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BRITISH WOMEN FILL THE RANKS

Hundreds of Them Recruiting For a Special Force and Drilling and Learning to Use the Rifle

London, Jan. 30.—We read in despatches that at least fifty German women fighting in their trenches in men's clothing have been taken captive by the Russians near Warsaw. If the Germans ever invade Great Britain and the situation becomes desperate they will be faced by an army of British Amazons, carefully drilled and trained to the use of the rifle, compared to which these Teutonic warriors are a mere bagatelle.

When I first heard of the Women's Volunteer Reserve I thought it was a joke, or rather a new ebullition of the suffragette class, but after a visit to old Bedford College and a view of the determined women perspiring through their military drills, I must confess that my feelings have changed.

As Last Resort
It is not to be concluded that the women will rush to the coast and fight the moment the Germans make a landing. They will take up the rifle only when Great Britain is in desperate straits. Till such an unhappy time the reserve will simply act as a disciplined body of women, skilled in first aid, cooking, despatch riding on motor cycles, signalling and the care of horses.

"At the same time the rifle is not being neglected," said Viscountess Castlereagh, the colonel-in-chief of the Women's Emergency Corps. "All the women are spending time in the private rifle ranges, and there are some astonishingly good shots among them. There is no reason in the world why a woman cannot be as good a marksman as a man."

Good Organizer
At old Bedford College, which is the headquarters of the Women's Emergency Corps, I found Colonel Viscountess Castlereagh, and the Hon. Evelyn Haverfield, honorary colonel, hard at work with their recruits. Mrs. Haverfield is remembered for her carefully organised remount camp, which she built up at that time of the Boer war.

Nearly a hundred women were going through the regular army infantry drill. They were not women of leisure either; most of them had put through a day's toil already in an office or along some professional line.

Recognises its Value
Several regular army officers in uniform, were present to assist in the work. The war offices at first took a contemptuous attitude towards this movement, but they have come to see the value of it just as the usefulness of the boy scouts is now generally recognised.

I had an interview with Captain Adair Roberts, the woman drill officer. "We are following the regular army rules throughout," she said. "No commissions are gained except for merit. When women are adjudged competent to teach the drill the regular army officers drop out in their favor."

No Distinctions
"The reserve is strictly non-partisan and non-sectarian. No women of wealth are permitted to buy commissions, although there have been many attempts of this sort. I can show you a titled woman and one of her servants drilling here side by side. This is not an isolated instance, either; there are several such."

No woman is permitted to enter the reserve without a careful physical examination. Women doctors from the city hospitals see to this in their hour off. The women of the reserve must be over eighteen and under forty years of age.

Signalling Corps
Special attention has been paid to signalling practice, as this is an important branch of warfare in which it is unanimously agreed that the female sex may be of service. There are many professional women telegraphers in the reserve. Instruction is given in Morse and semaphore signalling by flags and also by sound.

Other branches of instruction include open-air cooking, despatch riding, carpentering, fencing and Swedish drills.

Common Sight
The sight of women drilling may be seen at many big halls in London. Two favorites are Kingsbridge hall and the armoury of the London Scottish at Buckingham Gate.

The majority of the women are clothed in khaki. Their suits consist of skirt, coat, brown shoes, spats, puttees and hats. The cost of this uniform is \$12.50. Most of the women buy their own suits. The reserve is so far entirely self-supporting.

The government has not as yet given permission to the women to carry rifles. The women do not anticipate trouble in this direction however.

READ THE MAIL AND ADVOCATE.

WAR UNPOPULAR IN S. GERMANY

Story of a Priest Who Had Courage Enough to Denounce to Germans the German Barbarities

(The following was written by a gentleman, the subject of a neutral State, who has recently returned after a two months' tour in Germany):

In a train I sat next to three young men in uniform. They started a conversation with an old gentleman. One of them seemed rather disheartened and nervous.

"I am going to the front one of these days," he said, "and I am told it is nothing. I have not been training two months yet and have never had a gun in my hands. I do not mind that; I am not afraid of fighting for my country. But I have lived in France for twelve years; my home is there now, my wife is French, almost all my real friends are French, and now I am going to kill as many as I can of these people who have always treated me as a friend and whose hospitality I have appreciated more than that of my own country. Who knows? Perhaps one day I shall be sent against my own brother-in-law to shoot him down like a dog. I should never have fought against France had I not been forced to do so, being on a short visit here when this terrible war broke out. It is horrible!"

Hatred against Britain was intensified by the fall of Kiaochau. The Germans cannot forgive Britain for being far-seeing enough to sign a treaty with Japan. The loss of Kiaochau was more heavily felt throughout Germany than would have been a huge European defeat.

The Surprise of Our Colonies.
Everybody seems utterly disappointed that all is so quiet in the British Colonies. They cannot understand that India, Egypt, and South Africa do not now constitute one huge muddle. For years the professors told the students in confidence what would happen to the British Empire if war broke out.

Lessons in schools are more than ever touched by deep patriotism. The geography is now simply strategy. The pupils, especially the old ones, are taught, English and French with more intensity than before.

The war, however, is not popular in all quarters, more especially in South Germany.

During the two months I was in Germany I did not see a single gold coin. In Britain in September—and I find it to be the same now—I was given mostly gold when changing five or ten pound notes, without asking for it. But in Germany, even if you ask you will hardly succeed in obtaining it. People keep their gold, or bring it to the Reichsbank.

Gold-Plated Bullets.
In Heidelberg I met an old student friend. He was wounded, and wore the Iron Cross. A bullet extracted from his body was gold-mounted by the Duchess of Baden and returned to him. "The Duchess has all such bullets taken from the wounded in the hospital in Karlsruhe plated with gold and returned to them as gifts of honour."

I was present at a political lecture in Stralsund, North Germany, delivered by a priest. He began to criticise the awful atrocities and outrages committed by German troops. A roar of indignation passed through the hall. Most of the audience left, cheering the Kaiser, but some constantly clapped their hands and seemed pleased to listen to the denunciation of their own army. The priest was arrested before he had time to finish his lecture.

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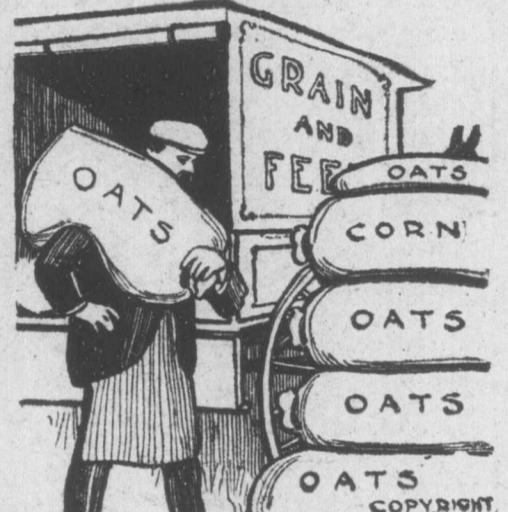


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