



## ANCC FOUNDATION Did You Know?



### Playing Through: World War II

This article is a combination of the DYKs from January 2020 and May 2021

The challenges faced by Army Navy Country Club during WWII were those faced by all country clubs, but because of the unique composition of our membership, some of the impacts were greater for a Club that catered to active duty and retired military personnel. The Club's challenges included the following:

- **Members.** Obviously, the advent of World War II had an immediate and significant effect upon our membership. Two of the highest profile departures were Admiral Chester A. Nimitz, ANCC President, to Commander-In-Chief, Pacific, and retired Admiral William Standley to be U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union. The lack of stability of the resident membership led to high Board of Governors' turnover and to the combination of committees, e.g., Planning and Grounds.
- **Staff.** Losses of key staff members such as head golf professional Alan Burton (Marine Corps) and head greenkeeper Walter Cosby (Army) combined with the paucity of labor for golf course maintenance, clubhouse staffing and caddies, forced a reduction in events, services, and maintenance.<sup>1</sup>
- **Rubber.** The diversion of most rubber production to the war effort made it difficult to find golf balls, tennis balls, and tires for both private and Club-owned vehicles.<sup>2</sup>
- **Gasoline Rationing.** Gasoline was strictly rationed, making its use for trips to the Club and for golf course maintenance problematic.
- **Restrictions on "Non-Essential" Driving.** These restrictions were administered by the Office of Price Administration which on at least one occasion (July 1943) visited ANCC taking automobile registration numbers and issuing tickets to appear before a special panel on non-essential driving. Public transportation was not a viable alternative as the bus service to the vicinity of the Club was terminated in 1939.
- **Golf Shoes and Clubs.** Like golf balls, the conversion of manufacturing facilities to the war effort had an adverse effect on the availability of new shoes and clubs.

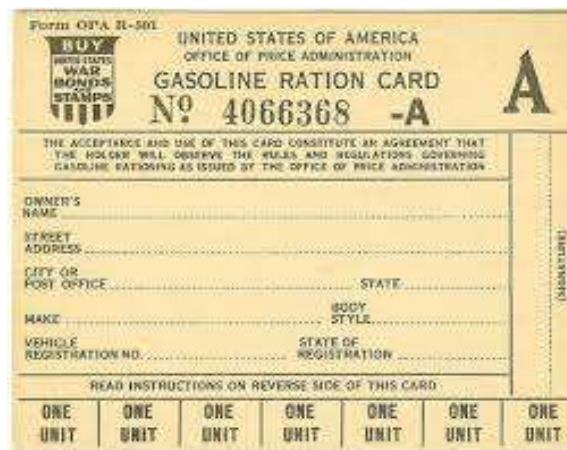


ADM Chester Nimitz

<sup>1</sup> The labor shortage led to higher labor rates in the Washington DC area (Executive Committee, April 13, 1942) while "Many British courses addressed a labor shortage by leaving the maintenance of their fairways to herds of grazing sheep". ("When War Played Through", John Stregge, Gotham Books, New York, 2005, page 89)

<sup>2</sup> Tires were rationed. To purchase a new tire an individual required clearance from a rationing board. ("When War Played Through", page 101)

- **Fungicides, Herbicides, and Insecticides.** Many of the chemicals used as fungicides, herbicides and insecticides were no longer available due to their diversion to the war effort or because they could not be imported due to shipping constraints. Unfortunately, with a greatly depleted technical staff the USGA Green Section was unable to test the many potential substitutes.<sup>3</sup>
- **Maintenance Practices.** To reduce manpower, the USGA Green Section endorsed recommendations such as those developed by the Chicago District Golf Association to increase the cut height of greens, fairways, rough and tees while decreasing the frequency of the cuttings as well as other maintenance practices such as raking bunkers. These recommendations included adopting year-round “winter rules”.<sup>4</sup>
- **Revenue.** All the above contributed to reductions in revenue from monthly resident membership dues, initiation fees, activity fees and food/beverage revenue.

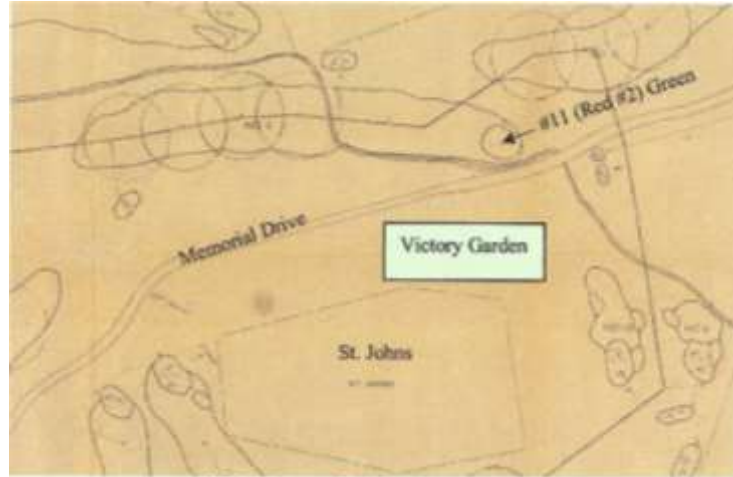


## Victory Gardens

Like numerous other clubs, ANCC set aside some otherwise unused land for “**Victory Gardens**”. In the case of Augusta National the golf course was used to graze a herd of dairy cows (unprofitable) and to raise turkeys (profitable). In April 1943 the ANCC Board of Governors reported that “plots of land 30’ X 40’ across the “Club road” (Memorial Drive) from No. 11 (White #2) green are being arranged for Victory Gardens”. At the time the area now occupied by the White #3 tee was owned by Charles H. St. Johns (ANCC purchased the St. Johns property in 1952). Accordingly, the area across the “Club road” and below the St. Johns holdings was open space. We have found no record of how many, if any, of these lots were planted and harvested.

<sup>3</sup> *Timely Turf Topics*, June 1942, USGA Green Section, Page 1

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, Page 4



**ANCC Victory Garden Location (1943)**

