

Army Wives Get Basic Training in Golf

By DAVID D. MARSH

COL. "SPARKY" BAIRD, manager of the beautiful Fort Leavenworth (Ks.) Officer's club starts the golf season by offering wives of personnel attached to the Fort a series of golf lessons. The short course of instructions—which is gratis by the way—is given to groups of around 50 students. The students are nearly 100% beginners.

As a preliminary to the short course, Col. Baird devoted an evening to a showing of moving pictures featuring the nationally known stars. This served as an appetizer and gave the students a good mental picture to carry with them to their first lesson. It also put them in a golfing frame of mind.

The course itself is divided into 3 parts; the grip and stance; taking the club back; the swing and follow through. The chief principle stressed in the first part is that the grip is never changed from the start of the swing to the finish.

One of Col. Baird's theories—and one which varies somewhat from many teachers—is that the ball should be fitted or adjusted to the player, not the player to the ball. That is the student stands in what is for her a comfortable position, then the ball is placed in position to be hit.

Developing aptitude for the golf swing through exercises is another Baird idea which has shown good results. After taking a comfortable stance, the class is di-

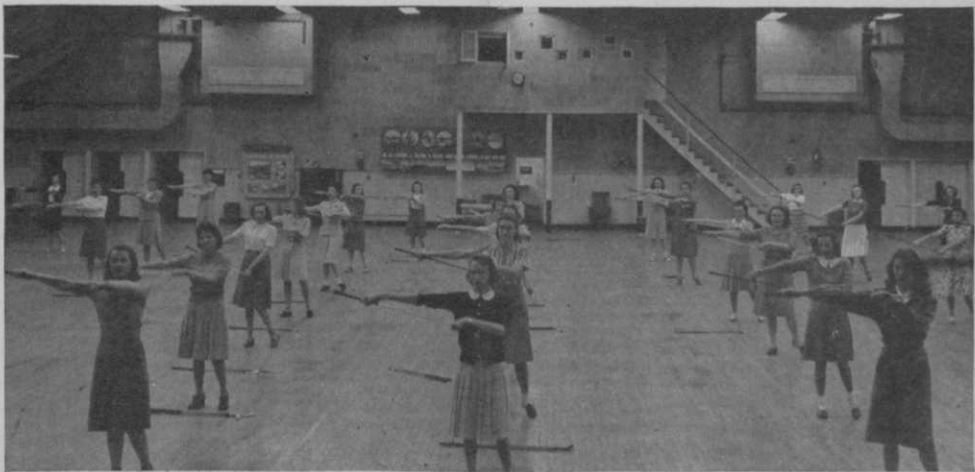
rected in an exercise designed to teach body *turn* (not swaying) and to introduce dormant golfing muscles to activity. In addition to this turning exercise the Colonel also has the students hold a club horizontally in front, then raise the club to a perpendicular position using the hands only. This movement exercises the lethargic muscles of the forearm and gives the hands more hitting power.

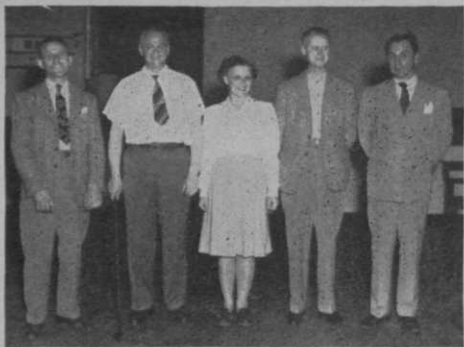
A pleasing innovation is the music which accompanies the exercises and does much to smooth the jerky movements of the novices. A victrola and electronic loud speaker arrangement carry the notes of the rhythmic Missouri Waltz to all corners of the large class room (a room not long since devoted to the grim business of war). The rhythm of the golf swing is readily adapted to the Missouri Waltz and quickly the entire class is swinging in unison—and with a real golf swing.

The popular Colonel originated his teaching method some 16 years ago while stationed in Virginia. He carried it out farther and in elaboration in Honolulu. Here the large classes of 200 or more were conducted out of doors at night. The unusual sight soon became a focal point of interest for sightseers as well as golfers.

Col. Baird is fortunate in having a large gymnasium size classroom, excellent lighting, plus the alert assistance of a number of WACs and other army personnel. A microphone attached to his shirt

Golf swing exercises are given the "slimming" and physical grace features so popular with women, in class lessons for Army wives at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas.





Reading from left to right—Vic Szygiel, assistant pro, Colonel "Sparky" Baird, Mrs. Margaret Spears, and Gene Holmberg and Dave Marsh of Wilson Sporting Goods Company.

front leaves his arms free to demonstrate the correct swing—which he makes left handed in order not to confuse the students, who are facing him.

Mrs. Margaret Spear, an advanced student, assists Col. Baird on the stage and proves to the students that the Baird system works. Mrs. Spear has finished well up in several major women's tournaments.

The Colonel likes to have his pupils develop a picture finish. But he insists that it must be a natural finish or follow through. He impresses that the "picture finish" is a *result*, not a *cause* as so many beginners think. If the club is properly

swung, the follow through or "picture finish" will come without being forced.

After the swinging exercises are completed, a question and answer period is held. Uncertain points about grip, stance, and swing are cleared up.

By the end of the series of 3 lessons the students are well drilled in the fundamentals of the golf swing and are ready for individual lessons.

At the end of the final lesson each student is given a rule book and a small booklet listing the local rules and explaining the etiquette of golf.

The unselfish idea behind Col. Baird's program is simply this; to acquaint each student with the fundamentals of the golf stroke and to provide her a sound basis for further instruction at the hands of a pro. This idea is particularly valuable to Army wives since they move about frequently and a prolonged course of instructions might be interrupted before its completion.

Darrell Wilson, out of army, selected as pro at Springfield, Mo., new many course . . . Viscountess Astor new pres., English Women's Golfing Union . . . Jack Geals is new pro at Ticonderoga (N.Y.) CC . . . Jimmy Dolan, Hillcrest CC, Worcester, Mass., is coaching local high school golf team . . . Detroit, Mich., pros are demonstrating at each other's clubs in "Meet Your Pro" sessions.

PHILADELPHIA PROS IN TEACHING CLINIC

Philadelphia district PGA members gather at Llanerch CC for third in their series of instruction discussions that are tied in with their newspaper advertising campaign. Demonstrating is Walter Brickley, and Ted Bickle is pointing. Front Row, Kneeling:—L to R—George Sayers, Joe Chuck, Clarence Ehresman, Len Sheppard, Marty Lyons, Cas Banas, Jimmy Dangelo, Pete Henry, Willie Palumbo, Charlie Schneider, Ted Bickle. Standing, L to R—Geo. Sayers, Jr., Joe Zarhardt, Matt Kowal, Bob Aitken, Bill Boyle, Floyd March, Harry Markle, Henry Williams, Jr., Henry Williams, Sr., Elwood Poore, Ed Ginther, Wally Paul.

