

TAIAWHIO TAKU WAIATA I TE AO!



This photograph was taken when the NBS unit in the Middle East recorded a programme of messages from Maoris. Lieut. Toka is at the microphone

The Song of the Maoris Goes Round the World

FOR as long as soldiers have left their homes to go to war they have looked back over their shoulders, for no matter how resolutely one may put one's hand to the plough, one always looks back to the life one knew. So it has been with the 2nd N.Z.E.F. The need of the Anzac abroad for news began as soon as the members of the advance guard lost sight of the New Zealand coast in the sea-haze astern, and it will not be satisfied until the last disembarks at Wellington or Auckland or wherever the last man back does disembark.

For a long time, the Digger's natural thirst for information was satisfied by the casual gossip of letters from home, by broadcasts and radio recordings, newsreels, newspapers, periodicals, and the word-of-mouth which reached him with each succeeding convoy of reinforcements.

But when Japan struck behind his back, the news the New Zealand soldier wanted changed radically in character. He was half a world away from home, and it seemed that the enemy was at the very gate. But he had to stay put where he was, for the battle could not all be decided in the East. Small wonder then that he wanted reassuring news, and that he wanted it as much at first hand as possible.

To provide this reassurance, the NBS has been hard at work recently in field and factory recording sound pictures and commentaries, securing interviews, taking messages and amassing a large quantity of material on discs, which, when they are shipped to the Middle East, will carry to New Zealanders there not merely a comprehensive picture of their own land standing to arms but an encouraging picture as well. One which, while it does not minimise the dangers of the hour, will hearten the men overseas with its sober confidence and reassure them that the New Zealand which has become an advance base for the United Nations is now well able to shoulder that responsibility.

Into the Backblocks

To give members of the 2nd N.Z.E.F. a glimpse behind the scenes, an NBS

mobile recording unit has recently visited a number of munitions factories, gathering evidence of the gearing-up of Dominion industry to the demands of a total war economy. At the present time, the unit is engaged in visiting military establishments throughout the country so that the record will show not merely that we are producing the goods but that we know how and where to use them. Naturally, it is not always possible to go into great detail when

making such recordings, but sufficient can be, and is being said to satisfy the professional curiosity of soldiers, and to enable them, thanks to their own specialised knowledge, to form a picture of New Zealand preparedness which will be, if anything, fuller than that seen by the civilian at home.

Very properly, one of the first military camps to be visited by the recording unit was that occupied by the members of a Maori Battalion. To record this programme, which is to be sent to the Maori Battalion overseas, members of the unit, accompanied by Gordon Hutter, IYA's veteran commentator, made a long trip into the backblocks "somewhere in New Zealand," arriving at the camp, appropriately enough, within a day of the anniversary of the O.C.'s first attempt to escape from Crete.

Camp Described

Accompanied by the Hon. P. K. Paikea, Member of the Executive Council representing the Native Race, with

whose assistance the visit had been arranged, the party was welcomed by the Second-in-Command, himself a veteran M.C. and Bar of the Mediterranean campaigns, and quickly got to work. By interviewing an officer of the Headquarters Company, who proved to have an excellent recording personality, Gordon Hutter was able to secure a comprehensive picture of the camp and its surroundings—"very like the Doddington Camp in England, though the chestnuts and oaks are replaced here by the puriris," as the H.Q. Coy. officer said—of the life led by the men, the ways in which they entertain themselves, how they are fed and trained, all details likely to be of interest to their kinsmen overseas. The camp, it was pointed out, was an active service one and the weather was not always good—it rained most of the time the recording unit was there—but the ingenuity and the good-humour of the men were sufficient to eliminate discomforts.

The ensuing musical programme was opened with the singing of the National Anthem in Maori and a brief address to the men overseas was recorded by Mr. Paikea. He was followed by the C.O. and 2-I.C., who added their messages of greeting to their comrades in their old battalion; and then each company in turn recorded two musical numbers, as well as company and tribal greetings.

Splendid Singing

Radio technicians would probably admit to being hard to please, where records are concerned at any rate, but those concerned with this particular job found little to criticise in the singing of the Maoris, and were frankly incredulous when told that there had been only two singing practices in preparation for the programme. The discs certainly suggest that if the battalion is as well drilled in warfare as in choral singing, it will be a formidable proposition. Each company was represented by about 40 singers, and each recorded item was introduced by Mr. Paikea or Gordon Hutter.

Outstanding in a fine programme were three recordings, a haka, a marching song and a hymn. The haka was roared out with such vigour that one could well imagine it stopping anything short of a full-dress panzer attack. Indeed, the microphones were moved to a safe distance before the haka was given, just in case of accidents.

The marching song was the "Maori Battalion" Song, sung both in English and in Maori (this was the first occasion on which it had been recorded in the native tongue), and the choir singing it

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The NBS Goes Visiting

COMPLAINT has been made in some quarters recently that New Zealand does not enjoy the overseas publicity secured by other Dominions in Britain and the United States. If so, that may simply mean that New Zealanders, having a job to do, are more concerned with doing it conscientiously than with telling the world about it. But there is at least one area abroad where news of New Zealand has been abundant and varied since war began. Wherever men of the 2nd N.Z.E.F. have been stationed, they have been kept supplied with up-to-the-minute information about home. In providing such news for our men overseas—news which has grown immeasurably more important to them since war flared up in the Pacific, the NBS has played and is continually playing, an important part. We print here the story of visits made the other day by an NBS mobile recording unit to a Maori battalion in camp, and to an Army tank school



THE NATIONAL BROADCASTING SERVICE visits an Armed Fighting Vehicles School. From left: L. Fowler, Gordon Hutter, D. Logan and D. Ironside