

Somewhere in England

Baseball in the European Theater during 1943



Baseball in Wartime Newsletter—Special Edition Vol. 8 No. 42 Spring 2016

Introduction

I'm sure you've already noticed that this newsletter is a little different from previous editions. For some time now I've been planning on compiling a detailed history of the baseball season played by the US military in Britain in 1943. Why 1943? Well, apart from featuring two major events – an all-professional game in London and the 20-team ETO World Series - it was the only “stable” year for American servicemen in Europe. American military personnel began arriving in 1942, but their numbers were limited, movement was regular and no formal baseball leagues were in operation. In 1944, there were more servicemen in Britain than any other year, but with the invasion of mainland Europe in June, many units were either there for only a brief period of time or on the move to Europe in support of advancing troops. In 1945, the war in Europe came to an end in May, and while it's true thousands of servicemen remained until at least the end of the summer, many units were shipping back home or to the Pacific immediately after the Nazi surrender. Therefore, 1943, was the only year in which a large number of units had arrived during the preceding winter or spring months and remained until at least the following year.

One thing I should point out is that this is not a complete account of every game played by American servicemen during 1943. In fact, as you will see, it is a somewhat patchy collection of events as there was no formal recording of military baseball activities. As a result, many events have been lost with the passing of time and, in particular, the passing of those who were involved. Instead, this is a look back at the key players, games and tournaments that shaped the year.

How did I put this information together? To begin with, I've been collecting information on WWII baseball for over 20 years. Many of the events were recalled by veterans I contacted during that time. I have also studied every copy of the London edition of the Stars & Stripes newspaper that was published that year. Combine that with a review of military unit histories, local newspaper archives, books, magazines, websites and just about any other resource you can imagine, and you end up with the following social history which I hope you enjoy.

Oh, and where did the title, “Somewhere in England” come from? Due to military secrecy, many of the contemporary press clippings gave the location of the ball game as, “Somewhere in England,” which always drove me crazy trying to figure out where that could be. It seemed like a fitting title!

Gary Bedingfield
Glasgow, Scotland April 2016

Somewhere in England

Baseball in the European Theater During 1943

When American troops began arriving in Britain to take on the German military in 1942, they were following in the footsteps of their fathers who had come to fight the same enemy in 1918. The United States' involvement in the First World War had brought an end to the major league baseball season on September 2 that year, and only the cease of hostilities had saved the following campaign. Big league baseball during World War II was saved from a similar plight by President Roosevelt's response to a letter sent to him by baseball's ruling head, Kenesaw Mountain Landis. "I honestly feel that it would be best for the country to keep baseball going," Roosevelt replied in his now famous January 15, 1942, "Green Light" letter. The President's sentiment was also echoed by America's servicemen. In response to The Sporting News question as to whether baseball should continue while they fight and perhaps die for democracy and freedom, an abundance of replies besieged the newspaper's St. Louis offices. Private John E. Stevenson, based at Fort Dix, New Jersey, wrote, "Baseball is part of the American way of life. Remove it and you remove something from the lives of American citizens, soldiers and sailors. Private Clifford P. Mansfield at Fort Knox, Kentucky, added, "For the morale of the soldier and the morale of America itself, 'keep 'em playing'."

Naturally, this "part of the American way of life" reached the shores of Great Britain almost as soon as American servicemen began to arrive in January 1942. During a time of upheaval, deprivation and anguish; a time when young Americans were taken from their families and loved ones and faced with the rigors of military life, the anxiety of being stationed in a foreign, albeit English-speaking country, and the uncertainty of what lay ahead, baseball served as a much needed morale booster.

With the full support of the military high command – who regarded sports as an ideal way to keep soldiers physically fit – baseball flourished in Britain in 1942, with former professionals playing alongside sandlot players and high school lettermen. Although no formal league structure existed that year, the summer of 1942 was full of exhibition games and pick-up contests between units fresh from the United States.



African-American troops playing baseball in front of British civilians at Ecclesfield Park, Sheffield in 1942. Throughout the war, American servicemen played ball games to entertain the British public. Britain had been at war since 1939, they had endured rationing throughout that time and suffered through the blitz. Any form of entertainment was always welcome and well attended, as can be seen in this image.

In Belfast, Northern Ireland, on July 4, 1942, the first officially recognized baseball game in that country in 25 years was staged as part of the Anglo-American Independence Day celebrations at Windsor Park soccer stadium. Before a crowd of 7,500, mostly civilians, the 34th Infantry Division Midwest Giants defeated the 1st Armored Division Kentucky Wildcats, 3-2. Playing for the Giants were two minor leaguers who had both been in the Cleveland Indians farm system before entering military service. Vern Kohler, a 6-foot-3 left-hander, had won 18 games with the Michigan State League's Flint Gems in 1940, while Bob Lange, a 6-foot-6 right-hander, was a 10-game winner with the Northern League's Fargo-Moorhead Twins in 1939. Also with the Giants was former Kitty League pitcher, Don Shelton, who had been with the Hopkinsville Hoppers in 1940, and George Zwilling, a shortstop from Cincinnati, who had been inked by the Reds to play with the South Atlantic League's Columbus Red Birds in 1942, before military service intervened. Pitching for the Wildcats was Boston farmhand, Troy Needham, who won 12 games with the Eastern Shore League's Centreville Red Sox in 1940. In Glasgow, Scotland, on October 31, an elaborate "American Games Day" was held at spacious Hamden Park, with 29,750 spectators enjoying a quarter of football, five innings of baseball and a softball game. The softball game was staged by two locally based African-American Army units who put on a crowd-pleasing exhibition of crazy antics.



The 34th Infantry Division Midwest Giants in Northern Ireland in 1942. Back row, left to right: George Luke (ss), Robert Burns (of/mgr), John Hetcher (c), Leo Robinson (of), Victor Saltzgaver (2b), Captain Smith, George Zwilling (ss), Vern Kohler (p), Frank Tofanelli (of). Front row: Bob Lange (p), Lester Zabel (2b), Red Orgell (of), Sammy Lenninger (3b), Richard Olliges (3b), Wayne Gaddis (of), Don Shelton (p), Harold Flood (1b), John Rooney (of), Orlando Langenfeld (c), Eugene Bliton (coach).



Sheldon Bowen leads off for the 1st Armored Division Kentucky Wildcats at Windsor Park, Belfast, Northern Ireland on July 4, 1942. Bowen played semi-pro ball in Harrisville, New York, before the war.

With sport serving as a perfect morale-booster and reminder of back-home traditions for American servicemen, and as a much-needed source of entertainment for British civilians who had recently suffered almost a year of non-stop bombing by Hitler's Luftwaffe and witnessed all their professional sports put on hold for the duration, baseball was ready to play a major part in the recreation time of the American military in Britain during 1943, a year in which the number of US servicemen in the country reached 750,000.

January and February 1943

During the cold winter months of January and February, baseball was far from the minds of most Americans in Britain, but at least one former ballplayer was making his presence known against the Nazis. Army Air Force Captain Billy Southworth, Jr., son of the St. Louis Cardinals manager, and a former International League outfielder, had been piloting a B-17 Flying Fortress with the 303rd Bomb Group, hitting targets in France since November 1942. On January 27, 1943, he was part of the first American mission to drop bombs on German soil when the Eighth Air Force attacked the Wilhelmshaven Naval Base in northern Germany.



Bob Hope and Billy Southworth, Jr., discuss baseball tactics. After completing his tour of duty in England, Southworth returned to the United States in January 1944, and became the deputy commanding officer of a newly organized task force of the Second Air Force. By November 1944, he was at Grand Island Army Air Field in Nebraska, an operational training base for heavy bomber crews, where he trained pilots to fly the Boeing B-29 Superfortress, the same airplane that would drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. On February 15, 1945, Major Southworth was piloting a B-29 that left Mitchel Field in New York, bound for Florida. Following an engine failure, he attempted to make an emergency landing at LaGuardia Field, but the crippled plane overshot the runway and crashed into Flushing Bay, killing five of the ten on board, including Southworth.

On the home front, the big baseball news was Joe DiMaggio's military induction. On February 17, the future hall of famer traded his \$43,750 salary from the Yankees, for \$50 a month as an army enlisted man. He was assigned to Special Services with the Army Air Force and reported for duty on February 24, to Santa Ana Army Air Base in California, the Army Air Forces' west coast training center headquarters.

In the Mediterranean Theater, the 34th Infantry Division and 1st Armored Division - both of whom had been stationed in Northern Ireland during 1942, and had staged the July 4 baseball game at Windsor Park - were arriving in North Africa in preparation for the assault on Erwin Rommel's Afrika Korps. It was in North Africa that professional baseball suffered its first casualty of 1943. On February 22, a P-40F Warhawk fighter plane of the 57th Fighter Group, was shot down in the Bay of Gabes, Tunisia. Its pilot was Captain Marshall Sneed of Piggott, Arkansas, a former outfielder in the Browns farm system who had batted .239 in 63 games for the Northeast Arkansas League's Paragould Browns in 1940. He was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and Purple Heart.



Marshall Sneed in the cockpit of his P-40. Sneed attended the University of Missouri, where he was an outfielder on the baseball team. He signed a professional contract with the St. Louis Browns in July 1939, and was assigned to the Topeka Owls of the Class C Western Association. He was batting just .131 after 20 games and was sent to the Paragould Browns of the Class D Northeast Arkansas League, where he batted a much better .283 in 52 games. In 1940, Sneed was back with Paragould and batted .239 in 63 games. He entered military service on February 8, 1941.

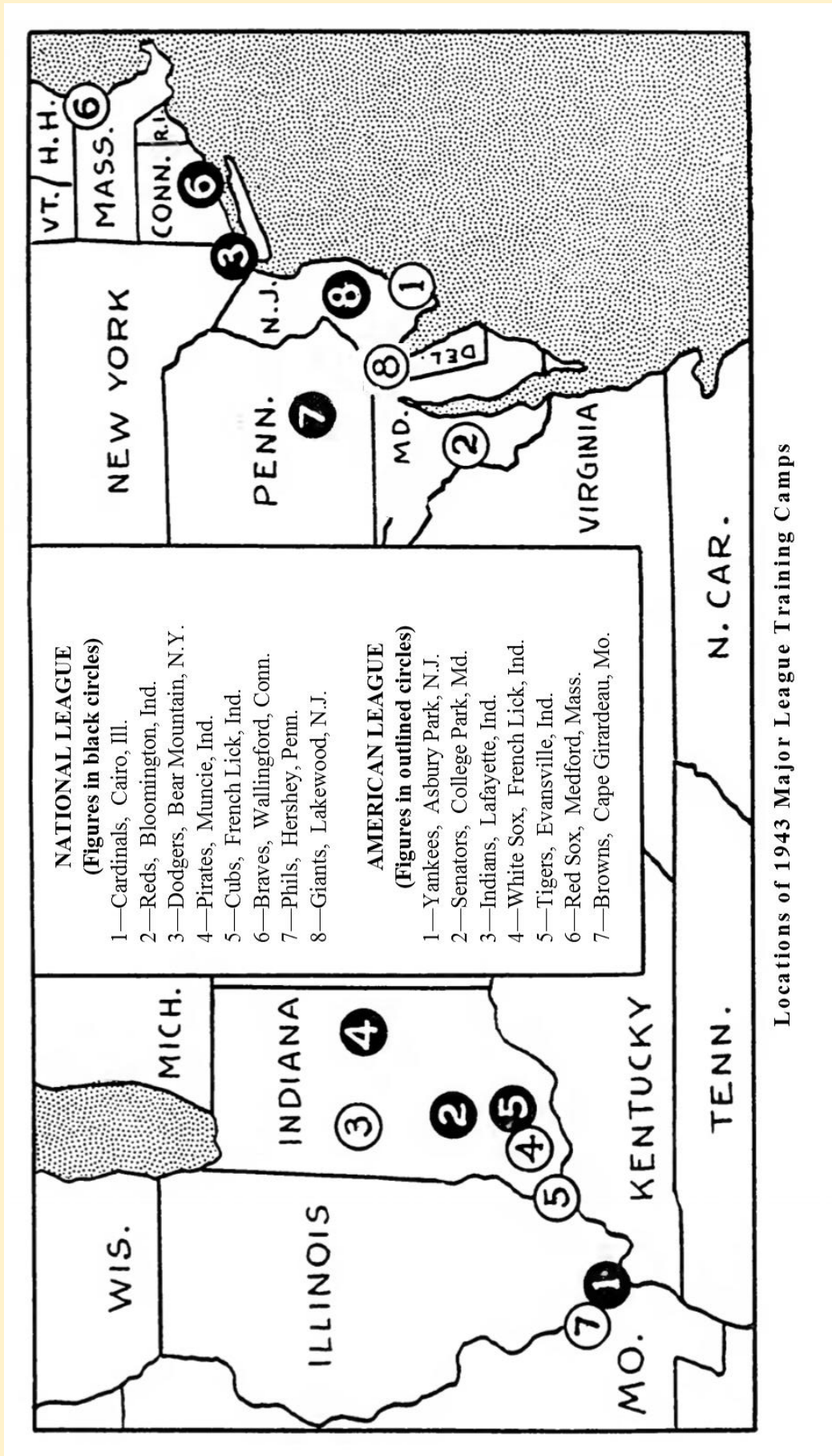
March 1943

March has always heralded the arrival of baseball with the start of spring training, but major league baseball's warm-up period took on a different appearance in 1943, as all 16 teams were instructed to train close to home in an effort to reduce non-essential travel. Commissioner Landis and Joseph B. Eastman, director of the federal Office of Defense Transportation, decided teams should train north of the Potomac and Ohio Rivers and east of the Mississippi (The Cardinals, White Sox and Cubs were limited to training in Missouri, Indiana or Illinois). The result was ballplayers would be battling freezing temperatures, rain and snowstorms, while limbering up in such places as Bear Mountain, New York and Muncie, Indiana.



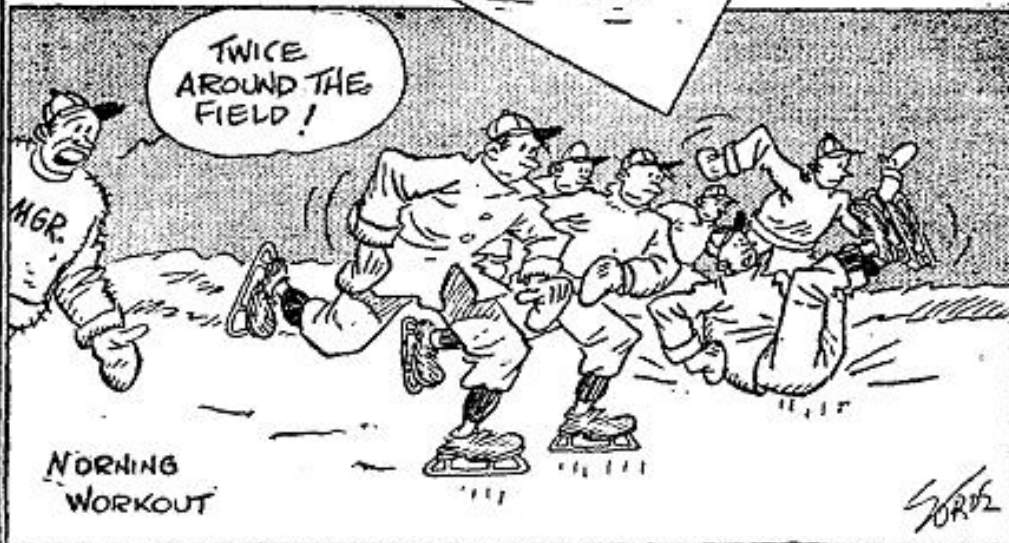
This aerial view of RAF Dunkeswell, an airfield in Devon, southwest England, that was used by the US Navy's Patrol Bomber Squadron VPB-103 for anti-submarine patrols, clearly shows a baseball field and softball fields right alongside the runway.



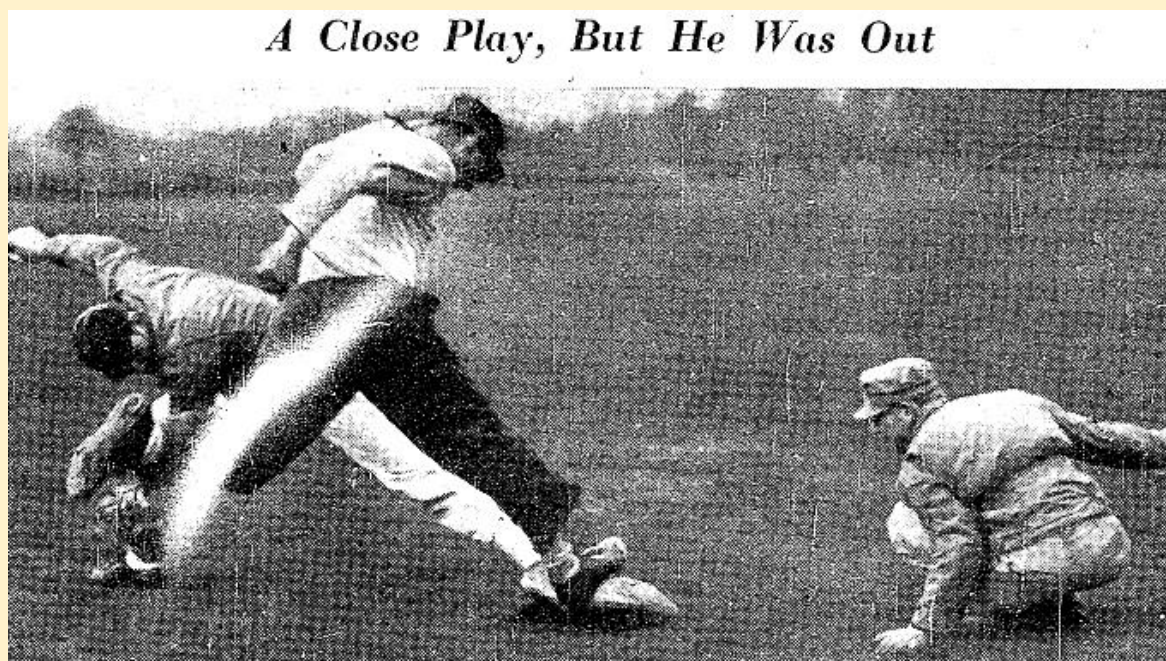


Locations of 1943 Major League Training Camps

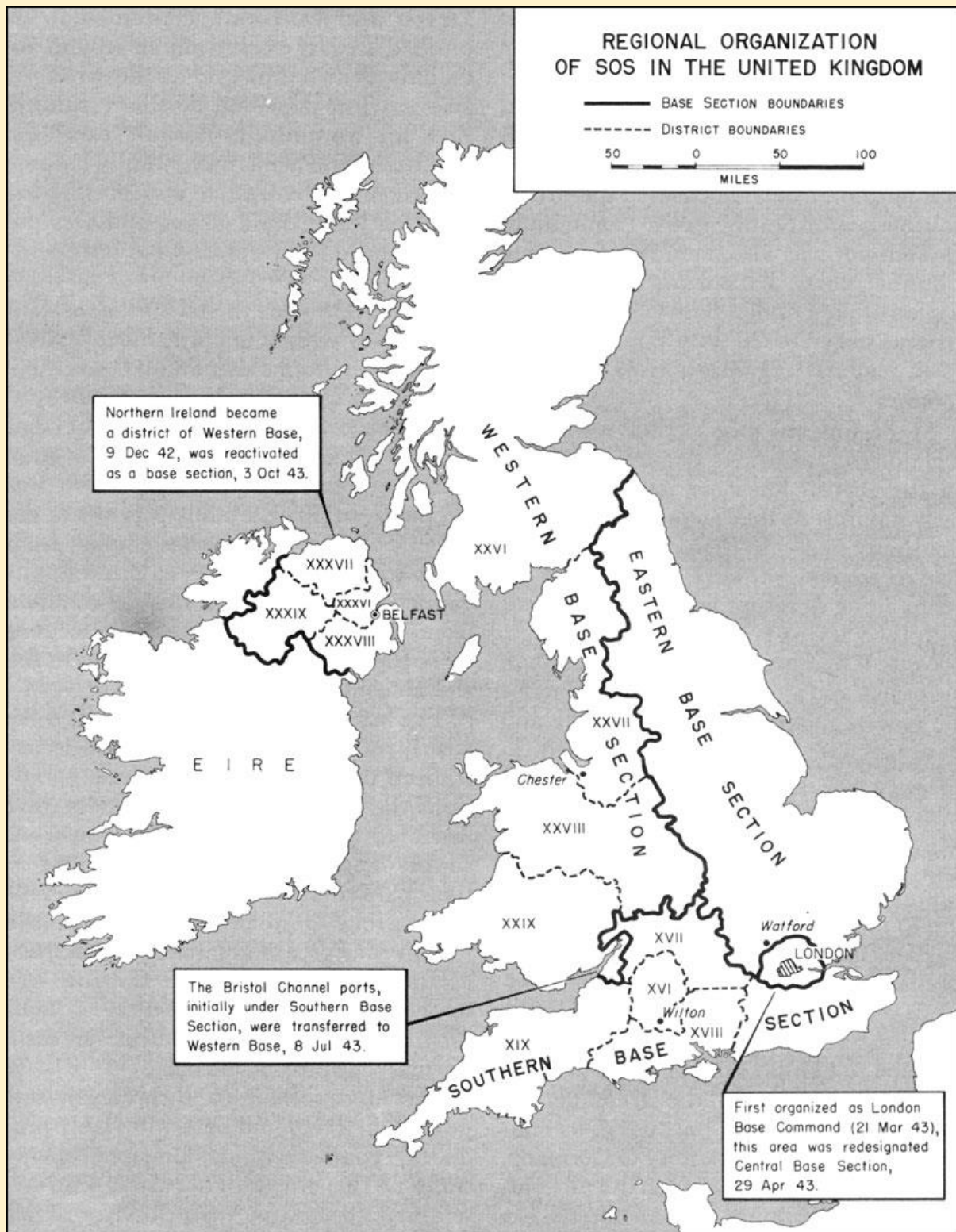
Spring Training—1943 By Jack Sords



In Britain, Captain Stanley Bach, athletic officer of the ETO, announced that six baseball leagues would play throughout England with another in Northern Ireland. Each team would play 30 games with the season beginning on May 15 and culminating in the ETO World Series in September. There was also talk of a London International Baseball League to be formed with American, Canadian and possibly British teams. Meanwhile, on March 16, an Ordnance Unit team in Northern Ireland was first to announce it was ready to play after two weeks of practice. The team was managed by 2/Lt. William T. Porter of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and the star player was infielder S/Sgt. Gordon Jenkins, a former semi-pro from Columbus, Ohio. On March 28, the London Base Command (LBC) team played their first game of the year against the 660th Engineer Topographic Battalion team at Richmond Hill, London. The LBC team was managed by Cpl. Jules "Red" Shapiro of New York. Star player was switch-hitting infielder, Sgt. Pete Pavich, who played five years in the New York Giants farm system before entering military service and batted .282 in 121 games with the Three-I League's Clinton Giants in 1941. LBC won the game, 6-3.



Action from the March 28 game between London Base Command and the 660th Engineer Topographic Battalion, as featured in the Stars and Stripes. First baseman is Pvt. Edward Konzinski of the Engineers. The base runner is Pfc. Allen Parr of LBC, who is being called out by umpire Pfc. Mike Conlotac.



In the month that major league baseball lost 1942 National League RBI-leader Johnny Mize to military service, and World Series hero Johnny Beazley was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Army Air Force after 12 weeks training at Officer Candidate School in Miami, Florida, three players from the minor leagues made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. On March 3, 2/Lt. Lou Miller of Bucoda, Washington, was piloting a B-17 Flying Fortress that continued an attack on Japanese shipping despite a fire raging in the radio compartment. Miller had been a third baseman with the Northeast Arkansas League's Paragould Browns in 1940, and batted .287 in 108 games

with 10 home runs. Just 300 feet above the water and still in the middle of the Japanese convoy, the bomber broke into two pieces and crashed into the sea, killing all on board. On March 28, Cpl. Steve Tonsick of Granite City, Illinois, serving with the 19th Engineer Regiment in North Africa, was killed in action. Tonsick had played 106 games and batted .231 with the Arkansas-Missouri League's Monett Red Birds in 1937. On March 31, Pfc. George Zwilling, who had played in Northern Ireland in 1942, was killed in action during the Battle of Fondouk Gap in Tunisia.

April 1943

In April, a month that started with the Norfolk Naval Training Station team beating the Washington Senators, 10-5, in a pre-season exhibition game, initial try-outs for the Eighth Air Force Composite Command ball team in Northern Ireland attracted minor league shortstop Pfc. Paul Bonner, who batted .254 in 139 games with the Sally League's Jacksonville Tars in 1939.

On April 4, in England, London Base Command beat the 423rd Signal Company, Eighth Air Force Headquarters, 9-1, before an estimated crowd of 5,000 at Hyde Park, London. Then on April 11, LBC trounced the 200th Field Artillery Battalion Eagles, 13-7, at the Lyons' Sports Ground in London. Playing shortstop for the Eagles was Walt Hemperly, who batted .245 his rookie season with the Interstate League's Allentown Dukes in 1939.



Paul Campbell, pictured here in England, had played 27 games over two seasons (1941/1942) with the Boston Red Sox. After missing the next three years to military service, serving with the Army Air Force's 306th Bomb Group, Campbell returned to the Red Sox in 1946, appearing in 26 games during the regular season and making an appearance in the World Series against the St. Louis Cardinals. From 1948 to 1950, Campbell was with the Detroit Tigers and played a career-high 87 games in 1949, batting a respectable .278. On May 14 of that year, he tied a major league record for first basemen by participating in two unassisted double plays in one game. Campbell went on to serve as president of the Louisville Colonels, and began a long career with the Cincinnati Reds in 1958, when he became a scout. In 1964, he was promoted to Traveling Secretary, remaining in that position until 1978. He spent a total of 57 years in professional baseball. Paul Campbell passed away on June 22, 2006, in Fairfield Glade, Tennessee. He was 88 years old.



Walt Hemperly of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, broke into professional baseball in 1939 with the Allentown Fleetwings. Earning \$150 a month, the scrappy shortstop hit .245 in 62 games. He received his draft call on April 4, 1941. "I didn't want to go," he recalled. "I wasn't an Army person. I wanted to pursue my baseball career." Hemperly was assigned to the 200th Field Artillery Battalion. From June 9, 1944, his unit went into combat and Hemperly was wounded in Germany on April 4, 1945. Exactly four years after his draft call. A compound fracture to his left leg ended his playing career. He later received a lifetime gold pass to all major league and minor league ball parks.

On April 15, Sgt. Maurice Jacobs hurled his Division Headquarters team to a 2-1 victory over C Battery of the Field Artillery, in the semi-finals of the 29th Infantry Division softball championships at Tattoo Field, Tidworth Barracks, England. In addition to being a softball star in his hometown of Baltimore, Jacobs had also been a six-year minor league veteran, playing shortstop and second base. In 1940, his last season before military service, he had batted .243 in 136 games for the Eastern League's Binghamton Triplets. In the final at Tattoo Field the following day, Jacobs again led his team to victory, defeating the Anti-Tank Company, 7-6, in extra innings. Jacobs was not only on the winning pitcher but also tripled to score the winning run in the eighth, drove in two runs in the sixth and scored the tying run in that inning to take the game into extra innings. The winning team earned a five-day furlough.

On April 18, London Base Command suffered their first setback of the season when Eighth Air Force Bomber Command beat them, 11-7. The following day, the baseball season opener at the US Army 10th Replacement Depot in Lichfield, in the Midlands, included a piece of history. A catcher's chest protector used by First World War American servicemen 25 years earlier.

On April 20, in Washington, DC, standing in for President Roosevelt, Paul V. McNutt - War Manpower Commissioner, and former pitcher at Indiana University - threw out the first ball between the Athletics and Senators at Griffith Stadium, to mark the start of the major league baseball season. The 1943 season brought a number of challenges for big league baseball. Firstly, there was the problem of a new ball – the balata ball. Due to rubber being war-rationed, a substitute had to be found to add to cork to make the core of the ball and balata, a substance used in golf balls, that was taken from tropical trees, promised to usher in a new period of long-ball hitting. The opposite was, in fact, true. Homeruns dropped drastically as evidenced by the fact that the Chicago Cubs did not hit a single home run until May 30. Eventually, a supply of old rubber -core baseballs was found and the game got back to normal. The second problem was an increase in players leaving for military service. In 1942, just 71 players left the game to join the armed forces, but that number increased to 219 in 1943. Combined with the fact that only nine minor leagues would operate during 1943 (compared to 32 in 1942), the game would require the services of youngsters and old-timers in order to survive. One former player trying to help with the problem was Larry French, a lieutenant junior-grade in the US Navy and a 14-year major league veteran with 197 wins. French's request to the Navy to pitch occasional home games for the Dodgers was denied by Rear Admiral W. B. Young, who stated that if permission was granted it would result in a flood of such requests. Thirdly, there was the case of the cash-strapped Philadelphia Phillies. In order to make ends meet, president of the club, Gerald Nugent, began selling off players at an alarming rate in 1943, forcing the league to step in and purchase the majority of the shares and take ownership. The league then sold the club to New York lumber executive William Cox. Despite losing five of their first six games, the Phillies had a not-too-bad season, finishing 64-90 (they were 42-109 in 1942). But, in November, Cox was found guilty of gambling on his own team and banned from the game for life.



Larry French, a 14-year major league veteran, arrived in England in December 1943. Before entering military service, French had won 197 games with the Pirates, Cubs and Dodgers. He started his military career on January 8, 1943, and became a lieutenant with the US Navy Supply Corps, providing spare parts for landing craft. He played a little baseball while in England during 1944, and in his first outing in mid-April of that year, French allowed just three hits in an 8-1 win over an opposing Navy team. Lieutenant French later served on the USS New York during the Okinawa invasion. He was recalled to active service during the Korean War and made the Navy a career, retiring in 1969 having attained the rank of captain. Larry French passed away in San Diego on February 9, 1987. He was 79.

On April 25, the London International Baseball League opened its season with two games at Harringey Stadium and two at Richmond Park. Harringey Stadium in north London, was a well-known greyhound racing and speedway venue that had a large grass area in the middle. It had been the home of the Hackney Royals semi-pro ball team in the late 1930s. The games at Harringey featured the 660th Engineers against the DeHavilland Comets (a team based at an aircraft manufacturing plant on the outskirts of London, that featured mostly Canadians in its lineup), and US Army Headquarters and the Canadian Military Headquarters (CMHQ). Before a crowd of 3,000 and with entertainment provided by Frank Rosato's London Base Command band, Brig. Gen. Pleas B. Rodgers, London Base Command commandant, threw out the first pitch. The Engineers beat DeHavilland, 11-1, while US Headquarters beat CMHQ, 7-2.



The DeHavilland Comets were the only non-military entry in the London International Baseball League. The DeHavilland aircraft plant was based in Hatfield, Hertfordshire, producing aircraft such as the twin-engined "Wooden Wonder" Mosquito. The company had many Canadian employees before and during the war, and were British baseball champions in 1939. Top row, third from left is Ed Smith, a renowned amateur-circuit player from Kingston, Ontario, known for his pitching and power-hitting. Pete Giovanella (front row, second from left) played semi-pro ball with the Toburn Gold Mines team in Kirkland Lake, Ontario, before the war.

May 1943

May saw the arrival in England of right-handed minor league pitcher Chuck Eisenmann. Before entering military service with the Army, Eisenmann was hurling for the Pacific Coast League's San Diego Padres. In fact, this wasn't his first stint with the military. In 1938, he was pitching for the Army in Hawaii, when the Detroit Tigers bought him out of the service. With the 827th Signal Service Company Monarchs in London, Eisenmann made his London International Baseball League debut by throwing a 2-0 no-hitter against 660th Engineers, before a crowd of 1,000 at Richmond Hill. That same day, London Base Command defeated a Glasgow All-Star team, 9-0, at Harringey Stadium, with Pete Pavich getting three hits for LBC, while Battalion HQ of a US Infantry Division was at the losing end of a 9-2 score line against the Division MP team. Samuel Foxx, the losing pitcher, went on to pitch briefly for the Fall River Indians in the New England League in 1946.



Chuck Eisenmann is arguably the best pitcher to ever play ball in Britain. His CBS Clowns were major contenders throughout 1943 and 1944, and again in France during the summer of 1945, as the Seine Base Clowns. He would have been the Army's starting pitcher in the all-professional game of August 1943, had it not been for an emergency appendectomy. In July 1944, tragedy almost struck when he was blown through the wall of his office in London by an exploding V1 buzz bomb. "That bomb didn't make the slightest preliminary buzz," he later joked, "and the only warning I had was when I heard a guard on the roof shout 'Jump!'" he explained. "I instinctively did and was actually in the air when the explosion came. It blew me backward right through the wall of the room – fortunately, the wall was crumbling with the explosion, however." Eisenmann spent around seven days in hospital with an injured hip and back, and almost lost the index finger on his pitching hand. "I refused the Purple Heart," he later joked. "I figured I wasn't damaged enough." When Eisenmann resumed mound duties with the Clowns he favored the finger and used an overhand curveball release rather than his usual three-quarter style. The result was an even more effective breaking ball that was almost unhittable for his service team opponents. Eisenmann rose to the rank of major while in the Army, and later recalled the difference that made when he returned to professional baseball and the Pacific Coast League in 1946. "A lot of the players on the San Diego team were enlisted men and they put up a sign in the dugout which read, 'enlisted men only.' Although it was done kind of in jest there was an element of truth to it, I did feel different."



The 827th Signal Service Company Monarchs were winners of the first half of the London International Baseball League. Back row, left to right: Charles McGowan (utility), Frank Partyka (c), Chuck Eisenmann (p), Maj. Bottom (company commander), Bill Stoddard (1b), John Farrell (ss) and Craig Penrose. Front row: Joseph Summerell (of), Fred Brandt (of), Bobby Korisher (2b), Richard Roberts (3b) and Lou Kelley (of).

On May 3, in aid of the Merchant Navy Relief Fund, the Eighth Air Force HQ team defeated the Signal Service Company, 8-4, before 6,000 fans at Eighth Air Force HQ in London. Three days later, in Cambridgeshire, nearly 4,000 people watched two teams from the 91st Bomb Group at a Wings for Victory (a National Savings campaign to raise money to build warplanes) benefit exhibition softball game. The Bulldogs beat the Bears, 7-5.

On May 14, a day after the remaining Axis troops in North Africa surrendered to Allied forces, play began in the Southern Base Section league in England with 14 teams. The league was organized by 1/Lt. Ralph Ifft, a right-hander who won 14 games with the Penn State League's Beaver Falls Browns in 1940. In addition to organizing baseball, Ifft formed a softball league, staged weekly boxing shows, ran a swimming pool and oversaw a golf tournament. He told a Stars and Stripes reporter in 1943, "We try to make it possible for every soldier who wants to take part in athletics to do so. Our job is to keep the boys on the post and out of the pub and to an extent I think we are succeeding."



Softball played by men of the 303rd Bomb Group at Molesworth, England.



Canadian servicemen playing ball on the streets of London.



Ralph Ifft had a superb 14-4 won-loss record and a league-leading 2.01 ERA with Beaver Falls of the Pennsylvania State Association in 1940. The crafty right-hander was juggling a baseball career with his education, and after graduating from the University of Akron in 1941, he pitched for Springfield of the Three-I League before entering military service.

On May 21, both the Eighth Air Force HQ and the 827th Signal Monarchs kept their undefeated records intact following a scoreless tie at the Lyons' Sports Ground, London. Chuck Eisenmann struck out seven in the contest while Herb Jenkins, who pitched for Salem-Roanoke of the Virginia League in 1941, struck out 10 for the flyboys. The following day the baseball season opened in Northern Ireland at the Ravenhill Rugby Park in Belfast. The league consisted of the US Navy team from Creevagh, the Air Force Dodgers, the Pill Rollers, the Agitators, Thunderbolts, Pelicans, Flying MPs, Redbirds, Bulldozers, Nightsticks, and the Blues. Col. I. S. Dirking, SOS head in Northern Ireland, threw out the first ball, with Commander Thomas Keane, USNR, receiving. The Navy Creevagh team beat the Dodgers, 10-1, in the opener. Four days later, Ralph Snyder, formerly of the Cordele Reds of the Georgia-Florida League, allowed five hits in the Bulldozers season opener, defeating the Thunderbolts, 15-2.



Baseball at Ravenhill rugby stadium in Belfast, Northern Ireland. The stadium opened in 1923 and was used by American service teams throughout the war. The stadium remains the home of Ulster rugby and is now known as Kingspan Stadium.

May 30, a Sunday, was a busy day for baseball in the ETO. The first no-hit, no-run game of the year was played at the 78th Fighter Group's home at Duxford airfield. T/Sgt. Dicky Snyder, of McKeesport, Pennsylvania, hurled the perfect contest for the Service Squadron Vagabonds who defeated the Fighter Squadron Scalders, 4—0. Snyder was never in danger. He didn't walk a man and struck out six batters. Beside his pitching efforts, Snyder hit two clean singles to lead in the day's batting. The same day, Pvt. Ed "Deacon" Behnen, Blues lefthander who pitched for the Northern League's Grand Forks Chiefs in 1941, hung up a North Ireland League record at Ravenhill Park by striking out 17 men in seven innings, beating the Pelicans, 2-0. And in the Southern Base Section in England, the American School Center baseball league opened its season

with the ASC Angles defeating the Center's Ordnance entry, 13-1, behind Pvt. Fran Hecker's five-hit pitching. Hecker was with the Dothan Browns of the Alabama State League in 1940.



Action from a baseball game at Duxford airfield in Cambridgeshire, England, home of the Eighth Air Force's 78th Fighter Group.



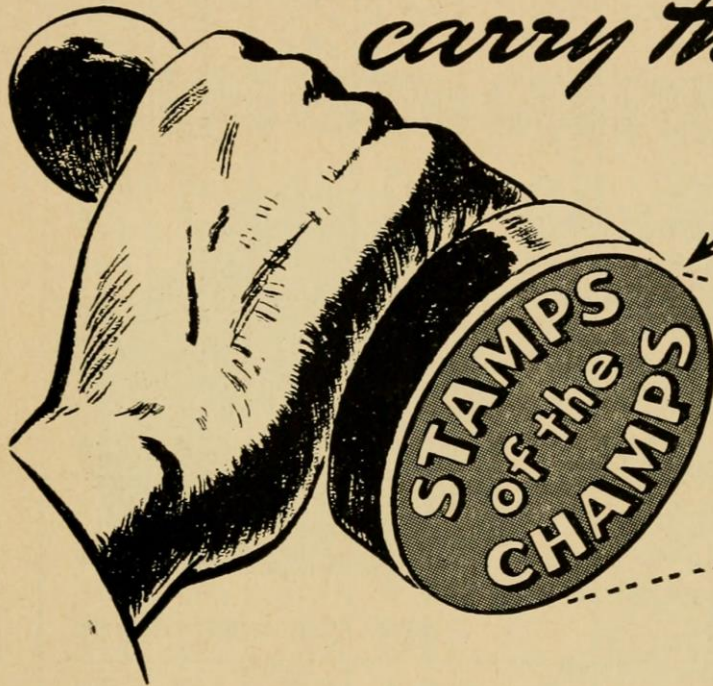
Pvt. Ed "Deacon" Behnen was from East St. Louis, Missouri, and had thrown a handful of games for the Northern League's Grand Forks Chiefs in 1941. He pitched in Northern Ireland for the US Army Blues in 1943, and set a Northern Ireland Baseball League record with 17 strike outs in May, then beat his own record with 18 strike outs in July.

Meanwhile, on that same Sunday, back in the United States, it was opening day of the All-American Girls Softball League, with Southbend playing Rockford and Kenosha facing Racine. A total of 108 games were played in the regular season, and during the summer the league name was changed to the All-American Girls Baseball League (AAGBBL) to make it distinctive from the existing softball leagues.



To round off the month, T/4 Bill Brech, an outstanding semi-pro pitcher from Secaucus, New Jersey, ran his three-game strikeout string up to 44 as he led the 988th Military Police Company Fliers to a 15-0 victory over the 952nd Engineers in a Wings for Victory game at Kingston-upon-Thames.

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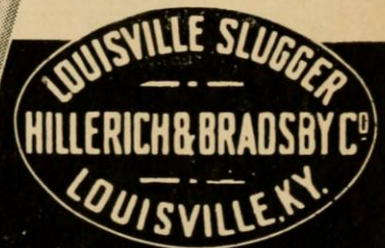


ONLY the bats of the Champs carry the famous Hillerich & Bradsby oval trademark and the written signature of a famous slugger. These are the marks of distinction which guarantee highest quality and dependability.

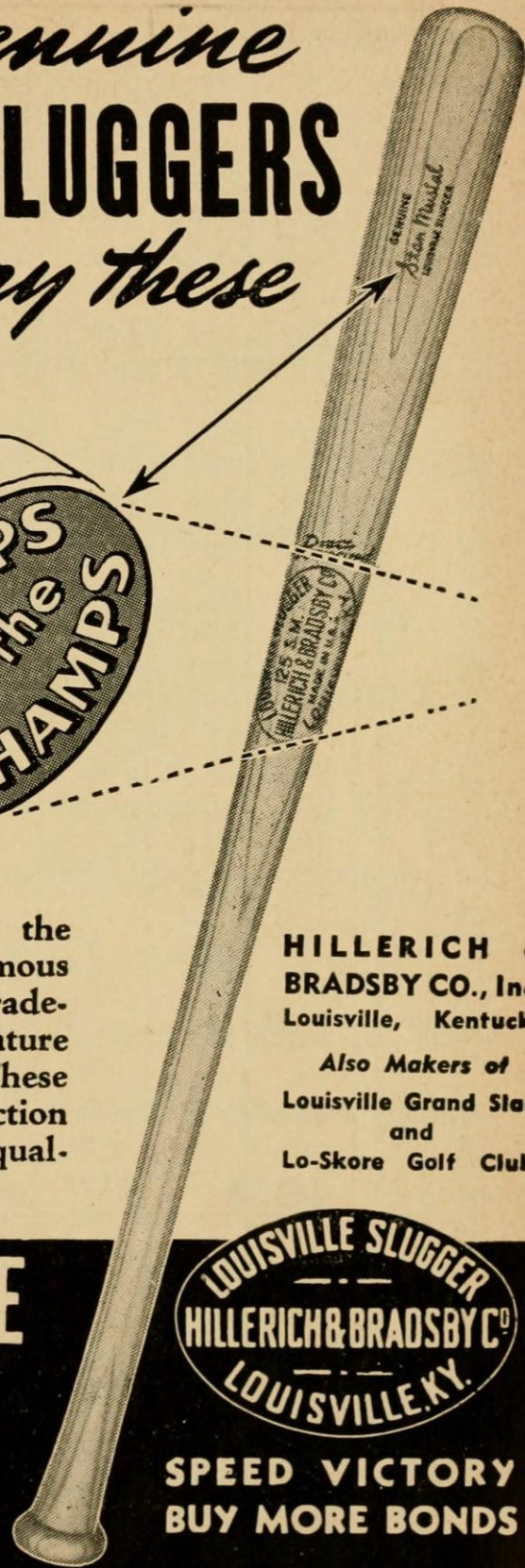
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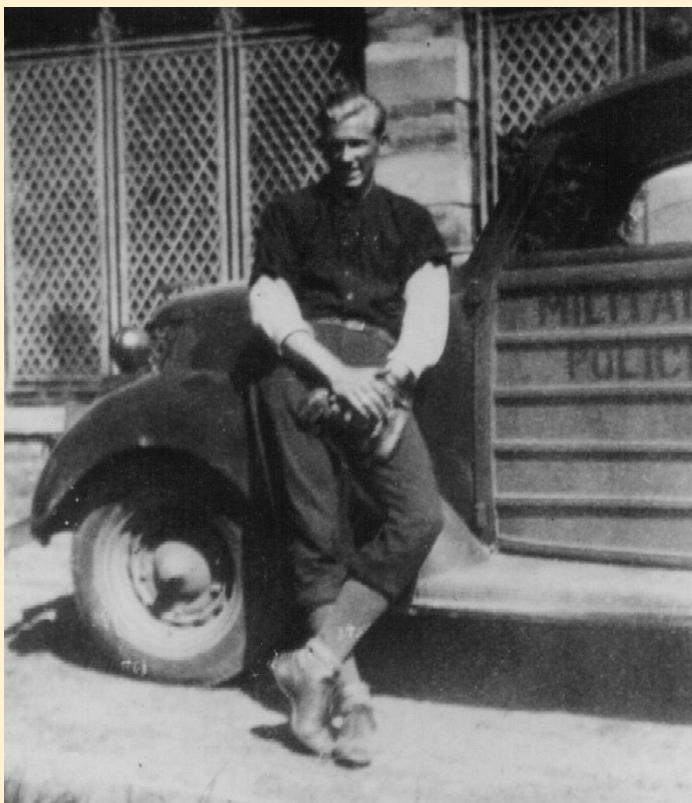
**SPEED VICTORY
 BUY MORE BONDS**



A 1943 advertisement for Louisville Slugger.



The 988th Military Police Company (Aviation) Fliers proudly display the contents of their trophy cabinet at the end of the 1943 season. The Fliers played in 15 fund-raising games in Britain between 1943 and 1944, more than any other American service team.



Bill Brech, a semi-pro right-hander from Secaucus, New Jersey, was probably the best pitcher to serve with the Army Air Force in Britain during the war. Although he will be remembered for his outstanding no-hit performance in the 1943 all-professional game, Brech pitched for three seasons with the 988th MP Fliers and won more than 20 games, including a no-hitter against the 1st BADA Bearcats in the 1944 Air Service Command championships. Upon his return to New Jersey, he signed with the Interstate League's Harrisburg Senators, but at 24, and with no previous professional experience, he chose not to play and joined the semi-pro Otto Mack team instead. Bill Brech was just 56 when he passed away in June 1978.

May was certainly ushering in the start of a long summer of baseball in the ETO, but back home, the month claimed the lives of three former minor league players. On May 21, Marine Pvt. Lou Vann, a former minor league infielder whose career had begun in the Eastern League in 1932, and who had more recently been playing with a House of David team, was killed in an accident at Camp Pendleton, California. May 23, claimed the lives of Army Air Force 2/Lt. Hal Dobson and Navy Lt. Roswell Higginbotham. Dobson had pitched in the Pacific Coast League in 1941, while Higginbotham had played infield in the minor leagues of Texas during the 1920s, then coached baseball at Texas A&M and Southern Methodist. Dobson was killed when his Army Air Force plane crashed at Silver Lake, California, while heading to Las Vegas for a baseball game. Higginbotham died during an emergency abdominal operation at the naval hospital at Quonset Point Naval Air Station in Rhode Island.

June 1943

On the first day of the month, Bill Brech struck out 17, making a total of 61 strikeouts in four games, as the 988th MP Fliers defeated Eighth Air Force Service Command, 4-1, in a Wings for Victory game at Maidenhead, Kent. Meanwhile, back in the States on June 4, former Yankee star, Joe DiMaggio, hit safely in his twelfth straight game to help the Santa Anna Army Air Base whip the Long Beach Ferry Command, 5—3. Red Ruffing, ex Yankee ace, was the losing hurler.

On June 6, a seven-team baseball league was inaugurated in the central district sector of the Western Base Section in England. The league was one of a number organized throughout the United Kingdom to determine representatives to the ETO championships in September. Units represented in the league were port headquarters; the station hospital; one from a military post, which included military police, infantry and quartermaster detachments; Headquarters Company WBS; and three from ordnance depots. On the same day, and after 13 straight wins, Chuck Eisenmann lost his first game in England as the 827th Signal Monarchs went down, 3-2, to the First Canadian General Hospital. Leo Curtis of Springfield, Massachusetts, was the winning pitcher for the Canadians.

Three days later, Eisenmann took advantage of the organizational change of London Base Command to Central Base Section and unveiled his new all-star ball club, the Central Base Section (CBS) Clowns. When asked why he named the team the Clowns, Eisenmann replied, "I had a group of guys that were characters so I just called them Clowns."



An early photo of the CBS Clowns in a London park, shortly after their formation in June 1943.

Like most pitchers in Britain at the time, Eisenmann was faced with one major problem. Few, if any ball fields in the country had a pitcher's mound, and many games were played on soccer fields where the erection of a mound was not permitted. So, to overcome this, he set about constructing his own portable mound. Eisenmann built a wooden framework that was then layered with turf, and the unusual creation, which met all baseball regulations, journeyed everywhere with the team. Unfortunately, the Clowns debut did not go according to plan. They were beaten, 2-0, by Bill Brech and the 988th MP Fliers, with Brech hurling a one-hitter.

June 9 saw Fran Hecker shut out the General Hospital, 7—0, as the American School Center Angels put together seven hits for as many runs. Hecker struck out 15, allowed five hits, walked one and permitted one runner to reach third base. From the enthusiasm shown by 8,000 British sports fans at Goodison Park, Liverpool, on June 12, the British were going to make it a point to see more American baseball as a charity exhibition game between two US Air Force teams, the Yanks and the Giants, was well received. The Yanks smothered the Giants, 16-2, and the crowd contributed a sum of just short of \$4,000 to the British Red Cross and St. John Fund. Playing for the Yanks was Burton Barger who went on to play briefly with the Hickory Rebels in the North Carolina State League in 1947.

On June 13, former Browns farmhand, Mike Kowal, pitched the Signal Battalion Yellowjackets to a 10-1 victory of the Port of Embarkation Bears, striking out 13 along the way, while playing first base in a 14-2 win for the 93rd Bomb Group was former Milwaukee Brewer Hugh Gustafson. That same day, Billy Southworth, Jr., took charge of a new B-17 Flying Fortress and named it "Winning Run."

On June 14, the 988th MPs' suffered their first loss in 14 games as Ross Grimsley hurled a one-hitter in a 2-1 victory for VIII Bomber Command Headquarters. Grimsley struck out 15 while losing pitcher, Bill Brech, struck out 10 and allowed six hits. Grimsley would start a minor league career after the war and pitch in the big leagues for the Chicago White Sox in 1951. His son, Ross Grimsley, Jr., would enjoy a 10-year big league career. Before a crowd of 5,000, former minor league pitcher, Joe Rundus, hurled an 11-0 no-hitter for the 303rd Bomb Group against a rival bomb group. Rundus had won 16 games with the Mid-Atlantic League's Dayton Ducks in 1937.



Four members of the Eighth Air Force All-Stars. Left to right: Ross Grimsley, Gene Thompson, Nick Fracaro and Bill Brech. Grimsley played in the Southeastern Kansas Ban Johnson League before the war. Following huge success pitching for military teams, he began his professional career with KOM League's Chanute Owls in 1946, winning 18 games. He was a 19-game winner with the 19-game winner with the Western Association's Topeka Owls in 1947, and made his big league debut with the White Sox in September 1951. Thompson spent eight seasons in the minor leagues, hitting over .300 in five of them. Fracaro, from Joliet, Illinois, played with the Joliet Rivals before and after the war. Brech was played semi-pro baseball in New Jersey.

On June 15, the Anglo-American Brains Trust - a committee designed to increase understanding between the United States and Great Britain, with over 200 visits to RAF and British Army bases - were at VIII Bomber Command when asked when the English would take up baseball. "When you Americans take up cricket," replied Lt. Col. Webster, director of British Army education in London.



African-Americans of the 826th Aviation Engineer Battalion, enjoy a ball game between building an airfield in Northamptonshire, England.

On June 17, two Army Air Force teams – the Service Command Red Devils and the Ramblers - battled it out at a city in East Anglia. Playing third base and hitting a home run in the first inning for the Red Devils over the Ramblers, was Alabama State League player Hall Causey. Penn State League lefty Adelard Benoit went the distance for the Red Devils in their 10-4 win. Meanwhile, in Northern Ireland, Ed Behnen was at it again, striking out 18 Pill Rollers as the Blues won, 4-0, at Ravenhill Park. That same day, Monte Rouquette, who won 13 games in the Alabama State League in 1940, hurled a no-hitter for the Signal Company Dodgers in a 4-0 win over the Engineer Cards in a Southern Base Section game. It was Rouquette's fifth win of the season.

Scheduled for June 18, was the first game of a three-game playoff at Stamford Bridge Stadium, London, to decide the London International Baseball League first half-season champions. The 827th Signal Monarchs were to face the First Canadian General Hospital, but the game was postponed due to rain. Rescheduled for June 22, Chuck Eisenmann struck out 19 and allowed five hits in the 4-2 win over the Canadians. He then clinched the title for the Monarchs with a 17 strike out, 14-0, win on June 25.



The 827th Signal Monarchs in action against the First Canadian General Hospital at Stamford Bridge Stadium, London, during the London International Baseball League's first half play-offs.

On June 26, a crowd of 7,000 attended a Wings for Victory game in Preston, Lancashire. The Washington Hall Yankees of the Eighth Air Force Control Depot lost to the Adams Hall Double Clutchers of the Quartermaster Truck Regiment, 13-3.

On June 27, the 827th Signal Monarchs, recently crowned champs of the first half of the London International Baseball League, lost their second half opener to the US Army Headquarters. Pvt. Jimmy Wright was the winning pitcher, with a ninth inning double by Pete Pavich clinching the game, 8-7. M/Sgt. Bill Stoddard took the loss for the Monarchs as Chuck Eisenmann was hurling that day for the CBS Clowns who cruised to a comfortable, 24-1, win over the Southern Base Section.

On June 28, Cpl. Fran Niergarten, former St. John's University pitcher, celebrated his first appearance in England as a Headquarters Squadron, Eighth Air Force hurler by twirling a no-hit, no-run, 10-0 game against the 1982nd Quartermaster Truck Company. He also fanned ten and not a man reached first. Niergarten also hit for the circuit, scoring three men in front of him. In Stratford-Upon-Avon that same day, a Wings for Victory game saw the Wildcats beat the Red Raiders, 7-6, before a crowd of 5,000 in the first baseball game in William Shakespeare country.

Minor league baseball suffered one death to a player in service in June 1943. Jim Donovan, a second baseman who played briefly with the Canadian-American League's Rome Colonels in 1938, was killed in a parachute training jump at Fort Benning, Georgia, on June 23.

July 1943

Major league baseball featured the first all-star game played at night in 1943. Before 31,938 fans at Shibe Park, the American League all-stars beat the National Leaguers, 5-3, and the game raised \$155,000 for the Bat and Ball Fund which supplied servicemen with athletic equipment. Announcer Don Dunphy, was at the microphone at Shibe Park for a special relay broadcast by the BBC to American troops in Britain.

In July 1943, the War Department announced the placement of new contracts for \$4,000,000 worth of additional athletic and other recreational equipment to meet the needs of service men in coming months. Contracts were placed by the Army Service Forces through the Quartermaster Corps for use by the Special Service Division. Equipment for baseball and softball led the list, but there were plenty of boxing gloves, footballs, basketballs, volleyballs and handballs, as well as sets of horseshoes, quoits, archery and fishing tackle. For quiet moments such games as chess, checkers, Parcheesi, backgammon, Chinese checkers, cribbage, dominoes and bingo were included in the order.



A little softball action at an Eighth Air Force base as B-24 Liberators fly overhead.

On the first day of the month, Chuck Eisenmann avenged his earlier defeat at the hands of the 988th Military Police with an 8-4 win, while, in his first start for the Navy Creevagh team in Northern Ireland, F/1c Frank Pekarovits, who pitched for the Virginia Creevagh's Salem-Roanoke Friends in 1940 under the name Frank Pekare, won, 14-11,

against the Marine Corps team in the first of a five-game series for the naval base championship in Northern Ireland.

The Fourth of July brought with it numerous ball games all across the United Kingdom. Some of the highlights included a 14-strike out, two-hitter by Eisenmann over the 78th Fighter Group, to claim his 21st win of the year for the CBS Clowns. Losing pitcher was Mauro Duca, who hurled for the Twin Falls Cowboys of the Pioneer League in 1939. Two US Army teams played at the spacious County Cricket Grounds at Northampton. A crowd of 6,000 witnessed the American School Center Angels' Fran Hecker defeat the Ordnance Indians, 16-0, allowing just one hit, in a charity game played for the British Red Cross and St. John Fund. Former Washington Senators pitcher, Monte Weaver – pitching for the first time in 18 months – defeated the 988th Military Police Fliers team as the Eighth Fighter Command Headquarters won, 6-2. He retired in the fourth inning after yielding two runs, two hits and a walk, while striking out a lone batter. But perhaps the most intriguing game was played between the doctors of the Lockheed Overseas' Base and a hospital unit at Amertex Park in Northern Ireland. Each team carried eight doctors and a nurse. The nurses pitched and Miss Louise Parker, of Los Angeles, won a pitchers' duel from 2/Lt. Dorothy Dibble, of Youngstown, Ohio. The score was Lockheed 8, Hospital 7.



Mauro Duca played for the Pioneer League's Twin Falls Cowboys in 1939, and the Quebec Provisional League's Sherbrooke Braves in 1940. He pitched for the 78th Fighter Group Thunderbolts in England from 1943 to 1945, and defeated Chuck Eisenmann's CBS Clowns in the semi-finals of the 1943 ETO Word Series before losing to the 116th Infantry Regiment Yankees in the final. Duca went on to serve in Korea. He passed away in July 1982.

On July 6, baseball was played for the first time in Worcester, with 7,000 people turning out to see the Rebels nip the Yanks, 3—2. The game was part of the "Holidays at Home" celebrations. Another morale-boosting event staged by communities in Britain. A week of entertainment was held for civilians who, due to the war and gasoline rationing, were unable to travel and enjoy any form of vacation.

On July 7, it was announced that an ambitious all-professional baseball game would take place on August 7 at Wembley Stadium, London. The game would feature Army pros against Air Force pros. The Stars and Stripes newspaper requested that any

servicemen with professional baseball experience since 1939 who would like to play, should get in touch. The following day, Chuck Eisenmann – most likely to be the starting pitcher for the Army team - underwent an emergency appendectomy. On July 11, Carl Smith, a pitcher from Alexandria, Louisiana, tied Ed Behnen's Northern Ireland strike out record of 18, pitching the Blues to a 2-0 win over the Agitators. After the war, Smith pitched for numerous minor league teams including a couple of seasons with his hometown Alexandria Aces in the Evangeline League.

On July 12, Ross Grimsley lead VIII Bomber Command to an 11-5 win over the 93rd Bomb Group Traveling Circus. It was Bomber Command's 12th straight win and Grimsley, who fanned 12, ran his strike out total to 73 over six games. On the same day, back in the United States, Babe Ruth's military all-stars beat the Boston Braves, 9-8. Managed by The Babe and featuring Joe DiMaggio and Ted Williams, 48-year-old Ruth, pinch-hit in the 7th inning and flied out to right, but the all-stars won on a Ted Williams home run.



A ball game in progress at the 306th Bomb Group's airfield at Thurleigh in Bedfordshire, England. Batting is minor leaguer Gene Thompson, who batted over .300 in five consecutive post-war seasons in the Western International League.

On July 15, the American School Center Angels remained undefeated in the Southern Base Section's Northern Baseball League, staggering to a 7-6 decision over the Quartermaster Senators. The winning run came in dramatic fashion in the bottom half of the ninth inning with two out as burly S/Sgt. Frank Davito, of Nokomis, Illinois, smashed the longest home run ever hit on the Angel field to break a 6-6 deadlock.

On the same day, in a league game at the 78th Fighter Group's home at Duxford, Sgt. Victor T. Panyan, of Kenosha, Wisconsin, pitching for the Fighter Control Warhawks, turned in a no-hit, no-run game as his teammates hit hard to down the Pirates, 13-0.

On July 16, in the United States, as a clear demonstration of how deprived of players the surviving minor league teams had become, 10-year veteran, Frank Veverka of the Southern Association's Memphis Chicks, shutout the Atlanta Crackers twice in a single day, 11-0 and 5-0, giving up five hits in 16 innings. All this took only two hours and 34 minutes, allowing Veverka plenty of time to make his 11.30 shift at the war plant where he also worked.



US servicemen were often found teaching British kids how to play baseball.

On July 17, Billy Southworth, Jr., completed his tour of duty as a B-17 Flying Fortress pilot, leading his crew on 25 successful missions. Two weeks later he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, having previously been awarded the Air Medal and three Oak Leaf Clusters. The DFC citation praised Southworth "for extraordinary achievement while serving as pilot of a B-17 on bombardment missions over enemy-occupied continental Europe" and for "displaying great courage and skill."

On July 18, Frank Pekarovits struck out 14 Air Force Mustangs in leading the Navy Creevagh team to a 3-0 win. He allowed just one hit in his third appearance. In 21 innings he had allowed five hits, collected 26 strikeouts and given up six earned runs.

On July 22, an estimated crowd of 5,000 saw the VIII Bomber Command Bombers top the 93rd Bomb Group Traveling Circus, 2-1, in a seven-inning twilight thriller at the St. Lawrence Cricket Grounds in Canterbury. This was the Bombers' second triumph over the Traveling Circus outfit and their 14th straight win in ETO competition. Ross Grimsley struck out six batters to bring his total up to 92 in eight games. On the same day, the Headquarters Blues defeated the Infantry Pelicans, 14-6, to claim the first round championship of the Northern Ireland Baseball League. July 23 saw the 1st Provisional Marine Battalion baseball team at Londonderry, Northern Ireland, make it two out of three in their five game series with the Navy Creevagh team for the US Naval Operating Base (USNOB) championship, with a 13-8 victory. The Creevagh team took the first game 14-11, and the Marines won the second, 16-9.



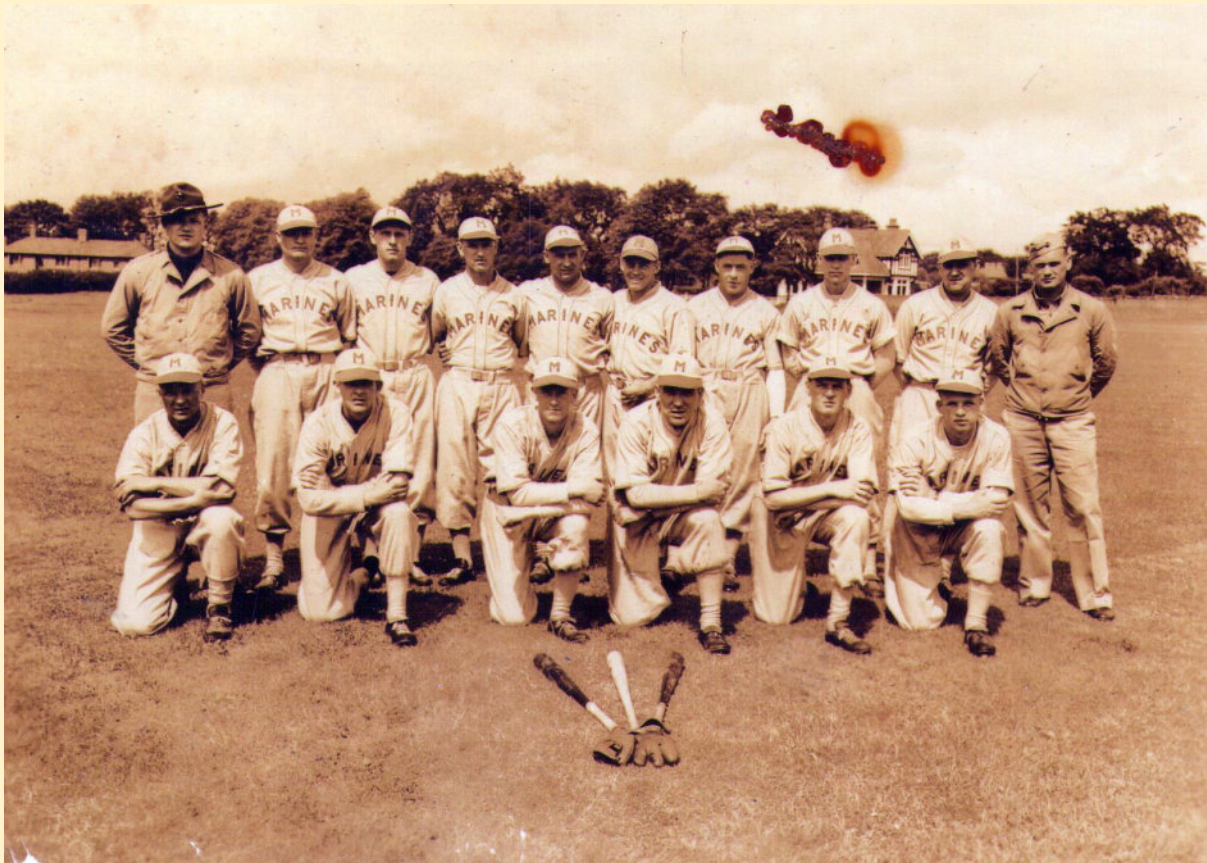
The VIII Bomber Command Bombers in 1943. Seated at the front is Ross Grimsley, at the time a semi-pro player, but he went on to enjoy a 16-year career in the minor leagues and pitched seven games for the Chicago White Sox in 1951. His son, also Ross, had an 11-year career in the majors with the Reds, Orioles, Expos and Indians. He won 18 games with the Orioles in 1974, and was a 20-game winner with the Expos in 1978, earning all-star selection.

At Yankee Stadium on July 28, Babe Ruth led a combined Yankees and Indians team – known as the Yank-Lands - against the North Carolina Pre-flight Cloudbusters, in a benefit game in aid of Baseball's War Relief and Service Fund. The Cloudbusters squad included stars such as Buddy Hassett, Johnny Pesky, Joe Coleman, Ted Williams, Harry Craft and Dusty Cook. Johnny Sain walked the Babe in his one plate appearance in the sixth, as the Yank-Lands lost, 11-5. The game raised in excess of \$30,000, which was added to over \$150,000 raised by other major league benefit games played that day. A similar day of major league benefit games on June 30, had raised \$147,391.

Professional baseball suffered two in-service fatalities during July 1943. On July 21, Navy Ensign Carlyle "Curly" Kopp – who played 104 games in the outfield with the Western League's Sioux City Soos in 1941 – was killed during a routine training flight near St. Paul Park, Minnesota. On July 31, Navy Lieutenant Bob Hershey – who had batted .313 in 120 games with the Three-I League's Cedar Rapids Raiders – was killed aboard a twin-engined flying boat that was making an attack run on a Japanese submarine in the Caribbean.

August 1943

On August 3, the Navy Creevagh team defeated the Marines, 8-3, to tie their five-game series at Londonderry, Northern Ireland, behind the two-hit pitching of George Ertell, who formerly pitched for the Medico Club in the Queens Alliance League in New York. However, the Marines clinched the championship with a 14-13 triumph over the Navy on August 13. The game was tied until the ninth, when Cpl. Frank Peitrich, of the Marines, came in on a wild pitch.




The First Provisional Marine Battalion baseball team (also known as the Beech Hill Marines). Back row, left to right: Lt. Metzler (business manager), Jack Halford (of), Charles Ziober (p), Leslie Akens (of), Frank Pietrich (ss), George Bailey (c), Robert "Red" Kimball (3b/p), Allen Marsh (of), Savikas (c) and Bill "Sunny" Robinson (manager). Front row: Hank Dubrowski (of), Pappy Potter (of), Cloyd Hamm (2b), Sam McAllister (1b), "Rubber Arm" Tewksbury (p) and Shriever (of).



Sam McAllister, first baseman for the Marines gets the out in a game against the Creevagh Navy team at Clooney Park, Londonderry.

In London, on August 5, before a crowd of 8,000 fans at Walthamstow Greyhound Stadium, the MPs edged out Army Headquarters Company, 4-3, in a London International Baseball League game.

August 7, witnessed the much anticipated all-professional baseball game at Wembley Stadium, London – the first pro game played in England since the New York Giants and Chicago White Sox toured the country in the fall of 1924. Featuring the best baseball talent serving with American military units in the country, the US Army and Eighth Air Force met before 21,500 fans in a fund-raising event that went down in history as a baseball masterpiece.



EMPIRE STADIUM
WEMBLEY
Managing Director: A. J. ELVIN
AUGUST 7th, 1943, at 2.30 p.m.

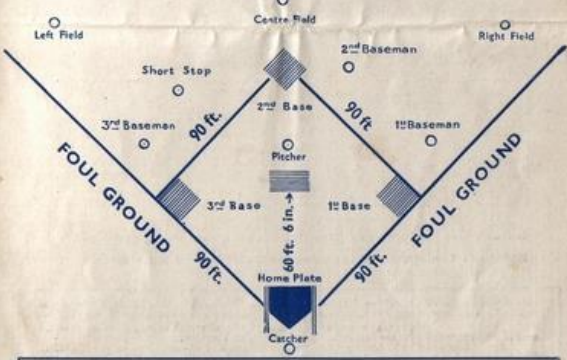
BASEBALL
In aid of H.R.H. The Duke of Gloucester's Red Cross and St. John Fund

CHALLENGE MATCH
U.S. ARMY v. CANADIAN FORCES

AND
ALL PROFESSIONAL GAME
U.S. AIR FORCE v. U.S. GROUND FORCES

Each Game will consist of Seven Innings.

DIAGRAM OF THE FIELD OF PLAY



AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS.
In the event of an Air Raid Alarm, if aircraft are reported in the immediate vicinity of the Stadium, spectators will be requested to leave the enclosures and make their way quietly to the Circulating Corridors under the Stands as directed by the Stewards and Officials. Those wishing to leave the Stadium may do so by any of the usual Exits.

OFFICIAL PROGRAMME SIXPENCE

BASEBALL
In aid of H.R.H. The Duke of Gloucester's Red Cross and St. John Fund

CHALLENGE MATCH
American Army v. Canadian Forces

Followed by
ALL PROFESSIONAL GAME
U.S. Air Force v. U.S. Ground Forces

SATURDAY, AUGUST 7th
AT 2.30 p.m.

AMERICAN ARMY BAND and MASSES PIPE BANDS OF CANADIAN ARMY

PRICES:

Reserved Seats (Unnumbered)	-	5/-	2/6
ALL ALLIED SERVICES IN UNIFORM	-	3/6	2/-

Bookable in advance from the **BOX OFFICE, EMPIRE STADIUM** (WEMBLEY 1550), or the usual London Ticket Agencies

Unreserved Admission (Seats and Standing) - 1/-

To get to Wembley Stadium: Book to Wembley Park (Bakerloo and Met.), or Wembley High Road Bakerloo and L.M.S.R.)

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BASEBALL CHALLENGE MATCH
American Army v. Canadian Forces
followed by
ALL - PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL GAME
U.S. Ground Forces v. U.S. Air Force
(In aid of H.R.H. The Duke of Gloucester's Red Cross and St. John Fund)

SATURDAY, AUGUST 7th, 1943, at 2.30 p.m.

PRICE (including Tax) **2/6** Enter at **F** Turnstiles

ENTRANCE **78**

GRAND STAND RESERVED SEAT (Unnumbered)

A. J. Elvin
Managing Director
Wembley Stadium, Ltd

TO BE RETAINED

Entrance 78

BASEBALL

Saturday,
AUGUST 7
1943

This portion to be given up at Stadium Turnstiles

Group F

The Army All-Professional team was led by manager Jules "Red" Shapiro, of New York city, who had hoped to utilize the services of Chuck Eisenmann on the mound. Eisenmann, however, had undergone an emergency appendectomy the previous month and was relegated to the role of coach. In his place, Shapiro was banking on the pitching services of Ralph Ifft, Lou Thuman and Norman Russell. Ifft was 14-4 with a

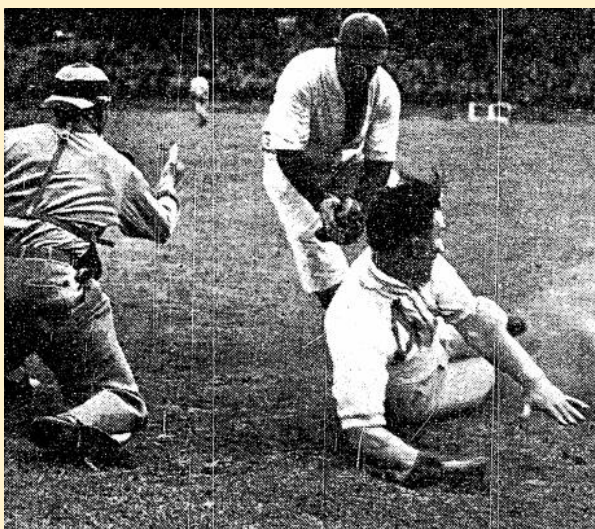
2.01 ERA for Butler of the Penn State Association in 1940, while Thuman had pitched five games for the Washington Senators between 1939 and 1940. Russell had a 16-4 record with Mobile of the Southeastern League in 1941. Catching duties were expected to be handled by Texas League receiver Walt Novick, while George Burns – a semi-pro from Sylacauga, Alabama, was the number one candidate at first base. Maurice Jacobs of the Eastern League would play second base, while Walt Hemperly of the Canadian-American League would handle third base. The team's shortstop was Pete Pavich, who had played with Clinton of the Three-I League before the war. Candidates for the outfield included Mid-Atlantic Leaguer Albert Brusko, Richard Catalano of the Penn State League and Massachusetts semi-pro Lou Kelley. "No man

has a cinch," Shapiro had announced in late July. "All these guys will have to prove themselves and hustle for the job."

Turning his attention to the opposition, Shapiro declared, "Those Air Force bums are flying a little too high. We'll bring them down and take some of that cockiness out of them."

Managed by Corporal Bill Moore, co-owner of the Greenville club in the South Atlantic League, and coached by Lieutenant Monte Weaver of the Washington Senators, the Eighth Air Force brought a powerful squad to London. The pitching staff was headed by Bill Brech, a semi-pro hurler from Secaucus, New Jersey, who had amassed a 12-2 record with the 988th Military Police Fliers. Southpaw Ross Grimsley, a semi-pro at the time who would go on to pitch for the Chicago White Sox in 1951, had struck out 86 batters in seven games for the VIII Bomber Command Headquarters. The pitching staff was further bolstered by Wisconsin State League pitcher Lou Anschultz and Joe Rundus, who hurled in the Evangeline League in 1939. At first base, the Air Force could call upon Paul Campbell, who played 26 games for the Boston Red Sox in 1942, and Northern League MVP Hugh Gustafson. Larry Toth, who played in the Ohio State League, was the second base selection, while Joe Gradisher, a speedy semi-pro from Muskegon, Michigan was to play third. Andy Dzuris, who formerly played for Lima of the Ohio State League, was to be the shortstop and leadoff man. The outfield choice included California League centerfielder Gene Thompson, John Linde, who played in the Western International League, Jack Gaston of the Northwest Georgia Textile League, and Nick Fracaro, a semi-pro from Joliet, Illinois. Ready for duty behind the plate were Stan Stuka, who was on the Philadelphia Phillies' roster in 1941, and Jim Vance of the Mid-Atlantic League.

Before the main event, the CBS Clowns captured their 36th victory in 39 starts by overpowering Canadian Military Headquarters, 6-3, in a preliminary seven-inning tilt. This was followed by a display by the Massed Pipe Bands of the Canadian Army, and in front of high-ranking American officers, including Lt. Gen. Jacob L. Devers, European Theater commander and Maj. Gen. Ira C. Eaker, Eighth Air Force commander, the All-Professional teams took the field in their striking uniforms – the Army in blue, the Air Force in red.



With all the professional talent in the Army line-up, no one expected Air Force pitcher Bill Brech, to retire the Army hitters in order in the first six innings of the seven-inning contest, but that is exactly what he did. In all, he allowed only two runners to reach base, faced just 23 batters and struck out six as he secured his 1-0 no-hitter and a place in the hypothetical European Theater Baseball Hall of Fame. Pitching for the Army was Ralph Ifft, who allowed five hits over four innings before being replaced by Lou Thuman. The Air Force scored their only run in the second

inning when Hugh Gustafson and Larry Toth led off with singles. Gustafson moved up to third after Stan Stuka flied deep to center and scored when Lee Taggert, playing third base, made a fine play to trap Bill Brech's hard hit grounder but threw wildly to second in an attempt to force Toth. A summary of the game was broadcast that evening on the American Forces Network Radio with George Hicks and Corporal Johnny Vrotsos at the mike. The event raised \$8,600 for the British Red Cross and St. John Fund and Maj. Gen. Eaker later commented that he "took great pride in this team," adding that they "played the best baseball game that [he had] ever seen, and [he had] seen all of the big league teams in action."

Bill Brech Hurls No-Hitter as Fliers Triumph, 1-0



The US Ground Forces bench during the all-professional game at Wembley



Ralph Ifft (left) discusses tactics with Bobby Korisher (third from left) and other members of the ground forces team. Ifft, a right-hander, toiled in the minors for eight seasons.



The all-professional game starting pitchers: Ralph Ifft (left) of the ground forces and Bill Brech of the Army Air Force.



Wembley Stadium immediately after Brech had hurled his no-hitter.

US Ground Forces all-professional team

Albert Brusko	of
Richard Catalano	of
Raymond Coyle	of
William Dwyer	2b
Chuck Eisenmann	coach
Walter Hemperly	3b
Ralph Ifft	p
Maurice Jacobs	3b
Lou Kelley	of
Robert Korisher	2b
Joseph Multa	of
Walt Novick	c
Joe O'Donnell	1b
Pete Pavich	ss
Norman Russell	p
Jules "Red" Shapiro	manager
Henry Smith	of
Lou Thuman	p
Lee Taggart	3b

USAAF all-professional team

Lou Anschutz	p
James Beane	c
Bill Brech	p
Frank Burger	3b
Paul Campbell	1b
Andy Dzuris	ss
Nick Fracaro	of
Ed Gatlin	c
Jack Gaston	of
Joe Gradisher	3b
Ross Grimsley	p
Hugh Gustafson	1b
Ed Hawkins	of
John Kilroy	of
Floyd Lancaster	2b
Bill Moore	manager
Joe Rundus	p
Al Slakis	ss
Stan Stuka	c
Lew Tabor	p
Gene Thompson	of
Larry Toth	2b
Jim Vance	c
Montie Weaver	coach

	Ground Force - 0					Air Force - 1			
	AB	R	H	E		AB	R	H	E
Taggart, 3b	2	0	0	1	Dzuris, ss	3	0	0	0
Hemperly, 3b	1	0	0	0	Gradisher, 3b	3	0	2	0
Korisher, 2b	3	0	0	0	Campbell, 1b	3	0	1	0
Kelly, cf	2	0	0	0	Thompson, cf	3	0	1	0
a-Fontana	1	0	0	0	Gaston, lf	3	0	0	0
Pavich, ss	3	0	0	0	Gustafson, rf	3	1	1	0
O'Donnell, rf	3	0	0	0	Toth, 2b	3	0	2	2
Jacobs, lf	3	0	0	0	Stuka, c	3	0	0	0
Burns, 1b	2	0	0	0	Brech, p	2	0	0	0
Novick, c	1	0	0	1					
Ifft, p	1	0	0	0					
Thuman, p	1	0	0	0					
Totals	23	0	0	2		26	1	7	2

a-batted for Kelly

Score by innings:
 Ground Force 000 000 0 - 0
 Air Force 010 000 0 - 1

Air Force Pros Hit Road Today

**Barnstormers, Who Won
At Wembley, Will
Tour Britain**

Three days later, the victorious Army Air Force team began a 30-day barnstorming tour of the British Isles. The trip, instigated by Maj. Gen. Ira C. Eaker, was made by bus, plane and boat, and served to give combat crews in outlying stations, who seldom had an opportunity for recreation, a chance to relax and see some good baseball and get their mind off business. "There are a lot of combat crews in those stations who haven't

seen a ball game this season, and this is our opportunity to do what we can for them," Moore said.

The tour opened on Tuesday, August 10 with a 9-0 win against a Photo Intelligence team, and it was the All-Star's second successive no-hitter with Joe Rundus performing the honors on this occasion. The following day they defeated Fighter Command, 5-1, then made it four in a row with wins against the Eagles (13-3) and the Comets (17-7). Walt Dixon, who won 11 games for the Eastern League's Scranton Red Sox in 1942, was the loser for the Comets.

Day in and day out the team traveled by bus from one base to the next and it was often dark by the time they hit the road. Because the blackout restrictions in Britain meant there were no lights on the street or on the bus one player often had to walk in front to lead the way. By late August, the All-Stars had amassed a record of 22 wins without defeat. In a five game series at a bomber station in Norfolk, the All-Stars beat the Flashes, 14-0, on Gene Thompson's one-hitter; the Tigers, 1-0, on Lew Tabor's two-hitter (Tabor had won 13 games with the Bi-State League's Martinsville Manufacturers in 1940), and the Irregulars, 10-0, on a Joe Rundus two-hitter. They then defeated the 303rd Bomb Group Hell's Angels, 5-0, before suffering their only defeat at the hands of the Alcon-Falcons – a five-inning thriller that saw Sgt. Tony DaVilla allow the All-Stars only two hits in defeating Ross Grimsley, 1-0. On September 4, the All-Stars bounced back and pasted the 93rd Bomb Group Traveling Circus, 11-1, before 4,000 fans in a charity event in Norwich, England. Lew Tabor earning his third win for the All-Stars. The All-Stars wound up their 30-day barnstorming tour by again trouncing the Traveling Circus, 18-1, behind the four-hit pitching of Bill Brech. The All-Stars had played 29 games and won 28. Maj. Gen. Eaker later wrote to each player telling them how they "contributed materially to the morale and high spirit of the Eighth Air Force by [their] personal example and great professional skill."



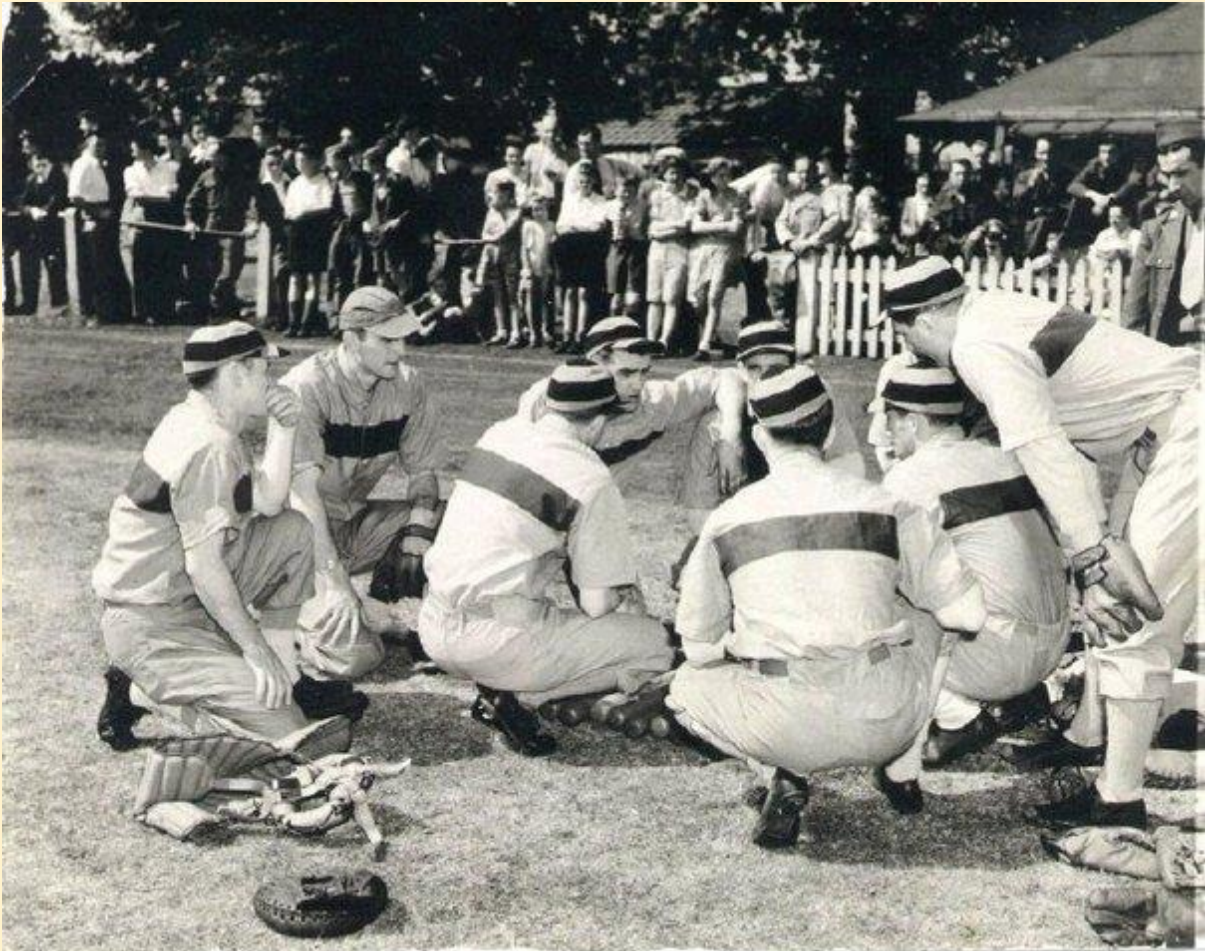
The Army Air Force all-stars were the finest military team assembled in Britain during the war. Back row, left to right: Montie Weaver (coach), Ed Hawkins (of), Bill Brech (p), Lew Tabor (p), Ed Gatlin (c), James Vance (c) and Bill Moore (c). Middle row: Hugh Gustafson (1b), Nick Fracaro (of), Andy Dzuris (ss), Gene Thompson (of), Ross Grimsley (p), James Beane (c), Jack Gaston (of) and Stan Stuka (c). Front row: Al Slakis (ss), Joe Gradisher (3b), Larry Toth (p), Paul Campbell (1b), Joe Rundus (p) and Floyd Lancaster (of).

On August 10, the Warhawks outfit and outpitched the Stumblebums in a 78th Fighter Group league baseball game, finishing on the long end of an 8-5 score and strengthening their hold on second place in the league standings. The winners garnered 14 hits during the game, including a home run by Sgt. Andy Biscan, who played for the Northeast Arkansas League's Paragould Browns in 1939. That same day, the LOC Amertex team defeated the Agitators, 2-1, in Northern Ireland. Marty Podmeyer, of Los Angeles, LOC hurler, pitched against Pfc. Martin Rothe, of Dundalk, Maryland, for the Agitators, who would spend two seasons with Coastal Plain League's Tarboro Tars after the war.

On August 11, Brig. Gen. Frank A. Armstrong, who played minor league baseball from 1925 to 1928, and who participated in the first American heavy bombardment mission over Europe with the 97th Bomb Group, was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for gallantry on a raid on Antwerp, Belgium, on April 5.

While the all-professional airmen team toured England, another Army Air Force team from England was touring Northern Ireland. The Eighth Air Force Headquarters team was led by Sgt. George Trocheck, a hard-throwing right-hander from Clairton,

Pennsylvania, who pitched in the McKeesport Daily News semi-pro league before the war. On August 14, an RAF Benevolent Fund game was scheduled to start their tour at Ravenhill Park in Belfast. Sir Basil Brooke, Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, threw out the first ball, before 2,000 fans as the Air Force defeated the Blues in a tightly fought pitching duel between Ed Behnen and the airmen's Herb Jenkins, who pitched for the Salem-Roanoke Friends of the Virginia League in 1941. The Air Force won the game, 1-0, with the only run coming in the fourth inning.



Huddled around their manager, George Trocheck (fourth from left), the Eighth Air Force Headquarters team prepares for a game in England in 1943. Trocheck was a hard throwing right-hander from Clairton, Pennsylvania, who played in the McKeesport Daily News semi-pro league before the war. Also a keen boxer, he continued to play baseball with local teams in Clairton after the war and served for 20 years with the town's police department.

On August 15, the Air Support Station triumphed over the Hornsey Red Sox, of London, 11-1. The Red Sox were one of the very few British baseball teams to survive during the war. Sgt. Willard Wood, of Poughkeepsie, New York, hurled the no-hit game for the Air Support Station before a crowd of 3,000 spectators' who contributed over \$300 to the American and British Red Cross in the first Anglo-American baseball game played during the war years. Also, that day, 20-year-old southpaw, Cpl. William Kallaher, of Birmingham, Alabama, who pitched for the Alabama State League's Andalusia Rams in 1940, ran his strike out total to 42 in just three days as he helped the Air Depot All-Stars to a berth in the semi-finals of the Eighth Air Force Service Command baseball eliminations. Kallaher had beat the Air Depot Yanks, 3-0, fanning 22, after his team dropped the first series game, 5-0. He then beat them 6-2 for the clincher. Kallaher

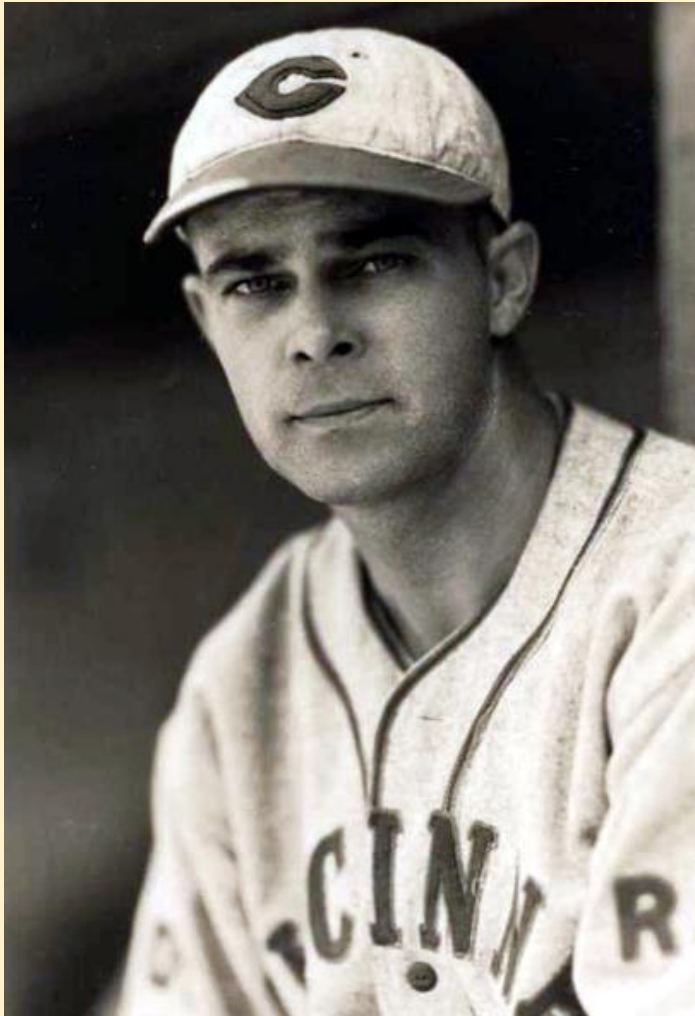
continued his strike out run by fanning 20 more men in a 4-0 victory over the QM Truck (Avn.) squad in the first game of the three-game series in the semi-finals of the Eighth Air Force Service Command championships, and followed this with a 5-2 win on August 24 to reach the finals. Practically winning his own game, Kallaher, added 16 strikeouts to his credit, bringing his total to 78 in four games. He also accounted for three of his team's runs, driving in two runs on a single and double and later scoring himself.

On August 17, the LOC Amertex nine halted the successful tour of the Eighth Air Force Headquarters team, beating the airmen, 5-4. The following day, the Blues, first round Northern Ireland league leaders, avenged their earlier defeat at the hands of the visiting airmen from England, taking the All-Stars by the same score they had been beaten by last Saturday, 1-0. Pvt. Ed "Deacon" Behnen, Blues' left-hander, struck out 17 and gave up four blows, Cpl. Fran Niergarten, loser, allowed seven hits.

On August 23, Maurice Davis, a former North Carolina State League catcher, faced only 22 men in a seven-inning game to record his second successive no-run, no-hit game in two starts for the Alcon-Falcons over the Schoolboys, 6-0, at Alconbury airfield.

On August 24, finishing their seventh game undefeated, the Replacement Depot Americans copped the championship of the eight-team Central District baseball league of the Western Base Section. Feature game of league play was the 4-0- victory over the 52nd General Hospital Chiefs, a pitcher's duel between Sgt. Merle Collins, of Harlan County, Kentucky, a ten-game winner, and Ted Kleinhans of the hospital team, former hurler for the Cincinnati Reds. Collins fanned 16, Kleinhans 15. Kleinhans was a captain in the Army and one of his responsibilities in England was to stop food wastage at the hospital. "Right now saving food over here is much more important than saving base hits," he told the Syracuse Herald-Journal in May, 1943. "Food shipped over here all takes up valuable space and costs sailors' lives. We impress that on our men and have taught them not to take more food than they can eat. If they underestimate their appetites, they can always come back for more. As to baseball," he added, "I feel that it has a very definite place in our war effort, for it gives the people needed relaxation. Perhaps the teams won't be quite up to the standards of past years, but they'll be good. Right now, though, I'm more interested in feeding a large group of hungry soldiers."

Kleinhans estimated that the 22 games played by the 52nd General Hospital Chiefs in 1943 were watched by a total of 25,000 spectators and raised \$12,500 for various charities.



Ted Kleinhans was 44 years old when he was pitching for the 52nd General Hospital Chiefs in England in 1943, but it was his first time with the military in Europe. During the First World War he spent 14 months with the 145th Infantry Regiment and was wounded in action during the Meuse-Argonne campaign in France. He played for semi-pro teams after the First World War and tried his hand at minor league ball, aged 29, in 1928. By the time he reached the major leagues with the Phillies in 1934, he was 35 years old. Between 1934 and 1938, he made 56 big league appearances, mostly in relief, for the Phillies, Reds and Yankees. He was still pitching in the minors with the International League's Syracuse Chiefs until 1941, and entered military service following the attack on Pearl Harbor. After the war, Kleinhans coached the baseball team at Syracuse University from 1947 to 1965. In 1961, he took the Orangemen to the College World Series in Omaha, Nebraska, where they defeated Northern Colorado and Western Michigan before being beaten in the semi-finals by Oklahoma State. He retired to Florida in the late 1960s, where he enjoyed golfing and fishing. He passed away on July 24, 1985 in Redington Beach, Florida.

On August 24, the Agitators clinched the second round championship of the Northern Ireland Baseball League, when they defeated the Pelicans, 6-5. A two-out-of-three series between the Agitators and the Blues, who took first round honors, was to be scheduled to decide the Northern Ireland champs for 1943. Sgt. Carl D. Smith, took individual honors, when he not only pitched his team to victory, but smashed out a triple and two singles. Also playing in this game was Cpl. Thomas McEvoy, who played for the New England League's Lawrence Millionaires in 1946.

In New York, on August 26, a War Bond game took place before 35,000 fans at the Polo Grounds, featuring a Giants-Yankees-Dodgers all-star team against the Army's New Cumberland Reception Center team, which included Hank Greenberg, Johnny Beazley and Enos Slaughter. The all-stars beat the soldiers, 5-2, but the undoubted highlight of the day was the appearance of twelve of baseball's old-time greats, including Babe Ruth hitting one of Walter Johnson's pitches into the upper right field deck. Other former greats on hand included George Sisler, Eddie Collins, Honus Wagner, Frankie Frisch, Tris Speaker, Duffy Lewis, Red Murray and Roger Bresnahan, along with umpire Bill Klem.

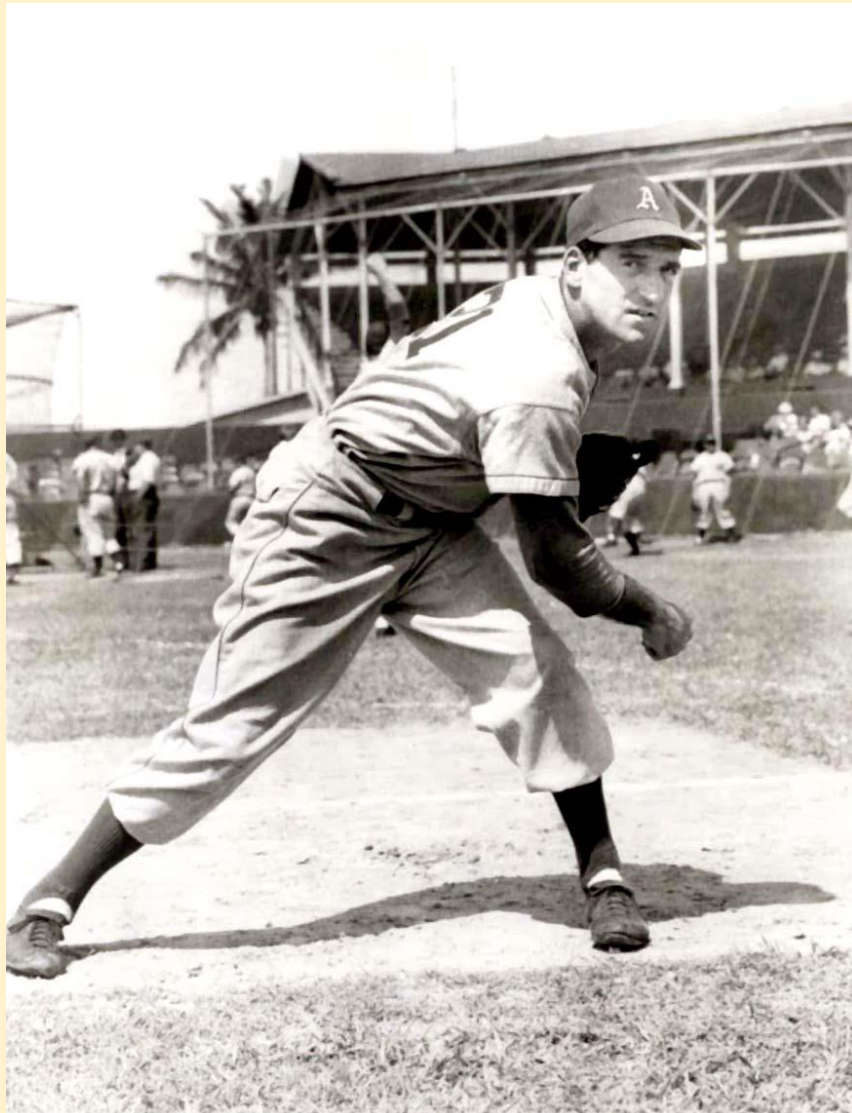


The August 26 Polo Grounds old-timers. Back row, left to right: Duffy Lewis, Eddie Collins, Roger Bresnahan, Connie Mack, Bill Klem, Red Murray and George Sisler. Front row: Honus Wagner, Frankie Frisch, Babe Ruth, Walter Johnson and Tris Speaker.

During August, there was a lot of talk about a major league overseas all-star tour to entertain troops. There were numerous meetings between Commissioner Landis and league presidents Will Harridge and Ford Frick. "We would like to have at least one player from every club," explained Landis. "While the size of the clubs is yet to be determined, I think each would have about 18 players." Even manager Bill Terry, got involved, volunteering his services as manager. By late September, the War Department had formally agreed the trip, with Landis announcing a team from the American League under Joe Cronin and a National Leaguer squad under Frankie Frisch would make the trip. But, by the beginning of October, the trip was called off following a telegram to Landis from Maj. Gen. Alexander Surles, Army Public Relations chief. "Increased activities in the Pacific have created greater demands on transportation than was anticipated. The uncertainties which developed make the trip inadvisable at this time. Let me assure you again, however, of the War Department's appreciation of the desire of baseball players and officials to be of service to the troops overseas,"

In late August, a former major league pitcher arrived in England with the Royal Canadian Air Force. Phil Marchildon had won 17 games with the Philadelphia Athletics in 1942, but now he was a tail-gunner in a Halifax bomber with 433 Squadron. Active duty offered little time for Marchildon to play baseball, but his brother-in-law, Adam McKenzie, who played for the DeHavilland Comets of the London International

Baseball League, persuaded him to make a handful of appearances for the team. In his first outing against an unsuspecting US Army team, he threw three strikes right by the first batter. "The poor guy hadn't lifted his bat off his shoulder," Marchildon later recalled. The strikeouts continued, and one by one the American batters returned to the bench in bewilderment, wondering who this guy was. McKenzie finally revealed, "That's Phil Marchildon of the Philadelphia Athletics!"



Phil Marchildon, from Penentang, Ontario, Canada, served with the Royal Canadian Air Force in England during World War II. He won 17 games for the Athletics in 1942 and was a 19 game winner for the team in 1947. But Marchildon almost never returned from the war. During the night of August 16, 1944, he flew his 26th mission as a tail-gunner on a Halifax bomber - he was four missions away from going home and hoped to be back with the Athletics for the 1945 season. But, as the bomber flew through the darkness above the Baltic Sea on the way to its target at Kiel Bay, it was attacked and set ablaze by a German night fighter. The pilot immediately gave orders for the crew to bail out, but in the spiraling chaos and confusion only the navigator and Marchildon escaped with their lives. Captured by German forces, he was sent to Stalag Luft III prisoner-of-war camp near the town of Sagan, then in Germany, but now part of Poland. By this time Marchildon was liberated in May 1945, he was severely malnourished and had lost 30 pounds in weight. He was flown back to England to recuperate then returned to Canada by boat. Nine months as a POW had taken its toll. He suffered recurring nightmares, his nerves were in tatters and, not surprisingly, he had little interest in baseball. It took all of Connie Mack's persuasive powers to get Marchildon to return to baseball but by 1946 he was back in the Athletics starting rotation.

In August 1943, minor league baseball suffered one fatality among its ranks of players in service with the loss of pitcher/outfielder Jack Moller. Moller had an 11-10 won-loss record with the PONY League's Olean Oilers in 1941, while batting .350 with seven home runs and 53 RBIs in 77 games. A pilot with the 90th Bomb Group in New Guinea, 1/Lt. Moller was flying a B-24 Liberator, nicknamed Big Emma, which took off from Wards Airfield on a patrol along New Guinea's northern coastline. It was his first mission. Moller and his crew of 11 successfully completed the patrol but encountered poor weather as they returned to base. The late afternoon quickly descended into darkness and Moller radioed the control tower to say that visibility was so poor he could not see the searchlights at Port Moresby, a popular landmark for pilots returning at night. He searched hopelessly in the dark for an hour and a half before advising that he was going to instruct his crew to bail out rather than continue the seemingly hopeless search. Shortly afterwards all radio contact was lost. The following day the wreckage of Big Emma was discovered in a swamp 20 miles from the airfield. All crew members were dead.

September 1943

September in the ETO got off to a sporting start with a softball tournament at Regent's Park, London. Teams from all across the United Kingdom and even two from Iceland competed in the four-day event, with the semi-finals and finals scheduled to be played at White City Stadium. Largest representation was from the Eighth Air Force, with six squads, one from each command, and one from the Headquarters Squadron. Each army base section sent one representative, while Headquarters SOS, Northern Ireland, and the Navy entered one team each, with the field forces represented by three squads. Highlight of the first day was Central Base Section's US One, 1-0, win over the Ground Force Aces. On day two, four teams survived to advance to the semi-finals: Composite Command Mustangs, Ground Force Blues, EBS MPs, and the Hospital Daredevils of WBS. The Blues then shutout the Mustangs, 5-0, while EBS edged the Daredevils, 4-3, to advance to the finals. In the finals, on September 10, Pfc Bill Gross, of Frederick, Maryland, pitched the Ground Force Blues to the championship title and handed the EBS MPs their first loss in 18 starts, with a two-hit, 3-1 victory. Notable, is that the Ground Blues championship team included minor leaguers Walt Novick, Maurice Jacobs and Robert Cleer, together with former big leaguer Lou Thuman.



Lou Thuman had made five appearances over two seasons with the Senators before entering military service in 1942. He arrived in England with the 175th Infantry Regiment in February 1943, and apart from two innings in relief in the all-professional game at Wembley, he played very little baseball, but did find time for softball, playing for the ETO champs, Ground Force Blues. In 1944, shortly after D-Day, the 175th Infantry was sent France and during action in the St. Lô area, he was hit in the right shoulder by a sniper's bullet. It was the end of Thuman's war and the end of his baseball career. Thuman spent the remainder of the year in a military hospital in Europe and was shipped back to the United States in December 1944. He tried to play again but the bullet had taken away his fastball. Devastated, Thuman took a clerical job with Bethlehem Steel in Baltimore to avoid the game, and never used the "gold pass" he was given that allowed free access to any major league or minor league ballpark. Thuman almost never watched or listened to ballgames, and never met with his former teammates. The one concession to his ball-playing past was to honor the requests of fans and memorabilia collectors who wrote him seeking autographs. He always kept a supply of photos of himself as a player which he would sign and send to fans. Lou Thuman died of pneumonia, aged 84, in December 2000.

Newly-Crowned Softball Champions of the ETO



The Ground Force Blues. ETO softball champions of 1943. Back row, left to right: Cptn. Ed Casey, John Kropp, Walter Odom, Bob Cleer (Virginia League 1940), Howard Hylock, William Gross, Samuel Lomaglio, Pat Gallagher (trainer) and Lt. Thomas Dukehart. Front row: Edwin Hauser, Martin Behnke, Walt Novick (14-year minor league veteran), George Buckless, Maurice Jacobs (Eastern League 1940), Leon Derda, John Chopick, Lou Thuman (Washington Senators) and Patrick Fitzgerald.

On the same day of the ETO softball championships, September 10, former minor league outfielder, Jack Siens - now a pilot with the US Navy - took off from St. Eval, Cornwall, in southwest England, at the controls of a PB4Y-1 Liberator. It was meant to be a routine practice of a simulated fighter attack, and at 4,000 feet over the Atlantic Ocean, the Liberator met up with a friendly fighter. Siens was the co-pilot on this day and Lt (jg). George W. Brown began evasive action at the controls of the bomber as planned. Somehow, Brown lost control of the plane and crashed into the sea. All eight crew members were killed. Jack Siens' body was never recovered.

Early September also saw many baseball leagues throughout Britain reaching the play-off stages as teams hustled for a coveted place in the ETO baseball championships scheduled for the end of the month. On September 9, the 303rd Bomb Group Hell's Angels clinched the VIII Bomber Command baseball championship, walloping Ted's Traveling Circus, representing the 93rd Bomb Group, 20-5. The Hell's Angels then went on to defeat Air Support Command (on a 5-0 no-hitter by Joe Rundus) and Service Command teams before overcoming the Fighter Command team, 7-6, to claim the Eighth Air Force Championship with an impressive record of 29 wins and 1 loss for the season.



The 303rd Bomb Group Hell's Angels pose for a photo beneath their namesake B-17 Flying Fortress. Back row, left to right: Al Slakis (Coastal Plain League 1941), Joe Uhls (post-war Florida International League), Marion Lewis (Canadian-American League 1941), George P. Wright, Don Wiegand, Cptn. J. Leonard Wheeler, Col. Kermit D. Stevens, Lewis Toretto, Joe Rundus (Evangeline League 1939) and Gilbert Goar. Front row: George Ruder, William Craddock (Virinia League 1941), Carl Murphy (Arkansas-Missouri League 1938), Oscar Maraple, Jimmy D. Stewart, Ed Kumer and Lloyd Jones.

On September 12, the London International Baseball League second half playoffs got under way to determine the team to tie up with the 827th Signal Service Company Monarchs for the league championship. The first game was played at Richmond Park, with the Army Headquarters Company nine advancing to the finals by blanking CMHQ, 3-0. Meanwhile, at Eton Manor Sports Ground, the Engineers defeated the MPs, 10—7, in their free-hitting semi-final. On September 19, the Headquarters Company and the Engineers split a doubleheader as part of the three-game playoffs. Headquarters Company annexed the opener, 4-3, the Engineers blanking them, 18-0, in the nightcap. On September 22, making a five-run rally in the fifth, the Engineers defeated the Headquarters Company, 7-5, in a seven-inning affair called because of darkness, earning the right to face the Signal Monarchs in the finals scheduled for early October.

The 1943 ETO World Series (September 27 to September 30)

The 1943 ETO (European Theater of Operations) World Series was held in England over a four-day period at the Eighth Air Force Headquarters, Bushy Park, London. Starting on Monday, September 27 and concluding on Thursday, September 30. The event featured 20 teams from all across England and Northern Ireland, who had earned the right to play in this prestigious event by winning their respective area championships. The event was arranged by Maj. Donald Martin (ETO Special Service athletic officer). Each team was permitted a roster of 15 enlisted men and one officer.

CBS Clowns	US Army (Central Base Section)
Buccaneers	US Army (Eastern Base Section)
116th Infantry Regiment Yankees	US Army (Field Force)
Quartermaster Agitators	US Army (Northern Ireland)
Yanks	US Army (Service of Supply)
American School Center Angels	US Army (Southern Base Section)
General Hospital Medics	US Army (Southern Base Section)
Signal Company Dodgers	US Army (Southern Base Section)
Americans	US Army (Western Base Section)
Military Police Nitesticks	US Army (Western Base Section)
Port Ramblers	US Army (Western Base Section)
Signal Hounds	US Army (Western Base Section)
First Provisional Battalion Marines	US Marine Corps (Northern Ireland)
US Naval Hospital Creevagh	US Navy (Northern Ireland)
901st Engineer HQ Company	USAAF (Eighth Air Force HQ)
Air Support Command Eagles	USAAF (Eighth Air Force)
303rd Bomber Group Hell's Angels	USAAF (Eighth Air Force)
78th Fighter Group Thunderbolts	USAAF (Eighth Air Force)
Service Command Red Devils	USAAF (Eighth Air Force)
Composite Command Mustangs	USAAF (Northern Ireland)

Early favorites to win the tournament were the CBS Clowns, led by Chuck Eisenmann. In the preliminary round on September 27, the games went as anticipated. The CBS Clowns beat the Signal Hounds with Eisenmann striking out 19; Mauro Duca hurled a three-hitter for the 78th Fighter Group Thunderbolts over the Port Ramblers; Fran Hecker of the ASC Angels beat the Yanks, 7-5, and Carl Smith of the Agitators beat the Signal Company Dodgers, 2 to 1, in 10 innings, striking out 21 along the way. There was, however, one surprise. A previously unheard of team called the 116th Infantry Regiment Yankees beat the 303rd Bomb Group Hell's Angels, 4 to 1, in 11 innings, with Elmer Wright outdueling Joe Rundus. Wright was a St. Louis Browns' farmhand with four years' minor league experience. The Yankees had been playing ball all summer at the greyhound stadium in Plymouth and amassed a record of 27 wins without defeat. The Hell's Angels had been tipped to be semi-finalists at least and were shocked to be out of the tournament at such an early stage.

The second round of preliminary games on September 28, saw the CBS Clowns trounce the Air Support Command Eagles, 7 to 1; the 78th Fighter Group Thunderbolts overcome the Agitators, 2 to 1, and the darkhorse 116th Infantry Regiment Yankees cruise past the Derry Marines, 9 to 1.

In the quarter final games on September 29, it took 13 innings for the 901st Engineers to defeat the ASC Angels, 3 to 2, while the 116th Infantry Regiment Yankees disposed of the Service Command Red Devils, 5 to 3. Later the same day, Doug Gillette hurled the 116th Infantry Regiment Yankees into the finals by defeating the 901st Engineers, 7 to 3. Thirty-two-year-old Gillette had pitched in the Cardinals farm system and was a 16 game winner with the Nebraska State League's Grand Island Islanders back in 1932. But the real upset of the afternoon was the 3-2 defeat of the CBS Clowns by the 78th Fighter Group Thunderbolts. Mauro Duca scattered six hits with nine strike outs while Chuck Eisenmann struck out 15 in a losing cause.



The Service Command Red Devils made it to the quarterfinals of the 1943 ETO World Series. Back row, left to right: Cptn. Westphalen, William Venable, Hatas, Bixler, Randino, Heintz, Adams and Lt. Kernan. Front row: Hall Causey, John Corbett, McDonough, Saunders, Crosetti, Wolfe and Hamilton.



Chuck Eisenmann teaches English school boys the art of baseball.

The final on September 30, proved to be a thrilling affair between the 116th Infantry Regiment Yankees and the 78th Fighter Group Thunderbolts. Elmer Wright was the starter for the Yankees, while the Thunderbolts went with Mauro Duca. The game was scoreless for three innings. The Thunderbolts managed singles off Wright in the second and third innings, but without success. However, they scored a run in the fourth on a walk, a single and a double and Doug Gillette - who was catching - came to the mound and let in two more runs on wild pitches. The Yankees were quick to respond

in the bottom half of the inning, tying up the game by scoring on two doubles, a single and a base on balls.

With the score tied, 3-3, the Yankees took the lead in the sixth when two men were safe on errors and scored when a batted ball got past the second baseman and went into right field. They tallied again in the seventh, Frank Draper of Bedford, Virginia, getting his second triple of the game, but was out at the plate trying to score when Joe Gubernot of Shamokin, Pennsylvania, hit to second. In the seventh inning, Gubernot came home on an error at first for the final tally of the game and Gillette pitched shutout ball for five innings to give the Yankees a memorable win and the ETO World Series crown.

Thunderbolts - 3					Yankees - 6				
	AB	R	H	E		AB	R	H	E
Darrell, 3b	4	0	0	0	Draper, cf	4	1	3	0
Woleslagel, lf	3	1	0	0	McManus, rf	4	1	2	0
Blackwelder, rf	3	0	1	1	Gubernot, ss	4	1	0	0
Letsinger, 1b	4	1	3	1	Alberigo, 3b	4	2	1	0
Yerke, cf	3	1	1	0	Cleer, lf	4	1	1	0
DeLiest, 2b	2	0	0	1	Proffitt, 1b	4	0	0	0
Rouselle, 2b	1	0	0	0	Keller, 2b	4	0	0	0
Davidson, ss	4	0	1	0	Gillette, c-p	4	0	1	0
Kopperud, c	4	0	1	2	Wright, p	1	0	0	0
Duca, p	2	0	0	0	Marsico, c	3	0	0	0
Petty, p	1	0	0	0					
a-Sepich	1	0	0	0					
Totals	32	3	7	5	Totals	36	6	8	0

a-batted for Darrell in ninth

Score by innings:
 Thunderbolts 000 300 000 - 3
 Yankees 000 302 10x - 6



The 116th Infantry Regiment Yankees, ETO baseball champions in 1943. Back row, left to right: Robert Marsico, Maurice Williams, Lou Alberigo, Cpl. Burke, Robert Keller, Carl Proffitt, George McManus, Joe Pelligrino. Front row: Bob Cleer, Frank Draper, Elmer Wright, Doug Gillette, James Mabes, Dante Roitero, Joe Gubernot, Carl Grimes



The 78th Fighter Group Thunderbolts. Finalists in the 1943 ETO World Series. Back row, left to right: 1/Lt. Ralph Blair, James Darrell, Adolph Sepich, Guy Wolerlagle, Ernest Yerke, Mauro Duca, Neil Davidson and Orval Letsinger. Front row: Albert Rousselle, Burton Kopperey, Richard Snyder, Buford Petty, John Swilenga and Robert DeLiest

Game Results for 1943 ETO World Series First Round (September 27/28)

Agitators	2 (11 innings)	Carl Smith strikes out 11
Dodgers	1	
116 th Infantry	4	Elmer Wright winning pitcher
303 rd Bomb Group	1	
Marines	3	Sam McAllister winning pitcher
MP Nitesticks	2	
Eagles	10	Willard Wood winning pitcher
Navy	6	
Mustangs	5	James Clancey winning pitcher
Americans	2	
Thunderbolts	2	Mauro Duca three-hitter
Port Ramblers	0	
Red Devils	9	
Medics	7	
Angels	7	Fran Hecker scatters five hits
SOS Yanks	5	
CBS Clowns	4	Chuck Eisenmann strikes out 19
Hounds	2	
Engineers	5	Hack Niergarten scatters seven hits
Buccaneers	2	

Second Round (September 28)

CBS Clowns	7	Eisenmann strikes out eight
Angels	1	
Thunderbolts	2	Buford Petty scatters three hits
Agitators	1	
Red Devils	9	William Venable winning pitcher
Mustangs	5	
116 th Infantry	9	Maurice Williams winning pitcher
Marines	1	
Engineers	3	Frank Sliak scatters four hits
Angels	2	

Quarter Finals (September 29)

116 th Infantry	5	Dante Roitero winning pitcher
Red Devils	3	

Semi Finals (September 29)

Thunderbolts	3	Mauro Duca beats Chuck Eisenmann
CBS Clowns	2	
116 th Infantry	7	Doug Gillete winning pitcher
Engineers	3	

Third Place Final (September 30)

CBS Clowns	3	Myron Scow and Johnny Puskas combine for shutout
Engineers	0	

Final (September 30)

116 th Infantry	6	Frank Draper hits two triples. Elmer Wright and Doug Gillette combine for win.
Thunderbolts	3	

Eight months after the 1943 ETO World Series was played the 116th Infantry Regiment Yankees were in a different kind of battle. They were among the first troops to land at Omaha Beach, Normandy, on June 6, 1944. Frank Draper, who hit two triples in the series final; Elmer Wright, who pitched so effectively throughout the tournament; Louis Alberigo, who played third base and had two hits in the final; and pitcher Maurice Williams – who beat the Marines in the second round game - all lost their lives on Omaha Beach.



Canadian servicemen based in Britain were also playing baseball whenever time allowed. Pictured here is 407 Squadron, Royal Canadian Air Force, who were crowned southwestern champions in September 1943. Back row, left to right: Doug Graham, O'Donnell, Jesse James, Jenner, McAskile, Bouchard, Poirier, Harrison, Howie Pender, Rutchinski and Libby. Front row: Alex Cairns, Cohan, Faulkner, Wright, Leatherdale and Fleming.

October 1943

Most baseball competition in Britain had ended with the ETO World Series, although the London International Baseball League winner still had to be decided. On October 10, the first two playoff games were played at Eton Manor Sports Ground between the 827th Signals and the 660th Engineers. The Signals won the first affair, 9-7, then dropped the second, 6-5. On October 15, the Engineers took the London International Baseball pennant by defeating the Signal Monarchs. 4-3.

In the United States, the major league World Series – between the Yankees and Cardinals - got underway on October 5. In order to minimize travel, the first three games were scheduled to be played in New York with the remainder at St. Louis. The series was broadcast to servicemen in Britain by the BBC, with Don Dunphy giving a detailed description of each game immediately after the last out. The Yankees took the first game, 4-2, while the Cards evened the series with a 4-3 victory in the second. The Yankees went ahead in game three with a 6-2 win, thanks to a five run eighth inning. Moving to St. Louis, the Yankees made it three games to one and moved to within a game of clinching the title with a 2-1 win. Spud Chandler then held the Cardinals scoreless in a 2-0 win in game five to give New York the title.

Also in October, a naval destroyer escort vessel was named for Ensign Gus Bebas, a pitcher at Northwestern University, who played minor league baseball with the Tar Heel League's Hickory Rebels in 1939. Bebas was killed while piloting a Douglas SBD-3

dive bomber in July 1942, and was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for heroism at Midway and Coral Sea.

Arriving in England this month was minor league pitcher, Metro Persoskie, a former Dodgers farmhand who was now a B-17 Flying Fortress waist gunner with the 384th Bomb Group. Four months later, on February 22, 1944, Persoskie's B-17 was assembling over England in preparation for an attack on an aircraft manufacturing plant in Germany, when it collided with another plane. Both planes plunged to earth with seventeen airmen, including Staff Sergeant Persoskie, trapped inside. They all perished on impact in the British countryside at Irthingborough in Northamptonshire.

November and December 1943

The last two months of the year saw little baseball action in Britain but plenty of military action as the Allied forces prepared for the following year's invasion of mainland Europe. Among the units arriving at this time was the 1st, 8th and 9th Infantry Divisions and the 2nd Armored Division, as well as numerous fighter and bomb groups of the Eighth and Ninth Air Force. One former minor leaguer who was heading in the opposite direction was Second Lieutenant Alan Grant, a former University of Illinois varsity pitcher, who played for the South Atlantic League's Macon Peaches in 1941. On December 29, 1943, Grant had completed his tour of duty as a bombardier with the 95th Bomb Group and was one of 21 servicemen aboard a B-17 in England that was making the first leg of the journey home. The journey was never completed. As the weather deteriorated, the plane crashed into the side of a mountain in Wales, just 25 miles from its destination. All 21 aboard the plane perished in the burning wreck.



Alan Grant hurled for the University of Illinois varsity team for three years (1938 to 1940), playing alongside future major leaguers Hoot Evers and Boyd Bartley. In 1941, his senior year, Grant was team captain and opened Illinois' spring training tour by keeping Louisiana State University hitless for the first five innings of a 7-2 win on March 31. To open the Big Ten campaign on April 11, he was beaten by Indiana, 2-1, despite allowing only three hits, but defeated Wisconsin, 5-0, the following week, prompting Wisconsin coach Art Mansfield to say that Grant had as fine control as any college pitcher he had seen in some time. Grant's 3-2 victory over Michigan on May 9 was the highlight of his season. He held the Wolverines to four singles in handing them their first defeat of the year. In his last outing of the campaign on May 16, Grant beat Ohio State, 8-3, allowing the Buckeyes six hits. His five wins for the year tied him for first place among Big Ten pitchers. Grant graduated from Illinois' college of liberal arts in June 1941, and immediately signed with the Chicago Cubs' organization.

Other minor league casualties during the last two months of 1943, were Glenn Sanford, a pitcher who won 14 games with the Kitty League's Fulton Tigers in 1940. He was killed on November 6, when his P-39 Airacobra fighter plane crashed into the ocean off the California coast. On December 21, pitcher Fred Yeske, who played for the Mountain State League's Welch Miners in 1942, was killed in action with the 36th Infantry Division in Italy. Yeske was the second minor leaguer to be killed in Italy. On November 1, Bud Schohl, an eight-year minor league veteran shortstop, died from wounds received in combat while serving with the 3rd Infantry Division.

Some of the baseball leagues operating in Britain during 1943

Western Base Section Bristol Port District League

Ramblers
Fence Busters
Pill Rollers

Western Base Section 12th Port of Embarkation League

Hounds
Wolves
Rinky-dinks
Bronco Busters

Western Base Section Central District League

Americans (Replacement Depot)
Cajuns
52nd General Hospital Chiefs
Couriers
Beer Barons
Zigs
Imps
Batons

[Teams in Central District league represented Port HQ, station hospital, a military post, HQ company and three ordnance depots.]

Western Base Section Central District League (second half of season)

Port Ramblers
Trainer's Tigers (Ordnance Depot)
MP Nighsticks
Pill Rollers (Station Hospital)
Fence Busters (HQ unit)
Ordnance Wolves

Southern Base Section Baseball League

Southern League

Ordnance Cubs
HQ Co Reds
Quartermaster Grays
Signal Co Dodgers
Engineer Cards
Ordnance Pirates
Station Hospital Phils
Engineer Giants

Northern League

American School Center Angels
Engineers Red Sox
Cavalry Athletics
Field Artillery Browns
Ordnance Indians
Ordnance Yanks
Station Hospital Tigers
Quartermaster Senators

Northern Ireland Baseball League

US Navy Creevagh (Navy)
Dodgers (USAAF 8th AF)
Pill Rollers (Medics)
Agitators (QM)
Bulldozers (Engineers)
Thunderbolts (Infantry)
Pelicans (Infantry)
Flying MPs
Redbirds (Army Ordnance)
Nightsticks (MPs)
Blues (HQ)
Composite Command Mustangs (Eighth Air Force) joined league late June

London International Baseball League

827th Signal Service Company Monarchs (first half season champions)
Headquarters Company
660th Engineer Topographic Battalion (league champions)
First Canadian General Hospital
DeHavilland Comets
Quartermaster Car Company
Canadian Military Headquarters
Military Police Company

78th Fighter Group (Duxford) Baseball League

Vikings
Vagabonds (Service Squadron)
North Islanders (Fighter Squadron)
Airscrews
Scalders (Fighter Squadron)
Dry Runs (Service Squadron)
Stumblebums (Fighter Squadron)
Warhawks (Fighter Control)
Pirates (Fighter Wing)

Eighth Air Force Headquarters (Camp Griffiss), London

988th Military Police Company (Aviation) Fliers
423rd Signal Company (Air Force)
952nd Engineer Topographic Company (Aviation)
901st Engineer HQ Company (league champions)
1982nd Quartermaster Truck Company (Aviation)
55th Quartermaster Sales Company
8th Air Force Headquarters Squadron

Corps Headquarters Baseball League

Wolverines
200th Field Artillery Battalion Eagles
Signal Battalion Yellowjackets
Port of Embarkation Bears
Lions
Cavaliers
Leopards
Tigers

1st Base Air Depot (BADA 1) Burtonwood

Jeep League
Yanks
Hawks
Missions
Giants
White Sox
Cards
Tigers

Rosters of Prominent Teams

CBS Clowns

London-based army all-star team

George Burns – 1b

Chuck Eisenmann - p

Amey Fontana - of

Harold Fouts - c

Pete Galuska - ss

Lou Kelley - of

Bobby Korisher – 2b

Clair Morgart – 3b

Pete Pavich - ss

Johnny Puskas - p

Myron Scow - p

Jules “Red” Shapiro - mgr

Harry Somerville - of

988th Military Police Battalion
(Aviation) Fliers

Rufus Bell – of

Bill Brech - p

John Conter - of

Andy Dzuris – ss

Bob Froelich – of

Ed Gatlin - c

Ed Hawkins – of

Elwood Hoffman - of

Ed Krull – of

Norb Kuklinski – 1b

Art Lamb – 3b

Lanny Lancaster – 2b

Bill Moore – mgr

Russell Morgan – team officer

Fred Mucci – 2b

Chuck Reynolds – 3b

Heinz Roller - c

Larry Toth – 2b

Calvin Tripp - p

US Naval Hospital Creevagh

USNOB Northern Ireland Runner Up

Lou Buontony - 1b

Cerregghino - of

Lefty Conville - p

George Ertell - ss/p

Tom Evans - p

Kauffman

Arnold Kinney - p

Frank Pekarovits - p

George Pellend - 2b

Pelligrino - 2b

Lou Skarda

First Provisional Marine Battalion

USNOB Northern Ireland Champions

Leslie Akens - of

George Bailey - c

Harold "Hal" Barney - p

Lou Buontony - 1b

Andy Devine

Henry "Hank" Dobkowski - of

Flynn - p

“Black Jack” Halford - of

Cloyd Hamm - 2b

Robert “Red” Kimball - p

Allen Marsh - of

Sam McAllister - 1b

Pelligrino - 2b

Frank Pietrich - ss

Pappy Potter - of

Warren J "Bill or Sunny" Robinson - mgr

Savikas - c

Shriever - of

“Rubber Arm” Tewksbury - p

Mark Titler - p

Charles Ziober - p

116th Infantry Regiment Yankees
ETO World Series Champions

Louis Alberigo - 3b
Wilburt Allan - c
Robert Cleer - of
John Crenshaw
Adam Decker
Frank Draper - of
Doug Gillette – mgr/p
Carl Grimes - p
Joseph Gubernot - ss
Robert Keller – 2b
James Mabes - coach
Robert Marsico - c
George McManus - of
Joe Pellegrini
Carl “Chubby” Proffit – 1b
Dante Roitero - p
William Rowell
Maurice Williams - p
Pride Wingfield
Elmer Wright - p

827th Signal Service Company
Monarchs
London International Baseball League
first half champions

Joseph Summerell - of
Fred Brandt - of
Robert Korisher - 2b
Richard Roberts - 3b
Lou Kelley - of
Charles McGowan - utility
Frank Partyka - c
Chuck Eisenmann - p
Bill Stoddard - 1b
John Farrell - ss
Craig Penrose - utility
Ferrans - utility
Kulscar - utility

78th Fighter Group Thunderbolts
ETO World Series Finalists

Ralph Blair
James Darrell
Neil Davidson
Robert DeLiest
Mauro Duca - p
Burton Kopperey
Orval Letsinger
Buford Petty
Albert Roussele
Adolph Sepich
Richard Snyder
John Swilenga
Guy Wolerlagle
Ernest Yerke

303rd Bomb Group Hell's Angels
Eighth Air Force champions

William Craddock
Gilbert Goar
Lloyd Jones
Ed Kumer
Marion Lewis
Oscar Maraple
Carl Murphy
George Ruder
Joe Rundus
Al Slakis
Col. Kermit D. Stevens
Jimmy Stewart
Lewis Toretto
Joe Uhs
Cptn. J. Leonard Wheeler
Don Wiegand
George Wright

Professional Players in Britain in 1943

Louis Anshultz (p)	pre-war Wisconsin State League
Burton Barger	post-war North Carolina State League
Adelard Benoit (p)	pre-war Penn State Association
Andy Biscan	pre-war Northeast Arkansas League
Paul Bonner (ss)	pre-war Quebec Provincial League
Albert "Abe" Brusko (ss)	pre-war Mid-Atlantic League
Paul Campbell (1b)	pre and post-war Red Sox
Richard Catalano (2b)	pre-war Penn State Association
Bob Cleer (p)	pre-war Virginia League
Hall Causey (3b)	pre-war Alabama State League
Vince Cicero (3b/of)	pre-war Northern League
William Craddock (p)	pre-war Virginia League/post-war Tobacco State League
Maurice Davis (c)	pre-war Tar Heel League
Walt Dixon (p)	pre and post-war Eastern League
Mauro Duca (p)	pre-war Quebec Provincial League
Andy Dzuris (ss)	pre-war Ohio State League
Chuck Eisenmann (p)	pre and post-war Pacific Coast League
Samuel Foxx (p)	post-war New England League
Larry French (p)	pre-war Dodgers
Doug Gillette (p)	pre-war Penn State Association
Alan Grant (p)	pre-war Sally League
Ross Grimsley (p)	post-war White Sox
Hugh Gustafson (1b)	pre-war American Association
Fran Hecker (p)	pre and post-war Alabama State League
Walt Hemperly (ss/3b)	pre-war Interstate League
Ralph Ifft (p)	pre and post-war Mid-Atlantic League
Maurice Jacobs (2b/ss)	pre-war Eastern League
Herb Jenkins (p)	pre-war Virginia League/post-war Carolina League
William Kallaher (p)	post-war Southeastern League
Bob Keller (2b/of)	pre-war Florida State League
Ted Kleinhans (p)	pre-war Reds
Mike Kowal (of)	pre-war Western Association
Marion Lewis (c)	pre-war Canadian-American League
John Linde (of)	pre-war Western International League
Oscar Marable (3b)	pre-war Appalachian League
Phil Marchildon (p)	pre and post-war Athletics
Thomas McEvoy (p)	post-war New England League
Carl Murphy	pre-war Arkansas-Missouri League
Walt Novick (c)	pre-war Texas League/post-war Interstate League
Pete Pavich (ss/2b)	pre-war Three-I League/post-war International League
Frank Pekarovits (p)	pre-war Virginia League (as Frank Pekare)
Metro Persoskie (p/of)	pre-war Interstate League (killed in plane crash February 1944)
Martin Rothe (p)	post-war Coastal Plain League
Monte Rouquette (p)	pre-war Alabama State League
Joe Rundus (p)	pre-war Evangeline League
Norman Russell (p)	pre-war Texas League/post-war Tobacco State League
Jack Siens (of)	pre-war Mountain State League (killed in plane crash Sept 1943)
Al Slakis (ss)	pre-war Coastal Plain League
Carl D. Smith (p)	post-war Coastal Plain League
Ralph Snyder (p)	pre-war Georgia-Florida League
Thomas Sooy (2b)	pre-war Eastern Shore League

Billy Southworth, Jr. (of)	pre-war International League (killed in plain crash 1945)
Stan Stuka (c)	pre-war Interstate League
Lewis Tabor (p)	pre-war Bi-State League
Gene Thompson (of)	pre-war California League/post-war Western International League
Lou Thuman (p)	pre-war Senators
Larry Toth (2b)	pre-war Ohio State League
Joseph Uhls	post-war Florida International League
Jim Vance (c)	pre-war Mid-Atlantic League/post-war Southeastern League
Montie Weaver (p)	pre-war Senators
Guy Woleslagle (p)	pre-war Penn State Association
Elmer Wright (p)	pre-war Southeastern League
Charles Ziober (c)	pre-war Eastern Shore League



This baseball-themed poster from 1943, produced by the Office for Emergency Management, encouraged better production at work.



Hall of Fame pitcher Bob Feller is one of the most well-known figures from wartime baseball. During 1943, Feller served in the Atlantic as chief of an anti-aircraft gun crew on the USS Alabama (BB-60), a South Dakota-class battleship. In the above photo he is seen at spring training in 1946, with fellow military veteran Vern Kohler. Kohler, a keen amateur radio enthusiast, had pitched in the Indians organization before the war. He was in Northern Ireland with the 34th Infantry Division in 1942, and saw combat in North Africa and Italy.



Joe Gradisher at the plate during an VIII Bomber Command game.

Significant Military Teams in USA



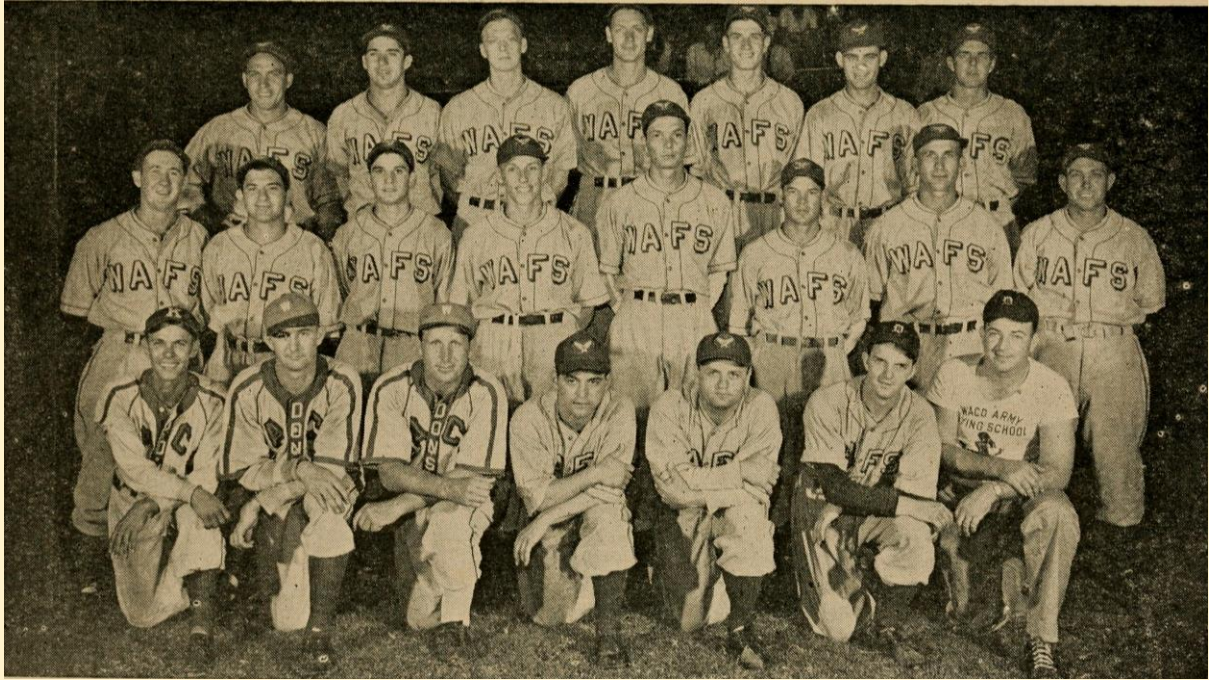
Camp Wheeler Spokes (Georgia) - National Baseball Congress champions in 1943

Back row, left to right: Ken Jungels – Pirates (p), Ralph “Babe” Ellis – Southern Association (of), Jim Oglesby – Athletics (1b), Forrest “Buck” Zeiger – Appalachian League (p), John Haley – American Association (p), Hank Valco and Lamar Zimmerman – of (Appalachian League). Middle row: Whitey Bahrinsky, Tony Sabol – Canadian-American League (of/2b), Cecil Travis – Senators (ss/3b), Milt Rosner – post-war Mid-Atlantic League (mgr), Emil “Mike” Kreshka – Virginia League (of), Harry Jordan – North Carolina State League (p) and Walter Lance – Appalachian League (1b). Front row: Leon Scherer – Sally League (p), Bill Donica – post-war Eastern Shore League (1b), Buddy Riley (batboy), Louis Isert – Kitty League (c) and Jennings Edwards. Lamar Zimmerman was killed in action with the 80th Infantry Division in Luxembourg on January 24, 1945.



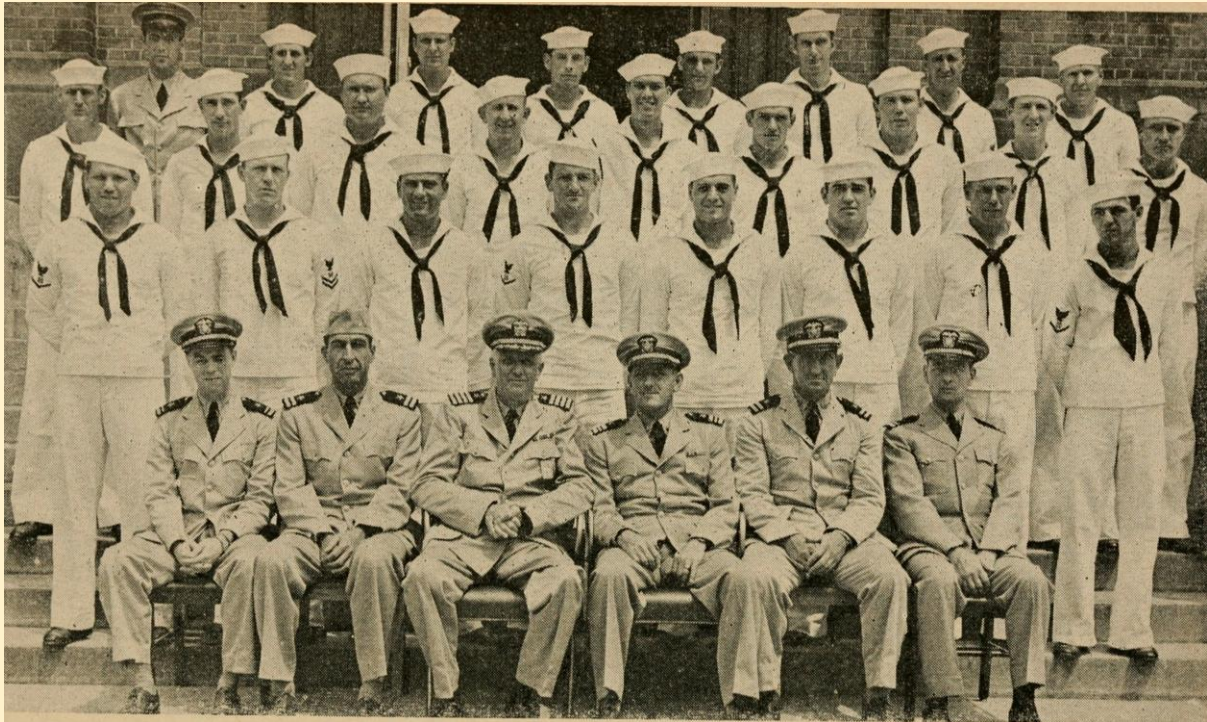
Chapel Hill Navy Pre-Flight School Cloudbusters, North Carolina

Back row, left to right: Ted Williams – Red Sox (of), Victor Bradford – Giants (of), John Kispert, Johnny Sain – Braves (p), Joe Coleman – Athletics (p), Allen “Dusty” Cooke – Reds (of), Robert “Ace” Williams – Braves (p), Joe Cusick – Georgia-Florida League (c), John Kettle, Lewis Powers, and Joe Malone. Middle row: Paul Gallagher (mgr), Ed Moriarty – Braves (2b), John “Buddy” Hassett – Yankees (1b), Johnny Pesky – Red Sox (ss), George Kepler – Interstate League (head coach), Alex Sabo – Senators (c), Andy Pilney – Braves (of), Tom Ravashiere – post-war minor league umpire and Lewis “Buddy” Grempe – Braves (1b). Front row: E.L. Anderson, Earl Stewart – Bi-State League, Robert Carney, Harry Craft – Reds (of), Clayton Whisman (2b), Robert Sampson, Gunner Hagstrom – Williams College, Massachusetts and J.E. O’Grady. Front center: Jimmy Raugh (batboy)



Waco Army Flying School, Texas

Back row, left to right: Gil Turner – Southeastern League (of), Jack English – post-war New England League, Hoot Evers – Tigers (of), Sid Hudson – Senators (p), Nick Popovich – Three-I League (p), Bob Stone and Herbert Nordquist – American Association (p). Middle row: Birdie Tebbetts – Tigers (c), Louis Batterson – Southeastern League (3b), Mike Popovich, Robert Birchfield – Evangeline League (of/c), Alfred Kasperek – post-war East Texas League (p), Lester Stephens, Bruce Campbell – Senators (of) and Buster Mills – Indians (of). Front Row: John Stewart, Leroy Conrad, Michael Mandjack – Western Association (p), Jake Berger, Ernest Nelson – California League (p), Bob Sherman and Ernest Dougherty.



Great Lakes Naval Training Station Bluejackets, Illinois

Back row, left to right: George Hader – Southern Association (p), Warren “Sheriff” Robinson – International League (c), Henry Perry – Texas League (p), Marvin Felderman – Cubs (c), Barney McCosky – Tigers (of), Jack Hallett – Pirates (p), Carl Meyer – Southeastern League and F. Joseph Shaffer – American Association (p). Second row: Joe Grace – Browns (of), Earle Bolyard – Texas League (of), Johnny Mize – Giants (1b), Vern Olsen – Cubs (p), George Dickey – White Sox (c), Glenn McQuillen – Browns (of), Tom Ferrick – Indians (p), Johnny Schmitz – Cubs (p) and Bob Harris – Athletics (p). Third row: Frank Biscan – Browns (p), Dennis Gleason – Interstate League (c), Johnny Lucadello – Browns (2b), Chet Hajduk – White Sox (of/1b), Carl Fiore – Eastern League (3b), Tom Madden – Virginia League (3b |), Red Nonnenkamp – Red Sox (of) and Eddie Pellagrini – post-war Red Sox (inf). Front row: Lt. John L. Griffith (assistant athletic officer), Lt. Paul D. “Tony” Hinkle (assistant baseball officer), Cptn. Robert R.M. Emmet, Lt-Comdr. J. Russell Cook (athletic officer), Lt. Gordon “Mickey” Cochrane (baseball officer), Lt. Luke Walton (athletic public relations officer).



Lambert Field Naval Air Station, Missouri

Back row, left to right: Babe Martin – post-military service Browns (of), Emil Kush – Cubs (p), Al Fisher – Texas League (p/of/1b), Bob Scheffing – Cubs (c), Dick Sisler – post-war Cardinals (1b/of), Ralph Sacko, Bill Mueller – White Sox (of) and Buddy Blattner – Cardinals (ss/2b). Middle row: Lt. Rody Ruttenbusch (coach), Johnny Berardino – Browns (ss/2b), Frank “Skeeter” Scalzi – Giants (inf), Cptn. P.C. Supan (senior medical officer), Lt-Cmdr. John W. Geppert (executive officer), Lt. C.A. Muhl (athletic officer), Val Heim – White Sox (of) and Lt. Hal Schumacher – Giants (manager). Front row: Frank Mason, Robert Martin, Ken Olson – Kitty League (p), Bob Stapenhorst – post-war Kitty League (p), Russ Nixon, Bill Messman and Robert Grant – Piedmont League (of).



McClellan Field Army Air Force, California

Back row, left to right: Don Brown (scorekeeper), Charlie Silvera – post-war Yankees (c), Walt Judnich – Browns (of), Bill Schmidt – Pacific Coast League (p) and Malcolm Silva – Western Association (p). Middle row: Kenny Butler – Piedmont League (of), Carl DeRose – Canadian-American League (p), Dario Lodigiani – White Sox (3b), Vince Latino – California semi-pro, Bob Dillinger – post-war Browns (3b) and Al Hanley – post-war Wisconsin State League. Front row: Red Renfree (manager), Mike Sypnicki, Ferris Fain – post-war Athletics (1b), Izzy Smith and Joe Marvelli – Arizona-Texas League.

About Gary Bedingfield

For an Englishman, my enthusiasm for baseball may seem a tad strange. Baseball does not enjoy a big following in Britain, and yet I developed a passion for the American national pastime at a tender age. My interest in baseball begins with my father, who was born and raised in England but, as a musician, toured the American Air Force bases during the early 1960s. He developed a keen interest in baseball during this time by watching the Air Force teams play and participating in the occasional scratch games.

As I was growing up we would play catch with the gloves he had acquired from the military and I really got hooked at a very young age. By the time I was 12 I was playing in a competitive league and continued to do so for the next 20 years. Most of those years I was a catcher with the Enfield Spartans - an amateur team that reached the British finals every year from 1989 to 1994 and were British champions four of those years. I also played for the Great Britain national and Olympic teams, and coached varsity baseball at the American School in London. I am privileged to say I have played against such well-known professionals as George Foster, Tug McGraw, Graig Nettles, Mark Fidrych and Luis Tiant.

Fleeting moments of my own achievements will always be with me, but more than anything I enjoy the things that make baseball so perfect - the ballfields with their lovingly maintained grass infield, the rich brown dirt base paths, and perfectly laid white lines; the thud of a fresh white baseball hitting a well-seasoned glove; and the grace and precision of my teammates as they execute with perfection seemingly impossible plays. There's no doubt about it - I love baseball.

As my playing days came to an end, I developed an appetite for the history of the game, searching for links between baseball and my own country. I have always been interested in WWII history and it was in the mid-1990s I was thinking about American servicemen in Britain during the war and wondering what their affiliation with baseball could have been. Were there any minor league players here? Maybe even a major league player or two might have passed through Britain. A little research showed that many ball players had indeed served and also played baseball in this country during the war. I'd had professional baseball on my doorstep, albeit half a century ago!

That was really the spark I needed. The amazing thing was no one had written about overseas military baseball in WWII. I began writing articles for Army magazine, Our State, Roanoker, Die Hard and Vintage and Classic Baseball Collector Magazine. This led to the publication of *Baseball in World War II Europe* by Arcadia Publishing in 2000. October 2008, saw the release of *When Baseball Went to War* by Triumph, a book I was heavily involved in following my participation and keynote presentation at the National World War II Museum in New Orleans in November 2007. My most recent written work (apart from the Baseball in wartime newsletters) was *Baseball's Dead of World War II*, published by McFarland in 2010.

I am a SABR member and a Dodgers fan. I operate two baseball-related websites (www.baseballinwartime.com and www.baseballsgreatest sacrifice.com) and currently live in Glasgow, Scotland, where I run my own staff development training company, Gary Bedingfield Training.

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