



Fine clubhouse with a well stocked pro shop give first class rating to the golf setup at Guantanamo. Below is Jim Dempsey, who runs the 27 holes.



Golf Boosts Morale, Calms Nerves at GTMO

It's part of a big recreation program that's helping to keep the military alert and on its toes in the Cuban crisis

By **BILL McWILLIAMS**

Jim Dempsey was standing on the first tee of the golf course at the U. S. Naval Base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, scratching his head. It was a typical Saturday afternoon. Most of the U. S. Navy ships in the area were at anchor for the weekend. The crews, except for the duty sections, were ashore for liberty, some to buy souvenirs from the base exchanges.

But Jim Dempsey, manager of the golf club, had nothing to do with souvenir hunting. His problem was to fit all the fleet golf players to the golf course even though he had 27 holes to work with. American sailors and marines play a lot of golf and it's not unusual to see golf clubs in liberty boats packed with personnel coming ashore.

Guantanamo is a little different now



Tifton 328 is planted on greens. It's said this is the farthest south this strain is used.

from the easy going, pre-Fidel Castro days. Physical fitness here is as important as it is with the rest of the Navy. This big Naval Base with its excellent harbor with depths to 60 feet is of prime importance in connection with our defense in the Caribbean. Guantanamo guards the narrow Windward Passage between the eastern end of Cuba and the northwestern tip of Haiti through the chain of islands that border the Atlantic. It is only 800 miles from vital Panama.

Leased in 1903

Cuba leased the land, first discovered by Columbus on his second voyage in 1494, to the U. S. in 1903 for an annual rental of what now amounts to \$3,676. The original lease was signed by President Theodore Roosevelt. Another treaty was signed in Washington in 1934. It gave the U. S. a perpetual lease on the reservation, to be broken only by mutual agreement of both countries. The lease is still effective and we intend to keep it that way. For all practical purposes it is American territory.

Guantanamo has been used as a home away from home by almost all the operating naval units of the Atlantic Fleet. It primarily is a training area and most of the ships are here for that purpose. Practically every ship completing an overhaul at a shipyard on the Atlantic coast will visit GTMO for a period of intensive training to test new equipment and to train new men. It's a hard working time not only for the men being trained but for the Guantanamo based trainers.

Each week-end the really elaborate Guantanamo sports program blooms again. Every sailor or marine may take his pick from an assortment of activities sites that would make a big city recreation director green with envy. These include 6 baseball fields, 15 softball fields, 6 swimming pools, 8 basketball courts, 8 tennis courts, 20 bowling alleys, 2 riding stables and 18- and 9-hole golf courses. Although the fleet has first crack at these sports on weekends the same facilities are available to the 6,000 Americans living on the base. Many who never picked up a golf club before start swinging here and some have gone on to become really fine golfers.

Golf is important at GTMO. Also at the Army and Air Force bases in Puerto Rico — Ft. Buchanan, Ft. Brooke and Ramey Air Force Base. It's a major sport in Panama. But military golfers like Guantanamo.

First there was only a 9-hole course in the early 1940s built along the rifle range. The clubhouse was half a quonset hut. A second 9 was added in 1947 and the third 9 in 1956. Now there is a first class clubhouse with a well stocked pro shop.

328 on Greens

Greens are being converted to Tifton 328 grass, the farthest south this strain of grass has been used. And incidentally, the completed greens are beautiful.

Jim Dempsey, a retired Lt. commander, runs the course for the Special Services dept. at the base. He was stationed in GTMO, has a real good swing himself and

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make you think: (1) Your fire extinguisher may be useless when needed; (2) It may spread the fire if used incorrectly; (3) It can produce dangerous gasses. So be sure of yours and have them checked!

Other Safety Measures

Perhaps you may gain something from the following practices. Every piece of equipment for each man has a first aid kit and fire extinguisher for any emergency. We have saved three electric carts that got too hot.

Around our ponds we place life savers and ropes. Players and children should not be there, but they are!

Signs are placed at #1 and #10 tees notifying members when greens have been sprayed and warning them not to place a ball to their mouths and also to clean their shoes before entering locker room. We also alert locker room attendants.

In a twofold effort to teach and practice safety, we have our men constantly look for hazards on the course. This may surprise you, but some of our best ideas are tapped from this source. Ramps leading from steep tees for electric cars, suggested by an employee, eliminated the roller coaster atmosphere and also the dangers.

Golf at Guantanamo

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likes the duty. When he retired he did just what he wanted to do by getting a job running a golf course.

The club holds an invitation tournament each year that has fast become a must on the military golfer's list. The 72 hole medal play event attracts many of the best of the military golfers stationed not only in the Caribbean area but also at bases within the United States. Many save up leave just for this tournament, then hitchhike by military aircraft to be on hand for this highly enjoyable event. Frank Boynton, a pro golfer in civilian life and a former sailor won one of the Guantanamo tournaments. Jim Kinder, ex-All Navy champion, comes up from his San Juan duty station to compete. Jim is presently the Navy's best in the Caribbean area.

There is plenty of trouble outside the gate. But inside, Guantanamo goes quietly about the task of training men and ships. That 27-hole course, built as a big "Do It Yourself" project at no cost to the government, contributes its part to that training. It's physical fitness at its best and keeps morale highest. When there is a little time to spare a lot of golf is played.

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