

Nostalgia Corner

30 Years Ago ... by Paul Davison

Howard Hill, 1901-1975



In the March 1975 issue of *Archery*, the magazine's founder and retired editor, Roy Hoff, eulogized his long-time friend Howard Hill, who had recently passed away:

"Howard Hill, without a doubt, the greatest all-around archer of modern times, passed away February 4th of this year. Gone at seventy-four. He retired a few years ago and returned with his wife, Elizabeth, to their old home in Vincent, Alabama to spend his last days."

*"... He was an accomplished hunter by the time 1928 rolled around. He bagged big and small game in many countries and his ability as an archer was depicted in the popular movie titled "**Robin Hood**," in which Howard costarred with Errol Flynn."*

"... In the early years of modern archery, Howard competed in some of the big national target events. But the real challenge, which he enjoyed immensely, was field archery, which was founded in the late 1930s."

"... I had my first scuffle with Howard on the old Redlands, California range, which is generally considered as the first to cater entirely to field archery. When I say I competed against Howard Hill in those years I use the word loosely. To my knowledge there were few who could claim actual competition, for Howard won every tournament. There were those who figured he couldn't possibly shoot that good. The word got out that Howard must be padding his score. When Howard heard about these

insinuations he, in effect, told field archery to go jump in the lake."

"... On March 18, 1945, the California Bowman Hunters staged their first annual state tournament. Howard participated and I felt privileged to shoot with him in the same foursome. He explained that he would forego keeping score because there were those who would feel badly if they were beaten in the shoot. There was no doubt in my mind who won the event, though I took home the hardware as the first state champion."

Howard Hill was more than just an expert archer and bowhunter. He played baseball, basketball and football at Auburn University. He was also a semi-pro baseball player for a while, and even a part time golf professional.

After he became established as a Hollywood personality, Howard spent some time at the nearby Pasadena Roving Archers range, which holds claim to being NFAA's oldest club. Coincidentally, Alabama's Vulcan Archery Club, his home club, is older, but its NFAA affiliation is not continuous. As of 1998, there was at least one Hill relative still active in club affairs.



**Howard Hill as Errol Flynn's double
in *Robin Hood***