

General Birdwood's Message to Men of the Australian and New Zealand Forces. March, 1916

Now that we are proceeding to France, I am re-publishing Lord Kitchener's message to the troops of the British Expeditionary Force, which was originally issued to the Australian and New Zealand Forces before their departure from their homes in October, 1914. I feel that it is hardly necessary for me to emphasize to all ranks how sincerely I trust that they will bear in mind all that Lord Kitchener says, and do their utmost to live up to the ideal which he has placed before you.

Since the Australian and New Zealand Forces left their respective countries, you have made for yourselves a national reputation as good fighters, which has earned for you the esteem of our comrades, alongside of whom we will shortly be fighting. The training that you have had will, I hope, enable you to utilise your fighting qualities to advantage. But, in addition to these two qualifications, there is still a third which is essential to success—**DISCIPLINE**; and it is the greatest of the three, for without discipline the best fighting troops in the world will fail at the last to achieve success.

You will undoubtedly be faced with temptations in France, for we shall probably have to pass through and be billeted in densely populated French villages. Drink will, I am afraid, be obtainable, while villages will mostly be full of women and children, whose fathers, husbands and brothers are fighting for their country in the trenches against our common enemy. That you will respect the women I have not the slightest doubt, because I well know how absolutely repugnant the idea of any offence against a defenceless woman is to every Australian and New Zealander. It is against drink, however, that I particularly wish now to warn you, and to implore you to take hold of yourselves, and in the case of every man to absolutely make up his mind and determine for himself that he will not give way to it, and that he will remember that the honour of either Australia or New Zealand is in his personal keeping. In saying this you all know that I am only referring to a very small proportion indeed of your numbers. The great majority of you want no such warning, for I know you will already have made up your minds on the subject, and all such I earnestly beg to do what is in their power to look after their comrades, who may not have the same strength of mind as they have.

Remember that a few black sheep can give a bad name to a whole flock, so let there be none such among us and let us make up our minds that the Australian and New Zealand Forces are going to prove themselves second to none in the way of discipline, as they have already done where sheer hard fighting was concerned.

See to this, boys! You know you are capable of it, if you will only determine that it shall be so, and if you will do this, you will be able to return to Australia and New Zealand after peace and victory with an unsullied reputation, which will go down for all time in your home.

W. R. BIRDWOOD, Lt.-General.

EARL KITCHENER'S MESSAGE TO THE TROOPS

"You are ordered abroad as a soldier of the King to help our French comrades against the invasion of a common enemy. You have to perform a task which will need your courage, your energy, your patience. Remember that the honour of the British Army depends on your individual conduct. It will be your duty, not only to set an example of discipline and perfect steadiness under fire, but also to maintain the most friendly relations with those whom you are helping in this struggle. The operations in which you are engaged will for the most part take place in a friendly country, and you can do your own country no better service than in showing yourself in France and Belgium as the true character of a British soldier."

"Be invariably courteous, considerate and kind. Never do anything likely to injure or destroy property, and always look upon looting as a disgraceful act. You are sure to meet with a welcome and to be trusted. Your conduct must justify that welcome and that trust. Your duty cannot be done unless your health is sound, so keep constantly on your guard against any excesses in this new experience. You may find temptations both in wine and women. You must entirely resist both temptations, and while treating all women with perfect courtesy, you should avoid any intimacy. Do your duty bravely. FEAR GOD. HONOUR THE KING."

From our case - R. E. Jettico on it -
lost between Michigan and there.