Auckland Police Pipe Band

http://www.aklpolicepipeband.org.nz

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Music, in one form or another, is a tradition with armies of the world, the origins for which have been lost in time. Those traditions were carried into the Armed Constabulary in New Zealand, which itself, was for a time as much a military body as a Police unit. By 1886 however there were no Police bands. With small numbers of Police serving wide areas, and financial constraints in force, those Police officers who were able to play a musical instrument joined outside bands. It was not until June 1945 that the Auckland Police Highland Pipe Band was formed, following a meeting at the Auckland Central Police Station - chaired by Constable Fred McKenzie. The Commissioner gave his blessing to the band's formation and there followed three years hard work to find tutors, train bandsmen, obtain uniforms and equipment. It took all of three years before the band was ready ready to perform in public, and following a weeks final training and practice at the Papakura Military Camp in South Auckland, the band took to the streets of Auckland on Sunday 29 August 1948, led by Drum Major Constable Bob Walton. The Auckland Police Highland Pipe Band has been a show piece of the New Zealand Police ever since - and has had the distinction of being invited overseas on several tours. Between 1945, when the decision was made to raise a Auckland Police Pipe Band was mooted, and 1948, when the band gave its first performance, it was joined by Regimental Sergeant Major William Cameron McQueen - from the Papakura Military Camp. A perfectionist himself, he set about the task of turning civilian Police into marching performers. On 20 and 21 November 1948, shortly after the bands first appearance, the Auckland Provincial pipe band contest was held at Auckland, at which the Auckland Police Highland Pipe Band was placed second in the street march section. RSM McQueen died in 1974 as a lifetime member of the band.

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