

B/M Hazel Brown celebrates 60

In January, the Bellingham Corps, Washington, will celebrate the 60th anniversary of Bandmaster Hazel Brown's leadership; Hazel may hold the record as longest continuous Salvation Army bandmaster.

In 1936, Hazel joined a band through school and learned the clarinet and trumpet. Several Army officers helped her with the cornet. "They were rough on me and made me play it right." Soon she was an accomplished cornet soloist.

At 16, she served unofficially as the corps' Y.P. band leader. While in the Northwest Divisional Band, she was featured as a cornet soloist at the 1939 San Francisco World's Fair. In 1942 she was commissioned as corps bandmaster.



Brown mastered other instruments and attended Western Washington State College and the University of California at Berkeley, graduating in 1945 with a bachelor's degree in music.

In the Bay area, Hazel worked part-time with Brigadier William Broughton, the territorial music director, and gave lessons in several area corps. She was the first woman to play with the Oakland Citadel Band. In December 1946, she returned to the Bellingham Corps.

She then obtained her bachelor's degree in education from Western Washington and began teaching at Whatcom Jr. High School, retiring 30 years later in 1979. She directed the band program there for eight years.

Music has been Hazel's life and her ministry. She recently stated: "I am thankful the Lord has helped and guided me throughout my life. God has put a desire in me to do what he requires, even though I do not always succeed. As long as my health holds up, I plan to continue with the band, because I really enjoy it."