

Stars in Battledress, RAF Gang Shows & Garrison Theatres

Joyce Grenfell



Charlie Chester (with guitar), 1941



By 1942, ENSA employed nearly 2,000 people, but as more people were called-up for active service, so there evolved a central pool of artists, drawn directly from the armed servicemen – known as ‘Stars in Battledress’ (SIB), they started many famous careers.

Norman Wisdom



Terry Thomas



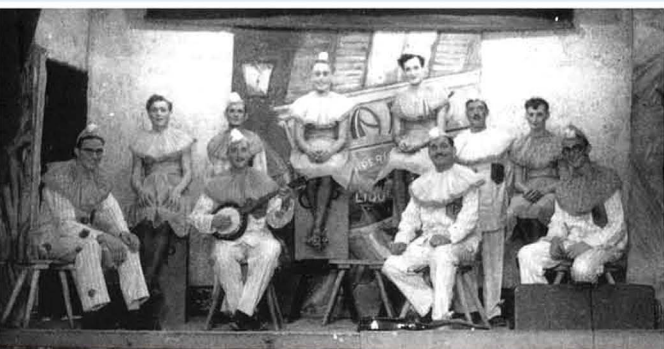
Frankie Howerd

Tony Hancock (on right)



The RAF established ‘RAF Gang Shows’, under the direction of Somerset-born Ralph Reader, the format of which is still popular with Scouts & Guides Associations.

Ralph Reader



POW pierrot concert party at Stalag XVIII, Austria

In Britain, performance venues were created on the military bases, to provide concert party entertainment for troops stationed in barracks - these were known as ‘Garrison Theatres’, whilst countless more concert party troupes were formed to provide entertainment at hospitals for the wounded and even in prisoner of war camps!