

# WVS/WRVS Bulletin/Magazine

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# WOMEN'S VOLUNTARY SERVICES for CIVIL DEFENCE

Bulletin No. 5.

March, 1940.

## EDITORIAL.

This month thoughts of many must have been directed Canteen-wards. As the War goes on it becomes clearer that communal feeding everywhere will become more and more important. Already it is reckoned, on a percentage basis, that W.V.S. is feeding on an average, 30,000 people daily, these numbers being made up of evacuated children, mothers, Civil Defence workers, and in some cases, by special request, troops; in reality, the figure is probably far higher.

At a large meeting of London Canteen workers on the 27th February, Lady Reading stressed the individual responsibility of Canteen workers. She pointed out that it is the food of the people which, in the long run, affects its health, and in the short run, its temper. Therefore no work could be of more vital National importance than that of communal feeding in all its guises.

Much Canteen work is being carried on in difficult circumstances, in inadequate premises and uncertain conditions. One Canteen in Wales has such restricted premises that helpers have to be chosen because of their figures! In another, with the help of black magic, exquisite meals for 300 are produced on two Primus stoves. The question of premises, too, raised constant difficulties. There are examples of the same premises being used for feeding school children during the day and the troops at night.

The spread of rationing, and limitation of supplies generally, will make the feeding of children "en masse" of the utmost importance. In West Sussex alone, 1,561 school children are already fed in canteens daily; in East Sussex, 2,095.

The transference of the responsibility from the Local Authority to the Education Authority has not, in any way, affected the carrying out of this work; voluntary helpers being asked everywhere to carry on as before. Several Education Authorities (at Selsey for example) have acquired allotments where vegetables for the canteens will be grown.

The importance of canteen feeding of A.R.P. personnel was demonstrated at the recent Sunday Exercises in one of the Regions. Here W.V.S. were called upon to feed an invasion of over 4,000 additional A.R.P. workers and "casualties" with only one day's notice in which to do it. This task was carried out in a most efficient and praiseworthy fashion.

The new Canteen Section of W.V.S. should do much to help to maintain the high standard of personal efficiency which is so important a factor in all canteen work. Out of this co-ordination for war, it seems likely that a lasting contribution will be made towards a widespread understanding of food values, and the better nutrition of the country as a whole.

NOTES OF THE MONTH.

Our Mobile Chairman. During 1939 Lady Reading spoke at 98 public meetings. She travelled an average of 1,200 miles a fortnight. She spoke in Scotland, Wales, and all parts of England from Carlisle to Lewes. Here are some of the audiences she addressed:- Women's Employment Federation Conference, dinner of the College of Nursing, London Guides Conference, Soroptimists Luncheon, American Women's Clubs, Royal Sanitary Institute Health Congress, and many others.

Miss Bowerman. Everyone who came in contact with Miss Bowerman must feel sad to know that she has now left W.V.S. Her special gifts, and her sense of fun, will be greatly missed in Tothill Street. We send her our best wishes in the important work at the Ministry of Information to which she has gone.

"Britannia is a Woman". A remarkable film has been produced by Movietone called "Britannia is a Woman". It is a documentary film of women's activities in war-time and has been directed by Elsa Dunbar of W.V.S. It can be seen in Gaumont British Cinemas on Whit Monday.

Technically and artistically it reaches a high standard. The story of women's endeavour is told with great sincerity and sympathy. No false note is struck and the effect of the whole is strangely moving. There are many unforgettable sequences:- evacuated children playing in a lovely setting of English countryside; shipwrecked survivors being cared for in a blizzard; the earnest face of a young girl at work in a canteen; an old woman knitting, the arabesque of fingers as an auxiliary nurse sterilises her instruments; and much more besides. Do be sure to see it.

Medical Gifts from America. The first consignment of gifts from the American Society for British Medical and Civilian Aid, Inc., has arrived in London for distribution by the Personal Service League. Dudley House, Park Lane, has been lent by Lady Ward as a central depot and storehouse for these gifts from America, and has become a bonded warehouse for Customs clearance purposes. Lady Ward is herself chairman of the Dudley House Depot Committee, and a group of American ladies is assisting representatives of the Personal Service League in the work of unpacking, sorting and distributing the gifts.

This first consignment includes the following articles:- 6,400 children's dresses, 2,000 men's sweaters, 1,000 operating gowns, 600 convalescent robes, 1,000 babies' nightgowns, 1,000 boys' shirts, 800 layettes, and 650 women's dresses. Each article, as it is unpacked at Dudley House, has a small printed label attached to it bearing the words "America to Britain". They are intended for the use of civilian hospitals, for evacuated families, and for cases of hardship or distress directly attributable to the war.

Savings Association. The Savings Group, at Tothill Street, was formed during the month with a membership of over 80. The weekly collection of half-crowns, shillings, etc., grew from the initial £10 on 14th February, to £13 on 28th February.

Some new W.V.S. Activities. At Wells, Somerset, there is an evacuee Lending Library to which local children are also encouraged to come. Some of the books are given and some are contributed by the junior section of the County Library.

At Bridport a gardening scheme has been set in operation, W.V.S. is looking after the gardens of those people who are away on active service.

At Leeds, volunteers are being enrolled to teach groups of women, especially in the poorer districts, how to buy and cook unrationed foods to the best advantage.

Posters. The new poster is now ready for distribution. It is bright yellow with the W.V.S. badge and the words "women wanted" printed in black. Gummed slips with the names of the various categories of workers, can be provided and affixed as required, and there is a space for the local centre's address.





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Speakers Panel. Meetings are again being held all over the country. They are in the main different from those which took place before the war, though recruiting for specific needs is still being done locally. The requests for speakers which are now reaching the Speakers Department at Headquarters, specify subjects such as W.V.S. work past and present all over the country, or Food and War-time Cookery, Salvage and Thrift, the War of Nerves and the Housewife's duties in case of air-raids, Hospital Supplies, etc. To meet the new need, the Speakers Panel is being amplified and new Speakers Notes are being drafted.

Apology. The Editor regrets that in the last issue of the Bulletin an account was given of the Chairman's tour in "South Wales". This should, of course, read "Wales", for a programme, full of interest and enthusiasm, was carried out throughout the Principality.

### THE UNDER FIVES.

As the result of meetings which have taken place at the Ministry between representatives of that body and the Board of Education, of the L.C.C. and of W.V.S., it has been decided what children under five shall be eligible for the present limited scheme for evacuation, how vacancies shall be created in the existing nursery parties, and what machinery shall be employed for filling these vacancies. In addition to the children who cannot be taken away from an evacuation area by an adult member of their family, for some strong reason, such as the death or illness of the mother, those children who had registered to go away in September and were unable to do so, and those who have attended a nursery or creche which has closed down, are to be on the priority list.

The Ministry cannot agree to places in nursery parties being used either for children who have reached the age of five, or for those whose parents have moved from the evacuation into a reception area. In the case of children reaching the age of five, billets are to be found. It is thought desirable that wherever possible these should be with older brothers and sisters. Care Committee workers visit parents and explain the necessity for the child to be billeted: where the parents refuse permission, the Government considers that the children should be brought back to London and registered to go away with a school party, rather than that they should continue to stay at the nursery.

The machinery for filling vacancies is the registration of all children with W.V.S. A Panel consisting of W. V. S., a representative of the Standing Joint Committee of Metropolitan Borough Councils, a member of the L.C.C. Care Committee, and an officer of the Public Assistance, consider the applications for evacuation and allocate vacancies. The children pass through Bedford College; here they spend a few days to make certain that only clean, healthy and adequately clothed children go down to reception areas. W.V.S. provide transport and escorts as before and in the country it is hoped that W.V.S. will be able to provide transport to take five-year-olds from nurseries to billets. All vacancies arising are notified by matrons or superintendents to the authority in charge of the nursery party who will inform W.V.S.

Meetings of the Panel are held each week and the machinery is working smoothly.

/WAR

### WAR TIME TECHNIQUE IN AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS.

General Training. A.R.P. Technique has undergone a number of changes since the advent of war. It was natural that this must be so, for there is a vast difference between "preparation" and "realisation."

Prior to September last, A.R.P. volunteers were thoroughly trained in Air Raid Precautions; volunteers for the Casualty Services additionally in First Aid, and Wardens in a Short First Aid Course; Incendiary Bomb Control; and various other subjects. The time factor was not the important matter which it has now become.

In order to overcome this time difficulty, a new scheme of Basic Training has been inaugurated, in which each volunteer gets a general groundwork of training, followed by complete Courses in each subject. This groundwork consists of:- Intensive instruction in the general organisation of Civil Defence; Incendiary Bomb Control; Rescue of unconscious persons; elementary protection against high explosives; War gases and anti-gas protection, both individual and collective; Elements of First Aid; and details of the various official publications which are very useful.

Personnel undergoing this basic training, get in this way, a complete general picture of the whole of the A.R.P. Organisation, and the part played in it by each individual Service.

The introduction of Elements of First Aid as a part of the general training for all branches is a particularly interesting development.

Report or Control Centres. Training in Report Centre work was, before the war, only carried out in isolated cases. Now such training is of daily occurrence in all such Centres, and is tested out by periodical exercises.

In a Report or Control Centre, each person has his (or her) individual part to play, quite independently of each other, but nevertheless as a whole making a perfect machine - as, for example, Plotting officer, Plotting clerk, Reception telephonist, Transmission telephonist, Message supervisor, Messenger, etc. Each of these jobs is highly specialized, and very constant practice is essential in order to obtain perfect working as a whole.

R.S.D. Parties. In the old organisation, the Immediate Action Parties, each consisting of a Demolition Party and a Stretcher Party, have now given way to the Rescue, Shoring and Demolition Party. These men, in addition to their technical work, are trained in First Aid, and attend to casualties trapped in a building until the wreckage is made safe for the entry of the Stretcher Parties. This Service has evolved a special technique in the lowering of stretchers from damaged buildings. There are two methods:- "Block and tackle", and "Sliding by means of a ladder". The "Block and Tackle" method has proved the best suited for all forms of serious injury.

Incident Control. The question of Incident Control is an interesting and important one, which has only developed during the past two months.

It has been found that when an "Incident" takes place during an Air Raid, it is essential that control should be established at the earliest moment. This involves definite technique which should be standardised, because the question of mutual assistance arises. The Post Warden concerned is obviously the right man to perform the duties of "Incident Officer", as he can be on the spot directly after the damage has taken place.

The provision of a control point at which Incoming Services report, Control flags, parking of vehicles, etc., are all dealt with in training exercises on this form of technique, as well as the importance of control by leaders of parties and contact, one with another.

/W.V.S.





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W.V.S. Housewives' Service. This Service was in being for a considerable time before the war, but its value has been shown, and new avenues for its use have developed in connection with collective exercises. The Service is now of the utmost value to the Wardens' Service, and may do much in case of need, to be of actual assistance as regards treatment for hysterical cases and prevention of shock for casualties, as well as helping in many and numerous other ways.

Repair Depots. Repair Depots are being organised to deal with the upkeep of respirators and anti-gas clothing. These Depots will each be under the control of an A.R.P.S. Instructor, who will train the necessary staff to carry out this work. The work will consist of inspection and local repairs to respirators; the "doping" of cracks in clothing; replacement of press studs; and numerous other small details which can be seen to on the spot. W.V.S. workers with skilled fingers can be of real use here.

Gas Detection Service. The Gas Detection Service has been inaugurated since the war, and one or more Gas Detection Officers are now appointed to each Local Authority.

Unexploded Bombs. Very special orders on the subject of unexploded bombs have now been issued, and instruction in how to deal with such a case is now part of a Warden's training.

In short the period of waiting is being actively used to overhaul A.R.P. technique generally and to ensure a really efficient A.R.P. Service.

### CASUALTY SERVICES.

Regional Nursing Officers have now been appointed, and have taken up their posts with the exception of Wales, where no appointment has been made. In the case of London the Regional Nursing Officer will not be able to take up her duties until April.

The Editor regrets that on page 3 of the last Bulletin, under the heading "Casualty Services" the term sector matron was wrongly applied to the Regional Nursing Officer whose appointment by the Ministry of Health was announced.

### TRANSPORT.

Owing to the generosity of the W.V.S. County Transport Representative, the ambulance drivers of Havant are now the proud possessors of a converted Bentley. This is painted grey with a red Maltese Cross and "presented by Women's Voluntary Services" on the side.

W.V.S. at the request of the Ministry of Supply are now busily engaged in a Salvage drive, and transport has been given at Cheltenham, Nottingham and Whitby for the collection of bones and paper. Worksop had 18 W.V.S. ambulance and sitting up car drivers engaged in a recent exercise. The latter are used for work in connection with the Evacuation Appeals Court, and one volunteer has driven 650 miles on this work. At Bath a W.V.S. emergency squad moved 100 sick soldiers from canvas to billets, and at Stoke-on-Trent a corps of women drivers is being formed at the request of the Medical Officer of Health to convey the wounded from station to hospital. Baildon are running a fresh course of training for ambulance drivers.

### SALVAGE.

The Salvage Department has taken up its quarters in Room 28 4th Floor at Tothill Street and is going ahead fast. The Ministry of Supply, having strengthened its faith in the W.V.S., is advising one Borough after the other to address themselves to the W.V.S. for help towards Salvage. We are now helping Paddington, Westminster, Hackney, Wembley, Romford, Dartford - all with satisfactory results. Shoreditch is the latest to call for assistance, and it is hoped that we shall be working with ten other municipalities before the issue of the next bulletin. We are endeavouring that each Group Administrator should have at least one or two Boroughs concentrating on Salvage; and the Ministry of Supply are agreeable that this should be the scheme for development.

St. Marylebone has not been included on the list as it is entitled to special mention. It was in this Borough, through the courtesy of the Cleansing Committee and the enthusiasm of the Cleansing Superintendent, that the bone collection experiment was carried out. The W.V.S. made a personal contact with the housewife and asked her to put her household bones (cooked or uncooked and however small) in the sweeper orderly's hand cart, which is provided with a special container; the sweeper orderly to pass the street once or twice a day at regular hours - OR - to wrap up her bones and leave them beside or on top of her dustbin. The Mayor of St. Marylebone put the experiment into action by placing the first bone in the cart, and at the end of the week the Borough had 6 cwt. of household bones to its credit. The experiment is a success. It is interesting to note that approximately 6 cwt. was the weight recovered from the central belt conveyor from which articles of value are "picked" and recovered by hand when St. Marylebone had a salvage plant in action some years ago. As we are not yet by any means in full cry, it would seem that the manual effort and method will beat the mechanised process.

Other Boroughs are now to follow suit. The law of averages tells that the housewife would infinitely prefer to place her bone either beside or on top of her dustbin rather than take it out to the sweeper's cart. However, she may think differently as the weather becomes warmer!

W.V.S. has worked hard to further the publicity of the waste-paper campaign, distributing 40,000 leaflets in a series of Boroughs. Each leaflet means a personal visit and talk! That is our major work - getting into contact with the housewife and teaching her to be Salvage-minded.

Waste-Foodstuff. The Salvage Department suggests that there should be an Officer in Charge of Salvage in every canteen so that it is someone's business to see there is no wanton waste and that the necessary receptacles to prevent this are at hand.

It is good news that the Tottenham pigs grow fatter and fatter, but it remains something of a problem as to how to get London swill to their thinner country cousins.

A memorandum on W.V.S. Salvage schemes is to be had on application to Headquarters.

KEEP YOUR WASTE PAPER CLEAN, AND DON'T BE BONE IDLE.

### USEFUL INFORMATION.

Warm linings for waist-coats can be made out of old evening kid gloves, cut up and sewn together.

A set of patterns, cut out in cardboard, should find a place in every depot.

For sewing parties, thread can be bought in large reels, twelve times the size of small ones, and much more economical.

(The Editor will be very glad for contributions to this feature. Canteens and working-parties please take note).





## WOMEN'S VOLUNTARY SERVICES for CIVIL DEFENCE

### CARAVAN CANTEN.

It was a Sunday, the first morning of Summer Time. Not many people were about in the streets when we went to the garage. We slammed the double doors back and there beside the small brown car it towered, silver-grey in the early morning, like a gentle elephant beside its mahout. Three young soldiers came dawdling by, whistling "Colonel Bogey" and we got them to push the thing out of the shed. It moved quietly on its rubber wheels, with the surprising ease and lightness that a fat policeman can sometimes show in an emergency. As it moved out of the shadow the sunlight picked out the scarlet paint on its die: W.V.S. MOBILE CANTEN.

We coupled it to the car and drove off towards the outskirts of the town to a triangle of waste land between the railway and the high road. There we jacked the trailer up, opened the serving-hatch and set about boiling water for the urns. There was one for tea, one for coffee and a third for soup: if only the water would boil. Presently some women in W.V.S. uniform appeared with loads of split buns and some sausage-rolls that we popped into the oven to keep hot till the dummy casualties arrived. We hoped they would not arrive before the water boiled. By the time the first ambulance lurched into view, packed with labelled casualties, a kind of muted whisper was beginning to be heard from the urn, a murmur, a quickening, hinting at boiling water to come just about as convincingly as the first swallow hints at summer. But it had to do. Casualties cannot wait. The war must be prosecuted with efficiency. We tumbled the soup cubes into one urn, infused the tea in another, slithered the hot sausage-rolls out of the oven to make room for a second batch. The sun rose higher.

A hospital train pulled into the siding. Stretcher-bearers clambered out. They set down their stretchers and the casualties came to life and converged upon us. We were surrounded. "Coffee? Tea? Soup?"

The soup came out of the tap in a reddish gush into the white mug. An aged man conspicuously labelled Fractured Femur sniffed at it with the sagacity of an ancient fox-hound.

"Tomato soup", I improvised. "Or would you rather have tea?" Fractured Femur nodded. I drew off a mugful from the other urn. It swirled into the mug with a deep and greenish look, as if from the dark backward and abysm of time.

"W.V.S. colours, huh?" said a voice in the crowd. But they drank up, and after the first urn was emptied the tea came out a better colour. Fractured Femur came back for a second cup. Sausage-rolls were snapped up in ovenloads, split buns were wolfed away. In the middle distance a man wearing a chain, a mayor I suppose, made a speech unheard by us through the hiss of steam and the clatter of washing-up. More food arrived, more hot water. More ambulances, more volunteers. Soup, tea, buns, coffee, buns, buns, buns. From time to time Fractured Femur recurred. He had had only an hour's notice of the demonstration, he confided to us, and what with Summer Time and the lost hour, had missed his breakfast. He was that hungry, he told us. He was telling us!

Custom began to fall off. They shelved the stretchers back into the train. They packed themselves into the ambulances. The hospital train pulled out. The sun went lower. Cars drove off. People dwindled away. Washing up, so long outpaced by dishing-up, caught up with it at last and then outstripped it. We stacked the crocks and the mugs up on their trays, gave the last bun to a little dog, shut up the serving-hatch and emptied the washing-up water on to the trodden grass of the triangle of waste land between the railway and the high road. We trimmed the trailer for the journey. Then we got into the car and drove away, slowly at first, over the grass, till we reached the highway, and then at a steady speed, with the last of the sun picking out the red paint on the caravan.



THE CENTRE ORGANISER'S DAY.

Get up early, read my mail  
Catalogue of Whiteley's sale.  
Can't stop now, go through it later.  
Must see about refrigerator  
Shan't get it without a fight  
Heavens! Ain't the Council tight!  
Yes Jane, I'll be home to lunch  
Must see I get those tabs from 'Punch'.  
Telephone! What do you say?  
Tell 'em that I'm on my way.

Here's the letters - only seven  
Sounds a typist's dream of heaven.  
Circulars I'll study later.  
Don't forget refrigerator.  
Two more people have earned badges.  
Must rope in that girl of Madge's.  
Two Land Girls to interview.  
Month's enrolments very few.  
Better write to local Paper  
First demonstrate that respirator.

Gracious me this baby's sick  
Sign this paper Mrs. Crick.  
Two blankets now for Three B Unit  
S.O.S. from Mrs. Boon; it  
calls for boots and that and this  
for poor evacuee at Diss.  
Don't forget our Trawler boys;  
And see they send the children's toys.

Good morning Padre, how are you?  
No, that parcel's Air Force Blue.  
These are yours, we've checked them over.  
Who is 'phoning me from Dover?  
Say we sent them yesterday.  
Says he's got them, well O.K.  
Helmets, mittens, scarves and socks.  
Here Padre! Here's your box.

Oh! They're splendid Mrs. Bonger,  
Make them just a little longer  
Size twelve needles, yes that's right.  
Thirteen's make them rather tight.  
Dear me! Why, its ten to one.  
Not a single letter done.  
Goodbye dear, I shan't be late  
Home at five as sure as fate.

I'm so sorry Mrs. Tong  
Have we kept you waiting long?  
Quite three minutes in the street?  
Too bad, but we sometimes eat  
You'd like some knitting just to hand  
When you're listening to the band  
Or Sandy Powell? You never tire  
of working hard! (Beside the fire!)

Hello, Mrs. Baxter-Grubble!  
Now then, tell me what's the trouble?  
Canteen workers tired of working  
While there's other people shirking?  
I'll come up and smooth them over  
When I've placated friend Grover.  
She is tired of washing dishes  
Peeling spuds and frying fishes.  
To do just that from four to seven  
Just now to me would seem like heaven.

Here Miss Jones, you've book and pencil;  
Could you run me off a stencil?  
Re arrangement I've just made  
To start the classes in First Aid.  
Now we'll start on the statistics,  
Then complain about those biscuits.  
Supply of wool is getting low  
Better let the Mayoress know.  
What's the time? Just ten past five!  
Letters? Bless my heart alive!  
Better take them home to do,  
All the other writing too!

Home again, its nearly six.  
Hear the news in just two ticks  
Announcer leaves me lost for words  
With 'National Service' - FEED THE BIRDS!

(Contributed from Kent).