity was successively reduced to 24,000 and then to 10,000, which the latter figure represented its proposed peacetime capacity. Its area, too, which had begun at a quarter of a million acres had dwindled to 115,000. It soon became evident to the military authorities that even more extensive reductions would have to be made in the project if the camp was to be retained for a peacetime school. Soon after the cessation order had halted the construction at the camp, Colonel Eames and Major Jones were called upon by the warplans and construction divisions of the general staff to assist in preparing plans and estimates for a peacetime infantry school with a personnel capacity of 5,040 and an area of 98,000 acres. This work was completed and

After the end of World War I, the status of the Infantry School and Fort Benning became uncertain.

the new plans were transmitted to the operations division on January 27.

Paradoxically, it would seem that while a steady process of physical contraction was being applied to the school, the month of February presaged the adoption of a policy of immense expansion of the scope of the school's work. The trial of combat had revealed many latent defects in our infantry training methods and had emphasized others which had been self-evident but unavoidable in the hasty mass production of new infantry officers. Contemplation of these flaws in the infantry's war-effort developed quickly a realization of the necessity for finding means of obtaining uniformity and greater efficiency in infantry training methods. The infantry's school was regarded as the proper instrument with which to accomplish this end, and forthwith a study was conducted to broaden to the character of the school from one dealing primarily with the technique of armament to an institution whose teachings would embrace the entire field of infantry tactics and would impart a knowledge of the cooperation of infantry with other arms. From these deliberations, which were to exert a strong influence on the future character of the school, no conclusions were manifested until fall. On February 22 the West Point class which had begun a short course of instruction in December graduated.

Soldiers used to sleep in tents in the early days of Fort Benning. The silo in the background of this 1925 photograph was part of Arthur Bussey's plantation, which he sold to the government so that the School of Infantry could be built.

March began as a harbinger of material progress, for on the eighth the Assistant Secretary of War issued orders which directed the continuation of the execution of the peacetime plan of the school. An expenditure of $9.2 million was allowed, of which $6.6 million was for construction, and the remainder for purchase of land. Officially, the work of building the camp was resumed. Actually, it had never entirely stopped, despite the mandate of January. Major Jones, the constructing quartermaster, who seems to have been an officer whose talents included rare qualities of initiative, ingeniously interpreted his instructions to salvage the work as meaning to carry on to completion all partially finished buildings, and then to preserve them from deterioration by the application of paint. However, superior authority of that time may have regarded his adroit translation of his orders, his operations were of immense practical permanent value in the development of the embryonic camp.

After a respite of three weeks, instructional work was resumed when a new class of student officers enrolled on March 15 for a three-month course. On March 23 the garrison of Camp Benning was augmented by the arrival of the 1st Battalion, 29th Infantry from the demobilization center at Camp Shelby, Mississippi.

Early in April the reunion of the school's dismembered parts was completed by the arrival on the third of some 200 men of the Camp Hancock machine-gun center and their consolidation with the personnel of the school on the fifth. This detachment, which included two demonstration machine-gun companies — one animal-drawn and the other motorized, was accompanied by a number of officers, both instructors and students. Colonel Eames concluded his important labors as commandant on April 22 upon the arrival of his successor, Major General Charles S. Farnsworth. Colonel Eames thereupon became executive officer of the school.

On June 17 the Infantry School of Arms began its move from the temporary camp on Macon Road to its new but uncompleted home at what is now Fort Benning. Uncertainty still obscured the future of the new camp. The local authorities, actuated by an ardent desire to save the camp for the school, did everything they could toward affecting this end. One of their plans, by which they hoped to avert abandonment of the camp, was the production of an appearance of intensive training activity to impress congressional or other influential observers. The idea seemed to be that the presence of a large class of student officers engaged in important studies would make less feasible an interruption of the school's career, and might also aid to divert any sentiment which favored such a move. At any rate, this is the only explanation which has been advanced to account for the decision to retain the class of officers which should have been graduated on June 15, for an additional three-month course. While the school was in process of removal and settling, the students enjoyed a two-week holiday period, during which they recuperated to some extent from the enervating effects of a long spell of hard work in the high temperatures of summer. They returned to their classes on June 30 and carried on their strenuous work of bayonet combat, drills and firing of weapons in the intense midsummer heat. It was a trying ordeal and a severe test of morale. The months of June and July saw a succession of curiously contradictory orders which alternately granted carts blanche authority to proceed with the development of Camp Benning and summarily checked such activities. The authorization which the Secretary of War had given in March for the completion of the project had allotted approximately $2.6 million for the purchase of the land required. On June 5 the officer in charge of the acquirement of land was told "to spend as much as may be needed" for the procurement of the 98,000 acres which the camp was to have, although it was apparent even then that the transaction would require more than the allotted sum. On July 1, the Secretary of War again placed an

official ban on all construction work and purchase of land for Camp Benning. All unexpended funds hitherto allotted for these purposes were to revert to the United States Treasury. Apparently the injunction did not affect operations at Camp Benning until July 5, for the local quartermaster records show that land purchases and construction work ceased officially on that date. Local enterprise again met the situation. With such materials as were at hand, the inhabitants of the camp set about improving their living conditions and, despite the sharp limitations placed upon such activities, they accomplished a great deal before winter. This, and the previous local solution of pressing problems, seemed to prove that there is more than one way of killing a cat or of saving an infantry school.

More Challenges

In June, Colonel Paul B. Malone was recalled from duty with the Army of Occupation in Germany to become assistant commandant of the Infantry School of Arms. He was also to act as representative of the War Department to acquaint Congress with the necessity for and the objectives of the school and to induce that body to approve the project. Colonel Malone's duties in Washington as liaison officer between the War Department and Congress began in July and extended over a period of eight months. One of his first acts was to begin the preparation of a digest of information on matters relating to the school plan for the members of Congress. The importance of an infantry school in the Army's educational system was cogently demonstrated by an analysis of the American casualties of the World War. This showed that the infantry suffered 89 percent of the combat casualties and indicated certain deficiencies in training. A school for the infantry, he argued, was an absolute necessity, no matter what the size the Army was to be. By a brief discussion of the general features of existing Army posts, cantonments and camps, he proved that the Camp Benning area was the only available one which fulfilled the requirements of an all-year-round infantry school. He outlined an organization plan and the new character of training for commissioned and noncommissioned personnel of the three components of the Army. He procured the approbative statements of such eminent soldiers as Generals Hunter Liggett, Robert L. Bullard, and Charles P. Summerall. Among others, endorsements of the scheme were given by the chief of the tank corps, then a separate arm, the director of air service, the chief of the militia bureau, and by two influential civilian organizations, the Military Training Camps Association and the National Rifle Association. About 200 infantry officers and several officers of other arms participated in the work of acquainting Congress with the necessity of completing the Camp Benning project.

An impetus was given to the school's instructional activities on July 10 when two classes of noncommissioned officers began a three-month course. On September 5 another class of officers arrived for a physical training course of one month. With two classes of officers and two of noncommissioned officers in session at one time, the school presented a scene of bustling training activities, as the authorities no doubt had intended it should, when Colonel Malone conducted a congressional inspection committee to Camp Benning in the fall.

The study, which the general staff had begun on the question of infantry training, resulted in a definition of policy which was announced in War Department general orders on September 25. The infantry was to have its own special service school which was "to develop and standardize the instruction and training of officers in the (techniques) and tactics of their arm of the service." The infantry's school was to operate under the supervision and control of the chief of infantry, who was directed to draft special regulations for the conduct of the school. General Farnsworth, assisted by Colonel Malone and Colonel Monroe C. Kerth, at once began the preparation of the regulations, and in January 1920, submitted a draft to the War Department.

Colonel Paul B. Malone

On September 30 the class which began in March (a course which should have ended in June) finally graduated. A new class of recent West Point graduates arrived on October 1. On October 15, the remainder of the 29th Infantry arrived from Camp Shelby. Colonel Eames was placed in charge of the school's department of experiment on November 1 and was designated a member of the Infantry Board on December 24. Mobile Laundry Unit No. 5 arrived on November 5, but it did not operate until the following year. General Pershing came to Camp Benning on December 10 to inspect the school. Seas of mud, overflowing streams, liquid roads, and a sodden camp, awaited him. The inundation, which resulted from a downpour of several days' duration prior to his arrival, is known to this day as the "Pershing Flood."

At the close of 1919, the infantry's school had made little advancement toward permanency, and, friendless and forlorn, was still floundering in a quagmire of uncertainty.

The new year, 1920, began with little promise, and January was void of accomplishment until the 23rd, when General Farnsworth sent the draft of the new school regulations to the War Department. The importance of this document in shaping the character of the school was not evident, however, until several months later.

The month of February had, in previous years, held a singular significance for the school. February 1920 was to be no exception, for on February 11 officials received the War Department order which invested it with the dignity of a distinctive title, "The Infantry School." February 20, 1920, will ever remain a red-letter day in the history of the Infantry School, for it was on this date that Congress approved the plan to retain and develop Camp Benning. The promise of support for the school plan which Representative Anthony of Kansas and other members of the committee had

given to Colonel Malone when they visited Camp Benning had not been an empty one. At last the status of the Infantry School was definitely fixed and plans for its conduct and development could proceed with confidence. From February to April, plans for clothing the school in its new character as the Infantry School were being perfected along the lines which had been indicated in the tentative regulations which General Farnsworth had submitted in January. These were approved and published by the War Department as Special Regulations No. 14, dated April 22, 1920. In them were prescribed the new organization of the Infantry School, the duties of its staff and departments, the classes of students and the manner of selecting them, the courses for the respective classes and the methods by which they would be carried out. Some idea of how far the process of evolution had advanced the character of the Infantry School beyond that of its antecedent of 1907, may be gleaned by a comparison of the respective objectives and organizations of the two schools. The immediate objective of the earlier school was to raise the marksmanship standards of the Pacific Division by giving to "selected officers and enlisted men a higher degree of practical and theoretical instruction in the use of small arms than it is practicable to obtain at posts, with a view to making them better instructors and thereby increasing the fire efficiency of the organization to which they belong." The school staff at this time consisted solely of an officer in charge and an assistant instructor. More comprehensive were the purposes of the later school. "The chief aim of all courses will be to develop in the student the quality of leadership and the capacity to instruct others. Instruction in research will form part of each course with a view to developing the habit of independent investigation and thus arriving at conclusions by analysis and deduction," reads a paragraph in the special regulations of the 1920 school. For the organization of the school, the latter prescribed a commandant, an assistant commandant, a secretary, a director for each of the four departments, and such instructors and other assistants as were required. The scope of instruction of the Infantry School had grown, almost immeasurably, from a curriculum limited to subjects related to marksmanship and musketry, to the whole field of (techniques) of the numerous modern infantry weapons, the tactics of all units to, and including, the reinforced infantry brigade, and the cooperation of infantry with other arms. Students for the Monterey school were drawn from a limited area and command, while the Infantry School of 1920 was opened to the infantrymen of all three components of the Army.

Brigadier General Walter H. Gordon

With its new investitures of title, estate, and career, an era of renaissance had begun for the Infantry School. It had not yet recovered its strength but it no longer had to expend all its energy in a struggle for the right to exist.

In the spring of 1920, several small increments of demonstration troops were added to the garrison. The 32d Balloon Company came in March, the 344th Tank Battalion and Company D 7th Engineers in April, and a detachment of the air service with 10 airplanes in May.

On June 5 Colonel Eames departed from the Infantry School to take up new duties elsewhere in compliance with orders which had been issued in April. On July 31, General Farnsworth was relieved as commandant to become the Chief of Infantry, with the rank of major general.

Brigadier General Walter H. Gordon was appointed his successor, and he arrived to take command on September 20.

The school year of 1920-21 was the first in which were conducted the prescribed courses of the modern Infantry School. Since the issuance of the special school regulations in April, the War Department had added to the mission of the school the requirements of training efficient commanders and staff officers for all units, and of preparing officers for the advanced training given in the general service schools. The new courses, amplified to the additional requirements, were scheduled to begin on October 1, but unsettled conditions in the service made it so difficult to assemble the students that the classes did not commence until November 1. An exception was that a group of recent graduates of the military academy who arrived in time to begin the basic course on October 1. This group was carried as a separate class throughout the school year as it had advanced too far in its work to be merged with the other basic group upon the latter's arrival. Approximately 650 regular officers reported for enrollment in the four classes, the field officers,' company officers,' and the two basic classes, but the actual enrollments were reduced somewhat by the necessity of using prospective students to fill vacancies in the school staff and post organizations. A national guard class, the first of the three-month courses for this component, began on November 1.

Two important demonstration units were added to the garrison in this month. The medical demonstration detachment of seven officers and about 100 enlisted men, assembled from five corps areas, arrived on the second. On the 20th, the 1st Battalion 83d Field Artillery arrived after an overland march from Camp Knox, Kentucky.

Despite the hampering effect of the primitive environment in which it was carried on, the instructional work of the school proceeded steadily. Classes came and went. Courses were improved little by little as experience indicated where changes for the better could be made. By 1921 the school had acquired enough experience in the extensive fields of its work to justify a revision of what might be termed its character, Special Regulations No. 14. By this time, the school had also undertaken the revision of several training documents and the preparation of others. On January 31, 1921, the first class of National Guard officers graduated. Another class began a similar course on March 1, which terminated

near the end of May. All the regular courses ended on June 30 after a two-week extension to compensate for the late opening of the classes in the fall of 1920. In October the regular courses for 1921-22 began with 439 students enrolled. An indication of the broadened character of the school's training program was the commandant's recommendation in August 1921 that in addition to the 29th Infantry at full war strength, there also be a battalion of field artillery, a battalion of tanks, a company of engineers, an observation squadron, a medical demonstration unit, a pigeon loft and a balloon company stationed permanently at the Infantry School as demonstration units. However, the schedule of troop demonstrations had to be curtailed considerably. This setback in the training scheme was due to the reduction of the 29th Infantry to a two-battalion regiment, the disbandment of the medical demonstration detachment, and the withdrawal of the air service detachment. In 1921 the majority of the regular Army students were newly commissioned and, according to the assistant commandant, Colonel Paul B. Malone, "knew little of the unwritten laws of the service." Nevertheless, they apparently entered into their studies wholeheartedly, for Colonel Malone pays them high compliment in the school's annual report. "On the whole," said the colonel, "the conduct of the classes was excellent, the morale high, and the feeling that a great work for the Army had been accomplished was general, almost universal."

This evidence of student esprit appears to have been a circumstance of conspicuous brightness in an otherwise gloomy year. Besides the disheartening problems associated with the living conditions of Camp Benning, General Gordon was confronted with others of totally different character but of equally disturbing influences. One of these was the problem of adequate transportation service between Camp Benning and Columbus. The schedule of the one daily train which the Central of Georgia Railroad operated to and from the camp, was wholly unsuited to the needs of the majority of the garrison, which found itself interned during its hours of freedom from duties. This circumstance was regarded as a golden opportunity by a number of individuals who forthwith engaged in the business of transportation between the camp and the city. Soon scores of nondescript vehicles, operated by persons of no particular responsibility, were haphazardly engaged in carrying passengers between Camp Benning and Columbus. General Gordon desired the establishment of a reliable transportation system to displace the unregulated jitneys. Accordingly, negotiations were begun with the management of the Columbus street railways. An offer of the free use of the government's tracks to the camp was made to the company. This did not appear to be sufficient inducement, and the street railway company asked, in addition, that it be given a monopoly on all passenger and freight transportation, and a guarantee that the government would reimburse the company for any deficit incurred in operating the line. The latter point could not be conceded and the negotiations fell through. With the street railway company eliminated, Columbus' interest in the camp transportation system seemed to be limited to a small circle of automobile dealers and independent vehicle operators. However, when a proposal to establish a regular passenger bus line between Camp Benning and Columbus was made by a Mr. Howard of Atlanta, the subject at once became a matter of community concern. In May 1921, a counterproposal offered by the automobile dealers of Columbus was laid before the Camp Activities Committee, a local citizens' organization. The committee regarded Mr. Howard's proposal as the better one and recommended that General Gordon accept it. This he did, and the Howard Bus Line was given the exclusive automobile transportation privilege between the camp and the city. The contract did not become effective until August as General Gordon allowed the independent operators 90 days in which to withdraw their service.

Another problem of no mean proportions was the constant readjustment of all activities which was made necessary by the growing shortage of enlisted personnel. This was particularly evident in 1921 following the promulgation of the War Department's order which permitted the discharge of any soldier who desired to leave the service. This state of affairs was, of course, one which local authority had to accept with such grace as it could. However, in midsummer of 1921, General Gordon made emphatic protest against a proposed reduction of one-fourth of the force of nurses at Camp Benning. "If we had modern quarters for our families, officers and enlisted men," he said, "the necessity for hospital accommodations would be very much less."

Constant criticism by casual, but high-ranking observers did little toward lightening the general's cares. "The personal appearance of the officers at Benning is the worst we have seen in the army," is a criticism transmitted to the harassed commandant by the Chief of Infantry.

As a final, but by no means all-inclusive recital of the minor burdens borne by General Gordon, a list of some of the ill-starred events of this year will be illuminative. In March, during a firing exercise, a tank fired a six-pound shell into one of the officers' quarters in Block 23. Just a few days later an artillery shell fell on the railroad near Harp's Pond and a civilian workman narrowly escaped death or injury. In the same month a violent storm destroyed wire communication lines, unroofed buildings, moved some from their foundations, and damaged a great amount of subsistence and other supplies. In May, a fete day, whose program included a ceremony, demonstrations, a baseball game, and a public reception, was broken up by another violent storm. In June the local water supply dried up and it was necessary to improvise a temporary source of supply. On October 27, President Harding and his party visited Camp Benning.

While no untoward incident occurred, the plans for the presidential visit had to be curtailed to a great extent. A gloomy outlook for the future was prohesied by General Farnsworth in this same month when he wrote, "It is becoming increasingly difficult to get personnel, money and materials for Benning. This is not because of any opposition to Benning, but because of the necessity for economy in the army. The economy is real economy and not simply talk about economy." Only a year before General Gordon, viewing hopefully the immediate future, had written to General Farnsworth, "I feel, too, that we are meeting successfully the crisis that the Infantry School is now going through and that in another year the troubles of today will be forgotten in the improved conditions and in the school's success." A vain hope, indeed, as it turned out to be, but at the end of 1921 General Gordon was regarding the school's prospects for the forthcoming year with optimism and courage unimpaired.