



U. S. Army photograph

The 1955 All-Army golf team, chosen on medal scores in the All-Army championship at Fort Meade. L to R: SFC Murray Jacobs, Pfc Dan Sikes, Sp. W. J. Williamson, Pfc R. E. Goerlich and Lieut. W. G. Moody.

Golf and the Soldier

By LIEUT. GEN. FLOYD L. PARKS

WHENEVER George Cobb, golf course architect, comes to Fort Meade, Md., for a day or two of work on the new 18 now under construction, I try to make it a point to go around with him. After Fort Meade received approval of the construction of a second 18 holes, I was most insistent that an experienced golf course architect be employed. During my 37 years in the Army, I have seen too many golf courses, laid out by some eager Sunday golfer, with uninteresting holes, postage stamp, plateau greens, and grave-type box tees. Such an arrangement makes maintenance difficult and play boring.

I ran into George Cobb's work first at Fort Jackson, S. C. where the Army has probably its finest 18-hole golf course. Cobb designed it shortly after World War II, and today, with a division at Jackson, thousands of soldiers are enjoying golf on one of the top courses in the Southeast.

The value of a good architect is further revealed on Army courses at Fort Benning, Ga., and West Point, N. Y. Unfortunately, many of the other Army golf courses are unimaginative areas of closely cropped grass, chiefly due to false economy in not employing a good architect. At Benning, with numerous soldiers passing through attending the Infantry School, and with a combat division there

on permanent duty, the old 18 holes could not handle the number of players. Benning called in Robert Trent Jones, who designed nine new holes to give Benning one of the finest nines anywhere.

At West Point, the Army Athletic Association also employed Jones to design the Military Academy course. Only ten holes have been completed in very rugged terrain. However, considering that the course is actually built right on the side of a mountain, it is a beautiful layout and a real test of golf. The architect did his job so that there are very few holes where the player must chug straight uphill. Without an architect, West Point would not have had a real championship course for their golf teams and individual cadets to use. The cadet teams have shown steady improvement on this course and beat Princeton this year for the first time.

George Cobb feels that his 18 at Fort Meade will be an equal to Fort Jackson or possibly Pinehurst No. 2. The terrain is similar; rolling, pine-covered sandy land.

Cost Taxpayers Nothing

Financially, not one cent of taxpayer money is going towards any phase of this new golf course. The profits of the Post Exchanges and Post Theatres and similar facilities made available to the soldiers go into a Welfare Fund, which

must be expended for the welfare of the soldiers of the Army.

Such funds not only help with golf courses, but among other things they build swimming pools, tennis courts, bowling alleys and provide good shows and dance bands for soldier entertainment and recreation.

The new course at Meade, when opened for play sometime in the summer of 1956, will ease a very tight golfing situation. At present, during the week, we average about 150 golfers a day from the soldiers in the Fort Meade area. Of course, the great majority of this number arrives at the course between 5 and 6 p.m. for a quick nine holes before dark.

Big Play of Beginners

Naturally, with such numbers, many of them can't even finish their nine holes, and even those who finish must stand and wait on each shot. On Saturdays and Sundays, 350 to 450 golfers usually show up for a game—more golfers than many large clubs carry on their membership rolls. Even with a system of starting times spaced at six-minute intervals and beginning at 7:00 a.m. and ending at 4:30 p.m., the course is jammed with players taking a minimum of four hours to play 18 holes.

The fact that many beginners are coming out for golf also slows up play. Re-



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The juniors get good golf at Fort Meade. Gary Brewer is putting on the tenth hole during the 1955 Fort Meade Junior Invitational. Brewer lost in the play-off in the "13 and under" division to John Boyce of Fort Belvoir, Va.

gardless of the resultant slowness of play, we strive to get more beginners playing every day.

I personally encourage other golfers to be considerate of beginners and help them in learning the rules and etiquette of the game. To give these beginners greater enjoyment of the game, we have a club pro and two excellent enlisted instructors, who devote a major portion of every day to instruction of the new soldier golfer—male and female.

In addition to soldier beginners, we have an active junior program aimed at getting the youngsters of our post personnel in-

Lieut. Gen. Floyd L. Parks, 2nd Army commander, recently won his third All-Army seniors' title.

General Parks during his long military experience has been conspicuously successful in combat, planning, training and executive capacities. Formal recognition of his professional achievements is strongly endorsed by the high regard in which General Parks is held by men who have served under his command.

The General's remarks about the place of golf in the recreation, physical training and morale program of the armed services are of deep interest to all in the golf business, particularly.

The armed services are getting more and better golf courses for the reasons that General Parks sets forth and which are known to other commanding officers at military installations.

Recently, at the Air Force world-wide conference of Special Services, Lyle P. (Bud) Werring, pro at Elgin Field (Fla.) Air Force Base, headquarters of the Air Proving Ground Command, detailed the golf operations at that base. Jack Isaacs, pro at Langley (Va.) Air Force Base, where the Air Force World Wide tournament (won by 2nd Lieut. Ray Terry) and Interservice matches (won by Air Force Team) were held in August, has told in GOLFDOM of the important service a pro must give in properly supplying military personnel and their families with golf equipment and programs.

Course superintendents have told in GOLFDOM of their successful handling of military course maintenance problems.

Now for the first time in a golf magazine the basic reasons for good courses, well operated, at military installations is told by a high ranking military authority.

terested in golf. Our pro gives free group lessons every Friday during the summer for the juniors and we have an annual Fort Meade Junior Invitational Tournament which brings junior golfers from the Washington, Baltimore and Annapolis areas to Fort Meade for a day of golf. All of this adds up to very heavy play on the present course.

Pleasant Use of Free Time

With more personnel moving into the Fort Meade area all the time, the number of golfers will probably increase at least 50 percent, which simply means that many golfers are not going to play golf because of the long waiting during play and the necessity of getting starting times in advance. Such a situation will certainly force the soldier with time on his hands out into the neighboring communities and cities. Many of us know what can result from this circumstance.

The new course at Meade, and those being built at other military installations, will help to answer the question every soldier faces of what to do with his free time.

Army golf is aimed at providing healthy, enjoyable recreation for the soldiers and their dependents. Golf uses up much of the free time a soldier might otherwise use in less desirable activities. The game helps to maintain the soldier in good physical condition, especially his feet. In a motorized army the foot soldier marches very little as compared to thirty years ago. A distinguished general once told me that golf courses he had built helped thousands of men climb the hills of Korea!

The availability of an on-post golf

course gives soldiers an expense free opportunity to learn a sport which cannot fail to emphasize and develop the personal qualities of character and integrity. And, for many young Americans in the Armed Services, they learn a sport which is widely enjoyed outside the Army and which will give them years of pleasurable companionship even after they leave the service.

Army Golf Clubs Well Run

Most Army golf clubs are active and provide a number of tournaments with handicaps or different flights so that every golfer, par or 120 shooter, has a crack at a prize.

In addition, the Welfare Fund buys clubs and bags so that the soldier who wants to learn the game can get equipment for no charge. This system means that on almost every Army course you will see privates and generals trying to get the ball into the cup.

Most clubs organize golf teams and challenge other golf teams, military and civilian. My regular partner on the Fort Meade team is Sergeant Max Deckard. There is no rank on the golf course—it's the old business of distance and direction. As my old golfing friend, Col. Russell ("Red") Reeder, used to say: "A golf ball doesn't care who hits it, whether a general or a private, but where it goes depends on how it is hit. Rank cannot control a slice!"

Army Championships Train Stars

Every year the Army has an All-Army Golf Championship. Tournaments are held at the smallest posts and units and their teams are sent to the next higher tournament.

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Looking from green to tee on the 440 yd. 17th of Fort Meade's first 18 holes.

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6. Assignment to women members playing in inter-club or city championship — for each 18 holes caddied 1
7. Assignment to PGA tournament—for each 18 holes caddied for his player 1

PENALTIES MAY BE CHARGED TO

1. Any first-class caddy receiving a poor grade 1
- Any first-class caddy receiving a fair grade ½
2. Any first-class caddy assigned second-class rate as a disciplinary measure ½
3. Any second-class caddy, after first six assignments, receiving a poor grade ½

NOTE: All penalty charges are reviewed each week by a member of the Grounds Committee.

Golf and the Soldier

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ments. Eventually, all of the major commands send teams to the All-Army Tournament. This year the All-Army was held at Fort George G. Meade, Md., with the Second Army Team winning the championship by one stroke. Individually, Pvt. Dan Sikes of Fort Meade, won the championship, in a play-off.

After the All-Army tournament the All-Army team is selected to play against the other services at the Interservice Tournament. This tournament gives the soldier a chance to play against other very good service golfers and to play different courses. Since Army pay is hardly sufficient to allow most of the soldiers to play in the many tournaments held about the country, the All-Army and Interservice give him a chance to prove himself without the expense of entrance fees and other incidental tournament costs.

More and Better Courses

The future of golf in the Army is probably the same as in the country at large. It is going to increase. New courses are being built to meet the present need and help with the future demand.

In my command, I am encouraging other posts to employ golf course architects for their new construction. A man who has never played before or doesn't play well, is liable to want to play a lot more golf on an interesting, well laid-out course than on some sun burned, dry, and unimaginative 18. And, above all, the soldier who is healthfully playing a round of golf will be one less soldier who might be on a street corner, in a bar, or trying to drive an automobile a thousand miles on a week-end pass, a practice which has resulted in an alarming loss of life and limb to service men in traffic accidents.

Morale-wise, a long putt "clunking" into the cup goes a good long way towards keeping anybody happy and contented!



SWEETHEART IS PRO SHOP PATRON

Carolyn Stroupe, West Palm Beach, Fla., becomes a buyer in Harry Obitz' pro shop at Fred Waring's Shawnee Inn CC, Shawnee-on-Delaware, Pa. Harry claims that into his pro shop come the world's most beautiful women golf customers.

Harry's interest in the pulchritudinous patrons is strictly platonic. He carries on a deep love affair with the shop cash register.

Miss Stroupe in the nation's "Sweetheart of Sigma Chi," the fraternity that has in addition to its formal roster, a million barbershop choral auxiliaries.

USGA GIVES RIGHT ANSWER

Q. Am I correct in thinking that "Green Committee", and "Green fee" are correct, and that to add an "s" is an error?

A. "Green Committee" and "green fee" are correct.

Question by: Norman Beecher
Clearwater (Fla.) CC

Answer by: Joseph C. Dey, Jr.
USGA Executive Director