

Musings Over the Morning Muster

By MR. FEATHER-MERCHANT

Exercise is a wonderful thing. I have never denied it, and have even helped to support it. I have a miniature mountain of ticket stubs ranging in price from two-bits to three rustles of the long green folding stuff to prove that I love exercise.

Long ago in one of those Golden Gloves affairs I was struck simultaneously by a haymaking right cross to the eye and a realization that I was the studious, not athletic type. Thereafter I always bought a ticket and discovered the superiority of successful shouting over attempted clouting.

I joined the Navy. It was decided soon thereafter that all enlisted men must exercise daily.

Who, me? . . .

The next morning at seven-thirty—a time that had existed for me only in the vague legends of brave souls who stayed up all night to discover it—I was huddled forlornly on the stone wall that faces Raleigh Street. I was not alone, for the stern voice of duty had called the entire crew to face the worse-than-death fate. Our hopelessness was darker than the darkness-before-dawn that shrouded us.

One tremulous voice rose in the gloom: "For nearly 30 years I haven't touched my toes without bending my knees. I'm proud of that record and I intend to keep it."

A record, among other things, was broken that morning amid a bedlam of grunts and creaking joints.

We fell into formation. Presently came those awesome words, "Prepare the divisions for physical drills."

A huge and imposing figure in shorts appeared. At first glimpse, I thought I recognized Charles Atlas. Then I realized my mistake. This officer was bigger. Subsequent and slightly awed inquiry revealed him as Lt. (j.g.) G. C. Emerson, erstwhile all-pro football league guard. I reflected, "If exercise will give me muscles like that, it's almost worth it. Almost."

He boomed out, "Double arm interval, dress right." Then, "Right face."

I'm a feather-merchant. Most of my military training was in the Boy Scouts; and a little I gleaned from idly watching the National Guard in the days when it was fashionable to poke fun at the boys who could see a bit further into the future than the rest of us. It was not that I didn't understand the commands; I had dabbled a trifle in languages, including English. But my feet never had become educated. I tripped and nearly fell.

Mr. Emerson wasted no time in this-hurts-me-more-than-it-hurts-you orations. He got right down to business, which meant giving us the business.

On the first bend I waved sociably at

my toes from a distance, murmuring, "Ne'er the twain shall meet." But they did. Mr. Emerson saw to that. I made it on the fifth try. And then I couldn't straighten up again.

He had an amazing repertoire of muscle stretchers that would have been useful in the days of the Inquisition. Grunts of anguish were torn from us as unknown muscles protested.

He said, "Throw out the chest on that backward bend!"

He threw out his own chest for demonstration. Being in the first ranks, I shied off in self defense, uncertain as to where that chest was going to stop expanding.

The final exercise followed the command, "Arms sideways and upward, feet apart with a jump." So I jumped and flapped my arms, recalling between jars a toy monkey on a stick I once owned. Had some grind-organ operator wandered past in search of a performer, I am sure a new and brilliant career would have opened for me at that moment.

At the final, blessed command, "Dismissed!" I crawled to the building. In the days that followed, I discovered that due to the fortunate arrangement of trees between the street and Alexander Hall, there was no necessity for undignified crawling.

My muscles became supple and tough. So Mr. Emerson figured out new exercises that reached as yet untouched muscles. Most unpopular of these is the "Russian Ballet," so named in honor of Joseph Geletka, Sk. 3c (recently elevated to lieutenant, junior grade) and performed from a precarious "Knees-bend" position.

There was one ray of hope; some morning my prayers might be answered with rain. Seas of moisture descended on Chapel Hill, but none at 0700. Then one morning I awoke to the merry music of raindrops on the roof. A dismal, dark, rainy, beautiful morning. I waded toward Alexander, feeling indeed that "Every cloud hath its silver lining."

At 0725 the rain ceased miraculously. We exercised.

And then came the cold snap. It was bitter cold, colder than Longfellow's Hiawathan Winter. Even while I shivered through extra underwear, I smiled a frozen smile. It was too cold for exercise.

But there on Raleigh Street waited the statuesque Lt. (j.g.) G. C. Emerson, nattily attired in a pair of shorts, smiling in appreciation of our Southern climate.

The weeks went by. The fresh air my lungs accepted so reluctantly in the morning did not poison me, as I had feared. Either my trousers were stretching, or my waistline was shrink-

Navy Discloses Data on Captured Zero Fighter Plane

Preliminary testing of a Japanese Zero fighter captured in the Aleutian Islands by American forces has produced figures indicating that the famous enemy plane is by no means the "superplane" some observers have claimed it is.

The Mitsubishi '00, which was salvaged after being only slightly damaged when forced down in the Aleutians, was repaired and flown through initial trials at the Naval Air Station, San Diego, Cal., before being moved to the NAS at Anacostia, D. C., for exhaustive examination into its performance characteristics.

The Navy, in reporting acquisition of the Zero, disclosed information indicating that the much publicized Jap plane has shown both strong points and weaknesses in the tests held so far.

In preliminary trials, the Navy report stated, "the Zero developed a top speed of slightly less than 300 mph.," adding, however, that later tests may increase this speed somewhat.

"The Zero shows to best advantage in a dogfight where tight turns make high speeds impossible," the Navy announcement declared. "Then its maneuverability and climbing speed come into play.

"Around 200 mph. the Zero is very light on the controls, but at higher speeds the controls become stiff. Above 225 mph., the Zero will not make a fast roll because of this stiffness. At 380 mph., in a dive, the Zero develops marked flutter and vibration, which may be inherent or due to some undetected disalignment caused by its rough handling in the Aleutians.

"Otherwise the Zero is a stable, easy-to-fly plane with generally good flying characteristics. Its lightness is not gained by flimsy construction, as it is well designed. The lack of self-sealing tanks and armor protection for the pilot, which mainly accounts for its lightness, have made its over-all combat record against the Navy's Grumman Wildcat a poor one. The Zero's empty weight is 3,781 pounds and its combat

ing. My food tasted better. I finally realized that the gleam in Mr. Emerson's eye was simple good humor instead of sadistic ferocity.

Last Sunday came the acid test. I competed for a table in a Chapel Hill restaurant, where might makes right and missing a meal is fatal because it leaves one too weak to battle for his food at the next chow hour. I captured and held against all comers the best table in the house.

Verily, exercise is a worker of miracles.

Of course, it can never quite repair what a passion for cocoanut pie has done to my figure over the years; but I can now retrieve a fallen chest and for a number of magnificent moments appear quite military.

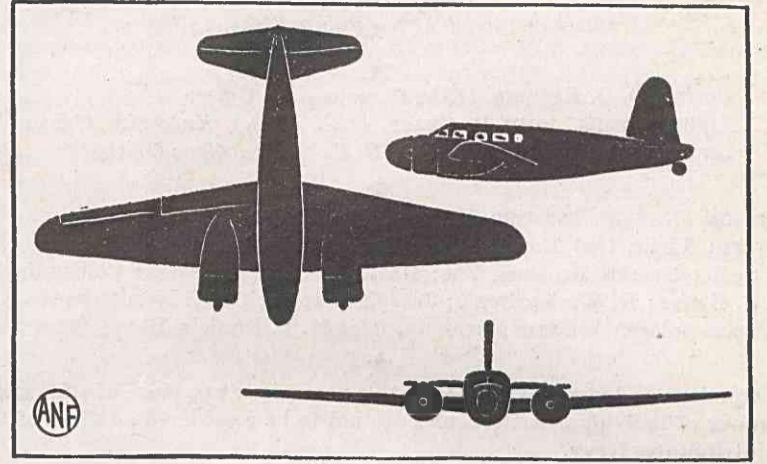
I was admiring the new posture before a mirror the other day, and idly murmured without false modesty, "The Navy builds men."

A Yeoman passed and added thoughtfully, "Usually."

In the plaintive words of E. N. Logan, Y 2c, "He could have accumulated six hash marks and never said that."

Know the Enemy's Planes

JAPANESE MITSUBISHI DARAI BOMBER



The Japanese Mitsubishi Darai 108, presented here as the sixteenth in a series by the Aeronautical Chamber of Commerce of America, is a light twin-engine bomber with motors mounted somewhat out of parallel to each other. Its rounded-tip wings are more tapered on the trailing edge than on the leading edge, and its nose extends but little farther forward than its radial engines. Another feature is that its wing span considerably exceeds the ship's over-all length.

weight, without belly tank, is approximately 5,200 pounds."

The armament of the captured Zero consists of two 22-millimeter, low-velocity cannon, one mounted in each wing, with 60 rounds of ammunition, and two 7.7 machine guns, with 500 rounds each, in the nose to fire through the propeller disk.

Over-all length of the Zero is 30 feet, three inches, its wing span 39 feet, five inches. The wings are hinged two feet from the tips to allow folding for easier carrier handling. The cockpit would be uncomfortably small for most of our pilots, the Navy said.

The 900 hp. radial engine in the Zero is a 14-cylinder, double-row design using modifications or direct adoption of many features found in our Pratt & Whitney and Wright engines. The propeller is a three-bladed, constant speed, hydraulic type identical with the Hamilton model. Radio equipment in the plane is copied after Fairchild units.

When salvaged, the Zero was painted a smooth light grey tinted with blue and light green, a coloring selected for operations in the foggy Aleutian area. It has been repainted in U. S. Navy colors.

Plans call for the Zero to be flown

from San Diego to Anacostia, as it is not considered feasible to disassemble it for shipping.

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