

**THREE ROADS TO A
COMMISSION IN THE
UNITED STATES ARMY**

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Three Roads to a Commission in the United States Army by W. P. Burnham

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W. P. BURNHAM

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BY

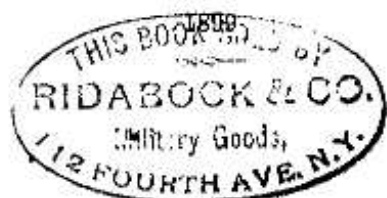
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P R E F A C E .

THE idea of preparing this handbook suggested itself to me shortly after assuming the duties of Professor of Military Science and Tactics at St. John's Military School, Manlius, New York.

I was surprised to find so much interest manifested in the army, and yet more surprised to find how little was known of its real workings. The most remarkable impressions were entertained regarding the character, hardships, and privations of the rank and file of the army. However, this was not new, for experience had proved to me that, as a rule, the average American believes the army is the receptacle of drunkards and loafers, and that the riffraff of the country is to be found in its ranks. Little seemed to be known as to the manner of entering the Military Academy, the nature of the preliminary examinations, and the course

pursued after entrance. The fact that a commission could easily be obtained from the ranks of the army was beyond comprehension, many not knowing that such a thing was possible in time of peace.

Believing that similar ignorance on this subject was general throughout the country, I decided, during my spare moments, to endeavor to lift the veil that obscures and darkens the view of the best fed, best clothed, best paid, and best standing army in the world.

During the years 1891 and 1892 the character and extent of the examinations for obtaining a commission from the ranks of the army and from civil life were considerably changed. While the *extent* and *character* of the preliminary examination for entrance to the National Academy are the same as heretofore, the *place* and *manner* of conducting it were changed materially in 1892.

The rules governing the various examinations are taken from the official records of the War Department, which are based on acts of Congress; and these regulations are so stated that the reader will easily distinguish what is regularly prescribed from such original remarks and explanations as it has been considered pertinent to make.

PREFACE.

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I am indebted to Lieut. J. M. Carson, Jr., Fifth Cavalry, adjutant of the Military Academy, for the very latest information regarding the requirements for entrance and the course of study pursued at that institution. I am grateful also to a number of other officers who kindly assisted me in obtaining the valuable lists of questions propounded at the different examinations.

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