

Athletics

A Muscle Grooming Campaign

Men were not made to fly at altitudes of 30,000 feet. Nor were they built to be wrenched in the air at speeds of 500 miles an hour. But the Japs do it. The Nazis do it. We must. And the rugged physical conditioning program here at Maxwell Field is the successful answer to how we can. The keystone in the training program is the development of those muscles and nerves most used in combat flying. It is to this end that hours of manpower, perspiration and drudgery are now being expended—to toughen our combat fliers for the fight.



THE OBSTACLE COURSE looked simple. But after the first run, cadets acquired a healthy respect for the course, sometimes called it "cadet killer".





SOME TOOK THE HIGH ROAD and some took the low road, but all felt the effects of a strenuous run over "The Burma Road".

DDOUBLE tiitiitiime, march! And a long column of fast-stepping cadets goes jogging toward one of the athletic fields at Maxwell. Take a good look at these men as they go by. Their heads are high, bodies lean and hard and their feet meet the ground in a sharp and rhythmic cadence.

Just a few short weeks ago these same trim, bronzed athletes were fresh from the softness of civilian life. A carefully designed and rigidly adhered to physical fitness program transformed them from civilians to cadets rapidly approaching that peak of physical perfection Uncle Sam demands of his fliers.

The physical education program at Maxwell Field has been prepared especially to develop coordination of mind and muscle, an essential quality for pilots. Before inaugurating a training schedule, the Army made an actual tabulation of the muscular movements required to pilot a plane. From these preliminary experiments, a body building plan was developed that would do the best possible job of conditioning cadets for flying.

From the cadet's viewpoint the program might be divided into three parts. There is calisthenics, cross-country runs, and last but

far from least, "The Burma Road."

The first few cross-country runs seem almost impossible to finish. Each cadet grits his teeth and determines to keep running as long as the fellow next to him does. Soon leg muscles harden, chests deepen, breathing becomes steady and unhurried. One day the entire group swings out for a five mile jaunt around the airport. And they all finish with an extra sprint at the end to show what fine shape they're in.

At calisthenics, wand work, dumbbell-drills, and coordination exercises follow in rapid succession. Finally, a single, sharp command rings out:

"Front leaning rest position, ho!"

That's when the push-ups begin. They push up till they can't push anymore—then they do ten more. Organized games play an important role in the overall training program. They range from basketball and push-ball to boxing and volley-ball.

Progress is slow at first, but in two months a superbly conditioned group of men leave Maxwell for primary, fit and ready to fly for Uncle Sam.

—A/C M. William Jacobs.