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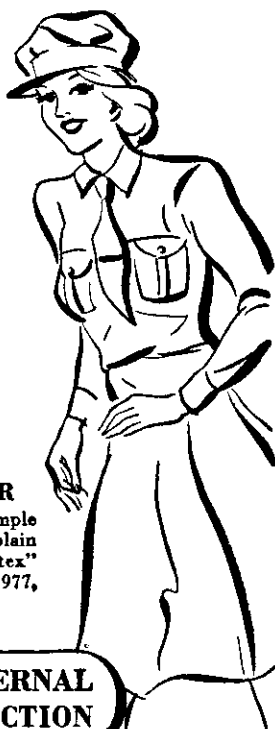


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EARNESTNESS—AND SOME CONFUSION

American Women Organise For War

THERE is a certain amount of confusion in America's Office of Civilian Defence, according to the newsmagazine *Time*. And some of it has been blamed on the head of Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, who, deciding that defence workers did not get enough recreation, led 40 or 50 of them up to her roof during lunch hours to dance Virginia Reels. "Her intentions," said one admirer, "were swell." The First Lady typified the earnestness and confusion with which U.S. women have stampeded to defence work since December 7. By last week, hundreds of thousands of them were madly sewing, knitting, cooking, dancing, driving automobiles, thundering in aeroplanes, jumping into fire nets.

Many were just as bewildered as an elderly woman in Los Angeles who hustled into the Defence Council insisting that she wanted to make bullets. Eager women volunteers turned up in all kinds of unlikely spots. In Boston, militant women practised fire-fighting and had firemen worried over the possibility of their turning up at a fire, to get tangled in hoses. Members of the Women's Ambulance and Defence Corps of Los Angeles, in khaki suits with Sam Browne belts, appeared at the sheriff's office on the night of December 7, saluted smartly, and announced to the startled sheriff that they were reporting for duty. (The sheriff sent them home).



MRS. ROOSEVELT
Virginia Reels on the Roof

In Chicago, Mrs. John Alden Carpenter, wife of the composer, sat gazing into space. Her job as head of the Women's Division of the Defence Savings Department awed her. Said she: "We are in the process of organising, and we are simply going to sell millions of bonds when we get started. I'm sure you realise that the upper classes cannot do all of the work."

Of all the volunteer groups, the one that made the most noise was the American Women's Voluntary Services, founded by Mrs. Alice Throckmorton McLean. She had modelled A.W.V.S. on the British Women's Voluntary Services.

Mrs. McLean nailed her colours to the mast on the day New York had its first air-raid alarm. The alarm was false, but Mrs. McLean, already at her "post," declared: "We shall remain on duty 24 hours. Our Motor Corps and Emergency Kitchen will be drawn up outside the door ready to rush to any spot where there is a disaster. I have sent women downtown to hunt for tin helmets, and others are sewing armbands on their uniforms. I shall stay here all night."

Finger-Polish And Hair-Do

Eight official A.W.V.S. uniforms included breeches and boots for the cycle corps, ski-troop suits for workers in the Far North (spotters, dog-sled teamsters in Saranac, N.Y., Alaska, etc.). For A.W.V.S. fingernails, light polish was prescribed; hair-do: simple, preferably short, up off the neck.

In a huge, dishevelled loft in Manhattan, short-haired A.W.V.S. women in slate-blue uniforms received applications. Volunteers had numerous war-time careers to choose from: navigation, aerial photography, truck driving, etc. The work of the A.W.V.S. sometimes overlapped the work of the Red Cross, sometimes duplicated the work of the Office of Civilian Defence.

Other organisations had already been busy for some time. The Women's Christian Temperance Union's Soldiers and Sailors Department, led by Mrs.

(Continued on next page)

The Woman Behind The Man

"*CHERCHEZ les femmes*" is Washington's advice to armament manufacturers facing a labour shortage, according to *"Time"*.

The War Department told Ford Motors to get 12,000 or 15,000 women for its giant Willow Run bomber plant, 10 per cent of its ultimate labour force.

The Washington Navy Yard called for women holders of degrees in mathematics, physics and mechanical, electrical, metallurgical and chemical engineering, but warned candidates that they "will really have to work."

At the Cessna Aircraft Works in Kansas, women saw, sand, nail, and glue wood; sew, stretch on, and dope the covering fabric; install the instrument board and radio.

Another aircraft plant expects to take on 6,000 girls by next summer; another 2,000. In World War I, women were 23 per cent of the labour force in 40 aircraft factories. In British aircraft plants now, they are 40 to 50 per cent.

An average woman's lifting strength, says the U.S. Department of Labour, is about one half of a man's, her pulling strength two-thirds. But she is superior to man in dexterity and patience. Women are peculiarly susceptible to certain chemical poisons; they are also more vulnerable than men to sickness and accidents from overwork.