

# PAINTING THE JUNGLE

By "VELLA LAVELLA"

**T**HERE are two ways in which the jungle might be interpreted in paint — one, as an impression of strongly contrasting lights and shadows, indefinite and mysterious; the other in detail almost in the manner of the Primitives and the pre-Raphaelites, Lieut. A. B. Barns-Graham, official artist for the Third Division, has chosen the second method, obviously because he is happiest in doing so and, wisely perhaps, because infinite detail is the only method by which any idea of the jungle can be conveyed to a public which is not so much interested in art as in pictures of people and things and the story they tell. Mr. Barns-Graham tells his story as truthfully and accurately as he is able and, as he is telling it for the parents and wives, sisters and younger brothers of the men who served in the Pacific and particularly in the Solomons, this is well. It is an honest record.

This exhibition of the artist's work commemorating the deeds and activities of the Third Division has been touring the North Island and is now in Wellington. Later it is destined for the South Island. The pictures, over 80 of them, are in several mediums—oil, water-colour, pencil and conté; this last is the artist's most successful medium, in that he seems more confident and alive when using it.

It is unfortunate, perhaps, that the artist's story did not begin earlier, say in Fiji, for there is nothing of that trying period in the history of the Force. Nor is there a great deal concerning activities in New Caledonia, though that island's landscape is successfully indicated. A small study entitled "Gendarmerie" suggests the type of landscape

in and around Bourail, which was the site of the Division's base organisation, and "8th Brigade Area" conveys a warm impression of the country over which that unit carried out manoeuvres. Here are the niaoulis and the hot barren hillsides near Bouloupari, and these are what the New Zealand soldier most vividly remembers of New Caledonia. A crowded canvas "Taom Race Meeting," recalls that ambitious sporting venture by the 14th Brigade in the lonely north, when the whole population—French, Kanaka, Javanese and Tonkinese—flocked to the course and cheered horses, borrowed from the neighbouring meat works, to many an exciting finish.

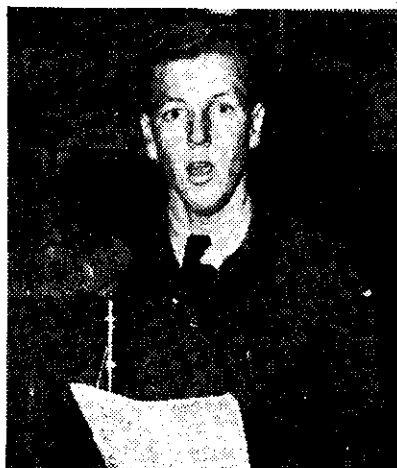
Barns-Graham's jungle studies, whatever they may lack in the eyes of critical artists, do have realism. This is the jungle, that tangled mass of trunks and leaves and vines, of growth which is almost obscene in its fleshiness and so thick that one involuntarily makes swimming movements with the hands when struggling through it. Only a mass of detail could suggest the country where men of the Third Division spent so many hot and weary months.

"A Relief Party Crosses the Estuary" comes nearest, I think, to telling the story of those enveloping leaves and vines; "Initial Engagement at Timbala Bay" conveys the impression of sprawling tree roots and fantastic growth where a soldier could make himself invisible only a few yards away. In other pictures you see the effect of filtering sunlight, where space has been cleared for tents; you see men digging coral for roads and tents, evacuating the wounded, carrying water and loading landing craft; you see them sitting beside their foxholes and pup tents or returning from a scrap in the rain; you see the

deck of an LST, littered with equipment and supplies, among which the anti-aircraft gunners restlessly watch the sky. In all of them you see an honest attempt to convey a pictorial record of the grim but unspectacular life of soldiers fighting and existing in the jungle, though it may be suggested that all New Zealand soldiers are not so tall or graceful as the artist would have us believe.

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## ON THE AIR IN THE YUKON



**T**WO young New Zealanders who have been broadcasting from Station CFWH, Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, Canada, are shown in these photographs which came to us from the Yukon. They are Arthur Bierman, of Christchurch (at the piano) and Colin Brightwell, of Morrinsville. Arthur Bierman was well-known as a pianist in Christchurch, where he had a band known as the Melody Makers, and used to play accompaniments at 3ZB. Colin

Brightwell is a tenor, and had not broadcast before he went to Canada. These two have been doing a programme from CFWH every Thursday evening for some months, and put on a special item for the American Ambassador to Canada (the Hon. Ray Atherton) when he went to Whitehorse. They have composed a song, "I Miss You," which has become a popular number with their audience.

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