

Philippines and Chief of Staff of the Army, this officer with the torso of a football player and the limping walk of an arthritic found at Governors Island the perfect opportunity for spreading the doctrine of national preparedness to which he had dedicated his career.

With the outbreak of the European War in 1914, General Wood felt that we would be drawn into it sooner or later, and he gave every ounce of his boundless energy and forceful personality to warn the nation that if drastic steps were not immediately taken to bolster our defenses there would soon be no nation to defend. He spoke his warnings to schools and colleges, at social clubs and patriotic societies, before church gatherings and scientific and business associations, and little by little he awakened a public consciousness of the need for military preparedness. During this period the federal administration was doing its best to maintain the neutral attitude expected of it as a non-belligerent, and since many of Wood's activities and forthright statements proved extremely embarrassing to Washington it was finally necessary to order the Eastern Division commander "to decline all public expression."

Without making any more speeches Wood practiced what he had been preaching. He briefly announced a "business man's military camp" for five weeks in the summer of 1916 at Plattsburg, N.Y., at

which 1,200 men of all ages and from all walks of life found out that it takes more than wishful thinking to make a good soldier.

So did Governors Island stand as sponsor for the "Plattsburg idea" which was to prove such an important cog in our military machinery. During the winter months that followed this summer training period an aroused citizenry carried on the lessons they had learned on the shores of Lake Champlain. Military training courses were organized at many colleges, and in New York and its suburbs older men nightly went through the manual of arms and the intricacies of close and extended order drill under the tutelage of officers and non-coms supplied by Fort Jay.

Provision was also made for issuing commissions as Reserve officers to qualified applicants. In addition to taking a written examination, all candidates were required to demonstrate their abilities in actually commanding troops, and a long-suffering platoon of the 22d was kept constantly available at the island upon which the embryonic second lieutenants could try out their ideas of infantry tactics.

Some failed their tests, many passed, but all contributed their bit, so that when the fateful, April of 1917 came to the United States it found the little island at New York's nose militantly enlarging the niche it had so long and so honorably occupied in the nation's service.