

## The Forties

# Golf Takes a Back Seat During “The War Years”

*December 7, 1941—“a day that will live in infamy.” The Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor convinced President Roosevelt to thrust the United States of America into the global conflict commonly known as World War II. A nation’s focus united on the war front as the country geared itself to take on the responsibility of supporting the Allied war effort in two separate hemispheres of the globe. As rationing, recycling, massive armament production, drafts, air raid drills and blackouts became routine, life as Americans had previously known it changed. This new war created a great degree of uncertainty, fear and anxiety, with emotion gripping the world. This was the big one, part two.*



*On December 7, 1941, the Japanese launched a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor.*

Golf course development naturally became a very low priority. Many existing golf courses were under consideration for use for agricultural purposes. The venerable Augusta National was used to graze cattle and raise turkeys. The armed forces used some courses as training sites or, as in the United Kingdom, as air strips. No new courses were built in the Chicago area.

Golf course maintenance also saw some adaptations. One example came in 1945 in Leavenworth, Kansas. The 18-hole golf course at Fort Ord was in trouble. Col. W. J. Baird saved the golf course, which had been struggling financially and confronting a manpower shortage. The maintenance equipment had broken down and a lack of funds prevented the club from doing the repairs. Baird, who was then a member of the Greenkeeping Superintendents Association (now known



A scrap-rubber drive. Everything from tires to boots was donated to keep the war rolling.

as the GCSAA), introduced the concept of grazing sheep on the golf course to do the mowing. The club purchased 100 sheep and turned them loose. The plan worked, and Col. Baird not only saved the golf course, but also saved the club \$1,500 because the sheep were less expensive to maintain than the mowers were.

Manpower shortages were common. Many clubs let bunkers grow in or filled in the bunkers to reduce maintenance. Circumstances forced some courses to fill maintenance positions previously

occupied by men with women and children. Everyone is familiar with "Rosie the Riveter," the nickname for the women who stepped forward to work in the factories and build the U.S. war machines. The golf course maintenance business was no different; as usual, people improvised as necessary.

Not everything was bleak, however. We were on the march to Berlin and an island-to-island air/sea voyage to Tokyo. Morale was high and the country effectively pulled together. The  
*(continued on page 24)*

# OLD DUTCH SAND COMPANY

A Division of Jack Gray Transport Inc.

- VARIOUS BUNKER SANDS
- CART & ROAD MATERIALS
- COBBLES AND RIP RAP
- ALL GOLF COURSE AGGREGATES

Call Richard E. Mika

(773) 374-2303  
(847) 228-9607  
(219) 938-7020

You take care of the course...

...we'll take care of the mosquitoes.

**That's what we do. That's all we do.**  
 Clarke's integrated pest management approach keeps nuisance mosquitoes off your course, and happy golfers coming back.  
 Call us today.

e-mail: [georgebalis@clarkemosquito.com](mailto:georgebalis@clarkemosquito.com)  
**1 800 942 2555**  
 website: [www.clarkemosquito.com](http://www.clarkemosquito.com)

"Serving communities for over 50 years."

**Clarke Environmental Mosquito Management, Inc.**  
 159 Garden Avenue • Roselle, IL 60172

Americans were getting it done on both fronts, and the Axis powers were soon to regret awakening the industrial/agricultural might of the United States.

One of golf's great ambassadors was making his rounds on the U.S.O. tour. Bob Hope was frequently seen entertaining the troops, usually with a golf club in his hands. He would return to the States after the war and help his buddy Bing Crosby promote the "great clam bake" on the Monterey peninsula. Eventually he would form the Bob Hope Open, which is still a popular PGA Tour stop to this day.

On the local front, the members at Aurora Country Club were innovative in developing the first prototype for the modern golf cart. The clubhouse had burned down in 1941. The caddies were unhappy with the layoffs and left the club. Members welded a bench seat and two tires to the front of a Cushman Scooter. *The*



Maintenance innovation in the late '40s—mechanical bunker raking at Butterfield C.C.

*Saturday Evening Post* ran a story on the "crazy" golfers at Aurora Country Club driving around the golf course. Cushman bought into the idea and later unveiled the "Arthritis Special Golf Buggy."

After the war (we all know who won), the men returned home. Americans began to enjoy a prosperous time. The Baby Boom was underway. More time was available for leisure activities. The technological advances

that usually follow a war were sweeping our society. One example was the introduction of 2-4D. This herbicide would become a great weapon in the control of turfgrass weeds.

In 1945, Byron Nelson set a record, winning 11 consecutive PGA tournaments. He would go on to win 19 of 31 starts. Remarkable! This record still stands. Nelson retired shortly thereafter at the peak of his game, at age 34, and returned



On May 7, 1945, the fight in Europe was over and Americans delighted in their hard-won triumph.



The one and only Betty Grable, the pin-up queen of the GIs. This photo has made its way around the world.

to his beloved ranch in Texas. Other popular players of the day, such as Ben Hogan, Sam Snead, Gene Sarazen, Cary Middlecoff, Bobby Locke, Johnny Revolta and the col-

*(continued on page 26)*

# JUNCTION®

**The Essential Fungicide for Greener Greens.**

**ARTHUR CLESEN INC.**

Excellent algae, brown patch and dollar spot control, plus other fungal diseases -

Vital component in resistance management - Convenient dry flowable -

543 Diens Dr.  
Wheeling, IL 60090  
ph: 847-537-2177  
fax: 847-537-2210

8050 W. 186th St.  
Tinley Park, IL 60477  
ph: 708-444-2177  
fax: 708-444-2199

[www.aclesen.com](http://www.aclesen.com)

# BUY 3 TONS AND WHAT DO YOU GET?

## A \$25 DONATION AND A COURSE THAT'S SET.



Right now when you order at least 3 tons of any combination of Country Club®, IsoTek®<sup>21</sup>, NX-PRO®, ParEx®, or PERK® from Lebanon Turf Products, we'll make a \$25 donation in your name to your local GCS Association.

It's just our way of saying thank you to our valued customers. And it's your way of sampling the most innovative slow-release nitrogen products on the market. Simply fill out and return the coupon below along with proof of purchase to take advantage of this great offer.

Superintendent's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Golf Course Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Local GCS Association: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: **LEBANON TURF PRODUCTS** Attn: Gary Neyman • 1600 E. Cumberland St. • Lebanon, PA 17042

Coupon is valid for orders of three tons or more of price list Country Club®, IsoTek®<sup>21</sup>, NX-PRO®, ParEx®, or PERK® products between January 1, 2001 and June 30, 2001.

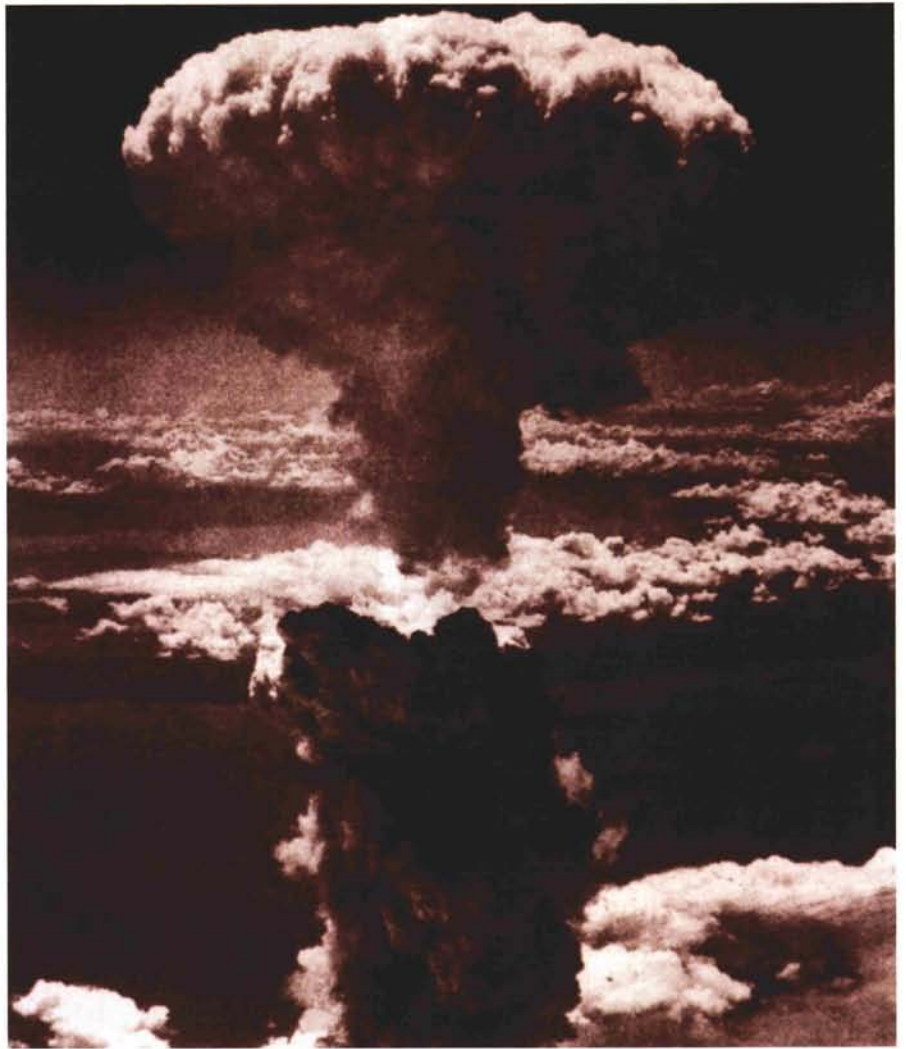


orful Jimmy Demaret, soon became household names.

In 1948, the Greenkeeping Superintendents Association (GSA) changed its name to National Greenkeeping Superintendents Association (NGSA). This same year, the NGSA held its national tournament at Medinah Country Club. Also in 1948, MAGCS members participated in the first Pro-Greenkeeper Tournament, held at Niles' Tam O'Shanter Country Club.

*The Bullsheet*, the MAGCS newsletter, made its debut in the '40s. Bob Williams coined the name during the war, for a camp newsletter published when he was stationed at Fort Campbell in Kentucky. Certainly the magazine, now called *On Course*, has come a long way from the early one-page editions of *the Bullsheet*. "The Bullsheet," however, lives on inside the *On Course* magazine as a popular information source of who's doing what around town.

The 1940s ended on a much different note than they began, with Americans enjoying the optimism and prosperity of the post-war era. Golf was once again a popular leisure activity, thanks in part to an American president whose infectious love of the game led to the construction of a putting green on the White House lawn. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, a hero of World War II and mastermind of the Allied invasion of France, would lead our confident nation into the next decade and the next era in our Association's history. 🌱



On August 10, 1945, the U.S. unleashed atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.



In 1947, Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in baseball.