

Spies and Sports Spell Success to Bob Deindorfer

A broken nose, an unhinged jaw, a pulled hamstring and knotted calf muscle — all of these injuries are a part of the game. Not the game of athletics, however, but the game of journalism as played by Robert Deindorfer, Journalism '44.

The injuries, however, were not from entanglements with a typewriter; they came from such ambitious activities as a boxing match against Joe Louis (two rounds), a wrestling match with Primo Carnero, a try at defensive tackle on a professional football team and as a batter against left-handed pitcher Hal Newhouser of the Detroit Tigers.

These “harmless” sporting indulgences were part of a series Deindorfer once wrote for *This Week* magazine called “I Tackled the Champs.”

In spite of injuries, Deindorfer finds the mental side of the job of being a writer at least as difficult as the physical. “A writer spends the bulk of his time walled up in a room by himself, bent over a pencil or typewriter, depending, bleeding severely to get it all in a lively and readable sequence, with those dratted transitions from one section to another that seldom seem to come easily.”

The research Deindorfer does more than makes up for whatever excitement the act of writing may lack. Since his series for *This Week*, his investigations have led him down equally dangerous paths.

“In the past few years I’ve shot an elephant in East Africa, spent a week in Timbuktu, played cricket in England, had my pockets picked along the Persian Gulf, fished salmon in Wales, interviewed poachers in Scotland and Wales, lived the life of a West Point cadet, ridden night patrol along the Iron Curtain frontier with West Berlin Cops, spilled a cup of tea at the Prince’s castle in Liechtenstein, settled back in JFK’s rocker in the White House, crossed the Sahara by truck, talked with espionage people in East Berlin, Vienna, Munich, and other places,



and even went up in a balloon,” Deindorfer relates. Extra added attractions to this type of work include one case of tick fever and several bouts of malaria.

For the last few years, Deindorfer has confined his writing to the field of intelligence and espionage. The five books he has authored are non-fiction. The late Allen Dulles contributed a foreword to one of his books and acknowledged Deindorfer’s help in another.

However, the Ol’ Mizzou alumnus does occasionally vary from the field of spies — he has an article on Tiger halfback Joe Moore in the November issue of *Boy’s Life* magazine, and has handled such varied assignments as political speechwriting for Adlai Stevenson, JFK and Hubert Humphrey.

At the moment, Deindorfer is working on three hard-cover books, all on the same subject: one is the story of the Israeli secret service combine, another a whimsical account of England’s SIS and the last a book on espionage-related disposals or killings. These will be added to his other published books, *The Great Gridiron Plot*, *True Espionage Stories*, *Confessions of a Gypsy Quarterback*, *Thirty-*

Three Centuries of Espionage, and *The Spies*.

He lives in Manhattan with his wife and three-year old son, Scott, and has a trout camp 120 miles upstate on the Neversink River for weekends, and “a small stone cottage, with the help of the Halifax Mortgage Society, in what we consider the most magnificent part of all England — Lower Slaughter, a small village in the Cotswolds, out in Gloucestershire, 20 miles from Stratford, 25 miles from Oxford.”

A lover of old English motorcars he owns a 1937 Rolls-Royce and a 1952 Bentley convertible with a built-in bar.

Aside from books and articles which have appeared in *Life*, *Look*, *Reader’s Digest*, *Saturday Evening Post*, *Saturday Review*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Nation’s Business*, *Redbook*, *True Sport*, *Parade*, and *Pageant*. Deindorfer does some public relations work for Boone and Company in New York. Yet despite the variety of work, the volume of published materials and the perils involved behind the scenes Deindorfer still says, “Except for the research, it’s simply another job, behind on the chair, a desk, fairly routine.”