

# RADIO WITH OUR TROOPS

## Travelling Broadcasting Unit Now Complete

**T**HE travelling broadcasting unit which is to accompany the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force overseas and operate in the field is now complete and ready for service. Last week it was brought into Wellington and given its final trial in Trentham Camp.

The three members of the staff are Noel Palmer, who is the engineer and officer-in-charge of the unit, D. Laurenson, who is the observer-commentator, and Norman Johnston, who is the assistant engineer.



**D. LAURENSON**  
(observer-commentator)

Mounted on its temporary truck, the plant caused considerable interest when it was driven through the streets of Wellington. It is the most comprehensive of its kind ever made in the Dominion and has proved the skill of everyone concerned with its construction and equipment, both of which have meant some months of constant work. Like all other military vehicles, the unit has been camouflaged with futurist patches of khaki and green paint. When it arrives at its destination it will be mounted on a Leyland chassis, a large Army one weighing 3 tons 16 cwt., capable of moving over any country in which the New Zealand forces may be operating.

The whole of the coachwork of the unit was constructed at the railway workshops at Petone and is beautifully finished. Messrs. Palmer and Johnston, with other members of the technical and engineering staff of the National Broadcasting Service, designed and constructed the electrical fittings and equipment.

### Marvel of Compactness

Outwardly the unit resembles a large rectangular caravan, though happily free from all fantastic shape. Attached to it is a trailer which houses the petrol-driven alternator for generating the electrical power, and a tank for extra petrol supplies. The interior is a marvel of compact arrangement, containing to the last minute detail all the equipment necessary for the operation of the plant as a complete radio unit. This means that on the field messages and entertainment

may be broadcast to the troops, and records made for use in New Zealand. Briefly, then, this tiny travelling unit is able to give all the necessary service to soldiers in the field that a modern receiving station gives to civilians. It will be more than that, for the material obtained on active service by this unit will have considerable value when the history of the New Zealand Division comes to be written. Such is the marvel of modern science that future generations will hear the voices of their soldier heroes of the world war of 1939-1945.

### Technical Mysteries

It would be impossible here to describe in detail the electrical equipment, which is a subject only for engineers. "Amplifiers," "play-backs," "cutters," "transmitters" and all the rest of the technicalities convey little to a public which is interested only in music or information coming over the air and obtainable by the simple process of turning a dial. But these mysteries are all housed in the unit.

The largest piece of equipment, into which cables are plugged, resembles a cross between a small telephone exchange and a frigidaire, painted green. This is the amplifier for the loud speakers which, when the troops are being entertained, will be fitted to the roof of the truck. The recording machines and the "play-backs" are each encased in sand-proof and water-proof material which is closed with zipp-fasteners.

And there are cupboards everywhere, lining both sides and one end of the unit. In them are housed various tools and extra wire, all records, spare parts, record blanks and "cutters" for making the records. There is a complete record file, card indexed, a spare receiver and much other technical equipment sufficient to do all repair work and avoid any breakdown in the plant.

Two small round seats, rather like those in a cocktail bar, have been built into the floor for the use of operators,

and on the walls are several small fire extinguishers. Overhead, along one wall, is the inevitable rack, already containing an assortment of odds and ends.

### Fly-Proof and Sand-Proof

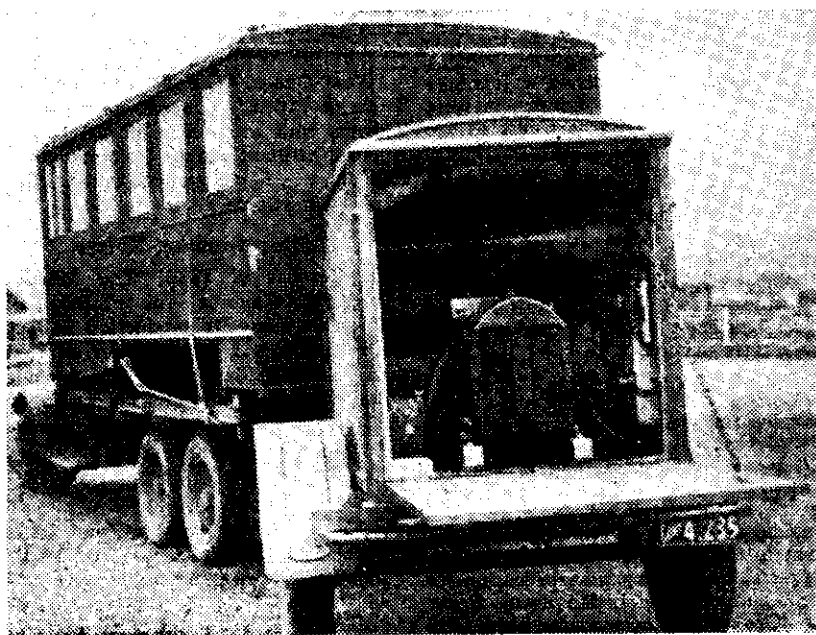
One large cupboard has been specially insulated against extreme heat or cold, and will house the "discs." A "disc," apparently, is the technical term for what the uninitiated would simply describe as a "gramophone record." All the windows are fly-proof and sand-proof, for the whole plant has been designed for operation in either hot or cold climates. The roof is insulated. Nothing has been left undone. On the outside of the unit hooks have been inserted in the walls to hold curtains for a "black-out" when the men are operating at night. Several small electric lights will be powered from the engine of the truck itself.

Demands on space have been such that the installation of sleeping equipment for the staff has been impossible, though this was originally considered. This will be overcome by the use of folding camp stretchers, which can be easily stored when not in use.

### Not Direct Transmission

This travelling unit, will, of course, not be able to transmit direct to New Zealand, but it is hoped by means of shortwave stations abroad to be able to relay programmes to the Dominion. If this is not found possible, it is the intention that records made on the field will be sent to Wellington by the quickest possible means for use by all the New Zealand stations.

For those who thirst for more facts and figures, the whole unit weighs 3 tons 16 cwt. and the trailer (which carries the power plant), 1 ton 5 cwt. It resembles the travelling dental clinic which is also to go abroad. Both these units have been made ready for mounting on their special chassis when they reach their destination.



*AN exterior view of the broadcasting unit which is to go overseas for service in the field with the 2nd N.Z.E.F. The lorry on which it is mounted is only temporary. The trailer houses the alternator and extra petrol supplies*



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