



# Houston Puts Golf at Veterans' Hospital

Putting lesson on first green of the nine hole golf course, McCloskey General Hospital Temple, Texas. Left to right: Pvt. Dudley Perlo, Texas; Cpl. Herschel Bell, Georgia; Pvt. Jim Benos, Massachusetts; Sgt. Jack White, Chicago golf professional assigned to the Golf Section, Physical Reconditioning Branch.

By **ANDY ANDERSON**

Houston (Tex.) Press

**L**AST FALL, through contacts made on a tour of hospitals with a fishing show, I had a long talk with Gen. J. A. Bethea at Temple, Tex. As we stood in the Red Cross hut and watched hundreds of boys minus arms and legs go by he suggested that these kids—all youngsters—would like recreation and that a golf course might help solve the problem. We made a tour of the grounds and found available land.

Then I called on the War Sports Activities Committee of Houston, of which I am chairman, with Dick Freeman of the Chronicle, Vic Emanuel of the Post, Al Lever, representing the theaters, Pop Rice, and R. E. (Bob) Smith, Houston businessman, and Morris Sigel, wrestling promoter, all grand guys. This group, in addition to helping finance the Stage Canteen, has staged a Navy relief game netting \$27,000 profit, sold \$80,000,000 in war bonds and conducted many other war activities.

We made a trip to Temple. The committee was sold on the golf course idea

as much as I was. Then we decided on a plan to finance it. I used to own five pay-as-you-play courses and was a little familiar with costs. We estimated we could build the course for \$500 a hole, using war prisoners as labor.

Instead of selling it on a dollar-a-shot contribution plan we decided to sell nine holes at \$500 each. Right off the bat donations poured in. The contributors included fraternal organizations, labor unions, churches, synagogues, families who had lost sons and who dedicated holes as memorials, and women golfers. Before we knew it we had the nine holes sold, had financed drinking fountains on the course, the water system, furnished the clubhouse, provided 80 sets of clubs, had a fund of \$1,000 for golf balls, a fund to build shelter houses, build three putting greens and another fund to purchase equipment needed. We got about \$8,000 in less than one week's time.

Then a Houston oil man phoned and  
(Continued on Page 40)



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Pvt. Jerry Tiettmeyer, who lost a leg in New Georgia, is sinking a putt that beat Andy Anderson, press sports editor, in a match on temporary course known as Guadalcanal CC. Pvt. Joe Bouska, who lost a leg at Cassino, is holding the pin. Others, left to right: Morris Frank, Brig. Gen. J. A. Bethea, Commanding Officer, McCloskey General Hospital, Pvt. Herbert Jacobs; Capt. R. L. Green, O. T. Chief, Tulsa, Okla.; Dick Freeman, Houston Chronicle, and Vic Emanuel, Houston Post sports writer. Photograph by U. S. Army Signal Corps.

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*(Continued from Page 30)*

said he'd hire John Bredemus at his own expense to lay out the course. Four days after the fund was completed Bredemus was on the job.

He laid out a course 2,200 yards long, with huge grass greens, big tees, no ditches or steps; in fact a boy can sit in a wheeled chair and play it. The fairways are 'stoloned' in 1 every 8 inches with Bermuda. The greens and tees are completely sodded in Bermuda. It was a record job. Four hundred war prisoners were used. We got priorities on pipe and seed. We found farmers who had some fertilizer. Some time in February we hope to have the opening tournament.

We'll raise about \$2,500 more on this tournament. It'll cost you \$10 to enter and no prizes—that gets you the privilege of playing with a disabled vet. All entry fees go into the fund.

Water has been piped to every green.

We are not watering fairways because rainfall in that area is sufficient. There is no rough; no water hazards. Traps are seeded in grass instead of sanded. We moved a small barracks to the starting tee and women bowlers are furnishing it and decorating it. One man donated an electric ice box, another a new greens mower. We got matched sets of clubs and some clubs which had been stored for years. Boys in Occupational Therapy—the trade school in which they teach kids to use their arms and legs—are reconditioning the clubs. They will also build the shelter houses in the carpenter shop. That's, briefly, the story and we've not done a thing other cities can't do.

The course is now open for play and scores of disabled boys use it. However, the official opening is still in the offing. We hope the PGA will send us Nelson and Snead for an exhibition. Jimmy Demaret and Ben Hogan are at nearby camps.

At right below, left to right: Sgt. Jack White, NCO, charge of golf course operations at McCloskey General Hospital, and team coach. White is a member of the Illinois PGA and was pro at La Porte (Ind.) CC before entering the service. Sgt. Emory Ball; hand grenade wounds suffered in Germany paralyzed Ball's right arm. Lt. Dave Devonald, charge of golf and swimming activities. He was shot through head while on patrol near Lorient, France and captured by Germans. 20 years old, he is one of the youngest officers in action. Sgt. Herman May, a pro golfer from Mission Hills CC, Kansas City, Mo., of the Engineers, returned from Alaska with head and nerve injuries. May was a flight winner in the Eighth Service Command golf tournament in 1944. Sgt. Roland LaBrie lost a foot in France.



Pfc. Bob Nelson, Chicago, Illinois;  
Pfc. Ed Isenecker, Chicago, Illi.

