# *TWO FAST MEN*

**by C. Aubrey Hearn**

I SAW GUNDER HAGG, of Gaevle, Sweden, and Gil Dodds, Boston divinity student, shatter the American mile record. It was one of those once-in-a-lifetime races, packed with thrills and suspense.

The place was the Harvard Stadium. The date, July 24, at 7:30 P. M. It was a typical New England summer evening. The track was in perfect condition. The 14,000 spectators were eager and expectant. It had been predicted that a new American record for the mile would be set, and the great audience confidently expected track history to be made.

The occasion was colorful. The American-Scandinavian Athletic Association sponsored the track meet for the benefit of the U. S. Army Air Forces Aid Society. A forty-eight piece Coast Artillery band and two companies of Wacs paraded. The American and Swedish anthems were played before the races got under way. The Wacs sang the Army Air Corps song. Fighter and bomber planes gave demonstrations in the sky overhead.

Five spectacular preliminary races kept the audience on their toes. One of these was an 880-yard obstacle race for service men, in which each runner carried a 60-pound full pack, helmet, and rifle, and jumped hurdles.

When the time for the feature race, the mile, arrived, a hush fell over the stadium. Five well-trained milers toed the mark. Besides Hagg and Dodds, there were William Hulse, Don Burnham, and Robert Knowles. The latter, a high school star, took a 25 yard handicap.

For slightly more than four minutes after the sound of the gun the spectators stood, craning their necks, yelling, and urging the runners on. Knowles set the pace for most of the first lap, until Hagg passed him and held the lead thereafter. Until the last turn Dodds and Hulse were right at Hagg's heels. Twice Hagg looked back at them. On the last turn Hagg quickened his gait and unleashed a stride that put him eight yards ahead of Dodds at the tape. Dodds led Hulse by four yards.

Hagg was clocked at 4:05.3, bettering by 1.4 seconds the American outdoor mile record of 4:06.7 made by Glenn Cunningham at Princeton in 1934. Dodds also lowered Cunningham's time, establishing a new mark for an American miler, 4:06.5. (A week later in Cleveland Bill Hulse lowered this to 4:06, finishing a yard ahead of Dodds. Hagg, who finished first, was timed at 4:05.4.)

In the Harvard race Hagg was clocked at 3:47.8 for 1,500 meters (120 yards short of a mile), a tenth of a second below Walter Mehl's American mark of 3:47.9, established in California in 1940. Thus two American records were set by Hagg in one race.

After the epochal race, I went to the

*Continued on page 8*

# OXYGEN SENSE

**Servicemen—also read feature on page 4**

BREATHE right along — easy does it! Don't be too self-conscious about this common and useful habit. But on the other hand, be sure what you are breathing.

If you are a flyer, you've already learned that—

Breathing water, illuminating gas, carbon monoxide, etc., isn't healthy in any event.

Breathing *enough* air that contains *enough* oxygen is part of the job of flying—as well as living!

Flyers learn a good many facts about air and the healthy person's use of it from a sprightly booklet named "Oxygen Sense." It was issued a few months ago by the Training Division, Bureau of Aeronautics of the U. S. Navy.

How would you like to know just what the problem of "not enough air at high altitudes" means? "Oxygen Sense" puts this in the form of a comparison you need never forget; it's that simple.

Imagine a huge pile of mixed straws; half of them black, the others white. The weight of the straws compresses those on the bottom more than those on top. A pitchfork full of straws from the bottom of that pile contains more straws in it than a fork full taken at the peak—though the proportion of black and white straws always stays the same.

Now, begin to stoke a fire with that straw, in which the white straws prove to be better fuel, and you'll see a difference in the results of a single fork full. To get the same results with a fork full off the top of the big pile, you'd have to add some more white straws.

A flyer's oxygen apparatus feeds "white straws" of oxygen into the lessened quantity of air available at high altitudes. The flyer has to know and thoroughly value that equipment. He must understand it, keep it in running order, and know enough to use it when flying for any length of time above 10,000 feet.

The book says that a fellow feels fine when he is first in need of more oxygen. He just isn't paying attention to the advice of his altimeter, which tells him he is flying at "thin-air" height.

"Sure you feel fine," the text continues. *"So does your drunken friend when you tell him he's had too much of the old stagger-soup and shouldn't drive his car.* He doesn't feel so fine later when they pick him up off the road. Anoxia—lack of oxygen—like alcohol gives a false sense of exhilaration and self-confidence."

Alcohol gets some other mention in the Navy flyers' book.

"I'd like some beer," it indicates, is just the wrong thing to say to a waitress when you're due for a high-altitude trip within the next day of so. Equally bad: "Let's have just one more drink before we turn in."

"Bad on two counts," explains the Navy. "First of all, it's cold up there. Alcohol breaks down your resistance to cold, even though it may make you feel warmer. You'll be a lot more subject to frostbite, chills, numbness, and so on if you've been drinking the night before than if you haven't.

"Alcohol of course has a lot of other effects which don't help you under conditions such as you face in high altitude flying:

"Your vision is not as keen.

"Your heart and breathing are accelerated (and remember, you're on oxygen).

"Your pores are opened due to raised skin temperature.

"Your whole general body adjustment is depreciated.

"Alcohol lowers your 'service ceiling' anywhere from 3,000 to 6,000 feet. *War is no time for that!"*

There's other advice—as commonsensible as this—leading up to the big *punch* sentences that any one of us might well paste inside his hat:

"You must realize that if you function below 100 per cent for any of the reasons given here, you're not the only one who suffers. The boys are depending on you—the squadron is depending on you—the Fleet is depending on you—the Nation is depending on you."