

THE NAVY'S DUMMY DRILL GUN

By Walter L. Beasley.

The recent brilliant and surprising scores made by the ships at target practice at Magdalena Bay shows a marked advance over previous years, and demonstrates that the men behind the guns have been trained up to the highest point of efficiency in the various operations connected with firing the batteries, such as quick handling of shells, ammunition, pointing and sighting, and other matters entering into the performance of successful naval gunnery. As recently announced by the Navy Department, the battleship Maryland of the Pacific Squadron carries off the honors, winning the trophy by the fine score of 76,470; the cruiser trophy goes to the Albany, having a score of 76,924, while the gunboat trophy was won by the Wilmington, whose record was 67,448.

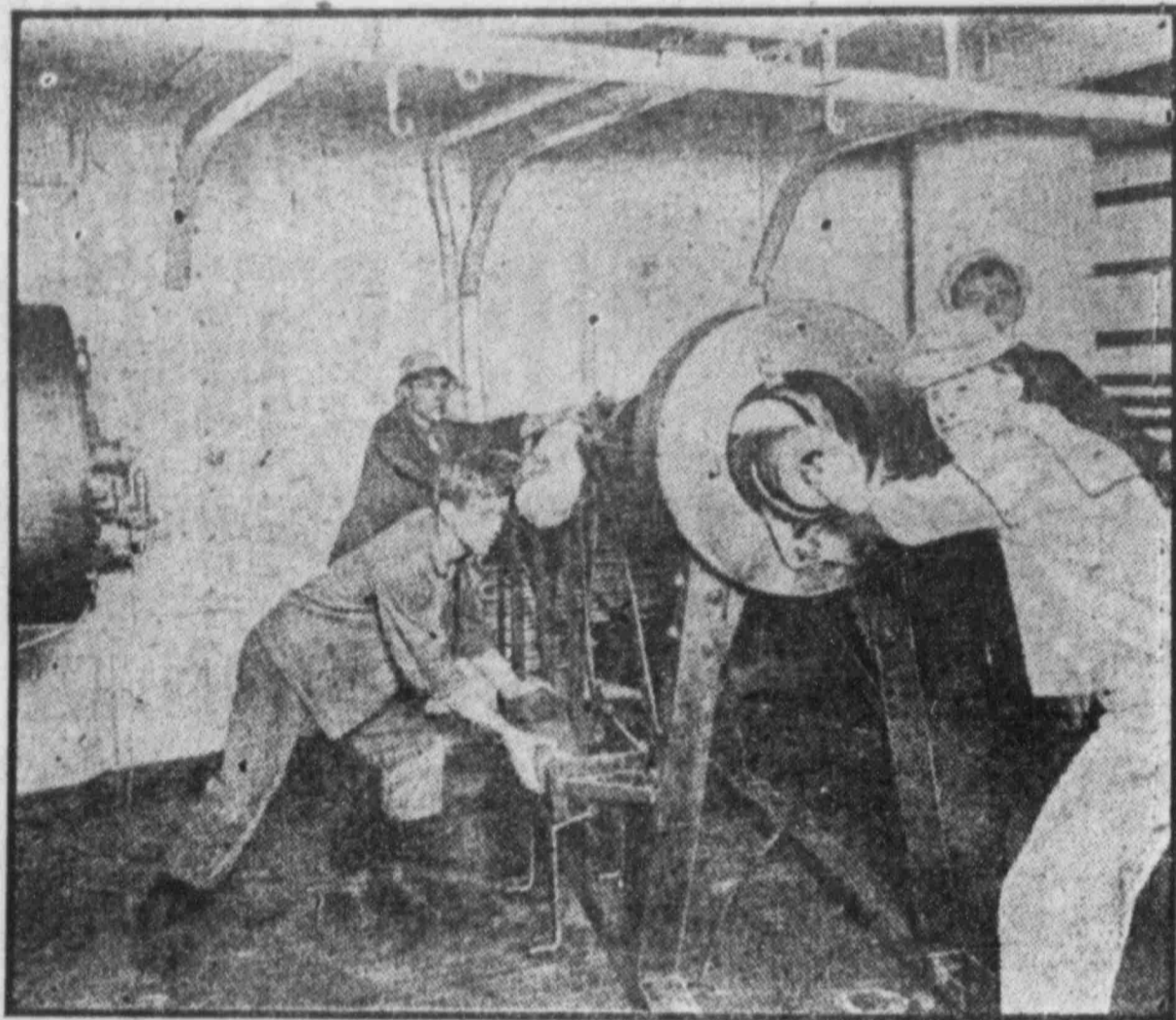
As the successful achievements of these creditable and record-breaking performances are due almost entirely to a particular method of training, it will be of timely interest to picture and describe the dummy drill gun. By the use of this device the men become experts in lifting and loading the heavy shells, and develop into human automatic machines, handling the weighty projectiles and shoving

and an additional shell shoved in. A marked economic improvement in the saving of the life of guns is thus obtained. The breechblock of these costly weapons would soon be worn by the constant slamming and the denting of quickly-thrown shells.

The new device is manufactured entirely in the Brooklyn Navy Yard, N. Y., in the ordnance machine shop. It is made mostly of steel; although there are a few parts of brass and cast iron, the supporting framework and return chute are entirely of steel. The one shown in the accompanying illustration is the latest seven-inch model, and is on board the battleship New Hampshire. It is seven feet four inches long, four feet four inches high, and weighs about 1800 pounds, costing the Government \$375 to manufacture.

Before reaching the target ground, the gun crews are kept at systematic and continuous drills with the dummy loading machine, consequently the men have acquired the top-notch in speed, coupled with a mathematical precision in the handling of the projectiles, powder charges, etc. When the vessel reaches the range, and as, at the speed assigned, a very short time interval is allowed for the run, it is important to begin firing at once with the rapidity consistent with "getting on" the target. The size of the target varies according to calibre

The 7-Inch Dummy Drill Gun of the Battleship New Hampshire.



Our high-speed target records are due to practice with the dummy.

them into the breech with great rapidity and skill. The main object of the "dummy loader" is to give the shell men an opportunity to acquire speed and proficiency in the handling of the shells without wearing out the breechblocks of the guns. Of late much attention is being paid by all the ships in the navy to these drills, for in actual service much depends upon the promptness and accuracy of the shell man. Should he "muff" a shell at the critical moment, or let it roll away from him, should he drop it—in short, should he fail to send it home safe and true when the breechblock of the big gun is swung open for him—the consequences might be serious.

The "dummy loader" is the latest invention of the Ordnance Department, and is a facsimile of the breech and powder chamber of a big gun up to the point where the rifling begins. Loading it requires the identical motions that are employed in the loading and firing of the real weapon. One man opens and closes the breech; the shell man grasps the projectile and quickly rams it inside, followed by the dummy charge of powder in a bag; the shell comes down the return chute on the left side of the apparatus; the "take-off" man catches the shell as it falls out at the end, and shoves it again to the loader at the front. The dummy powder charge is handled in the same way, and the whole makes a continuous operation for the loader. By the time he has put in the last shell and the breech is closed and locked, it is ready to be swung open again by the plug man,

and practice, but the target screens for the great guns are about twenty-one feet in length and seventeen feet in width and are distant from the range about 1600 yards. The Navy Department provides four trophies for excellence in gunnery—one each for battleships, cruisers, gunboats and torpedo craft. In addition, money rewards are distributed according to gun rank or rating among the successful crews.—Scientific American.

Cancer in Belgium.

Consul H. Albert Johnson, at Liege, reports that the new organizations for combating cancer in Belgium held a meeting at Brussels recently and outlined a comprehensive plan for its future activity. The association will affiliate with the international association for the systematic study of cancerous diseases. One of its first tasks will be to acquire and systematize all knowledge of the disease. It will endeavor to give to the medical profession the results of its research, in order that the disease may be combated with better results. It was also proposed to establish one or more institutions in Belgium to be devoted especially to the study of cancerous diseases.—Consular Report.

Geisha Dances For America.

A contract, it is reported, has been concluded between an American company and a geisha association at Kobe for the run of a geisha dance in America. The troupe, consisting of twenty geishas, will perform for four weeks.—Shanghai Times.

SAN MATEO.

LOCATION, ATTRACTIONS, ADVANTAGES.

Information for the Visitor or Home-seeker.

Location.

San Mateo, Putnam County, is situated on the east bank of the St. Johns River, and 90 feet above it. The highest point in Florida, east of the St. Johns river, which is one-half mile wide at this point.

Five miles from Palatka, our county seat, (city of 4,000), 23 miles from St. Augustine and about 75 miles from Jacksonville.

The terminus of a branch of the Florida East Coast Railway. The depot being three-quarters of a mile from the river wharf.

Advantages and Attractions.

San Mateo has good shelled roads and miles of hard sidewalks. Beautiful wateroaks line both sides of streets, and meet overhead in many places.

Two churches, public and private schools, telegraph, telephone, express, money order postoffice, three mails daily, meat market, two general stores, who take orders and deliver goods at your door, weekly paper.

The place is incorporated, but no town taxes have been collected for over ten years; the many public improvements are made by the push and generosity of the citizens and pulling together. The state and county taxes are about 20 mills on about one-third valuation.

Good hunting and fishing, deer, turkey, ducks and quail, black bass and other Florida fresh water fish.

Good boarding house, Byrlyn Place, open winters; rates eight to ten dollars per week; \$2.00 day.

Six thousand people went through the San Mateo Fruit Company's grove here last season.

One of the best advantages San Mateo enjoys is transportation; being on both river and rail is an advantage that few Florida points enjoy. The past season, for instance, railroads and terminals at Jacksonville were more than congested and fruit shipped from points down the central part of the state was, in some cases, three weeks getting to Jacksonville, en route to northern markets, and did not bring enough to pay freight, while San Mateo shippers, at same time, would ship from here one day and have fruit go out of Jacksonville on the Clyde ship the next. This little matter this season alone was worth thousands of dollars to the San Mateo growers and the homeseeker will do well to bear in mind transportation and cheap rates that come with competition, in selecting a Florida location.

The population is about 350, who came mostly from the northern states. As a class they are men of means, progressive and sociable. Have a better class of homes than can be found in any place in the south of its size. The buildings kept painted and grounds in good order.

Healthfulness.

On account of its high altitude, there is no healthier spot in Florida for all the year round or for the winter visitors. For those who come to Florida on account of health, many find this higher altitude, dry and balmy air is better than the lower, more harsh air found in salt water sections.

Business.

The principle business is orange growing. Some 400 acres in groves are here, and as this proves profitable, there is not much attention paid other crops, although there are some vegetables grown for shipment and

cattle and hogs seem to be profitable.

As an instance for profit in a good orange grove, Mr. B. F. Dotney, from less than seven acres last season, shipped \$6,200 worth of fruit.

Soil.

The soil varies a great deal from high pine to low and high hammock, all within a mile, so that lands for any purpose or crops can be secured.

San Mateo can be reached from Jacksonville by Florida East Coast railway or Beach and Miller line steamers (see time tables elsewhere in this paper). The Clyde's St. Johns river steamers arrive here about 10 p. m. so do not advise this route. Fare B. & M. line \$1.25; railroad \$2 from Jacksonville.

Launch Rainbow leaves Palatka every afternoon at 1:30. Lucas line steamers 2:30 p. m., every day but Sunday.

B. & M. line from Palatka 3 p. m. Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, and three trains daily on F. E. C. railway. Fare from Palatka 25 cents any route. tt

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