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SHE EXPERIENCED THE "BLITZ"

Wellington's "Bachelor Girl"

WHEN Kathleen O'Brien, the Wellington girl who is conducting Station 2ZB's "Bachelor Girl" session every Saturday morning, reads the news of the latest air raids on London, she has a special sympathy for the people of London in their terrible trial. For Miss O'Brien was in London when the *blitz* started last September, and she had three months of it.

She was living in a block of flats near Paddington Station, and she was lucky in having a deep shelter in the basement to go to when the sirens sounded. She saw much of the destruction caused by the German bombers, but like every other witness of the bombings, she declares that the average Londoner came through dauntless.

"They have their toes in, and they'll never be shifted in a hundred years," she says.

The dislocation of transport which has meant uncomplaining trudges of three and four miles morning and evening for many London workers, has also produced pleasant examples of democratic brotherliness among rich and poor. No one with a motor-car ever travels by himself; there is always some plodding pedestrian to pick up and take to work.

Miss O'Brien, who formerly conducted a school of dancing in Wellington and produced several stage shows for Wellington theatres, left for England six years ago. She worked in big L.M.S. hotels, and before the outbreak of war, was social hostess at Gleneagles, a resort hotel in the Scottish Highlands. When



Spencer Digby photograph
KATHLEEN O'BRIEN

war came, Gleneagles was taken over by the Government as a hospital.

Kathleen O'Brien is well qualified to give advice to bachelor girls on the many problems associated with rooming in a big city, and making the most of a moderate income. She has roomed by herself, catered for herself, and in a word, knows exactly how the bachelor girl can be helped. She claims that she personally tests out every housekeeping dressmaking and interior decorating hint she gives over the air.

WOMEN WHO SHOOT TO KILL

FORTY THOUSAND women march, fight, and fall on China's battlefields. Women? we may ask. What kind of women? Can you be a true woman when you shoot to kill?

These questions are answered in an article which appeared in the *London Star* as the result of an interview with Miss Lucy Tou, who is in civil life a lecturer in sociology at the Central China University, and an intimate friend of Madame Chiang Kai-shek. When you see Miss Tou in a grey Persian lamb coat, with a rose in her buttonhole and a Parisian hair-set, it is difficult to realise that she has gone through a training so severe that in comparison Waiouru is as voluptuous as a Beverley Hills apartment. "People ask what it is like to be a woman soldier," says Miss Tou. "The expression is a contradiction in itself. You can't be both. Only when fear, hatred, and despair have reached such a pitch that nothing seems to matter, only then will women in mass formation turn against their nature and fight to kill."

Veterans of the Great War will wonder how women, however willing, can stand the pace physically. It is in order to cultivate endurance that the Chinese Government has devised such a hard training for its women battalions. Vanity is the first thing a woman must leave behind when she enters a Chinese training camp. "We were eight in a room with one washbasin between us," said Miss Tou. "With Reveille at 4.25 a.m. and Fall In in the courtyard at 4.30, very few of us had time to use a comb. From 4.30 to 6.30 we had field exercises. Then 'breakfast,' a cup of water (out of the tooth-cleaning mug) and dry bread. Then a military lecture. After that shooting, machine-gunning, horse riding till lunch.

"For lunch a bowl of soup and a bowl of rice. More field exercises in the afternoon, another lecture, and at last dinner (consisting of vegetables and occasionally meat) at 7.30. Eight o'clock found us in bed. We had to sleep with our boots on and with our rifles slung over one shoulder—it's rather uncomfortable until you get used to it.

"But this is nothing compared with what women soldiers have to put up with when they reach the actual fighting line. In the training centre we at least slept on mattresses, but in the front line women soldiers frequently sleep on the bare ground, with only a cloak over their uniform. Food was meagre enough in the camp. In the trenches more often than not we were without food for two or three days.

"After what we have been through, no one can tell me that women's physical endurance is less than men's," concluded Miss Tou. "And there's one other point. Women never complain. Whereas the men of the forces ask for this and that, the women always say 'We're all right!' They are concerned with only one thing—ridding their land of the invader. Till this is accomplished they are determined to remain soldiers—not women."



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