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## Training the Troopers: Part 1, Before the Academy, 1919-1949

by  
**Merle T. Cole and Donald R. Davis**

The members of the State Police are typical ex-servicemen of an excellent sort. They are not thugs or gunmen. Such faults as they have are due to their youth and inexperience and to the fact that they have carried over from the army a too military and super-legal conception of police duty. . . .  
—Arthur Warner, 1921<sup>1</sup>

The approaching centenary of the creation of the West Virginia State Police (WVSP) affords an occasion to examine several aspects of its subsequent development. This is the first of two articles addressing state trooper training. A companion article on the WVSP Academy and Professional Development Center is being prepared by retired First Lieutenant Curtis E. Tilley, the academy's former deputy director of instruction.

Following a rancorous political struggle, the legislature passed the Department of Public Safety (DPS) creative act, and Governor John J. Cornwell signed the measure into law on 31 March 1919. The act authorized a field force of two companies, each to be comprised of a captain, a lieutenant, a first sergeant, four sergeants, four corporals, and a maximum of fifty-five privates. The entire field force thus totaled only 132 officers and men at full strength. The DPS headquarters staff was similarly

lean—a superintendent, a deputy superintendent, a bookkeeper and a stenographer.<sup>2</sup>

The governor appointed Jackson Arnold of Weston as first superintendent on 20 June 1919. Arnold had been a lieutenant colonel in the West Virginia National Guard (WVNG) before World War I, served in France and been elected state president of the newly formed American Legion. On 1 July 1919 Arnold opened the new agency's headquarters in the Charleston armory. He faced a daunting array of administrative and logistical obstacles, not least of which was recruiting and training the force.<sup>3</sup>

Thousands of applications had to be screened to identify men having the desired qualities. As a result, the "membership for the first three months of the organization was practically nil." The first enlistee, Samuel Taylor of East Lynn, Wayne County, reported for duty at the armory on 24 July.<sup>4</sup> Superintendent Arnold restricted appointments to the honorably discharged veterans who formed the natural DPS recruitment pool. He realized that the men would have to be deployed immediately, with little or no time for formal training beforehand. Instruction and discipline received in U.S. military service would serve to bridge the gap and provide officers a degree of self-reliance and judgment.<sup>5</sup>

In his first formal report on DPS operations at the end of 1920, Arnold observed, "Serious work for the Department began almost at once, due to the steel strike and the threatened march of workers from Steubenville, Ohio, to Weirton, West Virginia, followed in rapid succession by the rioting at

Benwood; the threatened march from Cabin Creek into Logan county; the strike at Willis Branch, Raleigh county; the Matewan shooting and the ensuing strike in Mingo county; and the strike in Monongalia and Preston counties.”<sup>6</sup>



Police mounts being trained to gunfire and to provide cover for their trooper



All images in this article are courtesy of the West Virginia State Police Academy Archives, Institute.

The men selected to meet these challenges “have had to be trained practically from the ground up, and while they have floundered a bit at times, they have ever given evidence of a desire to do their work thoroughly. The members are selected on a four months’ probationary period, and if found unworthy or seemingly unsuited for the work there has been no hesitancy in giving them their immediate release.”<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately, Arnold provided no information on training locales, duration or subject matter, and no DPS expenditures were identifiably attributable to training.

The high standard of selection is evident in the fact that “over three hundred men were discharged for a variety of reasons during the period 1919-1921, and from July 1921 through June 1922, an additional one hundred forty-one men were discharged.”<sup>8</sup> After providing nearly a full-page tabulation of various DPS activities (resulting in 3,549 arrests), Arnold noted that the work had been accomplished “under the handicap of the Department never being over half-strength, due to the low wages paid, and the further handicap of having on an average one-third of its men in Mingo county for a period of five months.”<sup>9</sup>

While selection standards and resultant turnover are well documented, details about training in those

early days are vague, contradictory or simply absent. No official records remain in either WVSP headquarters or the West Virginia State Archives. The topic is addressed only lightly (if at all) in DPS annual/biennial reports and contemporary newspaper articles. Notable among the latter were stories in the *Hampshire Review* (3 September 1919) and the *Charleston Gazette* (28 August 1919) summarizing organization of the two DPS companies and appointment of their commanding officers. The *Review* stated:

The men will be given their preliminary training at Pickens, Randolph County, where arrangements have been made for their quarters and subsistence. Already enough men have been accepted in the Department to fill one company. They have been ordered to Pickens where their camp was opened this week.

.....  
The men will be given a short course of instruction at Pickens and completely outfitted, after which they will be given assignments in different parts of the state.

Unfortunately, neither article provides details on either course content or length.<sup>10</sup> The 1919 date conflicts with a photograph in the WVSP archives labeled “1923 First State Police school [sic].”

On 15 April 1921 the legislature showed its confidence in DPS performance by amending the 1919 act to authorize two additional companies. All four units were to have a captain, lieutenant, first sergeant, five sergeants, eight corporals and a



The “first” police training school, 1923 (presented to WVSP Academy by J. R. Brockus family)

maximum of fifty-five privates—for a total strength of 71 officers and men each.<sup>11</sup> In November 1921 the *Beckley Raleigh Register* reported, “A school for recruits will be conducted in Kanawha City” to immediately fill up all four companies. Two years

later, the *Charleston Daily Mail* reported that a “trooper school” had been conducted at Kanawha City “shortly after the department was organized.” That school was conducted by Lieutenant Mack B. Lilly and Sergeant (later Lieutenant) Jack Kings.<sup>12</sup>

At the end of fiscal year 1921, DPS on-board strength stood at 113 (4 officers, 109 enlisted men). One year later, with the additional companies authorized, it had grown to 206 (8 officers, 198 enlisted men). But turnover continued at a high rate. During fiscal year 1922, 141 men were discharged “mostly because of lack of fitness for police work.” The turnover in part reflected “Great strides toward obtaining men of the ideal police type . . . during the fiscal year.” Without specifying what training (if any) had been provided Arnold stated, “There has been inculcated in the present personnel a real rudimentary knowledge of police work in its finer phases.”<sup>13</sup>

In his 1920 report on DPS operations, Superintendent Arnold had recommended that “in the absence of a National Guard [not yet reorganized after the World War I demobilization] the Department be granted the use and benefit of the state-owned target range at Caddell, in Preston County. This property is ideally suited for a training camp, for pasturing horses and for the growing of forage for horses.” The emphasis on horses arose from their use in patrolling the state’s rugged terrain and the virtual lack of paved roads. Horses were essential to patrol operations throughout the 1920s. In fact \$5 of

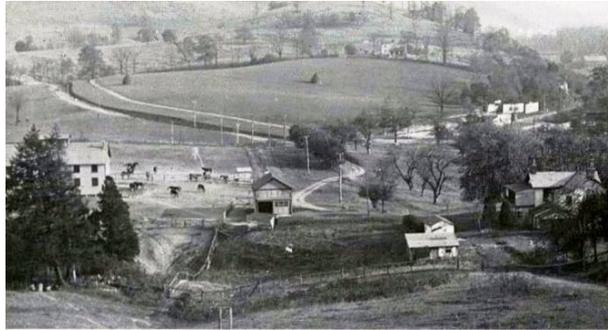
the DPS Creative Act stipulated that appointees be able to ride horseback. As Arnold observed in 1922, “The policing of rural communities has become a simple problem since the acquisition of . . . horses.”

Although his bid to acquire Caddell was unsuccessful, an equally agreeable facility came into DPS hands the next year.<sup>14</sup>

Until practically the end of 1922, the bulk of the field force was engaged in suppressing violence resulting from unionization efforts in the smokeless coal fields in the southern counties. There Company B, commanded from Williamson by the non-nonsense Captain James R. Brockus, enforced the governor’s martial law proclamation in Mingo County. The company also helped stem the “Red Neck” invasion of Logan County which culminated in the Battle of Blair Mountain.<sup>15</sup>

The state’s northern counties were being patrolled by Company A, commanded by Captain Thomas W. Norton. In conjunction with the 1921 reorganization, Norton was reassigned to command the newly activated Company C in Beckley, and was replaced by Captain Walter W. White. Company D, headquartered at Clothier in Boone County, was commanded by Captain Valkey W. Midkiff.<sup>16</sup>

Two *Charleston Daily Mail* articles painted a revealing picture of the first DPS training facility. On 11 June 1922, the newspaper reported that the DPS had entered into an indefinite lease on the Jefferson Bartlett farm at Haywood Junction, “near Clarksburg on the road to Fairmont,” and had



Company A headquarters at Haywood Junction, viewed from a hill in the rear



Company A mess and bunk quarters; note rails of traction line in foreground



Horse barn with well-groomed mounts grazing out front

relocated Company A headquarters there from Elkins. The farm featured 100 acres with three



Unarmed combat (jiu-jitsu) training by Haywood Junction instructors

dwelling which could accommodate thirty people. The article noted, “Though company [*sic*] A . . . has 66 officers and men, there will seldom be more than 10 men at headquarters at any one time, as detachments are scattered across the northern part of the state.” Also, “troopers are temporarily boarding at restaurants, but it is planned to begin soon to cook all meals at the camp. The land is to be cultivated and it is expected that the company will soon be self-supporting.” In addition, “A modern stable with accommodations for 24 horses has been built in addition to the old Bartlett stable, which had accommodations for 14 horses.” And, most relevant to this study, “The headquarters farm is a training station for troopers, who are required to study a course in civil government while stationed there. They also have plenty of opportunity for target practice.”<sup>17</sup>



Rifle marksmanship training; note the Thompson submachine gun leaning against the spotter’s table

The newspaper’s 23 July 1922 article provided greater detail about the establishment “of a modern barracks and a first class police school . . . .”

The new police camp is on the traction line between Clarksburg and Fairmont, is only a short distance from the Baltimore and Ohio railroad, and on an improved highway. All these facilities make it possible for Captain White’s men to get

anywhere in their jurisdiction in the shortest possible time either by electric or steam roads, or by automobile.

The camp comprises 87 acres of land which was equipped with all the up-to-date outbuildings necessary to a high class farm. The eight-room two story farmhouse has been transformed into the headquarters offices. The house has electric lights, and prompt telephone service, being on the trunk line between the two cities.

The farm is also at the junction of two streams, providing ample water and pasture for the 42 horses . . . located there. The 42 animals are trained for police duty. . . The horses are quartered in a large barn, which has been further enlarged to provide for them. Colonel Jackson Arnold announced recently that all the horses for the West Virginia state police will be sent to company [*sic*] A for training in police duties. Picked riders from the force throughout the state will be located there to ‘break’ the new ones.

The headquarters building is located about 150 feet back from the road at the edge of a rolling spacious lawn, studded with fruit trees and shade trees. Everything is kept spick and span, and already the place looks like a military academy. There are three frame buildings there that are to be used as barracks, and in the winter will house a police school. Officers of the state police, as well as men skilled in criminal research from outside the state, and professors from the University of West Virginia will be asked to address the men on police work. Colonel Arnold stated that the school will not be for state police alone, but police departments of every municipality in the state will be invited to send policemen there for further schooling.<sup>18</sup>



Recruits practicing unarmed combat skills

It is noteworthy that, even at this early stage of the agency’s existence, it saw the value of providing quality training to law enforcement officers other than its own. This would be a recurrent theme and

push the WVSP to national leadership in this area of training in the future.

To implement his training agenda the superintendent turned to his most experienced subordinate, Captain Brockus. This made Brockus *de facto* the first state police training director. A native of Tennessee, Brockus had enlisted in the infantry in 1893. He saw service in Montana, Alaska, the Philippine Islands, China (Boxer Rebellion), Texas, and Arizona. While serving on the Mexican border he was commissioned second lieutenant in July 1917. He completed officer’s training school, and was subsequently promoted captain and major. He fought in France and, following the Armistice was transferred to the 128th Military Police Battalion before returning to the United States and being discharged in late July 1919. Not content with civilian life, he quickly reenlisted (as a first sergeant) and served until retiring on 13 May 1920. After a brief visit to his old home in Tennessee, Brockus came to Charleston and enlisted in the DPS on 29 August 1920. He was appointed lieutenant then promoted to captain of Company B at Williamson, where he quickly won a reputation as the foremost state police field commander during the “mine wars.”<sup>19</sup>



Wildlife recognition lecture; troopers were also designated forest patrolmen, game wardens and deputy prohibition officers

The superintendent articulated his expectations and personal support in a letter to Brockus dated 23 July 1923. The letter remains significant because it discusses values which underpin WVSP training emphases to this day.

Confirming our several talks on the question of establishing a school for members of the department, specifically for men newly joining,—I am more anxious to get same started as soon as possible than any other one matter connected with

the department, and that means that you will have to go up there [Haywood Junction] to at least see that it gets started off on the right foot.

As I see the matter it is most essential that new men be first impressed with the necessity of using judgement [*sic*] in making arrests, courtesy in the treatment of citizens—especially women, and the maintaining of proper discipline in the organization. In all these points you are well qualified to instruct.

Personally, I have ever regarded the upper end of the state as the most desirable as a station and I am sure the people up there will be glad to have you, especially judging [*sic*] from the large number who have expressed to me a desire to meet you.

Another point, if there are any men now with you that you desire to take with you I will gladly transfer them. And while on this question I believe a pretty general shifting of men would be a good thing for the organization.

I am negotiating for an experienced retired detective of one of our larger cities to come to instruct in the policemen’s [*sic*] art and the superintendents of state police of other states have offered the services of some of their trained men, as have also several prominent attorneys of Clarksburg and Fairmont offered their services as lecturers on criminal law, ect. [*sic*]<sup>20</sup>

Superintendent Arnold’s 1924 report was the first to provide details of training expenditures. He stated the department had spent \$19,621 training members “in police work” during the biennium. Ironically, this included \$2,521 in conducting a



Horsemanship skills were soon to be replaced by the internal combustion engine



motorcycle school deemed necessary because “demands for road patrol work are increasing almost daily” due to the opening of new roads, and “of increasing lawlessness noted on our fine new highways.” This was a portent of the rapid switch from horseflesh—a principal rationale for establishing a DPS camp—to the internal combustion engine for transportation.<sup>21</sup>

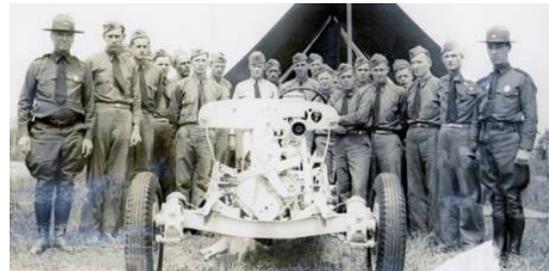
Arnold retired at the end of 1924 and was succeeded by Robert E. O’Connor, another World War I veteran. During 1927 all department members were given a week’s course of study and training at Haywood Junction. In 1928 a two-month recruit school was held at the WVNG camp near Point Pleasant. The training included instruction in military discipline, crime classification, investigation, arrest law, court procedure, firearms, and first aid. Instructors (other than first aid) were experienced DPS members “who had attended police schools in other states.” Attendees received subsistence only (no pay) so that the cost per man/day was only \$1.05. It is noteworthy that by 1928 only 11 of 157 members remained from the original 1919 recruits.<sup>22</sup>



Capt. James R. Brockus and Capt. Harvey N. Rexroad—officers-in-charge of the 1935 recruit training camp at Camp Conley

The next biennium produced a messy public scandal involving improprieties by Harry L. Brooks, the first department superintendent without military experience. The controversy prompted a legislative investigation, one of the issues being Brooks canceling a DPS training school. The legislative committee’s majority report insisted “the reason advanced by Chief Brooks being that the [recruiting] system was objectionable because it gave an opportunity for too many Democrats to get into the [police] service.” A minority report urged Brooks’s claim that the reason was “lack of funds.” The

superintendent also opined that a detailed State Police Manual prepared by the attorney general and issued to each trooper, coupled with a system of pairing newly appointed troopers with experienced mentors, provided adequate on-the-job training. Some senior DPS officers disagreed with that claim, even though “a fair number” of new appointees were veterans whose military experience and discipline would serve them well. Eventually charges were filed against Brooks and he resigned, to be replaced by Robert L. Osborn, a veteran of both the Spanish-American War and World War I.<sup>23</sup>



Vehicle safety inspection instruction; Capt. Brockus stands at left and unidentified instructor at right

The onset of the Great Depression had an immediate impact on the DPS. Unstable appropriations caused layoffs of experienced troopers. Those officers were rehired to fill authorized slots as they were vacated, so it was not necessary to convene a recruit training school in 1931-1932. During the next biennium, new enlistees were required to complete a two-week school of instruction at headquarters in Charleston before being assigned to a company. Their company commander was then responsible for overseeing each new trooper’s on-the-job training.<sup>24</sup>

Presley D. Shingleton, another Army veteran of France, followed Osborn as superintendent in March 1933. He immediately faced a major DPS restructuring necessitated by Depression-related budget cuts. Effective 1 July 1933, personnel and equipment of Companies C and D were transferred to Companies A (Haywood Junction) and B (Charleston). In addition, 18 men were reduced by one rank, and 17 detachment rental barracks were closed. Captain Brockus was placed in command of Company A, with both of the surplus company commanders assigned under him as lieutenants.

Captain Hobart A. Brown moved from Haywood Junction to take command of Company B. As additional funding became available the DPS returned to its statutory four-company structure. Company C was reactivated at Elkins on 1 August 1935, and finally Company D at Beckley on 1 March 1936.<sup>25</sup>

To provide new recruits for the reactivating companies, Superintendent Shingleton decided to hold a training camp, once more using the WVNG facility near Point Pleasant, now designated Camp Conley. Captain Brockus was again tapped to command with Captain Harvey N. Rexroad, another outstanding “old soldier,” as second-in-command. Rexroad, a native of Harrisville in Ritchie County, had served over sixteen years in the infantry and cavalry in the Philippines, Hawaii and on the Mexican border, and as a captain in France. He joined the DPS in October 1919 and was promoted to sergeant the following month. In June 1920 he was promoted first sergeant, and in August 1921 became the first man commissioned as a lieutenant after entering as a private. He left the agency in 1921 and engaged in the cattle business but returned in October 1923, reenlisting as a private. He won rapid re-promotion—to lieutenant in November 1924 and to captain as commanding officer of Company B in November 1933.<sup>26</sup>



A mass formation of recruits for review by Governor Herman G. Kump on 10 May 1935

In preparation, Brockus attended a police school at Ohio State University in March, then participated with other senior DPS officials in candidate interview boards. Following an extended winnowing out process—there were over 5,000 applications for the announced 80 recruit slots—300 men were selected. Only half passed the written and physical examinations and reported to Camp Conley on 1 May 1935. During that month, fifty more were dropped due to unfavorable background investigation findings. The successful candidates were not paid but did receive subsistence, lodging and a khaki

uniform. While undergoing two months of intensive training, they lived in tents and ate in mess halls run by former army cooks. The first month consisted of military drill and physical conditioning. In the second, candidates were taught the fundamentals of police work, first aid, West Virginia history and geography, motorcycle riding, jiu-jitsu and revolver shooting. There were weekly written exams. Late in July the men were ranked in order of proficiency and the top 75 assigned to field companies. The others were placed on a list from which the DPS would select replacements rather than hiring new recruits. A year later, Shingleton could report that only six of the graduates were unplaced.<sup>27</sup>



In-service training at departmental headquarters circa 1935-1936; Capt. Rexroad sits between two suited gentlemen along wall at left

In-service training was not neglected during this period. Two schools were held at the headquarters of Companies A and B during 21 January-16 February 1935. One-third of each company trained each week, and a comprehensive examination was administered at the end of each week. In 1936, just before Company D was reactivated, the entire in-service school was held at departmental headquarters with about 15 men from each of the three existing companies reporting weekly for 13 consecutive weeks. In-service training was held in winter months when road patrol work was lightest. The headquarters training featured use of reference materials and handouts, and emphasized motor accident prevention. The highlight was a moot crime investigation using a dummy body.<sup>28</sup>

The 1938 DPS biennial report summarized that an applicant would be enrolled in the training school for at least 30 days, “depending upon how rapidly he responds.” Once the school commander was satisfied that a recruit was “ready for field service,”

the trainee would be uniformed, equipped and assigned to a company. There the company commander teamed them with experienced officers “with whom they stay at all times while on active duty. Assignment to regular police duty comes only after the company commander is satisfied that the recruit is capable.”<sup>29</sup>



In-service training at Jackson's Mill in 1937



Training municipal police or prison guards in proper firing stance for the Thompson submachine gun

The approach of another world war necessitated a wide range of training activity. On 30 June 1940, DPS authorized strength was 220 but only 138 slots were filled. Nonetheless, enlistment was restricted to married men with at least two dependents,

as they would be most likely to be deferred from the military draft. Two recruit schools were convened—one in September-October 1940 which graduated 8 cadets, and the second during May-June 1942. The latter was conducted at the former Civilian Conservation Corps Camp Kanawha located some ten miles from Charleston, with Captain-Inspector Rexroad as officer-in-charge. It lasted two months and graduated 23 cadets. A retraining school for all members was held during January-February 1941 at Jackson's Mill in Lewis County.

After America entered World War II, gunnery schools were conducted across the state, with emphasis on the .30-caliber machine gun and the .45-caliber Thompson submachine gun. Since late 1940 more than 63 percent of the force completed specialized war training provided by such entities as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Northwestern University traffic schools and War Department civil defense schools. The DPS was

itself heavily involved in training air raid wardens, auxiliary police, defense plant guards and other civil defense workers. The military draft competed heavily for able-bodied men, so the department decided not to recruit any more new men during the war. Some 40 percent of the force was on active military duty by 30 June 1944. Two years later, 71 of the 86 men in military service had returned. The DPS could then field 181 officers versus the normal prewar strength of 225.<sup>30</sup>

The first post-war class was held in early spring of 1947. Thirty-one men were trained for twelve weeks in buildings at the South Charleston Naval Ordnance Plant, on loan from the U.S. Navy. A second class (graduating 20 men) was quartered during April-May 1948 in a state-owned building near the Capitol. Classroom instruction was given in a room adjoining the senate chamber. In-service training was also provided to six groups of troopers at Jackson's Mill.<sup>31</sup>



Graduation of the 1947 recruit training school, which had been conducted at the Naval Ordnance Plant in South Charleston; Supt. William E. Burchette (in suit) stands next to Major-Insp. Fife C. Crawford (no cover)

The 1950 biennial report announced opening of the academy as a totally new era in DPS training—“a long step forward for the state police department, and for the law enforcement profession in the State of West Virginia.”<sup>32</sup> In early 1949, 20 men had been selected from among 115 applicants for appointment. But plans encountered an unforeseen snag.

At the time the selection process was started, it had been expected that our training school near Dunbar, then under construction, would be completed in time for the new class to enter training immediately. Construction was delayed by the prolonged building strike in the Charleston area, and it was believed better to wait for such

completion rather than attempt to hold classes under the less than satisfactory conditions with respect to classrooms and living quarters. Also the department desired to try the system used by several state police departments of placing men in the field for a period of time prior to schooling. Advantages claimed for this system are that the new man will have a better attitude when he has had a chance to realize his need for classroom training, also that he learns and observes enough police procedure and duty to enable him to understand and remember instructions in the classroom.<sup>33</sup>

The new men were enlisted 1 June 1949 and immediately placed “at selected barracks throughout the state . . . under the command of the most competent non-commissioned officers in the department.” Upon completion of the new academy on 2 October 1949, classes were immediately scheduled. A comprehensive ten-week course was instructed by DPS, FBI, state liquor control board, state fire marshal, state board of aeronautics, Federal alcohol tax, automobile theft bureau and other specialist personnel. This class graduated on 20 December 1949.



Supt. William E. Burchette addresses graduating 1949 recruit class in House of Delegates chamber

Use of the new facility expanded rapidly, with the first in-service school convened there on 8 January 1950, followed immediately by classes for conservation commission and liquor control commission officers. Important for the state law enforcement community, plans were underway for a “school for municipal police officers, to be undertaken in cooperation with the various chief of police throughout the state.”<sup>34</sup>

1. Arthur Warner, “Fighting Unionism with Martial Law,” *The Nation* 113 (12 October 1921):396.

2. W. Va., Legis., *An Act Creating the Department of Public Safety* (Charleston, 1919):§3 and §5 (cited hereafter as DPS Creative Act). For a discussion of the agency’s creation and early history see Merle T. Cole, “Birth of the West Virginia State Police, 1919-1921,” *West Virginia History* 43 (Fall 1981):1-20.
3. “Weston Man to be Chief of State’s System of Police,” *Charleston Mail*, 20 June 1919:1; “New Department Opens,” *Charleston Daily Mail* (hereafter *CDM*), 1 July 1919:9. The Legion position was doubtless useful in DPS recruitment activity. Arnold had also offered the governor Legion support in his efforts to “root out bolshevism and promote one hundred percent Americanism.” “Governor is Pledged Support of Soldiers,” *CDM*, 30 June 1919:10. This aligned with §29 of the DPS Creative Act, which imposed a duty on the superintendent to “co-operate with the state superintendent of public schools and other educational agencies of the state, to secure the naturalization and Americanization of all foreign-born inhabitants.”
4. W. Va., Department of Public Safety, *Report to the Governor December 1, 1920* (Charleston, 1920):5 (hereafter, *DPS Report* by year(s)); Letter, Arnold to Taylor, 18 July 1919, WVSP Archives.
5. One of the state’s leading newspapers echoed Arnold’s faith in veterans: “They are . . . ready at a moment’s notice to go where disorders occur, or to lend a hand in case of disaster. Every man of the force is an ex-soldier or ex-sailor and knows what military discipline means; he knows how to understand and carry out an order without question.” “Worker and Employer Alike Have Faith in Mountaineer Trooper,” *CDM*, 15 August 1920, Section 2:1. Another newspaper even credited DPS performance at the Battle of Blair Mountain to the fact that ex-soldiers “found the fighting similar in character to that in the Argonne region of France.” “State Police Hold Logan County Line,” *Beckley Raleigh Register* (hereafter *RR*), 11 November 1921:2.
6. *DPS Report*, 1920, 3.
7. *DPS Report*, 1920, 3.
8. Cole, “Birth,” 18, citing *DPS Reports*, 1922, 7; and 1942, 15.
9. *DPS Report*, 1920, 4. Arnold averred that the DPS lost “many of its best and most dependable men owing to their inability to support dependent relatives on their pay. The morale of the department has been greatly affected by constantly recurring offers from outside sources of much higher pay to many of its most skilled men.” *DPS Report*, 1920, 4-5.
10. “Safety Department Organized,” *Hampshire Review* (Romney), 3 September 1919:2 (?); “Appointment Are Made in Public Safety Department,” *Charleston Gazette* (hereafter *CG*), 28 August 1919:12. As additional evidence of the confusion, Jim Comstock erroneously stated, “A State Police training school was established in

- 1927.” *West Virginia Heritage Encyclopedia*, Volume 21 (privately pub., Richwood, WV, 1976):4499.
11. W. Va., *Acts of the Legislature, Regular Session, 1921*, 244-246. The amendments (§1, §3 and §5) also provided generous annual salary increases in all ranks, ranging from 33 percent for captains and privates to 25.5 percent for sergeants. And, §7 officially gave appointment preference “wherever possible to honorably discharged soldiers, sailors and marines of the United States Army and Navy.” As late as 1926 more than 90 percent of DPS personnel were “ex-service men of the World War.” *DPS Report, 1926*, 18. However welcome the additional manpower, Arnold would have preferred a different configuration. In lieu of additional companies, he wanted each of the two existing companies increased by one additional lieutenant, three additional sergeants, four additional corporals, a cook and a farrier-blacksmith. He also wanted headquarters reinforced with a second deputy position (for a professional attorney), a sergeant major, a supply sergeant and two telephone orderlies (corporals). See *DPS Report, 1920*, 7-8.
  12. “State Police Hold Logan County Line,” *RR*, 11 November 1921:2; “Arnold Denies More Charges by Armstrong,” *CDM*, 17 August 1923:1. Evidently the bulk of the DPS was at one point based at the recently built Nitro reservation (Explosive Plant C) which had been purchased from the Federal government by the Charleston Industrial Corporation in November 1919. But the force was quickly dispersed across the state (particularly the southern coal fields), and records do not indicate whether any training was conducted at Nitro. See “Colonel Arnold Calls in the State Police,” *CDM*, 11 November 1919:10; “Capitol Gossip,” *CDM*, 29 December 1919:6; “Nitro, West Va. Ideal Factory Locations,” *CDM*, 27 February 1920:13.
  13. *DPS Report, 1922*, 7. No financial statement is provided and no disbursements are identified for training. However, quotes from “regulations of the department” indicate the existence of at least some written instructions by that time. *DPS Report, 1922*, 7.
  14. *DPS Report 1920*, 7. Caddell is now part of the Camp Dawson state military reservation. Arnold quote about horses is from *DPS Report, 1922*, 9.
  15. *DPS Reports, 1920*, 3-4, and *1922*, 4, 7. DPS involvement in the “mine wars” is addressed in Merle T. Cole, “Martial Law in West Virginia and Major Davis as ‘Emperor of Tug River’,” *West Virginia History* 43 (Winter 1982):118-144; and “‘Mere Military Color:’ The State Police and Martial Law,” *West Virginia Historical Society Quarterly* 17 (July 2003):1-13. See also “State Police Hold Logan County Line,” *RR*, 11 November 1921:2.
  16. *DPS Report, 1922*, 3.
  17. “State Police Company Moves Headquarters,” *CDM*, 11 June 1922:18.
  18. “Modern Barracks and Police School Is Planned by White,” *CDM*, 23 July 1922:2. See also F. A. Parlington, “Military Formations Taught Horses Used by State Police,” *CDM*, 29 October 1922:10.
  19. For a detailed account of Brockus’ life, see Merle T. Cole, “‘The Meanest Old Son-of-a-Bitch’—J. R. Brockus of the West Virginia State Police,” *West Virginia Historical Society Quarterly* 23 (July 2009):1-14.
  20. Arnold to Brockus, 23 July 1923. Serendipitously, a relative of Brockus delivered the letter and a set of related photos to then-Sgt. Curtis E. Tilley during a visit to the academy. First Lt. Curtis E. Tilley to Merle T. Cole, personal communication, 13 April 2012.
  21. *DPS Report, 1924*, 6-7. Preparation for motorcycle training included sending a “detachment . . . to Harley-Davidson school, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.” By 1930 the DPS was becoming heavily focused on road law enforcement and traffic safety regulation. It had acquired 55 automobiles and 62 motorcycles. As the superintendent reported, “A few horses are still maintained, but, for the most part, motor power has replaced the steed as a means of travel.” *DPS Report, 1930*, 6.
  22. *DPS Report, 1928*, 5-6, 15.
  23. W. Va., Legis., House of Delegates, *Journal of the House of Delegates of West Virginia, Regular Session, 1931* (Charleston: 1931):870, 1106; “Hostility in Logan for Brockus Told,” *CDM*, Feb 3, 1931:9; *DPS Report, 1930*, 6, 21-22.
  24. *DPS Reports, 1932*, 9 and *1934*, 15-16.
  25. Brockus had briefly (1924-1925) commanded Company C in Beckley then returned to Company B until May 1930, when he was transferred to command Company D in Parkersburg. Two weeks after the Camp Conley school ended, he learned that he would be dismissed from the force. On 19 July 1935, Shingleton announced that the captain was to retire on 1 August. Brockus died at his home in Huntington on 16 November 1966 at age 93, following prolonged illness. He is buried at Ridgelawn Memorial Park. Cole, “‘Meanest Old Son-of-a-Bitch’,” 9-11.
  26. Shingleton also served as acting adjutant general from April 1933 to March 1935. “Col. Shingleton Dies at Age of 47,” *CG*, 26 February 1942:1, 6. For Rexroad’s career, see “Promotions Made in State Police,” *CDM*, 26 October 1924:10; “West Va. State Police Will Hail 22 Years,” *CG*, 7 September 1941:22; “State Police Capt. Rexroad Retires on 25 Years Service,” *CG*, 6 October 1946:1, 16; “Retired State Police Officer Lauded for Personal Integrity,” *CDM*, 12 January 1947:3; “Ray Succeeds Rexroad as Chief of City Police,” *CG*, 14 June 1949:1, 10. In October 1935, shortly after training at Camp Conley wrapped up, he was appointed acting captain-inspector (*de facto* deputy superintendent), and was made permanent in that post in February 1937. Later that year he served as acting superintendent between Shingleton’s resignation and the appointment of Charles

C. Tallman. Rexroad retired in October 1946, being “generally credited with doing more than any other one man to build up the force to its present high place of efficiency and respectability.” He then served as Charleston police chief from 1947 to 1949.

27. *DPS Report, 1936*, 16-18. “Hail Levels Tents of ‘Rookie’ Cops,” *CG*, 10 May 1935:1, 14; “State Police Recruits get Stiff Workouts Daily with Military Training Stressed,” *RR*, 20 June 1935:5; “Third Police Company, Plan,” *CG*, 23 June 1935:9. “Trooper Recruits Will Go to Camp,” *Bluefield Daily Telegraph*, 21 April 1935:1, reported that 155 men had been selected, of whom “49 have had college training, 93 high school and seven completed a grade school education.” One candidate, a Marine Corps veteran, “reported to headquarters, where a huge captain who appeared not to like anyone, and especially me, was seated behind a desk. The nameplate said Captain Brockus. I guessed him to be about 50 years of age. When I gave him my name, he checked a list and told me to report to the large assembly tent where I would be told about the school. ‘Aye, aye, sir,’ I said in my best Marine Corps manner, and he exploded, ‘This is no damned Navy. We operate and talk like the Army and don’t you forget it.’ I was so scared I trembled in my shoes but managed to reply, ‘Yes, sir.’ He glared at me and said, ‘That’s more like it. You might have sense enough to last a couple of days.’ He then waved his hand in dismissal.” Brockus later addressed the assembled recruits, “indicating that he felt we should feel honored that the great state of West Virginia had seen fit to invite us to attend this school. From his demeanor, I gathered we should genuflect every time ‘West Virginia’ or ‘state police’ was mentioned.” C. C. Stewart, “A Boy’s Dream,” *Goldenseal* 25 (Spring, 1999):39-41.
28. *DPS Report, 1936*, 18-19.
29. *DPS Report, 1938*, 13.
30. *DPS Reports, 1942*, 25, 43-48, *1944*, 7-8, and *1946*, 13. Location of the 1940 school was not specified. The former C.C.C. camp (S-76) was located in Kanawha State Forest from 1933 through June 1942. Milton Harr, *The C.C.C. Camps in West Virginia, 1933-1942* (Charleston, 1992):28.
31. *DPS Report, 1948*, 14.
32. *DPS Report, 1950*, 20.
33. *DPS Report, 1950*, 16-17.
34. *DPS Report, 1950*, 17-20.

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### Submissions

The West Virginia Historical Society newsletter welcomes manuscript submissions for publication consideration that deal with state or local history-related topics. Submissions, which should be of a length suitable for publication in the newsletter and include footnote/endnote citations of referenced materials, should be sent to the newsletter editor, West Virginia Historical Society, P.O. Box 5220, Charleston, WV 25361.

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