

Military

Company M on the Border

By JAMES NAISMITH
Chaplain of First Kansas Infantry



MAJOR-GEN'L FREDERICK FUNSTON

Our most illustrious Kansan, a former student, and Commander of the forces on the Border.

Company M was composed almost exclusively of college students. There were only eight in the company who had not been associated with the University as a student or a graduate. These were recruited after the first call or transferred from other units. The physical chart of the students shows that the highest measurement was above the 100 per cent, the minimum measurement never went under the 10 per cent, the average was about a 60 per cent. The average of the company was above the average of the entering class in the University. There were twelve men disqualified at Riley—most of them for being under weight, some on account of eyes, and others on account of temporary conditions that could be easily removed.

From the standpoint of physical skill, the record of the company in comparison with others is shown by the number of prizes won at the inter-company contests at Fort Leavenworth, where four out of the six events were carried off by Company M men, some of these including such events as tent pitching which required eight men, shelter tent pitching requiring two men, etc. As to their ability to endure hardships on the hike from San Antonio to Austin, only about two men failed to go the entire distance on foot. None were incapacitated for more than a short time. On the return march, the greatest difficulty was to restrain the speed of Company M so as to accommodate the rest of the organizations. During the entire time at Eagle Pass only one hike was missed by Company M, and that was on account of ptomaine poisoning by which quite a number were made ill. In marksmanship the state was above the average.

No member of Company M was sent to the guard house. No member of Company M was acted upon by the summary court. There were only two breaches of discipline. These were for being late in returning to quarters, one of them being three minutes behind the specified time.

There was very little grumbling on being appointed to do fatigue duty around the camp and whenever a squad was detailed for a certain purpose, there was less tendency to slight the work than was noticeable in any other organization, but a desire to do the duty appointed and to get back to their quarters. Where growling and profanity is an expression of the dominant feeling, whistling was the characteristic of Company M, and the morale of the whole company was excellent. One noticeable feature of the discipline was the readiness with which they obeyed, not only the officers, but the non-commissioned officers. A strict realization and observance of their duty was noticed in the exactness with which search duty was carried on, and the search conducted with the cheerfulness and consideration that took away a great part of the animosity incidental to search on the international bridge.

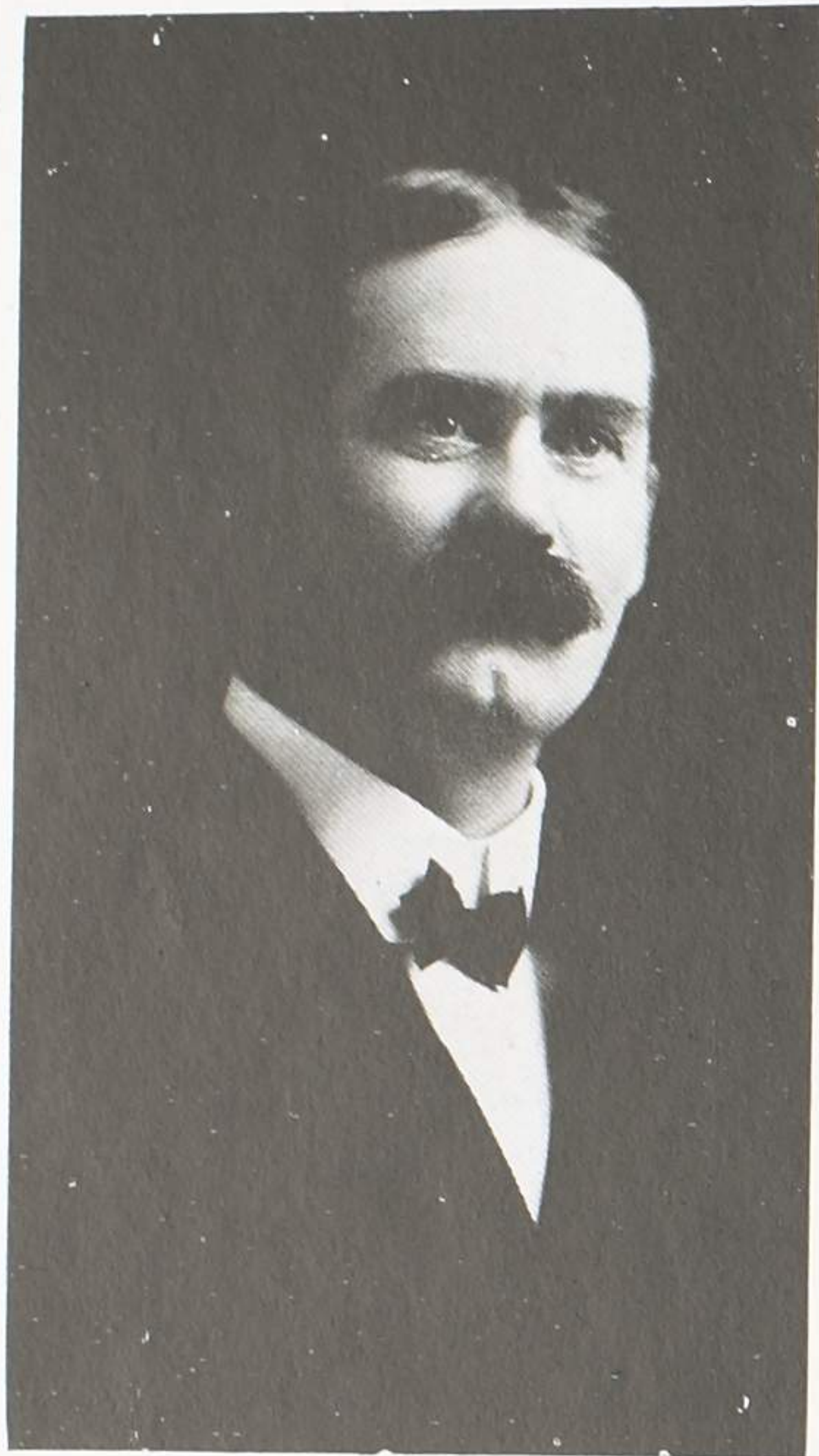
The manner in which a company spends its spare time is one of the best in-

Military



Military

dications of the atmosphere of the company. The way in which the spare time was spent in Company M was about as follows: Decorating the grounds and the officers' quarters, making the whole camp site for which they were responsible as bright and cheery as possible, conducting biological excursions, and studying the plants and the animal life of the surrounding country. The study of Spanish was carried on by a squad of about twelve individuals who made more or less of a thorough study of Spanish. There hardly was any time when the company was in quarters that you could not find baseball practice carried on and when football season arrived it took the place of baseball.



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The versatility of Company M was shown by the demands that were made upon the company for different things.

Both officers and men stood the four months in camp in excellent shape and returned to their homes in better condition than when they left. In the march to Austin, seventeen out of the whole regiment was the greatest number that fell out in any one day and some days not a single man had to quit the ranks, while in other regiments as many as two hundred fell out in a single day. On the last day's march Company M was setting the pace for the regiment when the commander ordered them to halt until the other regiments caught up, and they made the twenty-one miles before one o'clock in the afternoon and came in whistling and in the best of spirits.

Company M was always ready to take its share of the drudgery in a cheerful manner. Just before the train pulled out from Fort Riley a squad was told off to pick up the papers which had been thrown down during entraining and among them was a bachelor of arts, a master of arts, and an undergraduate, all of whom took it as a matter of course and did the work well. In general efficiency the K. U. men showed themselves the equal of any men entrusted with like responsibility.

Lieutenant Sprinkle and his men were called on to make a map of the vicinity of Eagle Pass; Charles Eggen supervised the wiring of the camp; Aaron Piepenburg was cook for the officers' mess; Pike Moyer officiated at the organ, Carl Brown at the piano; Lieutenant James was the unanimous choice for football coach; Wayne Edwards was official photographer for the regiment; Arthur Nigg was drum major for the band and supervised the erection of the regimental cook house; Rice was monologist; Milt Baker would sprint, box or wrestle at a moment's notice; a University of Kansas basketball team could be got together by blowing a whistle; Wint Smith put "pep" into the baseball team from his position at first; and the Reverend W. C. Johnson of Company M would supply the pulpit of any church in Eagle Pass or San Antonio.

The initiative of the men was shown by the confidence imposed in them by their officers where, when any manoeuvre was to be carried out, it was sufficient to announce that a certain manoeuvre was to take place. The non-commissioned officers saw that all necessary details were performed and that every step had been anticipated.

Military

