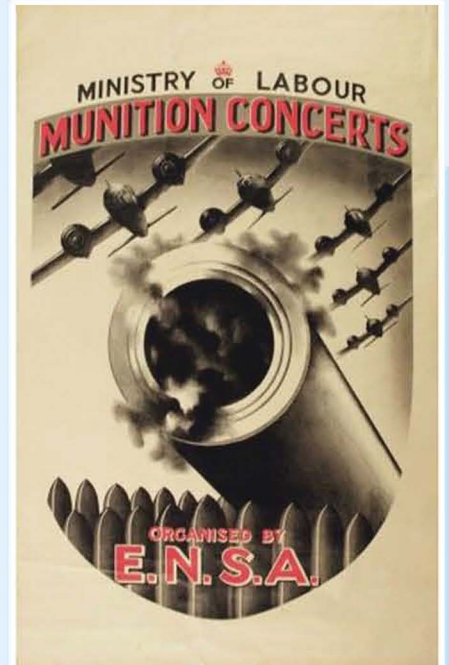


2nd World War Concert Parties and ENSA



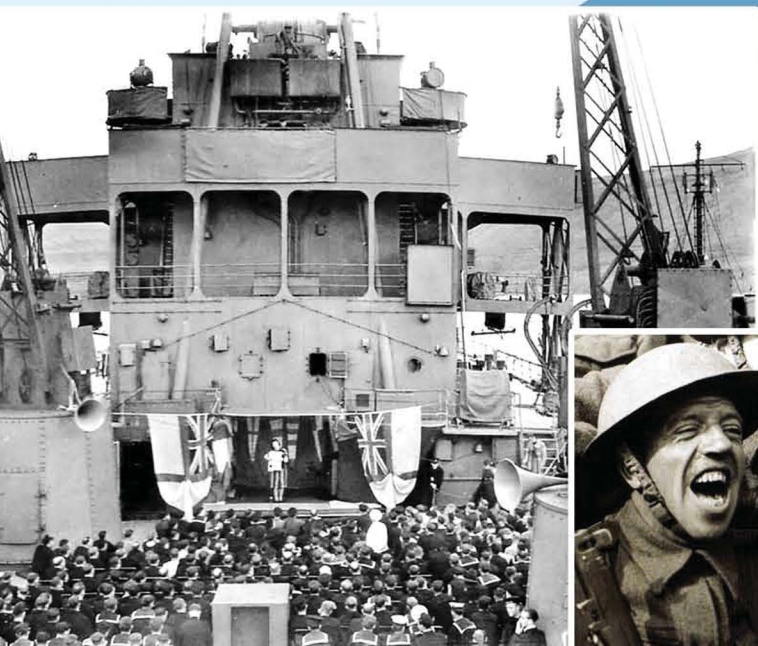
Basil Dean

Having put-on shows for the troops during World War 1, actor/director Basil Dean created the Entertainments National Service Association (ENSA) with the aim of providing "entertainment for the armed forces and munition workers of a country at war." He connected ENSA with the NAAFI (Navy, Army



and Air Force Institutes), who had financial resources and performance spaces like the military canteens and clubs: this combined perfectly with Dean's theatrical experience, so that from ENSA HQ in the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, they could organise the voluntary mobilisation of the entertainment profession to support the armed forces.

ENSA performers were civilian amateurs, unable to enlist because of ill-health or age. They were sent to perform on ships, in the desert, hospitals, distribution centres, aircraft hangers, or anywhere that a stage could be erected - even on the back of a truck!



ENSA performances



It is estimated that more than a million performances were given by members of ENSA during the 2nd World War.