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Why The Axis Fears Our Aerial Gunners

Skilled Marksmen Teach Our Boys How To Hit Speedy Enemy Planes



TYPICAL AERIAL GUNNER is Sgt. Leonard Matkey, of Stevens Point, Wis., of Lithuanian ancestry. Note colored bullets in his gun.

When you read about our air superiority in combat you can credit it to the thorough training we give our aerial gunners before they meet the enemy. Superior equipment both for training and combat has been developed by the Army. To this, add the pot-hunting and trapshooting heritage of American youth and the uncanny skill of trapshooting champions who serve as instructors in the basic training. Together these things make for a solid background with which to fight for freedom from the tail end of a bomber.

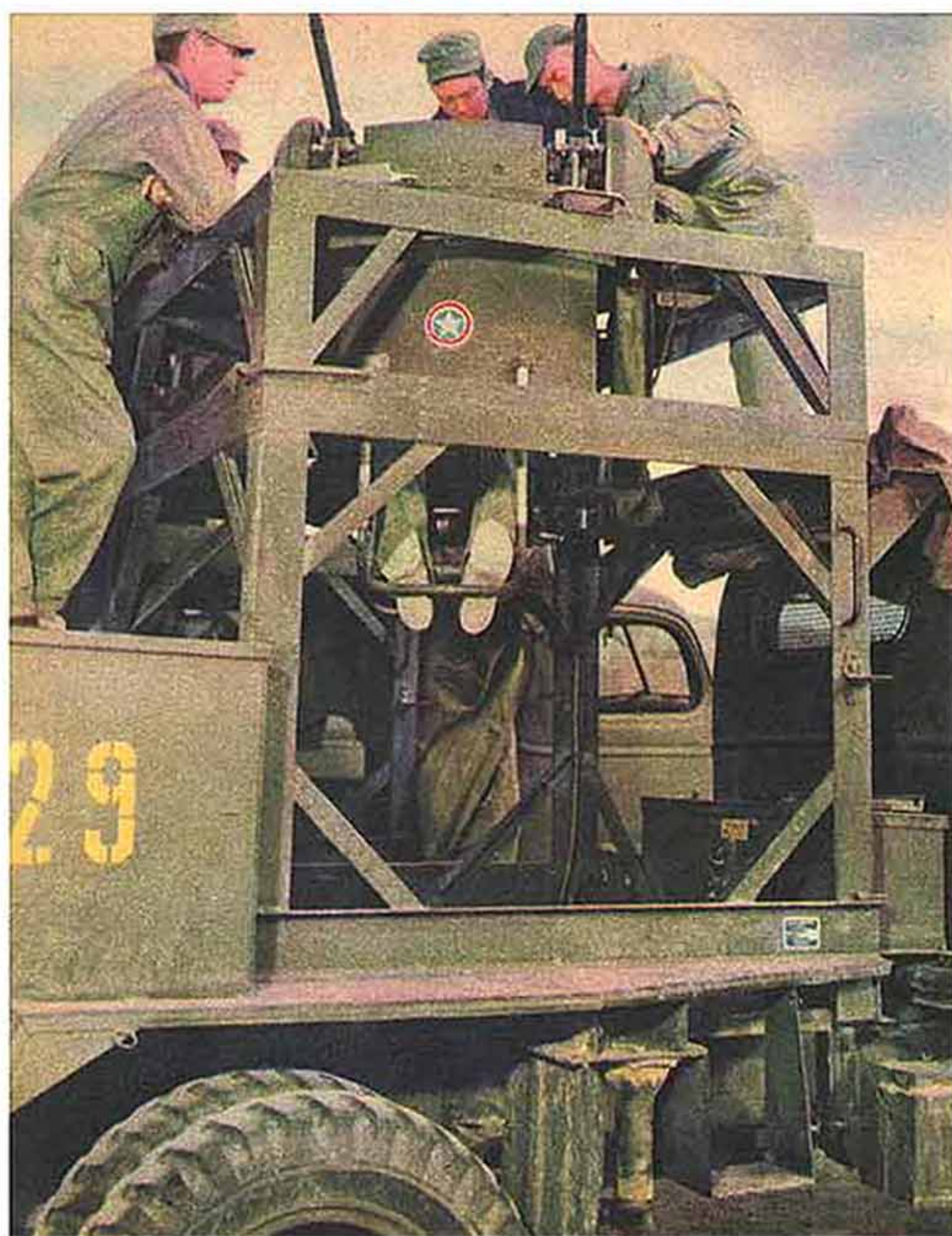
Men selected for aerial gunnery training are all volunteers. They come from all walks of life. Their five weeks of intensive training begin with lessons in "leading" a target, as do trapshooters and duck hunters. Men are then graduated to target shooting with shotguns—an advantage the Japs don't have because of the rarity of these weapons in the Orient. This is followed by a course in the "bumps," which consists of shooting at targets from turrets mounted on fast-moving trucks. This is the nearest thing on earth to the conditions they will face in the skies. After that, they go aloft and complete their training.

Aerial gunners, such as these men in training at Las Vegas, Nev., are taught a good gunner is an almost impossible target for the enemy while a bad gunner is an easy one. The balance of power favors the man who knows his job, and U. S. Army Air Corps spares no effort to see that American gunners are tops. The Army knows we must depend upon these aerial gunners to give us victory over our Axis enemies.



BASIC TRAINING under trapshooting champions accounts for the almost uncanny accuracy of our aerial gunners. Here a group of students use dummy guns to learn how to "lead" a moving target. Coordination of hand and eye is one of the dividends our gunners derive from this meticulous training.

GUNNERY SCHOOL



GUNNERY STUDENTS inspect a mobile turret before going out on the "bumps." Shooting from moving trucks is a new wrinkle in gunnery.



MACHINE-GUN BULLETS are dipped in specially prepared, vivid paints to stain the target. A different color is assigned to each gunner, so that his score can be controlled.



INDIVIDUAL SCORES made on a target sleeve are computed by the colored markings left by the bullets. Men who fail after five weeks of training are "washed out" as gunners.



PRELIMINARY TRAINING takes place on ground, where men shoot at stationary targets such as this one. Later they practice from trucks, then in plane.