

Letter from Frank Strafacci

T/Sgt. Frank Strafacci, DUKW Command, Writes from the Philippines to
Morton Bogue, USGA President

Nov. 4, 1944.

Dear Mr. Bogue:

Just received your letter and it's the first one in 7 weeks, so I enjoyed reading it a great deal. Before I left Brisbane I got a letter from an American Red Cross official, expressing his thanks for the golf balls he received from the USGA. I'm sure they can make very good use of them.

As for golf news, when I get back to the States I hope to present the USGA with a golf ball that has already travelled over 43,000 miles and used for 52 rounds of golf. It was used in America, Australia, Dutch New Guinea, I expect soon to use it in the Philippines, China and Japan. I used it for the first time at my club Sound View, and from there it went to Omaha, back to Sound View then to Frisco, Adelaide, Australia, Melbourne, Townsville Cairns, Sydney, Cairns, Brisbane, Cairns, Brisbane, Dutch New Guinea (I didn't have a club, I batted it around with a club made out of a branch).

At present things are pretty hot here. Col. Grimm and I landed 15 minutes after the first wave D-Day. The front line was already being established ten yards in from the beach, and for the next two hours we carried shells. I say "we" because the Col. and I were together for the first five days, and wherever he went I tagged along. The reason why he had to haul ammo was because, there weren't sufficient men on the beach at that time, so we all had to pitch in. We got out of that detail oke. As we were resting, we got a big thrill. General MacArthur, President Osmena, and lots of other brass came ashore right in front of us.

The second day we headed for a town, our mission being to contact the Mayor and Governor, and take intact a certain building where we were to place guards to protect it from the enemy. And, to have the Mayor and Governor assure us full cooperation once the town was liberated from the enemy. We hiked many miles when we finally reached a spot one mile from our destination. We were held up for two hours; the town was being shelled. We finally got started, moving in with the infantry. As we reached the town, many people came towards us, they hugged and kissed us, some were crying of happiness, it sure did make me feel funny inside.

The Mayor invited us into his home where we were given some good chow and beer. After the Col. told the Mayor what

was expected of him, we left and headed for the other side of town, where the particular building we were interested in was located. Just before we reached it many civilians were running our way. One boy, about 16 years old stopped us and told us that there were many snipers ahead, couldn't we give him a rifle. I was thinking that it wouldn't be a bad idea if I gave him mine, I hadn't fired one in so long, that he probably would have done a lot better than I hoped for. He decided to tag along, and we continued on our way. We got within ten yards of the building when the Nips opened up at us. I finally got behind a tree. The Nips were a couple hundred yards away, up on the side of a hill.

I couldn't see them and so I held my fire, and it was at this time that I got to thinking of the five foot putt I had to make to tie the 8th hole in an exhibition golf match played in Brisbane only a few weeks ago (Captain Bud Ward came down from Dutch New Guinea for five days, and I arranged a match for the benefit of the Australian Red Cross, which we lost 3-2). Our opponents, Alex College and Dick Coogen, played a bit too good for us. I thought of what a tough spot we would have been in if I missed the putt. I can assure you I'll never try hard for another putt as long as I live, at least it won't seem like trying.

We were there only five minutes when the infantry came up. They proceeded ahead and blasted hell out of those monkeys. After placing a guard around the building we headed back for the Mayor's house, but only before that native lad talked me out of my rifle for one hour. He certainly did have a happy look on his face. I checked my rifle and only three shots were fired; not bad shooting. The last I heard of my friend was that he and two other boys were headed for the hills. They hate the Japs as much as we love our country.

That nite we stayed at the Mayor's home, and the following day we were treated to one of the finest Chinese dinners I ever had. The head of a Chinese village was the host. We had roast duck, fried chicken, rice, wine, whiskey, and it was topped off with a Filipino cigar soaked in rum. The next few days I rested up, my feet were shot to hell, and I stayed at an actor's home. Finally I was given an assignment, which I'm still carrying out.

The past ten days have been hell on wheels. The Nips have been coming over night and day, throwing everything at us. And I must say they are the stinkos of all time. Don't get me wrong; I'm not complaining. Last night was tough. They started at 9 P. M. and every 10 or 15 minutes they came over and dropped their eggs. They finally went away at 8 A. M. Our planes came around, and the Nips are in no mood to mess with our flyers.

That's the way things stand at the present time. Until this Bomber's moon goes away, we'll continue to catch it. So far I've had five narrow escapes, but the only thing that connected was a scorpion bite on the night of the Typhoon. The Nips didn't come over that night. I'll take them any time in preference to that bit of rain and wind, and the everlasting scared out of me, too many times to mention. Even so, I believe all will be well with me, my name is pretty hard to spell.

Sincerely yours,

FRANK STRAFACI.

Tough War For Greenkeepers

... says Harold Stodola, Pres.
Greenkeeping Supt. Assn. of America

★ LAST FALL'S OPTIMISTIC outlook for 1945 has lost its rosy hue. Events on the war and home fronts altered the picture. The grim business of fighting and winning the war rightly must have first priority and consideration. Greenkeepers will take up another notch in their belts and accept these added problems in stride. Past performance records clearly indicate the continued and additional problems will be met effectively.

District and the national greenkeeper organizations have curtailed many of their functions to become geared to war economy. The Greenkeeping Superintendents' Assn. has not held any type of meeting since February 1942. Contact with its membership is being maintained through correspondence and "The Greenkeepers' Reporter", the association's official magazine. Many of our greenkeepers are engaged in war work in addition to their greenkeeping responsibilities. Necessarily, therefore, much of the program for advancement of course maintenance technique must await the return of peace.

A new era in sports will follow the war. Golf will enjoy increased popularity and become one of the leading participation sports. O. B. Keeler, in a recent article succinctly writes: "Golf—the outdoor game that may be played from sunrise to sunset of the life-span, as well as of the day." Golf has also done a job in this war and has been belatedly recognized by military and industrial groups for its value to service man and civilian worker.

How will the greenkeeping superintend-

ent be affected by this increased growth of golf? He hopes that increased recognition and responsibilities will carry just monetary compensation for his services. He wants a chance to have a home, to educate the kids and have enough left to feel secure in his chosen career of being a good greenkeeper. This he hopes isn't just wishful thinking—like it too frequently has been in the past!

Question of Small Golf Hole

★ Following the defeat of Byron Nelson by Bob Hamilton for the 1944 PGA championship, Jim M'Curley (syndicated sports writer of New York, revived the question as to why there shouldn't be larger holes on the putting greens, claiming that Nelson, a stylist in all other departments of the game, has only been defeated by "lucky" or "hot" putters, not as adept as Nelson in other departments of the game.

After citing numerous instances where Nelson was "nosed" out of first place by three-putt greens after playing flawless golf down the fairways, M'Curley asks:

"Wouldn't golf be just as fine a game, a much finer and fairer game, perhaps, if the stress were taken off putting? Why should the harmony of a fine drive and approach be disrupted by the thought of missing an eighteen-inch putt? Was the four and one-fourth-inch hole ruled in the game so that it would be possible for the Hamiltons to beat the masters like Nelson? If so, why? Would baseball have benefited if it had built 1,000-foot fences to stop the likes of Babe Ruth? I'm for bigger and deeper holes in golf courses."

Resort Being Built Into Country Club

Sparked by Walter H. Mode, a group of 170 golfers in and around Fort Atkinson, Wis., have taken over the resort formerly known as Hoard's Resort, which includes a nine-hole golf course, located near Lake Koshkonong. Plans are to operate the property as a resort until after the war, when with returning servicemen as additional prospective members, the place can be made a country club exclusively.

The property consists of 85 acres of rolling timber land over which are scattered 36 Indian mounds, animal and bird-shaped, some extending 160 feet in length. These are being retained as natural bunkers for the course. Grass and weeds had grown to about two feet in fairways, rough and woods during the past two years since the property was unused following the death of the former owner. Over 40 members volunteered to burn this out. Operations for the first season were reported profitable.