

Composer Kenneth J. Alford

The following article, written by Andrew Lamb, pertains to Kenneth J. Alford, the English bandmaster we mentioned briefly at the Atlanta meeting. Please be on the look out for copies of music by this composer. AAFA is interested in either the items as printed musical arrangements or recordings, the latter preferred.

Kenneth J. Alford, the British composer and bandmaster, (real name: Frederick Joseph Ricketts), was born in Ratciff, London, England on 21 Feb 1881 and died in Reigate, 15 May 1945. He enlisted as a bandboy in the Royal Irish Regiment in Sept. 1895, playing the cornet, the piano, and the organ. He was stationed at Limerick before serving in India. From 1904 to 1908 he was a student bandmaster at the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall, and in 1908 was appointed bandmaster of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.

Under his pseudonym (Alford being his

mother's maiden name) he began composing marches, of which "Colonel Bogey" (1914) remains the best known. Several of his finest marches date from World War I, while "Dunedin" and "Old Panama" commemorate a trip to New Zealand for the South Seas Exhibition. In 1927 Ricketts became director of music for the Royal Marines at Deal, moving to Plymouth in 1930. He was made lieutenant in 1927, captain in 1935 and (after being recalled from retirement in 1940) major in 1942. Further marches were produced during World War II before ill health forced him to retire finally in April 1944. Alford was one of the very finest of military march composers, his works surpassing those of Sousa and continental bandmasters in their range of expression, which was combined with clear melodic line, often ingenious counter-melodies and, above all, perfectly judged instrumentation. His brother R. R. Ricketts, bandmaster of the Essex Regiment and the Royal Corps of Signals, wrote military music

under the name of Leo Stanley, his best known piece being the march "The Contemptibles."

WORKS

(All published in London; for orch. band or pf unless otherwise stated)

Marches: Holyrood (1912), The Vedette (1912), Colonel Bogey (1914), The Great Little Army (1916), On the Quarter Deck (1917), The Middy (1917), The Voice of the Guns (1917), The Vanished Army (1919), The Mad Major (1921), Cavalry of the Clouds (1923), The Thin Red Line (1925), Dunedin (1928), Old Panama (1929), H. M. Jollies (1929), The Standard of St. George (1930), By Land and Sea (1941), Army of the Nile (1941), Eagle Squadron (1942)

Other Works: Valse Riviera (1910); Thoughts, waltz (1917); Sparks, xyl, with acc. (1923); The Two Imps, 2 xyl/cornet, with acc. (1923); and other works and arrangements.