

women at war

A Soldier

★ writes to ★

his wife

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A SOLDIER writes to his Wife . . .

My Dear Freda,

I am writing this on the train. Soon I shall be back in camp after the most wonderful fortnight I think we have spent in all our eight years of married life.

I know how you felt when I left. I know you tried not to cry at the station. Believe me, I felt the same. Let's try to look at it in another light.

We have the future to fight for and live for. A future in which we shall prize everything we took for granted before the war. We have pledged ourselves to conquer fascism and win that future. We shall do it.

We have always shared everything. Now we are sharing the biggest battle in history. You will be fighting with me, I know. You will

be back at the factory, making the weapons that will, in our hands, finally break fascism and open up the future.

Young Derek and Joan will grow up to guard that future, after our time, to realise dreams we never managed to hold on to.

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There never was an army so eager to fight as we are today. And there never was an army which depended so much on the women it left behind.

You have realised that this war is much more than a scrap between two countries or two sets of men. It is not even a war; it's a battle to stamp out the evil, ugly shape that fascism has twisted men into, the beastliness of man at his worst,





work in the factories—do you realise how much strength all this gives us?

Will you go on with that work? Will you do even more? We need that faith and work of yours. Even more, we need the weapons.

the horrible tortures and brutal domination fascism holds in store.

Blitzes, casualty lists, setbacks and disappointments—you still hold your heads high with confidence in us.

Will you please carry on being that way? Though some of us may not come back, and you know that, will you call for action when you know it is the right thing?

We need that Second Front now. We count on you to help us get it.

Your faith, your grit, your

Let there be no chance of talk about "too little and too late" again. This time—now—we soldiers know what has to be done. Each of us longs to set foot in Europe, to share with our Russian comrades the bitter battles that must be waged for victory.

But we must have the weapons. Production must never go down. We rely on you.

You know how much I miss you sometimes, Freda. We all get that way when we think of home. Do you know

what brings us back to earth again?

Remembering the sacrifices our wives, mothers, sisters and sweethearts are making. You are keeping our homes going, bringing up our children as we have tried to do, working long hours to provide us with tools, going without luxuries, and making ends meet.

If we slacken off, we are letting our Allies down. We are letting *you* down. Do you feel the same way?

But we want to ask even more of you now. You know, as much as we do, how much depends on the launching of that invasion of Europe now. That means you must be the first to demand and accept all sacrifices.

Freda, do you remember how you used to get mad if I stayed out late at a Union branch meeting or had a drink or so with some of the lads afterwards to talk over Union business?

None of that spirit now. You women have seen pretty quickly how much a strong Union can mean to production. We are proud of you for that, and for your fight to keep up the standards we have fought for. You are having a tough time, some of you. We know that, too, and we're with you all the time.

Derek and Joan must be proud of their Shop Steward mother. So am I!

We want you to carry on with that. The Government makes plans for victory production. Planning alone will not win the war—without your co-operation. The Government calls on all women to go into the factories. But it is you who must recruit your neighbours into industry. It is you who must introduce them to Trade Unionism, organise their energy into the most practical forms.

Time is all important. What you do today and

tomorrow will guarantee our success in battle.

You have read of the ghastly things that are being done to Russian women by the Nazis in Eastern Europe. You have read of the tortures and cruelties inflicted on the women of occupied countries. You have heard of the broken bodies of little children found after the Nazis had devastated villages and towns of Europe. You know what they would do to

us if they had the chance.

All that makes horror and hatred rise inside you. But that horror and hatred must be turned into energy.

It's hard sometimes to realise that the small piece of metal you handle hundreds of times a day will kill one of those Nazis or save one of us. But it will.

Keep it up, keep the Union going, improve production, fight for better methods and better organisation, we beg you, when you think of the terrible things the Nazi beasts have done and are doing.

Have you told other women, who doubt their own ability to help, of the jobs they can do in the factory—of the way they can help their men?

Machine setters,
lathe and press



operators—there is a job for them somewhere, a job that will bring their men home victorious all the sooner.

What does fascism mean to you? To me, it means living under an eternal threat, an end to the happy days of home and family, work and friendship. It means torture and death, fears for the children, the rule of greed, of men who would destroy the whole world for their own financial profits.

It means blotting out the hopes we workers have of a free life where we can build good and beautiful things from the best in us. It means the end of all hope.

Now we have a chance to put an end to fascism—and chances can't be put into cold storage. Take it or leave it.

We must take it. It may be a risk, but victories are never won without risks. And you and we can lessen that risk if we put all we've got into it.

We are passing through some lovely countryside, Freda. There are flat fields and meadows with dozens of little hedges hurrying across them, and behind, the Downs, looking almost blue in the distance. A piece of silver river just flashed by the train. Children on holiday fishing in the streams; the golden sea of a cornfield, splashed with sunlight.

Soon I shall be home again. We must come on a holiday to this part of the world, when the war is over.

All my love to you and the kiddies,

Jim.

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