

Almost every day of the week, Islanders had the pleasure of hearing the musical genius of the Ellis Island Band. It may have been on the Mess Deck where the Symphony Orchestra, the Swing Band or the small Jazz Band played while the men ate chow. Or, it may have been at the morning calisthenics class or the afternoon infantry drill where the Military Band played rousing martial tunes.

When the big Ship's Dances in the Social Service Hall rolled around each month, these same men would form the Dance Band to play danceable music scored by staff arrangers within the band.

Besides playing for Island morale, the Band had a hectic outside program to fill, including parades, Bond Rallies, and USO Dances. In order for them to accept engagements every night in the week, the Band was broken up into three small units each capable of keeping a USO full of G.I.s jumping. This split-up was only possible because some of these versatile musicians were able to play two and sometimes three instruments.

Since its prewar birth, the ever-changing personnel of the Band has followed the baton wavings of Tom MacLaury, Frank Klinger, Jerry Morin, Floyd Fox, Lou Mucci, Thurl Nelson, Artie Zazmar and Danny Hurd.

The happy ending to this story is that many of the leaders and men of the Ellis Island Band are now working for big-time outfits like Benny Goodman, Hal McIntyre, Claude Thornhill, Jimmy Dorsey and Stan Kenton.