

When I arrived in New Caledonia the G.O.C. gave his consent to the setting-up of a Welfare Committee, consisting of the following :—

Officer in Charge of Administration—Chairman.
D.D.M.S. (Senior Medical Officer).
Senior Chaplain.
Assistant Director of Army Education Welfare Service.
Commissioner of the Y.M.C.A.
Commissioner of the National Patriotic Fund Board.

The question of policy was decided :—

- (1) That the representatives of the National Patriotic Fund Board would be responsible for all supplies, and the erection, furnishing, and service of clubs and the erection of recreation centres, and also grants for regimental funds.
- (2) That the Y.M.C.A. would be responsible for the distribution of supplies, cafeteria service, &c., to the units, and the service of the recreation centres.
- (3) That the Divisional Sports Committee would be responsible for sports, the Board providing the sports gear.
- (4) The Army Education Welfare Service to be responsible for library and newspaper service and entertainment.
- (5) The Senior Chaplain to look after the spiritual welfare of the men.
- (6) The D.D.M.S. to be responsible for the distribution of comforts to the sick and wounded.
- (7) The Welfare Committee to be responsible for radios, musical instruments, band instruments, &c.

This delegation of duties was successful, and was the foundation of the success of the Board's work in the Pacific.

The first work undertaken was the building of recreation centres in all unit camps and the erection of two further roadhouses. This work was carried out by the units, the Board supplying Native labour and any extras required. The building of these recreation centres by the men themselves had a most beneficial effect on their morale and gave them an interest outside their military duties.

About this time the Deputy Chairman and the Secretary of the Board paid a visit to the islands and the policy of providing two clubs was confirmed—one to be of Native construction, the other to be prefabricated in New Zealand. The Native-constructed club was commenced almost immediately, being built by the men themselves, again with the assistance of Native labour, and was the largest building of its kind in the island. When established it was staffed by Waacs sent from New Zealand for the purpose, and during its period of operation, approximately nine months, served 54,748 cooked meals and 177,851 morning and afternoon teas and suppers, a total of 232,599 meals.

The Division moved forward to Guadalcanal, and eventually into Vella Lavella, Treasury, and Green Islands. The main service of the Board in the early stages was purely cafeteria through the Y.M.C.A., but gradually a forward base was established at Guadalcanal, and Captain L. M. Graham, Assistant Commissioner, operated in this area. In the first action on Vella Lavella the Y.M.C.A. services went in with the second wave, but on Treasury and Green Island, Y.M.C.A. services went ashore with the first troops and within half an hour had cafeteria service available for the men.

During the period in the forward area, one hundred unit recreation huts were erected, mainly of the Native construction type, but sometimes just tarpaulins and sometimes prefabricated huts.

Whilst the troops were in the forward area the prefabricated club was built in New Zealand and shipped to New Caledonia, and, on the return of the troops was erected and ready for use on the finest beach in New Caledonia, situated some twelve miles from the base camp. This club, known as the Kiwi Club, like the one at Bourail base camp, was staffed by Waacs. It was distinct, however, in that sleeping-accommodation for 120 men was provided, and during the short time it was in use some 3,000 men had an average of four days' leave at this club. A total of 43,287 cooked meals were served, and 39,378 morning and afternoon teas and suppers. This club was ultimately sold to the American Forces.

During this period also an ice-cream plant was installed at the base. Two rations per week were delivered to the troops, and rations issued daily to patients in hospitals and convalescent depots. During the period it was in operation, 500,000 rations each of $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. were distributed to the Forces, plus 166,000 rations to the sick and wounded and isolated units. This ice-cream plant was also disposed of to the American Forces.

When the Division returned to New Caledonia, the set up of the patriotic organization was almost complete, the staff consisting of approximately 185.

The distribution of gift parcels took place more or less at quarterly intervals. The contents of the parcels were, in the main, satisfactory, but could have been made smaller. Cakes, biscuits, &c., were always acceptable to the troops.

Splendid co-operation was received from Mr. J. Heffernan, the Senior Secretary, Y.M.C.A., and the whole of his staff. The work carried out by the club managers appointed by the Army, Major McClure in charge of the Waacs, and the Waac staff generally was of a high order. The assistance given by Captains Enright and Graham, Assistant Commissioners, and the co-operation received from the American Forces, was outstanding. Without this assistance the work, especially in regard to supplies for the Division, would have been seriously handicapped.

In addition to the amenities previously mentioned, musical instruments, daily newspapers from New Zealand, picture plants, printing plants, &c., were services provided which were considerably better than those supplied to the Allies in the same area.