

# Game Saddened by Death of N.L. Star **Ott** at 49

Milestones Along 22-Year Playing Career . . . And in Post-Grad Work



Mel Ott as a 16-Year-Old Rookie in 1926.



Ott as Giant Star.



Helped Air Tigers' Games Last Season.

## Injuries in Auto Accident Cost Life of 'Little Giant'

Wife Critically Injured in Car Crash in Mississippi;  
McGraw Favorite Started at 16, Set Many Marks

By FREDERICK G. LIEB

NEW YORK, N. Y.

Mel Ott, baseball's famous little Giant, has joined John J. McGraw, Christy Mathewson, Mike Donlin, Arthur Fletcher and Ross Youngs in that abode in sport's Valhalla set aside for former New York Giants immortals. Not only the baseball world, but the entire nation, was stunned—and shocked—when the former Giants outfield star and manager, and his faithful companion of years on the baseball trails, Mrs. Mildred Ott, were both critically injured in a serious automobile collision near Bay St. Louis, Miss., on the night of November 14. The Ott station wagon and another car crashed head-on, resulting in instant death to the driver of the lighter vehicle.

Everything within the ken of medical science was done in an effort to save the life of the former National League homer king. After Ott underwent surgery in Gulfport for four hours to patch up two broken legs, he was moved to the famed Touro Infirmary in New Orleans, where an artificial kidney machine was used to reduce pressure on the bladder. There were more hours of emergency surgery for multiple internal injuries, but Ott's physicians knew from the start it was a grim battle with the spectre of death. After a few minor rallies, the flame of life flickered out, November 21. Mel was only 49 years old. Cause of death was uremia, kidney damage and multiple fractures.

In the meantime, plucky, grief-stricken Mrs. Ott waged her own battle to overcome a brain concussion, broken arm and lacerations.

### Little in Size Only

The words, "the little Giant," were used affectionately by New York baseball writers in referring to Gotham's favorite National League player after Ott had outgrown his earlier appellation of Master Melvin, wished on him when he was a boy prodigy under John McGraw. He was "little" only when contrasted with some of his six-foot teammates, as Mel was five feet, nine inches tall, and was as solid as a piece of Louisiana cypress. His playing weight used to be 170 pounds. And there was nothing little about his accomplishments in the National League.

He played in the senior major for 22 consecutive seasons, though in his last year, 1947, he made only four futile pinch-hitting appearances. During that time he hung up many National League records, and wiped out some of Hans Wagner's old marks that seemingly were unattainable. Mel set up new N. L. records for home runs, 511; most runs scored, 1,859; most runs batted in, 1,860, and most bases on balls, 1,708.

### 'Mel Best Reporter on Air,' Says Old-Time Bengal Fan

DETROIT, Mich.—Mel Ott came to Detroit in 1956 to replace Dizzy Trout as assistant to Van Patrick in airing Tiger games. He gained popularity from the start.

A long-time regular at Briggs Stadium who couldn't get to the park last summer observed:

"Ott did the best reporting job of any radio man I ever knew. He had a way of presenting baseball so that it could be understood by all. His words carried authority because he knew the game thoroughly."

Briggs Stadium has lost an esteemed friend. SPOELSTRA.

His 511 homers gave him the third ranking position in the all-time major league homer parade, as Mel trailed only Babe Ruth, 714, and Jimmie Foxx, 534. Ott also was a splendid outfielder, with a great arm. He learned to play rebounds from the right field wall at the Polo Grounds with the precision of a billiard player, and woe to the baserunner who tried to take an extra base on "Ottie's" arm of steel. It is no wonder that he was elected to the Hall of Fame as soon as he was eligible, in 1951, four years after he appeared in his last National League box score in 1947.

Yet, what endeared Ott even more than his great deeds at bat and in the field was his kindly, friendly nature. The words, "He's a nice guy," as applied to a ball player, have become rather trite, but in the case of Ott, they fitted him like a glove. He truly was the nice little guy of baseball. Though Mel was the memory of the scrappy, belligerent and belli-

## Lasting Tribute



MELVIN T. (MEL) OTT  
NEW YORK (N.L.) 1926-58

ONE OF THE PLAYERS TO JUMP FROM A HIGH SCHOOL TEAM INTO MAJORS, PLAYED OUTFIELD AND THIRD BASE AND MANAGED CLUB FROM 1926 THROUGH JULY 1948. HIT 511 HOME RUNS, N. L. RECORD WHEN HE RETIRED. ALSO HAD IN MOST YEARS SCORED MOST RUNS BATTED IN, TOTAL BASES, BASES ON BALLS AND EXTRA BASES ON LONG HITS. HAD A .318 LIFETIME BATTING AVERAGE IN 15 YEARS. ALL STAR GAMES AND IN THREE PLAYERS.

### MEL OTT'S Plaque in Game's Hall of Fame.

John McGraw, his mentor and early manager, he never tried to emulate McGraw's belligerence and truculence as a player or Giants manager. In fact, a magazine article under Leo Durocher's by-line, "Nice Guys Finish Last," supposedly was aimed at "Ottie" when the little Giant managed the Polo Grounds cast. Durocher since has said that his ghost writer had him say a lot of things he didn't really mean, and admitted that an ex-ball player can be a nice guy and a successful manager.

### Champ in Gentleness, Sportsmanship

However, even in New York, which has been described as the nation's No. 1 rat race in the mad scramble for success, Ott's gentleness, kindness and good sportsmanship always set a fine example. He was given the annual sportsmanship award of the Sportsmanship Brotherhood in 1946. Only two other managers, the revered Connie Mack and Billy Southworth, and two players, Walter Johnson and Lou Gehrig, ever were given this award.

Melvin Thomas Ott was born in Gretna, La., across the Mississippi River from New Orleans, on March 2, 1909. His athletic prowess first manifested itself at Gretna High, where young Mel starred at baseball, football and basketball. He was the catcher for the school nine and always could hit. When he was only 16, he and his high school pitcher tried out briefly with the New Orleans Pelicans during summer vacation. A. J. Heinemann, the New Orleans owner, nearly broke young Mel's heart, when he signed the pitcher, farmed him to a Cotton States League club, and told the kid catcher, "You're not quite ready. Maybe in a couple of years you'll do." But getting the New Orleans turnout proved one of Ott's, really great breaks.

Heinemann sent young Ott to Harry

## Mel's Page in Game's 400

Year	Club	League	G.	A.R.	H.	2B.	3B.	HR.	RBI.	B.A.	P.O.	A.	E.	F.A.
1926	New York	Nat.	35	60	7	23	2	0	4	.283	18	3	2	.918
1927	New York	Nat.	82	163	23	46	7	3	19	.282	52	2	1	.982
1928	New York	Nat.	124	435	69	140	26	4	18	.277	214	14	7	.970
1929	New York	Nat.	150	545	108	178	37	2	42	.283	335	20	10	.975
1930	New York	Nat.	148	521	122	182	34	5	25	.298	320	23	11	.969
1931	New York	Nat.	138	497	104	145	23	8	29	.292	322	20	7	.981
1932	New York	Nat.	1154	566	119	180	30	8	128	.298	247	11	6	.984
1933	New York	Nat.	152	580	98	164	36	1	23	.283	283	12	6	.983
1934	New York	Nat.	153	532	110	180	29	10	35	.295	226	12	8	.974
1935	New York	Nat.	152	503	113	191	30	6	31	.292	304	42	4	.983
1936	New York	Nat.	150	534	129	175	28	6	33	.295	258	20	4	.985
1937	New York	Nat.	151	535	89	160	28	2	23	.294	198	12	10	.970
1938	New York	Nat.	150	527	116	164	23	0	26	.291	163	24	15	.964
1939	New York	Nat.	135	396	85	122	22	2	27	.280	190	45	11	.955
1940	New York	Nat.	151	528	89	125	27	3	19	.289	240	92	12	.975
1941	New York	Nat.	145	525	89	150	29	0	27	.286	258	119	9	.968
1942	New York	Nat.	152	549	118	162	21	0	30	.295	259	115	3	.980
1943	New York	Nat.	125	380	65	89	12	2	18	.274	219	12	6	.975
1944	New York	Nat.	150	399	91	115	16	4	20	.282	200	19	7	.969
1945	New York	Nat.	135	451	73	130	22	0	21	.279	217	11	4	.983
1946	New York	Nat.	31	68	2	5	1	0	1	.074	23	2	0	.900
1947	New York	Nat.	44	4	0	0	0	0	0	.000	0	0	0	.000
Major League Totals			2750	9456	1959	2876	488	72	511	.280	4716	766	144	.974

Year	Club	League	G.	A.R.	H.	2B.	3B.	HR.	RBI.	B.A.	P.O.	A.	E.	F.A.
1923	New York	Nat.	5	18	3	7	0	0	2	.289	10	0	0	.969
1928	New York	Nat.	8	23	4	7	0	1	4	.304	13	0	1	.923
1937	New York	Nat.	8	20	1	4	0	1	2	.200	5	4	0	.833
World's Series Totals			16	61	8	18	2	0	4	.295	27	9	2	.917

\*Denotes league leadership. †Denotes tie for league leadership.

Williams, a Louisiana lumber baron, who had a plantation and saw mill north of New Orleans and ran a summer semi-pro team as a hobby. Williams installed Ott behind the plate, and immediately was impressed by young Mel's natural swing.

It just happened that Williams also was a friend of John McGraw, then the great manager of the New York Giants. He wired McGraw, "I think I've got a real prize for you," and McGraw wired back, "Have your prize report to me at the Polo Grounds."

Ott never tired of telling of his first trip to the Polo Grounds in the late summer of 1925. He brought along an old straw suitcase from Louisiana, and didn't even try to check in at a hotel. However, he asked for directions to the Polo Grounds, and apparently they weren't too explicit. "I wandered under New York from one subway to another," he used to say with his contagious, ever-boyish grin. "I don't know how many trains I changed to, but it must have been a dozen. I was two hours getting from Penn Station to the Polo Grounds, but I finally made it."

### Clicked at Once With McGraw

He brought a short letter from Williams to McGraw. Mac looked carefully at the 16-year-old boy, who didn't look a day older. "So, you want to be a ball player," he said at length. Perhaps John J. had thoughts of his early career; he started his pro career as a 17-year-old with Olean, N. Y. Anyway, he told the trainer to give Mel a uniform and assign him to a locker. The next morning he watched young Ott take batting practice, and smiled. He liked what he saw, and chuckled: "That Harry Williams knows a ball player."

The Giants had a disappointing season in 1925, when the team frustrated McGraw's ambition to be the first major league manager to win five

### Ott's Big Regret—Failure to Play W. S. Under McGraw

NEW YORK, N. Y.—One of the regrets of Ott's life was that he never played in a World's Series under his managerial idol, John J. McGraw. Ott came to the Giants in 1925, the year the Pirates checked McGraw's great pennant run of 1921-22-23-24. The 1924 flag was McGraw's tenth and last. "We fought hard to give McGraw another championship," Mel once recalled. "In my early years with the Giants, we lost the 1927 championship by one and one-half games, the 1928 flag by two games, and in 1930, when we hit .319 as a team, we were in a tight race all the way with the Cardinals, Cubs and Dodgers. A few hits by myself, or one of the other boys, at the right places, could have won any of those races for Mr. McGraw."

straight pennants. But, the club finished second, and though the 16-year-old Ott was under contract, McGraw did not use him in any of his September games. However, the boy was invited to the Giants' Sarasota training camp in 1926. Roger Bresnahan then was a Giants coach, and at McGraw's request, he asked Ott, "Did you ever play in the outfield?" The youngster from Gretna replied naively, "Yes, a little when I was a kid."

Another instance of Ott's naivete in his first full season in New York, 1926, comes to mind, McGraw was using the kid mostly as a pinch-hitter and he was having phenomenal success. He ran off five straight pinch-hits, and

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## With Hall of Fame Pal



TWO ALL-TIME greats, Honus Wagner (left), when he was Pirate coach, and Mel Ott, when he was Giant star.

## Donlin to Ott—Giants Had Star Parade in Right Field

NEW YORK, N. Y.—Mel Ott was the fifth of a great string of Giant right fielders, Mike Donlin, Jack (Red) Murray, Davey Robertson, Ross Youngs and Ott. All were sturdy clean-up stickers, who batted third or fourth in the lineup. And all were exceptional throwers. This was natural as Murray and Ott started as catchers and Donlin and Robertson as pitchers. Youngs died of a rare ailment at an early age of 29 in 1927, and when illness struck Ross down in 1926, McGraw already had Ott available to fill his shoes. Donlin died in Hollywood in 1933. Murray and Robertson are still alive. The latter is a Virginia game warden, located at Norfolk.

vital homers. A two-run home run off Wallie Stewart was the margin of the Giants' 4 to 2 victory in the first game, and a disputed tenth-inning homer off Jack Russell won the fifth game, 4 to 3. With two out and nobody on, Mel's line drive to center glanced off the tip of Center Fielder Fred Schulte's glove and landed in a temporary center field bleacher at Griffith Stadium. The ball first was ruled a ground-rule double by Umpire Cy Pfirman, but on the appeal of the Giants, the other umpires reversed Pfirman, saying the ball never had touched the ground before it was deflected into the stand.

Mel also hit a homer in each of his Series with the Yankees, 1936 and 1937, but oddly enough never hit a circuit clout in his 11 All-Star games, two of them played at his homer haven, the Polo Grounds. He was so honest that he frankly admitted he never would have ranked third in the all-time homer parade if it hadn't been for that homer zone at the historic field of the old New York Giants.

Picked by Stoneham to Replace Terry Horace Stoneham, Giant president, had his disagreements with Bill Terry, after the Giants tumbled into the second division after the pennants of 1936 and 1937. In looking around for a successor for Bill, he decided on Mel Ott. Horace had been only a boy himself when Master Melvin first came to the Polo Grounds in 1925, and like many others he had grown up a red-hot Ott fan.

Some of Mel Ott's best friends felt he never was meant by nature to be a manager. He never could have tongue-lashed a player as did McGraw, or berated an erring or errant athlete with the cold scorn of Bill Terry. He had two strikes on him when he was named Giants manager at the minor league meetings in Jacksonville, Fla., on December, 1941. That was five days before the Japs struck at Pearl Harbor, which brought on our entry into World War II and upset all baseball values for five years.

"Ottie" got off to a good start with the 1942 Giants, finishing third, which was a distinct improvement over Terry's sixth in 1939 and fifth in 1940. But, then it was tough sledding—eighth in 1942, two fifths, another cellar finish in 1946, and fourth in 1947. This 1947 club was the Giants' famous homer circus that blasted 221 home runs, a National League record that was tied by the Cincinnati Redlegs in 1956. "Imagine all those home runs, and I couldn't get myself a single," moaned Ott, more or less in jest. That was the season he faded out with his four fruitless pinch-hitting attempts.

Took '48 Ouster in Stride Instead of improving in 1948, the slugging chorus slumped back into the second division. Horace Stoneham then made what he since has termed the toughest decision of his career. The Yankees, 1947 world's champions, were in the thick of a four-cornered race in 1948 and packing them in, while Giants patronage was dwindling. He heard some people say the Giants needed a tough manager, more like McGraw. So shortly after the 1948 All-Star Game, he had to tell Ott that he was through as manager, but would be retained in the Giant farm organization. And, to replace Mel, Stoneham brought in Leo Durocher, just let go by Brooklyn, the same Leo who was quoted as saying, "Nice guys finish last."

Ott took it like he took other tough breaks in his career—in stride. He never grumbled, or criticized the move. However, when a chance to manage the former Oakland Oaks of the Pacific Coast League presented itself in 1952, he took it. Oakland had been a steppingstone for Casey Stengel and Chuck Dressen to return to the majors as manager. It didn't work that way for Mel, as his 1952 and 1953 seasons as Oakland boss were undistinguished. But, the flavor of baseball remained in his blood, and he turned to baseball broadcasting, first as a Game-of-the-Day broadcaster and later as the man behind the mike in the American League city of Detroit.

In the meantime, he had built a fine

# Highlights of Ott's Reign as Swat King

## 511 Homers--323 Hit at Polo Grounds

By JOHN C. TATTERSALL

PHILADELPHIA, Pa.



Hack Wilson

On Monday, July 18, 1927, at the Polo Grounds, Melvin Thomas Ott, rookie Giant outfielder, batted his first major league home run. Hack Wilson, in center field for the opposing Chicago Cubs, missed a shoestring catch on a hit Ottie made in the first inning with the bases empty. Before the ball was returned to home plate, Ott had rung up Homer No. 1. Hal Carlson, who died three years later, was the victim of this first Ott circuit clout.

Nineteen years, a Great Depression and a World War later, Ott slugged his final major league four-bagger. The hit came on Tuesday, April 16, 1946, at the Polo Grounds, and was made on Ott's first time at bat in the season opener. Oscar Judd of the Phils has the distinction of allowing Ott's final home run, No. 511. Mel found the Polo Grounds ideally arranged for his homer ability. During his career he hit 323 of his 511 four-baggers on his home field, or 63 per cent.

Actually, his strength at home increased as time went on. In his greatest homer year, 1929, when he slugged 42, only 20 were hit at the Polo Grounds, with 22 on the road. Though this season saw his highest round-tripper figure, he failed to win the championship. Chuck Klein of the Phils stroked 43 four-baggers.

Through 1939, Mel had hit 369 home runs, of which 211, or 57%, were hit in New York. Thereafter, he batted 142 homers, of which 112, or 78%, were slugged in the familiar confines of the Polo Grounds. In 1943, for example, Mel hit 18 homers and all of them were at home! In 1945, his last full season, 18 of his 21 home runs were Polo Grounds socks.

## Baker Bowl Home-Run Paradise for Mel

On the road, Mel's favorite cousins were the Phils. As long as Philadelphia played in Baker Bowl at Broad and Lehigh, Mel was in paradise. In the next to the last game the Phils played at the park with the chummy right field wall, Mel hit his 325th home run, June 29, 1938. It was the 40th homer Mel had hit in Philadelphia, almost one-eighth of his major league total at the time. Once the Phils moved to Shibe Park a few days later, Mel lost his homer touch in the Quaker City. He never hit another four-bagger in Philadelphia.

Had the Phils not moved to Shibe Park in 1938, it is probable that he would have hit more homers against the Phils than any other club. However, the Pittsburgh Pirates actually yielded more homers to Mel, with 83 against the Phil total of 82. At the Polo Grounds, Ott clipped Pirate pitching for 58 home runs, his high against any club in New York. Mel's record against each club, at home and away:

	Total	Home	Road
Pittsburgh	83	58	25
Philadelphia	82	42	40
Chicago	78	40	38
Boston	73	56	17
Brooklyn	71	46	25
St. Louis	65	35	30
Cincinnati	59	46	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>188</b>

During most of Mel's career, the Cincinnati park enjoyed the reputation of being the graveyard of ambitious homer hitters. Mel did not hit his first home run at Crosley Field until July 15, 1935. All other parks had seen Ott homers before the end of the 1929 season. Ott twice hit homers in each park in the league during a season. In 1936 and again in 1938 he made the cycle of parks, but thereafter Shibe Park stopped him.

## Hit Four-Bagger Every 18.5 Times at Bat

A rundown of his 511 homers indicates that seven were hit with the bases full; 82 came with two men on base, 186 were hit with one runner aboard, and 236 came with the bases empty. Thus, of the 1,860 runs Ott batted in during his career, 892, or 48%, were the direct result of his 511 homers.

Ott's frequency of homers was one every 18.5 times at bat, with 511 homers in 9,456 official trips to the plate. His best year was 1929, when his 42 homers in 545 times up gave him a 13.0 frequency mark. In that year, Ott also tied a record set by Babe Ruth in 1921, and which has not been equaled since, when 25 of his 42 home runs came with one man on base. When Ruth hit 59 in 1921, he also hit 25 with a single runner aboard.

Ott holds the National League record for multiple-homer games, with 49. Of these, 48 were two-homer games. On Sunday, August 31, 1930, at the Polo Grounds, Ott slugged three four-baggers against the visiting Braves in the second game of a twin-bill, two coming off Tom Zachary and the third against Ben Cantwell.

Of his 511 homers, 32 directly resulted in the winning of a game for the Giants. Three times in one week in June, 1932, Mel powered homers which were the winning margin for New York. On Tuesday, June 7, 1932, Mel clipped Ray Kolp of the Reds for a ninth-inning clout with the bases empty to win, 4 to 3, for Bill Walker. Two days later, with Owen Carroll hurling for the Reds, Ott hit a sixth-inning homer with the bases empty which provided the margin of victory for Jim Mooney, 3 to 2. Again, on Saturday, June 11, with Larry French of the Pirates opposing him, he slugged a three-run homer in the fifth inning, making the final score 6 to 4, again winning for Bill Walker.

On August 13, 1932, at the Polo Grounds, Mel teamed up with the then recently-appointed Giant manager, Bill Terry, to hit back-to-back homers twice in the same game. This feat has been performed only seven times in the history of the majors. In the fourth inning, Terry, Ott and Fred Lindstrom hit three consecutive pitches tossed by Brooklyn's Hollis Thurston for homers. Terry slugged another homer in the fifth and in the ninth the Giant manager came up with his third of the game. Mel immediately followed with his second, to bring the total off Thurston for the game to six.

home in Metairie, La., near New Orleans, and had gone into the contracting business in the New Orleans area. Of his baseball broadcasting, he observed: "It's pleasant work, and it's lots of fun. And, I can see the home team lose a tough one, and do not fret about it all night."

Mel married Mildred Wattigny, also of the New Orleans area, on October 2, 1930, right after the 1930 season, in which Mel batted 349, his batting peak as a regular Giant. Both Mel and Mildred were 21, and their marriage was one of the happiest in baseball. Mrs. John McGraw, widow of the Gi-

ants' manager, was devoted to both, and they looked on Mrs. McGraw as a saint. The Ott's had two daughters. The elder, Lyn, is married to Dr. Philip Loria, who helped care for his father-in-law and mother-in-law after the Bay St. Louis crash.

Mel was fond of fishing, hunting, golf, and when the horses were running at New Orleans, he was not averse to trying a few bets. But first and last, his No. 1 interest, next to his family, was baseball. What a pity that this nice guy had to leave baseball, and his legion of friends, in such a way, and so soon.

# Mel Was Catcher, Outfielder, Third Baseman for Giants

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13)

then failed twice in succession. The writer chanced to have dinner with the young Louisianian after the second failure, and the boy was quite upset. "I just can't think what I'm doing wrong," he repeated over and over. "I hold the bat just the same way, and swing it just the same way, as when I made the hits, but I don't get the ball through anybody." Here he was hitting over .400, and the 17-year-old couldn't figure what he was doing wrong. He eventually closed that season with a .383 batting average for 35 games. It held up as Mel's high through his long career.

From the very outset, McGraw refused to option Ott out to any minor league club. Casey Stengel was managing the Toledo club, with which the Giants then had a close affiliation, but John turned down Casey when he said, "I think I could develop that kid, Ott, for you." McGraw repeatedly said in those days, "I'm not going to let any minor league manager do any experimentation with Ott's batting swing. Besides, in the minors, they would want to play him every day. Mel has very thick thighs, and that kind can slow up early if they are worked too much in their youth." It was because of those beefy thighs that McGraw decided against developing Ott as a catcher. "He would make a good catcher, and he has the arm for it," he said, "but crouching behind the plate would slow him up."

Nursed Carefully by McGraw McGraw's system of nursing Ott along paid rich dividends. He played 35 N. L. games at 17, 82 at 18, 124 at 19, and finally at 20—in 1929—McGraw let him play the full schedule. He batted .328 that season, and his 42 homers and 151 runs batted in were his high in those departments for his entire career. He had an odd habit of raising his right leg when he batted, but he early acquired the knack of pulling a ball into the right field stands at the Polo Grounds. He always batted left, though he was a righthanded thrower. And, he was as strong at 20 as he ever was in later years.

Beginning with his 151 RBIs in 1929, he whacked in over 100 runs for eight consecutive seasons for an N. L. record. He missed in the Giant championship year of 1937, when his RBIs fell to 95, but he was back to 116 in 1938. Among his marks are most times two or more home runs, 49; also most years

## Matty and Mel Ranked Top Favorites of Little Napoleon

NEW YORK, N. Y.—Asked one time who were John McGraw's favorite players in his long career with the Giants, Mrs. John McGraw, his widow, said they unquestionably were Christy Mathewson and Mel Ott. "Matty was very close to John in our earlier days in New York," said Mrs. McGraw, "but Mel was unquestionably his favorite in his later years. He also was fond of such players as Larry Doyle, George Burns and Frank Frisch, but I would say he had a greater personal affection for Mel Ott than for any player after Christy Mathewson died."

to lead in bases on balls, six, and most times, 100 or more bases on balls, ten. He made THE SPORTING NEWS' All-Star Major League team in 1934, 1935, 1936 and 1938, and played in 11 successive All-Star games, 1934 to 1944, inclusive. Though Ott felt he was an outfielder, and that right field was his best position, he readily agreed when Bill Terry, McGraw's successor as Giant manager, shifted Ott to third base during a good part of the seasons of 1937, 1938 and 1939. That strong throwing right arm was just as useful at the hot corner as it was in right field.

Batted .304 for Career Ott never was a batting champion, and usually was around the .300 mark, a little above or a little below. His lifetime average was .304. He experienced quite a shock when his batting average slumped to .234 for 125 games in 1943. He then got glasses to correct his vision and his average snapped back nicely, to .288 in 1944 and .308 in 1945. The latter average was made in 135 games in Mel's twentieth National League season. However, from then on, it was an abrupt descent—.074 for 31 games and 68 times at bat in 1946 and four futile pinch-hitting attempts in 1947. Though Mel then was only 38, he knew he had had it as a player, and called it a playing career.

He appeared in three World's Series, 1933, 1936 and 1937, and hit .295 against the crack American League pitching. His best Series was his first, 1933, when his big bat was a deciding factor in the victory of Terry's Giants over Joe Cronin's Washington Senators in five games. Mel batted .389 and hit two