

21ST ARMY BAND
Fort Lewis, Washington

HISTORICAL NOTES

The 21st Army Band, for the last fourteen years assigned as Post Band at Fort Lewis, has actually been in existence under different names since 1944. The band was stationed at Newport News, Virginia, during World War II, and at the New Orleans Port of Embarkation for five years after the war.

The long history of the 21st Army Band has included performances for many of the famous combat units going to and arriving from Europe and Africa. Their music has been an integral part of ceremonies for the chief executives of many countries, including four of our Presidents. While stationed at New Orleans, the band played for nearly all Chiefs of State of the South and Central American countries. Since its advent at Fort Lewis, the 21st Army Band has performed for still more illustrious personages. During the Seattle World's Fair, for example, the band played for the late President Kennedy, President Johnson, Washington Governor Rosellini, Colonel Glenn, Jacqueline Cochran and Jose' Jiminez!

In the meantime, the band is kept busy with innumerable military ceremonies at Fort Lewis, Fort Lawton, Yakima Firing Center and other military installations in the area. Parades and Guards of Honor average two or three every day at this extensive post. It is not uncommon for the band to depart at 0300 for a parade at a distant location, returning barely in time to greet a visiting general officer with a Guard of Honor, and follow that with a Retreat Parade for one of the many battalions of battle groups at Fort Lewis.

As a concert group, the band plays regularly for the entertainment of Army personnel at the Service Clubs on post. Concert appearances for civic events in the cities of Washington and Oregon, and British Columbia, are frequent. Street parades for patriotic events have taken the band to almost every community in the state. The band has dedicated dams, free-ways, post offices, and public buildings of all kinds. Good will toward the Army is fostered by performances in schools and at children's festivities.

An important part of the band's activities is that of furnishing dance music for the military clubs at Fort Lewis. It is not uncommon for as many as three dance bands to be formed by the twenty-eight men assigned.

Finally, the band maintains a high state of military training, so that in a national emergency it would be possible for them to exchange their instruments for weapons and give an equally good account of themselves.

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