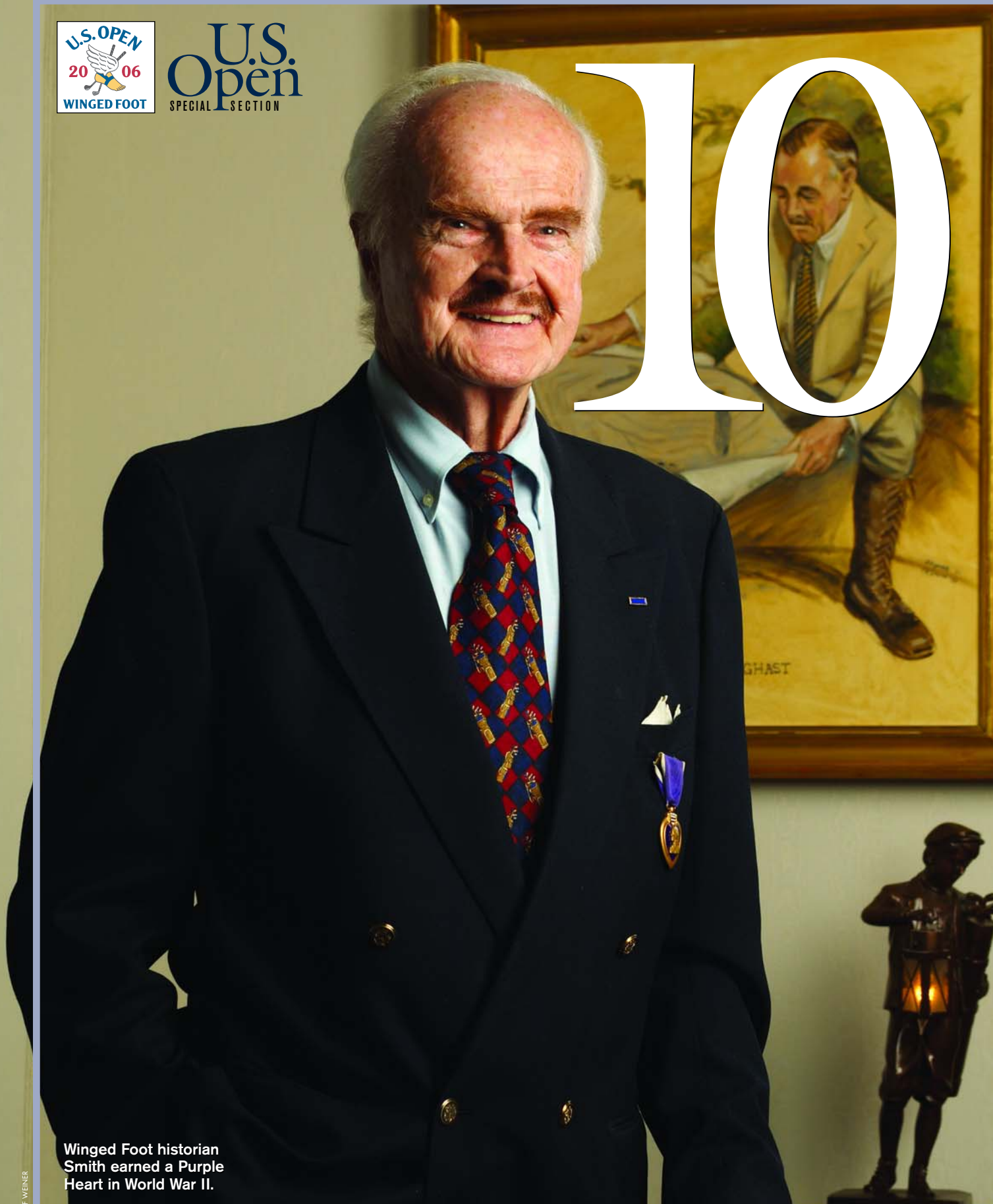




U.S.
Open
SPECIAL SECTION

10



Winged Foot historian Smith earned a Purple Heart in World War II.

JEFF WEINER

Things

You Didn't Know About Winged Foot

In its 83 years of existence, the esteemed club has been chock full of historic quirks, colorful characters – and more than one famous animal

BY TOM IERUBINO

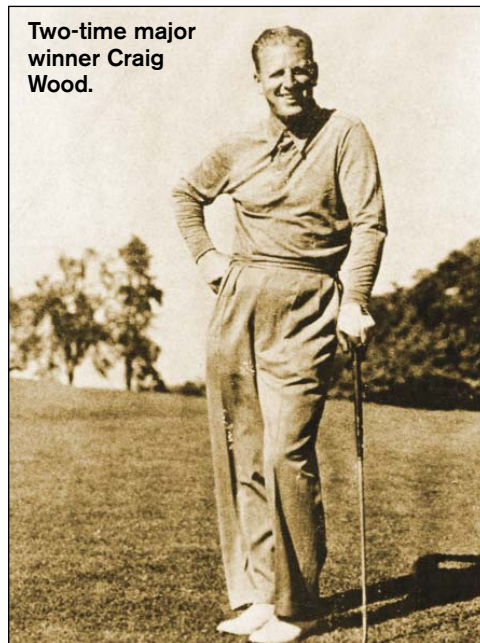
Rock Solid

When club historian Douglas LaRue Smith (*opposite page*) says that Winged Foot's clubhouse "rose right up out of the ground it was built on," he means it literally. The stone that was used to build the iconic clubhouse came from excavations during construction of the golf course. The architect, Clifford Charles Wendehack, wrote in 1925: "It was decided that the stone obtained from the site was not only the most permanent material, but the most harmonious with the surroundings."

The cornerstone of the clubhouse was placed during a ceremony on April 14, 1923.



Two-time major winner Craig Wood.



Pros' Pros

Winged Foot has only had five head professionals in its history, and three of them – Mike Brady (1924–39), Craig Wood (1939–45) and Claude Harmon (1945–78) – won PGA Tour events while holding the job. Wood and Harmon also won major championships – Wood claiming the Masters and U.S. Open titles in 1941 and Harmon taking the Masters in

1948. Current head pro Tom Nieporte won three Tour events prior to coming to Winged Foot in 1978.

Jack of All Trades

John G. Anderson, a founding member of Winged Foot and for whom the club's annual Anderson Memorial tournament is named, was not only a fine player but also was one of America's first golf writers. A two-time U.S. Amateur runner-up (1913, '15) and twice winner of the French Amateur (1924, '26), his reporting on Francis Ouimet's historic 1913 U.S. Open victory was a story that was widely read in *Golf* and *Golf Illustrated*.

Winged Foot's grounds are much quieter today than they were during the Revolutionary War period.

Who done it?

The disappearance of "Leo the Lion" is a mystery that has gone unsolved since the night in 1993 when the majestic copper statue that had stood watch at the clubhouse's front entrance since 1925 vanished. The original Leo was a gift from club member and clubhouse contractor Norton Leo. Not long after the audacious crime, the club had Leo reproduced by



Modern Art Foundry of Astoria, N.Y., and Leo II currently resides in the same spot as his predecessor.

Family Affair

To celebrate Claude Harmon's 20th anniversary as its head professional, Winged Foot gave him and his family an honorary membership in 1965. In his very first year of eligibility, Dick Harmon, then 19, won the club championship. The next year, his 17-year-old brother Billy won the title. It is rumored that the club quietly asked the Harmon boys to step aside and give the dues-paying members a chance.

Almost Voigt-ed

A year after Bobby Jones won the 1929 U.S. Open on the West Course, it was a Winged Foot member who nearly derailed Jones' Grand Slam hopes before they even began. George Voigt had Jones two down with five to play in the semifinals of the 1930 British Amateur before Jones rallied to win en route to capturing the first leg of the Slam.

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White Mule

During construction of the West Course in 1922, a worker showed up at No. 13 with an albino mule. He hitched the rare beast to his Fresno scoop and proceeded to shape the contours of the green. Course Architect A.W. Tillinghast laughed when the worker told him the mule was “not much to look at, but he sure can work.” Tillie right then decided to call the hole “White Mule,” and the name stuck.



The Silver Scot

Tommy Armour, winner of three major championships from 1927–31, was a club member from the late 1940s until his death in 1968, spending his summers at Winged Foot and his winters in Florida. Though Winged Foot isn't mentioned by name, the holes described in his 1959 book *A Round of Golf with Tommy Armour* resemble the West Course's front nine.

The difficult par-three 13th hole was originally shaped by a rare albino mule dragging heavy equipment.

century author, lived in a home adjoining the property and used the area as the setting for his novels *The Spy* and *Last of the Mohicans*.

Historic Grounds

The land Winged Foot occupies was once home to Mohican Indians. Later, during the Revolutionary War, George Washington's army camped here before and after the Battle of White Plains. James Fenimore Cooper, the famous 19th-

Lightning

When the par-three 17th hole on the East Course was built, it originally featured a bunker so large and deep that Tillinghast named the hole “Lightning” because, he said, “it would take a bolt from Jove to get out of” the bunker. Today, players can rest easy, as the bunker no longer exists. It was replaced many years ago by a grass pit, but the name remains.

Tom Ierubino is a Contributing Writer to *The Met Golfer* and lives in Somerset, New Jersey.

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