

Bands on the AirSeries No. 6

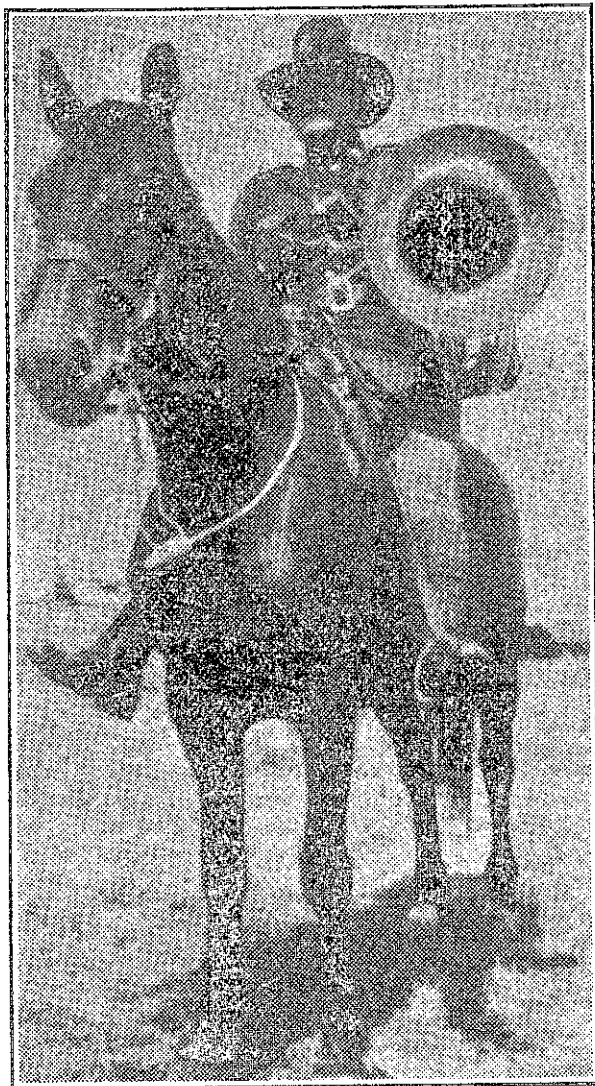
By Any Other Name

The Tale of Oamaru Garrison,
Tenth Regimental—(Or Is It the
Otago Mounted Rifles)—Band

Special To The "Record"

By

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F. J. FAMILTON.

... Forty years' service: still active.

for its conductor a man of such outstanding ability as the Hon. George Jones, and since 1922 another George has never spared himself in his endeavours to bring up the combination and keep it in a position to maintain the prestige and traditions of the Old Garrison.

Distinguished Themselves

MANY players from the Oamaru Band have distinguished themselves in the music world, among these being Archie and Ted Schnack, Dawse Hurst, Jabez Harwood, Watty Underwood, Fred and Archie McLeod and W. S. King. The late James Mitchell, journalist and musician, will long be remembered for the part he played in the drafting of rules for the New Zealand Brass Band Association. Many of these exist to the present day.

Of the Melbourne contest band, two (F. J. Familton and C. Sherwin) are still active members. Sergeant J. Hambley, who joined the band at the close of last century, continues to excel as euphonium player, and several others have long service medals, including Bandsman A. I. Familton, the indefatigable secretary. Mr. James Wansbrough is the only surviving member of the original band.

A recent occasion of interest was the playing together of the Oamaru band with Derry's Military Band at the Mounted Rifles Camp at Motukarara, where Captain King renewed association with the band in which he excelled as a trombonist and later wielded the baton—the old Oamaru Garrison Band.

BORN 1879, the Oamaru Garrison Band is still very much alive. The band—during the war years named the 10th Regimental and now known as the Otago Mounted Rifles—was heard on relay from 4ZB on May 1.

It was the band's third broadcast. The first was on August 9, 1931, when Lieut. G. M. Whale's men presented two grand selections from Gounod's "Faust" and Verdi's "Force of Destiny," and had to support them Madame Winnie Fraser, then of Oamaru. The next was on March 20, 1932, when "Barber of Seville" was featured, and Lex Macdonald was the boy soprano vocalist. Both these recitals were relayed by 3YA and 4YA.

To the fore in arranging celebrity concerts, the band-of-many-names has, in its time, engaged such artists as Senia Chostiakoff, Paul Vinogradoff, Miss Cecily Audibert, Mrs. Wilfred Andrews, Madame Cara Tait, Dan Foley, Rees McConachy, and others well known to listeners, including Himmy, Demie and Alfie. Their association with 4ZB talent was the latest outstanding success.

Wins Broke Records

IN the contest field the band has a long and varied career—but with many meritorious victories in that variety. Its wins in the early days constituted a record. Under the baton of the late Hon. George Jones, M.L.C., it won the 1883, 1884, 1885, 1889 and 1891 contests; under Lieut. Siddle it won in 1886 and 1887, and under Captain W. S. King in 1896. In 1898 the Hon. G. Jones took the band to Melbourne, and there tied with Sydney Model Railways for second place. In 1912 Mr. H. C. Fox (now of Hawera) contested at Christchurch, gaining third in the A grade and second in the B. The same year the band gained fourth in the A grade at Dunedin.

The year 1926 saw the band, with Lieut. G. M. Whale in command, leap to prominence again, where, at the Exhibition Contest, the judge, Mr. Ricketts (Alford of march fame), commented that the band was 17 points ahead, but, owing to intonation, he had to place it second. The personnel were well aware of the fault, for beforehand many anxious hours were spent in tuning, and not even hacksaws could effect much improvement. A new set of instruments was the only remedy, and, with these, the band next year won the B grade at Wellington, there being 17 competitors. The adjudicator, Mr. W. Halliwell, said of the O.M.R.:

"A performance of a refined order, even in full band movements. Accompanying delightful, being subordinated to the soloists most judiciously and with fine effect. Intonation always good. *Solo voce* work exceedingly good. A performance of much merit."

Then came Wanganui in 1929, and the band put up a good showing in the A grade. Latterly, provincial contests have occupied attention—first at Oamaru and second at Gore. In the early days the band was fortunate in having