

## Athletics Great Training for Soldiers



By Robert Edgren

American newspapers are raising a fund to buy athletic goods for all of our soldiers in the training camps and at the front. It is a good cause. Athletic sports will make our fighting men far more effective than any untrained unit of troops. The development of athletics will give the soldiers something to think about besides war. It will make them much more fit to "go over the top" and into the trenches of the enemy.

I was talking with an athlete-soldier just back from the front. "I was in only one charge," he said, "but the years I put in doing athletic work were worth while just for that three or four minutes. We were all well trained men—baseball and football players, mostly. Some of us were lacrosse players up in Canada before the war. We went over the top after a bombardment that only drove the Germans down while it lasted. As soon as we started the machine guns began to turn loose on us.

"I didn't feel like being in much of a hurry to get anywhere until that happened. But when the men began to drop I saw that it was a case of running to get there before I was hit. We all ran for all we were worth. It's part of the

strategy of an attack to avoid advancing so fast that the men are winded and tired out when they get to grips with the enemy. A dead tired man is up against terrible odds when he meets a fresh man with the bayonet. He has lost his speed and he'll be lucky if he doesn't lose his life because he's too slow to get in the first thrust.

"We didn't go slow to save our wind. The bullets were coming so fast it looked as if it would be a whole lot safer over there in the Boche trenches. It seemed hours that we took to cover that few hundred yards. It might have been a couple of minutes. We piled in on top of the Germans and it was lively work for a little while, although we seemed to have surprised them with our speed at that. When it was over we were in pretty good shape—those that were left. But if we had been untrained men we would have been winded and slow and our losses would have been twice as heavy."

**Greek Athletes Were Great in Battle**

The ancient Greeks knew the advantage of athletic training in the days of hand to hand fighting. Every Greek was trained to be a soldier. He ran races, threw the discus and practiced often with the javelin. He was trained in boxing and in sword fighting. The result

showed in many all-day battles with Persian invaders, where the Greeks sometimes killed ten of the enemy for every Greek in the fighting line. The Persians were war-like enough, but less skilled in athletic sports than the Greeks.

The sports that will be encouraged in the American training camps will all be useful in preparing men for battle. Boxing will be the chief sport. Every man will be taught to box, because a good boxer is sure to be a handy man with the bayonet. Bayonet fighting is practically boxing with a weapon. A lot of boxing tricks, including several that are barred in the Queensberry rules but considered quite the proper thing in a lumber camp fight, have been applied to bayonet fighting. In fact the blow that would be foul in boxing is most easily delivered with the bayonet.

Some of the new bayonet work is done with a short-handled gun, the muzzle grasped in one or in both hands. It was suggested by a boxer's infighting. And reports from the front say that the Canadians, who originated it, find it very effective.

**"Snappy Blow" the Thing with Bayonet**

In boxing, many blows, and particularly the jabs, are delivered with a quick, snappy motion, not driven through with the weight of the body behind. This has been applied to bayonet work, the soldier being instructed to drive his bayonet in not more than five inches. This is enough to kill, and it relieves the fighter of the embarrassment of having to tug his weapon out of bone or other obstruction, which would cause an awkward delay should another of the enemy be jabbing around in the immediate vicinity.

Baseball players, recent tests have shown, readily adopt the cricket bowling motion with which hand grenades are thrown from the trenches. Occasionally using a ball throwing motion they can throw much further than the cricketers, although there is more strain in this, and it is not to be used all the time.

Football and lacrosse players all make good fighters. There is something of the battle spirit in each of these games. They are rough sports, and they require courage, skill, endurance and aggressiveness to a superlative degree. No man with a yellow streak ever fought his way into a first eleven at any of the big colleges.

It isn't done. And the Canadian lacrosse men are all good fighters. They have to be. If they weren't they'd choose some softer sport.

**First Athletic War of Modern Times**

Baseball, football and lacrosse will be sports generally encouraged in the training camps. Boxing will be universal of course, and will be most important of all because it will be used for training every man. There will be a lot of games which two or three men can play, and which will not require great skill. These will be necessary for general exercise and entertainment.

There never has been a time, in the past sixteen hundred years, when athletic sport has played a serious part in war. The last occasion on which war and sport went together was in Greece, when the conquering Romans were compelled to prohibit the continuance of the Olympic Games because athletics kept the Greeks full of fighting spirit that led to frequent revolts against Roman rule.

(Copyright by the Press Publishing Co., the New York Evening World.)

## Pepper Talks

By George Matthew Adams

### HONOR

When a MAN dies, he lives. I never pass by Spalding sporting goods store but what I think of a story. Here it is. Back in the early nineties a fight was on between the National baseball league and an organization known as the Brotherhood. It was during a time when the life of organized baseball was seriously threatened because of crookedness among players.

Spalding sent for Mike Kelly, who had jumped the Chicago Club, and met him one night in the old Astor House. Mr. Spalding counted out fifteen \$1,000 bills and laid them on the table.

"Kelly," he said, "you can have this money if you will sign with the Chicago Club and begin playing with Anson at once."

Kelly, who had had a card in his pocket, looked at the healthy paper sheets wistfully for a few moments, and then replied:

"Can't do it, Al! You see I gave my word of honor that I'd stick by the Brotherhood, and I can't desert the boys."

"All right, Mike!" said Mr. Spalding, as he began picking up the money.

"I'll tell you what I will do, Al!" exclaimed Mike, with a grin. "I'll borrow a thousand, if you don't mind. I haven't got a cent!"

Mr. Spalding quickly handed over one of the bills and remarked:

"Your word is worth a thousand, Kelly! This is a present with my best wishes!"

I never saw Spalding or Mike Kelly. Spalding is dead. I know nothing of Kelly. But I shall never forget either. They are both worth remembering—both.

(Copyright 1917 by George Matthew Adams)

### FISH AND FISH

A shoemaker in an English city, getting on well in the way of business, became proud. One day there were a lot of customers in the store when the shopboy came in to say that the mistress bid him say dinner was ready.

"What's for dinner?" asked the shoemaker.

"Herrings, sir," answered the boy.

"All right," said the shoemaker, and when he went in to dinner he reprimanded the boy for not mentioning something decent and big, telling the boy in future always to mention a good feed when there were any people in the store. A few days after the boy came to say that dinner was ready.

"What's for dinner?" asked the shoemaker.

"Fish, sir," answered the boy.

"What sort of fish?"

"A whale, sir!" replied the boy.

### SHE PROVED IT

In a small Georgia town the principal speaker at a big meeting said: "This town is smaller than New York, but it is just as progressive and up-to-date."

Then he introduced a young woman who sang "Little Annie Rooney."