

# KNOCKED OUT BY ILLNESS

*Champion Boxer Returns From Middle East*

WHILE its fighting strength is still high, the N.Z.E.F. in the Middle East has had its fistic strength depleted by the return to New Zealand of two champion boxers. One is Frankie Bruno, once bantam and flyweight champion of New Zealand, whose picture appeared on the cover of *The Listener* three weeks ago; The other is Tommy Fairhall, former welterweight champion of Australia, but a resident of Timaru for many years.

Staff-Sergeant Fairhall, as he is now, was invalided home recently. He walked out of Greece and Crete without a scratch, although, like all of the men who served in those tough campaigns, he was in his fair share of tough corners. Then his luck gave out, and he succumbed to a prosaic illness.



**TOMMY FAIRHALL**  
"Obvious trade-marks"

Fairhall began his boxing career in Australia about the end of the last war. He went ahead rapidly, and soon won a reputation as a hard-hitting, orthodox fighter with a great right hand and a vicious left rip. He visited New Zealand in the late 'twenties' and in 1930 in Australia won the welter title from Wally Hancock. Then he paid a second visit to New Zealand, and since he stayed here more than the regulation six months, the title reverted to Hancock, who promptly lost it to Russ Critcher.

## Sensational Fights

But Fairhall will be best remembered by boxing fans for his sensational series of matches with Ted Morgan, the former Olympic champion, who had just turned professional. They met in Wellington, Westport, Timaru, and Dunedin, and were so evenly matched that they drew big, excited crowds each time. The Timaru match ended in a near-riot. Both men had hit the floor several times, sometimes, so fierce was the pace, simultaneously, when the referee stopped the fight and gave the decision to Fairhall. Morgan's supporters and a large section of the crowd charged the ring, and made as if to fight out the decision for themselves then and there.

Timaru was to become Tommy Fairhall's home town, and he did much to help boxing along there, both through the local association and as a referee. He was, incidentally, one of the few boxers who make good referees. He is also one of the few who have taken up bowls enthusiastically; he was well known among bowlers in Timaru and Christchurch, and represented South Canterbury at tournaments.

This information about his exploits, it should be explained, is a matter of official record and history. Tommy Fairhall is quiet and modest and reluctant to discuss himself. But for his obvious trade-marks—thickened ears and nose, and a scar above his eye from an injury which frequently caused him trouble in the ring—one would hardly suspect that he had as much as battered a punchball.

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