

**F  
A  
C  
T  
I  
S  
S  
T  
R  
A  
N  
G  
E  
R  
T  
H  
A  
N  
F  
I  
C  
T  
I  
O  
N**

Fred "Windy" Windsor was probably the most flamboyant and eccentric of the fight managers of the 1920's and 30's. "Windy" was out of Tacoma and even fought professionally under the name of Danny Gallagher. His ever present straw hat on, "Windy" was always searching for a gimmick to get his fighters press coverage.

One of "Windy" Windsor's favorite fighters was a good looking Mexican deaf-mute from Tombstone, Arizona. His name was Fredrico Mesa, but for convenience sake fought under the name Fred "Dummy" Mahan.

Mahan had run up quite a record on the west coast, and refused to duck anybody. Starting out in 1924, "Dummy" compiled a long string of knock-outs and welterweight contenders were hard to find to step into the ring with him. He faced two world champions in Mushy Callahan and Jackie Fields, who he fought in Kansas City, but was flattened in the second round.

Mahan was very popular on the coast and had just about everything a young man from the streets of Tombstone could want. All, but one. He desperately wanted to be able to hear, to dance to the sound of a rag time band; to talk to a girl; to hear

for years. He was willing to try anything at this point.

He tried a fast dive in an airplane, and afterwards claimed he could in fact hear for several hours. On this encouraging note, the Mexican fighter decided to give it one more try. This time jumping from a high flying plane with a parachute.

"Windy" Windsor was game for all the ballyho he could get, but this was just too risky. The boxer was'n't experienced enough to make that kind of a jump. It was out of the question. But the determined mute refused to be dissuaded. Having experienced the marvels of sound in some small measure, "Dummy" wanted it all.

On February 24, 1930, at Mills Field, in San Francisco, Fred "Dummy" Mahan was about to gamble his life on a dream.

Many spectators had gathered to see the jump, including many deaf-mutes who were anxious to see if the brave prize fighter could do it.

A small plane piloted by Colonel Harry Abbott taxied on the field, and the brave boxer, with his parachute strapped on, hopped into the cockpit with all the enthusiasm of a school boy. Stirring up a barrage

# THE LAS GAMBLE

THE TRAGIC STORY OF A DEAF  
"DUMMY" MAHAN — HE GAM  
FATE, BUT DEATH HELD THE W

the roar of the crowd as his arm was raised in victory. The Mexican deaf-mute had tried all "cure-alls" and experiments, and he was willing to gamble anything to come out of his world of silence. One day he either read, or was told a sure way to regain his hearing, was to have a sudden plunge into space and that this method had cured people who had been deaf

of dust the plane picked up speed and quickly was airborne. All eyes were to the pale blue skies, as the plane gained altitude and circled the field. Not a word was spoken as the small aircraft became smaller and smaller. Only the faint drone of the engine broke the morning stillness. Inside the cockpit, the Mexican looked over the side to see the ground give way

and the great expanse of the sky beckon him.

The plane still climbed. Up and up the tiny craft went. Now only a speck in the blue. Now they were almost 3,000 feet. Abbott looked back at the fighter. He shook his head. No, a little higher. With a faint feeling of dread, the pilot aimed the nose upward. The plane was now at 3,200 feet. It was now or never. Now as the time for the showdown in "Dummy" Mahan's gamble with fate. Colonel Abbott looked over his shoulder and gave "Dummy" the 'thumbs up.' With a smile and a wink, the fighter returned the sign, and climbed out of the cockpit.

A moments hesitation, and Fred "Dummy" Mahan, launched himself into space. Below on the ground the crowd gave a sigh as a small dot left the bi-plane. Down and down the tiny form tumbled.. Spectators were shading their eyes as they watched the figure descend. Down and down, with nothing between the falling man and eternity. A murmur arose from the crowd. "Why isn't he opening his chute? He is falling so fast." The speed of the falling man was tremendous. Now he was coming closer to earth, a slowly tumbling form.

# BT

by   
ROBERT CARSON

## MUTE FIGHTER IBLED WITH INNING HAND!

A scream escaped the throats of those watching in horror, as "Dummy" Mahan sped towards the hard packed ground of the air field. Now it was too late for the parachute, and at well over 120 miles per hour, the little fighter from Tombstone slammed into the mudflats with a dull thud. It was all over. "Dummy" had gambled, but death held the win-



R. CARSON

FRED "DUMMY"  
MAHAN

ning hand.

"Windy" Windsor stood horror-struck as the crowd rushed towards the still form. An aeronautics inspector atated that Mahan's chute got tangled, but Windsor disagreed. "I saw it all, and there was no tangling of the parachute. It simply didn't open. Why, I don't know."

"Windy" went on handling fighters,

and lived a full life, passing away a few years ago of old age. But through the years he was never able to rid himself of that spectacle of that body tumbling slowly through space, and that terrible feeling in the pit of his stomach, when he knew the chute wasn't going to open. It was a feeling "Windy" Windsor took to his grave. ■

Boxing Beat — January 1979 31



**FRED (DUMMY) MAHAN**



**PILOT, FRED WINDSOR (MGR.) AND FRED (DUMMY) MAHAN**