



IN AN age of prodigious hitting, no matter what the game, there is still a wide sweep of argument in regard to record distances. There is a wide divergence of opinion as to how far the mightiest of the hitters can drive a baseball, golf ball or polo ball, to take up three examples. Few have ever smacked a baseball beyond 500 feet. I mean on the carry. A good many years ago one of Babe Ruth's Florida wallops that dropped into a plowed field was measured around 520 feet. Anything over 430 feet is no part of soft hitting.

Ruth remains the long-distance champion, both as a record hitter and as the most consistent one. The Babe not only had bulk and power back of his punches, but he also had one of the finest swings that baseball has ever known in the way of timing and smoothness.

But the Babe rarely reached a full range of 500 feet. There is no way to make any exact measurement when the ball sails out of the park or crashes into the upper stands.

There is a center-field fence in the St. Petersburg park around 500 feet away, and no one has ever hit this palisade on the fly yet, according to the best knowledge I have.

Golf Sluggers

In golf Jimmy Thomson remains the long-distance ruler with something to spare.

As I recall the figures Thomson has won the last six driving contests arranged by the PGA.

It must be remembered that the only true measure in golf is from a flat surface, with no helping wind. Roll doesn't count. You can drive a golf ball a mile on the ice. And a few of the long hitters can stand on an elevated tee and pass 300 yards on the carry with a helping gale.

One earnest seeker for records once drove a golf ball well over a mile—standing at the top of the Grand Canyon.

Driving from a level surface, unhelped by a wind, Thomson's best blows usually range from 270 to 275 yards. This is big blasting. A carry of 250 yards under these conditions is big hitting. I doubt that any golfer ever carried 300 yards on flat ground, minus a keen breeze.

I know that few good hitters care to risk a carry beyond 225 yards when there is trouble to face. A helping or a headwind makes a much greater difference than many know. A headwind is also a mental handicap since it usually brings on pressing and overeffort, which is always a mistake.

How Far a Polo Ball?

In his prime, Tommy Hitchcock could hit a polo ball as far as anyone I ever saw. Dev Milburn and Wilburn Guest were also on the longer side.

Hitchcock figures that 150 yards, half the distance of the field, is about all one can get from a full polo smash. Any wallop beyond 100 yards is good, hard hitting.

"The longest drive I've seen," an eyewitness writes, "came from a combination of golf and polo. Winston Guest teed up a golf ball at Meadowbrook one day, mounted his polo pony and was then handed a polo mallet. With a good, galloping start and a double windup Guest drove the golf ball the full length of the polo field—a matter of 300 yards. It was all carry."

Golf machines can reach 500 yards, which shows how far the human machine lags behind the metal contrivance.

Getting Distance

Distance isn't a mere matter of bulk and physical power by many yards.

Ben Hogan, weighing less than 135 pounds, is longer by yards than most of the 180 or 200-pound swingers.

I once saw Cyril Walker, then weighing 110 pounds, outdrive Walter Hagen, at 185, consistently in a big tournament.

Distance comes largely from club-head speed—more so than from any other single factor.

Bobby Jones one day, with his own clubs missing, used his wife's set. Mrs. Jones' driver weighed only 12 ounces, much lighter than Bob's.

"I was astonished to find that I was hitting the ball that day longer than usual," Bob said. "I found out that I could get much greater speed from the lighter clubhead. Naturally it called for less effort in swinging."



Washington, D. C.
GOOD NEIGHBOR CO-OPERATION
The United States is getting much better co-operation from some of our South American neighbors than has leaked out to the public.

When Portugal protested to the United States against Roosevelt's fireside chat hinting the seizure of the Azores, the Brazilian government immediately got in touch with the U. S. state department. The Portuguese had sent the Brazilians a copy of their protest, and Brazil asked us what reply we were going to make.

Ambassador Caffrey in Rio de Janeiro immediately showed Foreign Minister Aranha a summary of our proposed reply, and Aranha volunteered to send Portugal exactly the same answer—telling them it was vital to the safety of the Western hemisphere that the Azores be in friendly hands, and that Brazil could not afford to see the islands taken by the Axis.

This message was sent: which means that Brazil will co-operate with the United States if and when the time comes to occupy the Azores.

Argentina also has been more cooperative than ever despite the diard efforts of our Rocky Mountain congressmen to prevent the importation of Argentine canned beef. Argentine sentiment is overwhelmingly anti-Hitler and pro-Roosevelt. The Argentines are much stronger for Roosevelt than for the United States, and have their fingers crossed as to what may happen after Roosevelt leaves office.

Dakar and Robin Moor.
For approximately one month, however, all White House advisers have agreed that the Azores were far less important than Dakar and the coast of West Africa. That is what makes the sinking of the Robin Moor by a Nazi submarine so doubly significant.

Despite the menace of Dakar, presidential advisers have been worried as to what we should do about it. To take Dakar from the French and to hold it against all comers would require more men than the 50,000 in the U. S. marine corps. It would require an expeditionary force from the regular army.

And while such troops are available, the bottoms to transport them are something else again. Once before, the British urged us not to get mixed up in the South Atlantic because it would divert our navy from the all-important North Atlantic.

The sinking of the Robin Moor, however, has played directly into the hands of those who have been urging the President to adopt the strongest policy in the South Atlantic and, if necessary, land troops on the bulge of Africa.

CATHEDRAL OF AGRICULTURE

Paul H. Appleby, diminutive, didactic undersecretary of agriculture, made a flying trip to Nebraska the other day which had some interesting inside background.

Purpose of the trip was to set up what some agricultural hands call a "Cathedral of Agriculture" in Lincoln, Neb. What Appleby was working on was a plan to pool all of the different federal agricultural agencies under one roof and under one director at Lincoln.

These were to include the AAA, Rural Electrification administration, soil conservation, farm security, extension service, farm debt adjustment, and so on. The plan was to make the state of Nebraska a guinea pig to test the idea. All of these different farm representatives would then report to one director in Lincoln rather than to Washington.

However, the proposed Nebraska director was Cal Ward, regional supervisor of farm security. And although working for a Democratic administration, he is branded as a staunch Republican. His selection therefore caused opposition from various federal farm representatives in Nebraska who didn't want to join any "Cathedral of Agriculture" under Cal Ward.

Chief objector was Fred Wallace, chairman of the Nebraska AAA, and it was to bring him into line that Appleby flew out to Nebraska.

Appleby had first ordered Wallace to Washington. But Wallace refused. Even after Appleby flew out to see him, he could not make Wallace budge. "I'm interested in an agricultural program, not a lot of bureaucracy," Wallace said.

Appleby stayed an extra day, finally flew back to Washington. His "Cathedral of Agriculture" for Nebraska definitely side-tracked.

Note—Secretary of Agriculture Wickard has been looking around to find a new berth for his undersecretary—outside of the agriculture department.

Army Movies.

Movies are the top amusement of the boys in camp and the army gives them all they want—at bargain prices.

For this purpose the war department has organized the Army Motion Picture service, which in a few months has become one of the largest theater chains in the country, with about 300 theaters in operation. There is at least one movie theater in every army camp, with shows seven nights a week, plus Saturday and Sunday matinees.



To the West—and Back!

EIGHT nights in Pullman berths, 6,300 miles! Left Shreveport before midnight. Three hours and 20 minutes later rolled under the portico of the Arlington hotel in Hot Springs, Ark.—202 miles in 200 minutes, through three states, one city and eight towns. The last 40 miles a bit difficult because of hair-pin curves zooming up into the Ozarks.

Some 3,000 uniformed high school musicians accompanied by nearly 2,000 parents, chaperones and instructors were also in Hot Springs for the eleventh session of Arkansas bands and orchestra contest. Contesting units included 64 school bands and 54 orchestras. All day long the bands paraded through the streets playing not only marching tunes, but excellent hillbilly music also.

Took the Ozarks Express on an overnight spin—and spin it was, as it whipped in and out of those circuitous little hills. Nearly spun me out of my berth, but managed to get several hours of interrupted shut-eye. Changed sleepily next morning in St. Louis to the American, the Pennsy's flier for New York. Everywhere across the Middle West—blossoms, buds, birds and beauty.

Into New York in time for some important conferences with persons high in the realm of national affairs. Would not be surprised to see a tax on mines, postage stamps, slot machines, even phonographs, records and movie film.

Boarded the Iroquois Limited, for the eleventh time this season! Spun across New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, to Illinois. Changed trains and whizzed across Iowa to Columbus, Neb. Rain had turned the country upside down. Counted 11 gasoline trucks, 41 passenger cars in ditches along the dirt highways, and was glad to climb aboard the Pacific Limited for a slow trip to the West. After all the fast, zippy shiny streamliners, it's nice to know there are still some vehicles on steel which travel as we used to. Passed another milestone crossing the Continental Divide. Rain squalls lashed the countryside, and Wyoming looked dull and foreboding. Patches of snow still remain on the higher reaches of the Rockies. Train almost empty; a few soldiers being transferred to posts.

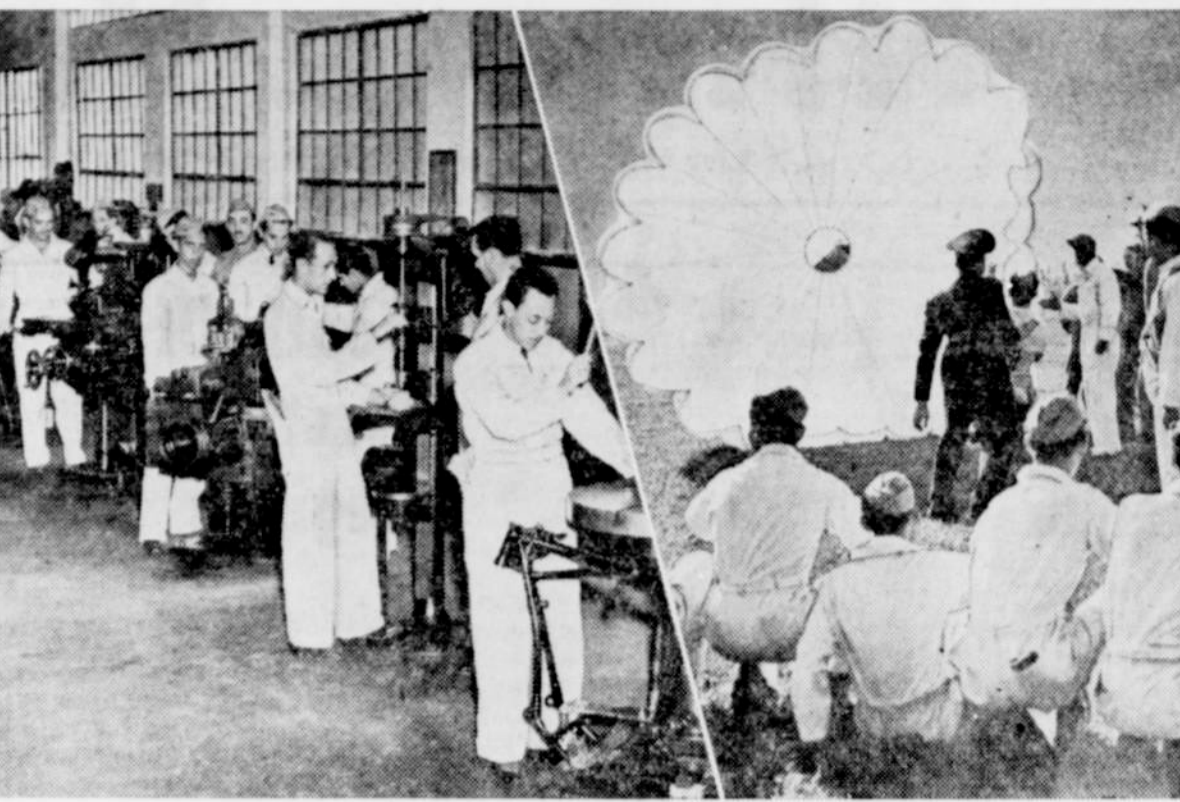
Picked up a Skyliner in Cheyenne for a swift 10-hour jaunt through the clouds back to Manhattan. Have bridged this continent 52 times by air, however, most of these trips were made way back in the early days when flying was a haphazard affair. Great strides have been made since then and today skyriding is not very different from sitting up in the coach of a fast train, except that the motion is more sea-like than the train's. I have never quite passed the stage of nausea when the flying horse strikes an air pocket and dives down-down and then up-up-up, with a notion like that of a fast elevator.

Reaching New York, tore down to the dock on the lower side of the Hudson river and there boarded one of the new, fast white vessels of the United Fruit Lines. This line operates what is probably the best service to Latin America, our "Good Neighbor." The boats are more yacht-like than strictly commercial, and one has a feeling of being master of one's own craft as one strolls leisurely along their trim decks. Unlike most ocean liners, one does not have to be continuously properly dressed for this or that occasion, which is another great comfort.

Days of lolling in the bright sunlight, of lying listlessly in one's cabin, of gazing at a bright tropical moon. Flying fish skim the surface of the seas, some of them actually landing on deck. Tropical showers come and go with tremendous ferocity—and then are quickly over without leaving a trace. Tiny atolls with a palm or two atop them, stick out of the aquamarine sea. As we near land, canoes filled with a motley crowd of brightly clad Bahaman Negroes approach the boat, and shout in their curious accent, more cockney than southern. The boat seems to be a world to itself, and except for the rapt attention with which the passengers listen to the news broadcasts, and the sudden and heated arguments on policy and politics which break forth occasionally, one could almost forget the crowding worries of our hectic world.

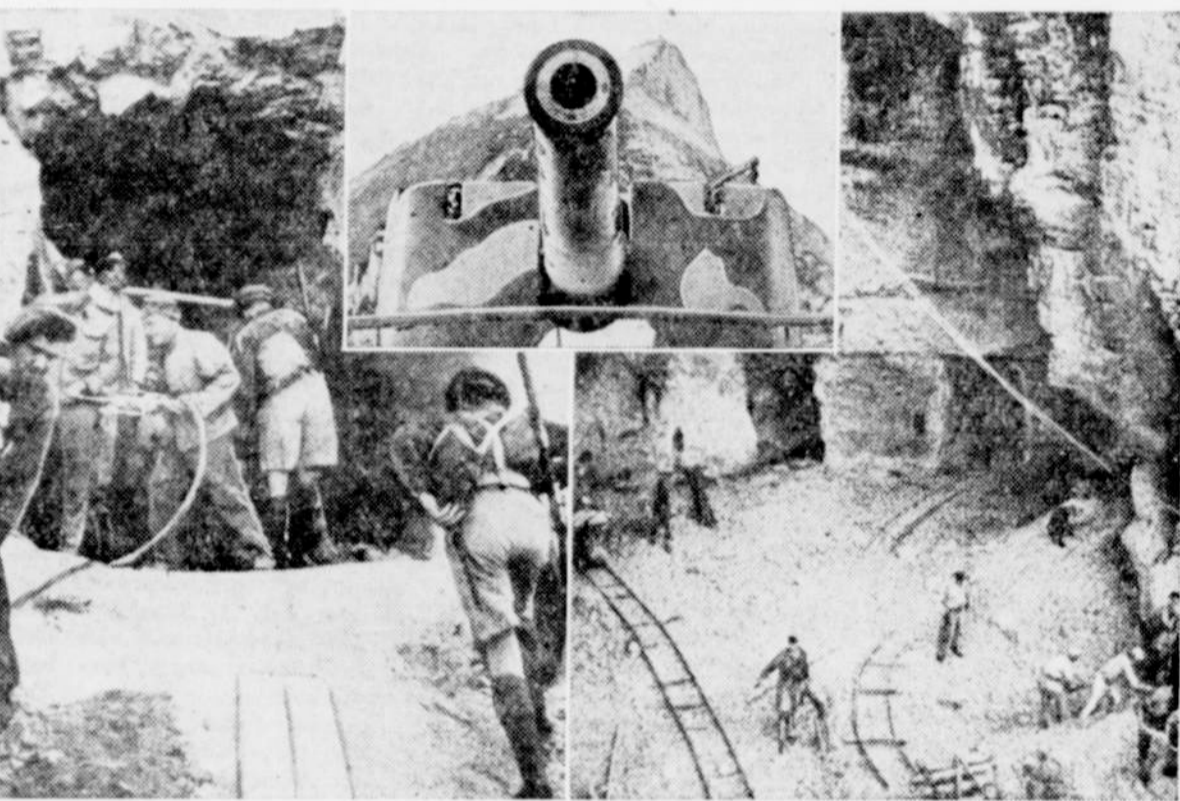
HEARING THINGS: Letter from Jean Donnelly in Hollywood tells of the swell work of the Women Fliers of America. This organization plans to train women along the same lines as its British forerunner did—as an auxiliary to our Air Corps. They would carry supplies, deliver planes from factories to military and naval depots, operate ambulance-planes, give first aid, etc. It would not duplicate the work of any other women's organization in the country.

As Cuba Prepares for Defense Against Invaders



In line with President Roosevelt's policy of Western hemisphere defense, the Republic of Cuba, under the leadership of President Batista, is training scores of youths for aviation. Students are also given courses in mechanical shop work. At left a group of students are being instructed in a mechanical workshop. Right: The right and wrong way to fall after taking the 'chute jump is explained.

Boring In—at Rock of Gibraltar



There's intense activity at Gibraltar—gateway to the Mediterranean—as British troops seek to make it impregnable to modern weapons. At the left a Tommy is handling a drill in one of the many honeycombed portions of the Rock. Right: One of the huge caverns inside the Rock, with new tracks about to be laid. Inset: A huge defense gun, manned at all times, points out from the base of Gibraltar, a warning to the Nazis.

First Big Gun Practice in War Games



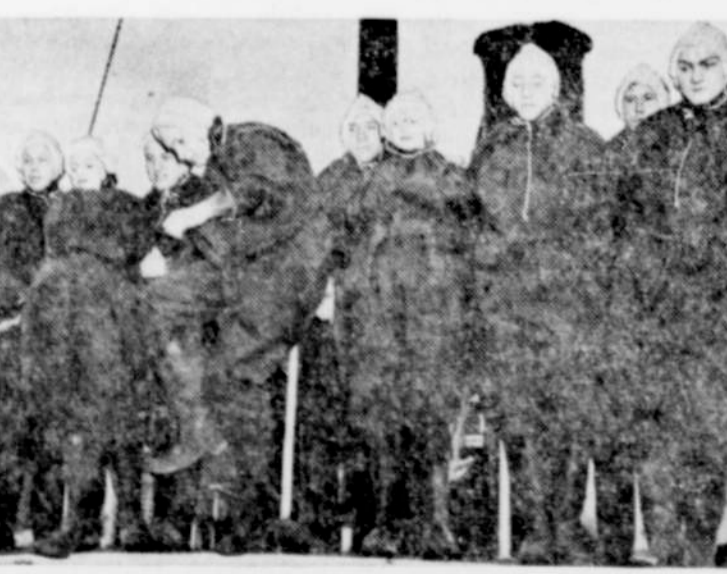
This photograph shows the first use of real ammunition in the Tennessee war games at Camp Forrest—the 155-mm. howitzers of the 123rd artillery using "the real stuff." The guns are shown booming behind a smoke camouflage. The 155-mm. howitzers throw a 95-pound shell some 12,800 yards, but effective range is limited to 10,000 yards.

Adrift 6 Days



Surviving seamen from the torpedoed 7,402-ton British freighter, Marconi, in a lifeboat approaching U. S. coast guard cutter General Greene, after six days adrift. The Marconi was in a convoy when it was sent to the bottom.

New Sack Suits Which Save a Life



A group of Norwegian girls and sailors on a tug in New York harbor wearing one-piece life-saving suits. The suits, inflated after being donned, can keep wearer afloat and comparatively warm for a long time. They are made watertight by a drawstring around the neck. Over 15,000 of these suits are being made for seamen.

Empress of Japan



Her majesty, the empress of Japan, seldom photographed, is pictured leaving the Japanese Red Cross society in Tokyo, where the annual meeting was held.