

German Staff Band.

Commissioner McAlonan was appointed as leader of the Salvation Army in Germany in December 1909.

After a short time in command he thought upon the idea of forming an orchestra with the Officers and Staff of the National Headquarters in Berlin.

This wish was fulfilled on March 10, 1910.

Under the leadership of Lt.-Colonel Percival Treite the Band started and later got the name "Staff Band."

The "War Cry" report of April 9, 1910 gives us information about the first concert:

"Great things were expected from the Headquarters Orchestra. On Easter Monday in the Prinzenstrassen Hall every seat was filled. The Orchestra was to be congratulated for its good musicians. If this continued it was prophesied that the Band had a good future. Songs and music were a pleasure to the ear. The message of eternity spoke directly to the heart and awoke in some people a longing for salvation in Jesus Christ."

Although some of the 19 musicians first had to learn to play an instrument.

They quickly reached a high standard under the qualified leadership of Lt.-Colonel Treite.

Practicing at Headquarters one hour each day was a great help indeed.

Commissioner McAlonan reorganized the Staff Band in 1912 and commissioned Lt.-Colonel Treite as Bandmaster, Brigadier Haines as leading Officer, Adjutant Richards as Deputy-Bandmaster and Staff-Captain Gruner as Secretary.

The first tour was to East and West Prussia in the same year.

In 1914 there was a "War Cry" report:

"From time to time in the offices of Headquarters, the music of the Staff Band rang in the ears of the comrades as the musicians practiced for the Easter meetings and the International Congress that was to follow, during which the Germans wanted to give a perfect performance."

On the way to the International Congress in London the Staff Band gave concerts in many towns.

The Staff Band suffered in the 1914-1918 world war.

Three musicians died in the war.

The reorganizing of the Band began slowly.

Progress was seen from 1920 on.

In the following years many concerts were performed.

The Band journeyed to the western part of Germany, East Prussia, Saxony and in the Hannover Division.

In foreign countries, Budapest and Vienna, they were enthusiastically received.

In 1931 the Staff Band gave its first radio concert.

The Staff Band celebrated their 25th anniversary in Berlin Temple Corps on March 20, 1935.

Lt.-Colonel Treite, who was the finance and property Secretary could look back over his 25 years of leadership.

During the meetings Captain Wiedenmaier was commissioned Deputy-Bandmaster and Captain Hellstern Band-Secretary.

The work of the Salvation Army was greatly hindered during the Nazi government and the official work partly prohibited.

Many of the Bandsmen were called up.
The last tour was in 1939 to Stettin for the Corps 50th anniversary.

Very few Bandsmen could pay their last respects to their long term Bandmaster Percival Treite when he was promoted to glory on March 31, 1943.

In a weekly letter, which was a substitute for the War Cry, dated April 6, 1943 the National Headquarters wrote:

“It appeared to us as though the burden was too heavy for his weak body. In spite of this he carried on true to his calling. In the difficult days of the war he fulfilled his duty for many years. He gave his free time in order to build and establish the Staff Band. As leader he shouldered hardship exertion difficult journeys and shrank from nothing. We will never forget the concerts given under his leadership. He was the soul of the Band.”

During world war 2 (1939-1945) the work of the Salvation Army suffered very badly.

After the war had ended the rebuilding of the Salvation Army work began.

In some cities the new construction of Corps and Bands started soon.

This was partly possible by the help of the Relief Team and the British Red Shield.

For the reconstruction of the Salvation Army music in Germany music camps and music schools were especially important.

In 1949 for the first time, Lt.-Colonel Walter Flade was instructed to organize a music course for Bandmasters followed by a Bandsmen’s meeting in Cologne.

The musical leaders were Lt.-Colonel Saywell, England and Colonel Rawie, the Netherlands.

In 1989 a German Salvation Army band was invited to Scarborough, England, to take part in the town anniversary.

Bandmaster Heinrich Schmidt from Solingen was asked to form a Band from musicians of the West Division and last Plön Camp A-Band.

After only six practices and one concert they journeyed to England.

Each interested musician could become a member of the Staff Band after undergoing a test by Bandmaster Heinrich Schmidt and Bandmaster Michael Clack of Chalk Farm, England.