

File: 4th Aviation Squadron

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UNCLASSIFIED

MAXWELL FIELD'S BANDS.

1 OCT 41 ÷ 1 FEB 44

(Has section on 4th Aviation Sq Drum &
Bugle Corps)

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HISTORY

OF

MAXWELL FIELD'S BANDS

1 October 1941 to 1 February 1944

Submitted by

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**HEADQUARTERS
3044 - 3054 AAF BANDS
Maxwell Field, Alabama**

27 January 1944

HISTORY

of

Maxwell Field Band

With the rapid expansion of the Army Air Forces in 1941, and the ever increasing enrollment of Aviation Cadets, both British and American taking pre-flight training at Maxwell Field, necessitated the activation of a Band at Maxwell Field on October 1, 1941. (See FN #1).

Prior to that time a volunteer Band of about 30 EM was functioning under the leadership of a Mr. Perry Bremer, a civilian secured from the Lanier High School Band. The enlisted men were placed on detached service from various squadrons on the field and some from various other neighboring fields. These enlisted men were assigned to the newly activated Band which was then known as the Air Force Band, Maxwell Field, under the command of 1st Lt. LEWIS N. MILLER.

On October 29, 1941 W/O FRANK WEIRAUCH was assigned as leader of the Air Force Band (See FN #2). The Band then had 35 EM, and a small Drum and Bugle Corps that augmented the strength of the Band to 60 men for parades and reviews. At that time the primary func-

Footnotes:

- #1. GO #11, Hq. Maxwell Field & Ltr W.D., A.G.O. File 320.2 (9-9-41) MR-M-AAF, No personnel asgd.
- #2. SO #253, par 114, WD, dated Oct 29, 1941.

tion of the Band was to furnish martial music for daily parades for Cadets, with an occasional concert and weekly dances for both Officers and Enlisted Men.

In addition to the Air Force Band, Maxwell Field the Commanding General of SEAAFTC, in the fall of 1941, ordered the cadres of the newly activated Air Force Bands of Barksdale Field, La., Eglin Field, and Tyndall Field, Fla. on detached service to Maxwell Field and as these units were recruited to full strength, Maxwell Field boasted a mammoth Band of 112 pieces plus a Drum and Bugle Corps of 40 pieces. This large organization functioned throughout the winter and spring of 1942, when increasing activities in Barksdale, Eglin, and Tyndall Fields necessitated the return of their respective Bands, thus, bringing about the activation of another Band at Maxwell Field on May 12, 1942. (See FN #1) The personnel for this Band (designated as Air Force Band No. 2) was taken from the combined personnel of Barksdale, Tyndall, and Eglin Field Bands prior to their departure from Maxwell Field.

In a short time the personnel of both Bands was woven into one formidable Band and continued to function as one unit of 56 men, since the present Table of Organizations only allows 28 men per Band.

The Bandsmen were housed in one two-story temporary barracks, such as house Cadets on this field, but lack of space prevented a suitable rehearsal room. At first a part of a mess hall was used and this was later taken away due to increasing strength of all squa-

Footnotes:

#1. Ltr. WD, AGO (AG 320.3) 4-30-42, MR-M-AF

drons on the field. A small squadron building, primarily built to be used as a supply room, is now used as a rehearsal room, but that is inadequate due to its lack of space, poor heating, and lighting facilities. Repeated requests for better housing have been without avail.

In August, 1942 the two Bands were redesignated, namely, Maxwell Field Band No. 1 redesignated 304th AAF Band and Band No. 2 redesignated 305th AAF Band. (See FN #1)

The functions of the Band were many and the demands for their service was increasing by the day. During the summer of 1942 the last of the British Cadets received their pre-flight training and their place was taken by our own Aviation Cadets, then numbering about 4000 per class. This created many functions for the Band, such as parades each evening, special parades for graduating classes, awards, decorations, concerts, and broadcasts. Honors for visiting dignitaries were quite frequent.

In June, 1942 the Band, under the direction of W/O WEIRAUCH, received orders to proceed to Smyrna, Tenn. (Smyrna Air Base) to play appropriate honors for Lt. General YOUNT and King PETER of Yugoslavia, who visited Smyrna Air Base where many Yugoslavian pilots were receiving flight instruction.

Many members of the Band, desiring more active service, took advantage of the many opportunities afforded by the Army, such as OCS, Aviation Cadet Training, and Glider Pilot Training. These

Footnotes:

- #1. Auth per Ltr. WD, AGO (AG 320.2)8-7-42, MR-M-AF, Aug. 10, 1942, Subject: Redesignation of AAF Bands.

men were difficult to replace, many of them being professional musicians, but in due time the Band was again brought up to strength.

During the summer of 1942 Lt. MILLER was relieved of command of the Bands to assume command of a squadron of Cadets and Lt. Col. DeWITT C. BAUER (then Capt.) assumed command of the Bands. It was during his tenure as CO that he conceived the idea of organizing a colored Drum and Bugle Corps from members of the 4th Aviation Squadron and in the month of September, 1942 a 45 piece Corps was organized. Two NCOs from the Band, a trumpeter and a drummer, under the supervision of the Bandleader, were detailed as instructors. In a very short time they were able to perform at parades. This was a timely move because on October 2, 1942 the Band was ordered by The Commanding General, SEAAFTC, on an extended tour of the southeastern states to recruit mechanics and technicians for the Air Corps.

It was during this absence of 25 days that the colored Drum & Bugle Corps proved their worth playing daily parades and furnishing march music for Cadets to and from mess formations. Upon return of the Band the colored Drum & Bugle Corps continued to function and relieved the Band occasionally at parades and to march Cadets to and from mess formations, thus, relieving the Band of some of the work.

In December, 1942 Lt. Col. BAUER was relieved of command of the Band to assume the position of Gunnery Officer of Maxwell Field and Capt. JAMES E. MURPHY, A. C. assumed command of the Band. He continued in that capacity until March, 1943, when Chief Warrant Officer FRANK WEIRAUCH, in addition to his duties as leader of the Band,

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Chapter
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was announced as Commanding Officer of both 304th & 305th AAF Bands.

In December, 1942 Capt. GLENN MILLER of orchestral fame, was assigned to Headquarters, EFTC and took an active part in the musical functions of the Band. With a fifteen piece orchestra he, being an accomplished trombonist, played and lead a half hour broadcast from Maxwell Field which was heard over the state of Alabama and neighboring states as well. This event took place on Christmas Eve.

During the spring of 1943 the Band continued to function on many festive occasions such as the visit of General MARSHALL, our Chief of Staff, Mr. ANTHONY EDEN, British Foreign Secretary, and Sir JOHN DILL, a Field Marshall of the British Army. They were on an inspection tour of Army Air Forces Fields all over the United States.

President ROOSEVELT paid a surprise visit to Maxwell Field on April 15, 1943 and a ceremony was accorded him such as this field had never before witnessed. The Band rendered honors and played for a mammoth review.

In addition to musical duties the Band has a definite schedule to follow in the school of the Soldier. This embodies Chemical Warfare Training, Army Orientation, First Aid, Military Courtesy, Customs of the Service, instructions in firing of certain weapons, and regular monthly inspections made by a regularly appointed group of officers under the supervision of the Director of Troop Training. This last phase is of a competitive nature, awards being made at parades for the best squadrons each month. This method was inaugurated

in May, 1943 and to prove that members of the Band were just as adept at the profession of soldiering as well as that of playing, the Band won the award for best inspection of Barracks and Personnel for squadrons under 100 men for six consecutive months.

In September, 1943 the EFTC was designated to conduct a WAC Recruiting Campaign in the 3rd & 4th Service Commands. The Maxwell Field Band was placed on temporary duty for approximately 60 days with Air-WAC Recruitment Section and on October 20, 1943 the Band, plus 18 Air-WACs, departed on an extended tour of 48 cities in the South-Eastern states. The members of the Band distinguished themselves in such a manner as to earn a personal commendation from Lt. General YOUNT of the Flying Training Command. A copy of this commendation was filed in each EW's 201 File.

During the Band's absence a provisional Band of 40 pieces was organized at Maxwell Field from the best talent of all the Bands of the EFTC and this Band, under the direction of CWO B. BALABAN of Turner Field, functioned at all ceremonies until the return of the Maxwell Field Band late in December, 1943.

In January, 1944, at the opening of the 4th War Loan Drive, the service of the Band was again in demand at many of the surrounding communities for the stimulation of War Bond purchases and the Band made trips to these cities to play concerts, parades, and broadcasts.

The manner in which the members of the Band cheerfully responded to all calls, no matter how difficult, has earned them a nationwide reputation such as is enjoyed by very few organizations.

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