

SCOUTING DURING THE GREAT WAR through old picture postcards

As Britain entered the First World War on 4th August 1914 Robert Baden-Powell, founder of the Scout Movement, volunteered Scouts to support the war effort. They weren't to have a direct military role but could undertake work which released men for service in the Armed Forces. The skills the boys had already learned through Scouting proved very useful in carrying out a wide range of jobs, from working on farms, delivering messages, to guarding railway lines.

Scope of the Exhibit
This picture postcard exhibit tells the story of Scouting's contribution during this conflict, and the appreciation from a grateful nation for their efforts.

Both used and unused postcards are used to illustrate the topic. While many Scouting-themed postcards were printed during this period, today they are not easy to find.

Exhibit Plan

- Introduction – page 1.
- Young Defenders on the Home Front, illustrates the public's patriotic view of Scouting's contribution – pages 2 to 3.
- Patriotic Favour, describes the use of postcards as propaganda – page 4.
- Mobilising the Scout Movement, depicts the often-humorous response to the support provided by Scouting to the war effort – pages 5 to 7.
- Providing Useful Service, illustrates the tasks undertaken by the Scouts – pages 8 to 12.
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A patriotic First World War postcard produced by Photochrom Ltd., London and Tunbridge Wells. It has not been postally used.

YOUNG DEFENDERS

By 1914 the Scout Movement had been in existence for six years. Its popularity had spread not only in Britain but across the world. Widespread membership meant many boys and young men had gained a range of useful skills from field-craft and camp cooking to signalling and sailing. Skills which as the First World War broke out would be put to practical use.

John Bull's Young Defenders postcard (right) by Valentine's, posted on the 10th July 1915.



Novelty card (above) from the Celesque Series No. 216, produced by Photochrom Co. Ltd., London and Tunbridge Wells. It contains 12 fold-out images of Richmond, Yorkshire, under the flap with the image of the Boy Scout. Posted on the 15th January 1918.

THE HOME FRONT

During the war, Scouts played a very visible role on the Home Front which demonstrated what a valuable contribution the Movement made to society.



Postcard (right), depicting Boy Scout with the Union Jack flag. From the Celesque Series, produced by Photochrom Co. Ltd., London and Tunbridge Wells. It has not been postally used but has writing on the back.



Postally used (above), but unfortunately the franking is not visible. Published by The Cynicus Publishing Co. Ltd., Tappot, File

PATRIOTIC FAVOUR

Millions of postcards influenced public opinion during the war. Within days of the declaration of war on the 4th August 1914, publishers had war-themed postcards on sale.

Even Scout-themed postcards were quickly amended with patriotic slogans (see examples) in support of the war effort.



England expects that every Scout will do his duty.

Only lend me a Gun, and I'll soon show the Germans!

A postcard (left) depicting a Boy Scout, postally used and post marked 26th July 1914, a few days before Britain declares war on Germany. The slogans are amended (above right) to reflect the war effort.

Unused postcards (above middle and right). All postcards printed and published by J Salmon, Sevenoaks, England.

MOBILIZING THE SCOUTS

Baden-Powell's instructions had been previously communicated to all County Commissioners and Secretaries, and the services of Scout Groups was soon at the disposal of the civil and military authorities. Before the Territorial Army could be mobilized, the Scouts were out and about performing their duties.

The Scouts took to their tasks with eagerness and enthusiasm, earning them goodwill from the British public. The following postcards showing humorous examples of this.



An unused patriotic postcard (right) by E. Mack, printed and published by J Salmon, Sevenoaks, England.



A humorous, although unlikely event depicted on the postcard 'Quick March' (above). Used although not posted. A Clifton hand coloured postcard, produced and published by E.W Savory Ltd, Bristol. Series No. 549.

PLAYING THEIR PART

A sense of humour played a major part in maintaining the morale of both troops and civilians during WWI. Humour fostered solidarity and helped shape a group identity against a common enemy.

The admiration of the general public to the seriousness of the Scouts efforts to contribute to the war effort, is captured in these further examples of postcards depicting humorous although unlikely events.



Used but unposted card (right), published by Valentine's.



A used but unposted card titled 'Prisoners of War' (above). The postcard is dated on the reverse side, 2nd August 1915. Published by Raphael Tuck & Sons as one of their 'Oilette' series.

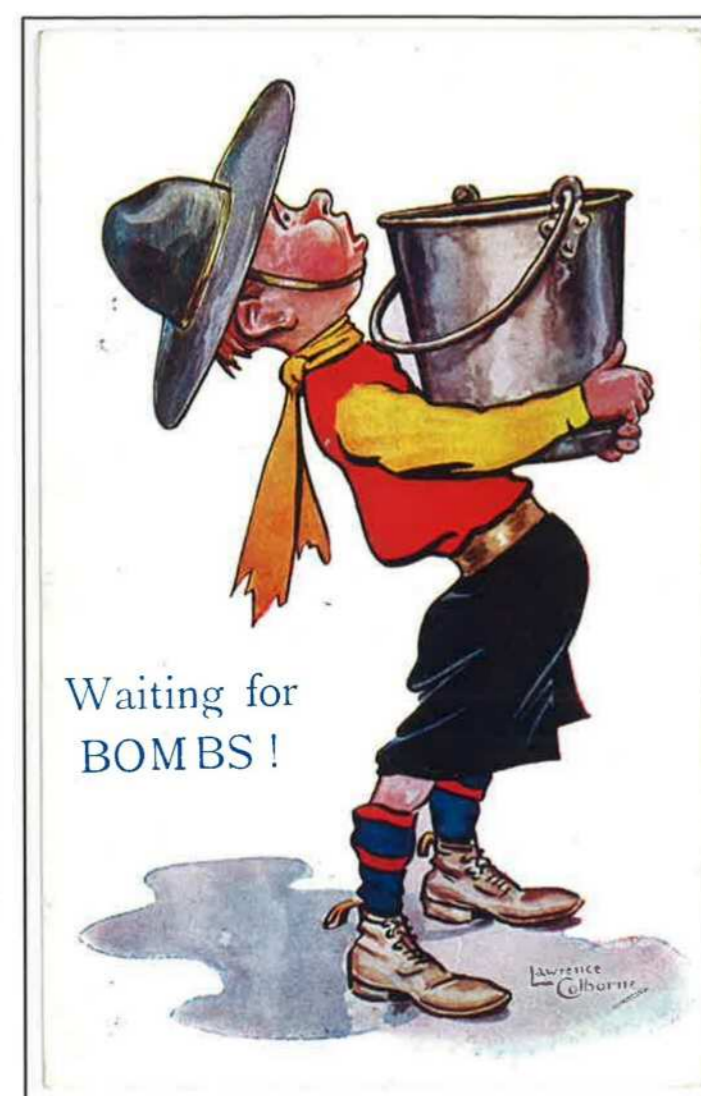
SUPPORTING THE ARMED FORCES

Working with other charities, such as the YMCA, Scouts bought and supported the running of huts at Army camps in Belgium, France, Italy and Britain. These huts provided refreshments and entertainment and a place for men to relax when they weren't involved in fighting at the front.

The Scout Hut and Ambulance Fund was created to support this project as well as provide ambulance vehicles. Scouts found some innovative ways of raising money, for this fund. Collecting bottles, newspaper and scrap metal were some, just as the Scout depicted on the card 'Waiting for Bombs for right hopes to collect shell fragments.'



'Pass Friend' (above left) posted on the 5th October 1914. From the Red, White and Blue Series No.10 produced by Photochrom Co. Ltd, London and Tunbridge Wells.



Designed by Lawrence Colborne, this postcard (above right) was printed and published by J Salmon, Sevenoaks, England. Posted to Weston-super-Mare on the 18th September, the year is not visible on the postmark.

FROM FIRST AID ... TO DELIVERING MESSAGES

Like today, one of the early skills a Scout developed was First Aid. Scouts were asked to help care for the sick and injured men of the Armed Forces as well as civilians caught up in attacks such as naval bombardments and Zeppelin raids. They worked as stretcher bearers and performed basic First Aid as required.

The role of messenger was very important in a time before mass telecommunications. In 1914 few homes or public buildings had telephones and telegrams and letters had to be delivered by hand.

Messengers were stationed at Government offices, Police Stations and other places from which messages might have to be urgently communicated.



Two used, but not posted, patriotic Scout postcards published in France, which were part of a set of four cards, depicting a Scout and his Red Cross dog.



While the card (left) depicts the Scout with a message in his pocket, with the inscription 'Never failing, proud and always brave, he is a true hero in difficult times!'

THE AIR RAID MENACE

During 1917 - 1918 London was bombed by the Germans using Zeppelins and other aircraft. This was a completely unheard-of military tactic. Scouts and their bugles were used to sound 'Take Cover' to send Londoners into their cellars when the raids commenced, and then the 'All Clear' once it was over.



'The Welcome Sound' (right), printed by Photochrom Co. Ltd., London and Tunbridge Wells. It has not been postally used.



A humorous postcard signaling the 'All Clear' following a raid. The card has been written on the reverse side, but not postally used. There are no publishers' details provided, other than 'No.979' and the text 'British Manufacture' printed on the reverse side.

SPY STORIES ...

During the war, anti-German propaganda in the form of humorous postcards was common. These cards reflected some of the realities of the 'home front', such as the spy scares depicted in these two examples.



An early comic postcard titled 'Cold Steel'. Sent to London, the postmark is obscured so no further information can be obtained. The Celesque Series, produced by Photochrom Co. Ltd, London and Tunbridge Wells.



In pre-war Britain, the growing military threat of Germany created a climate in which popular novels about espionage thrived. With the outbreak of war, an unprecedented 'spy mania' gripped Britain. Although 21 real German spies were arrested on 4th August 1914, thousands of imaginary acts of espionage were reported to the police and military authorities.

ANSWERING THE CALL

Children, like adults, were caught up in war fever after hostilities broke out in August 1914. Many wanted to join the Army, despite being underage. Some boys succeeded in enlisting by lying about their age, which was sometimes knowingly overlooked by recruitment officers.



Used postcard (above) depicting a Scout in uniform. It is one of the 'On Active Service' series produced by Printing Craft Ltd. Sent to Somerset and postmarked 5th August 1917.



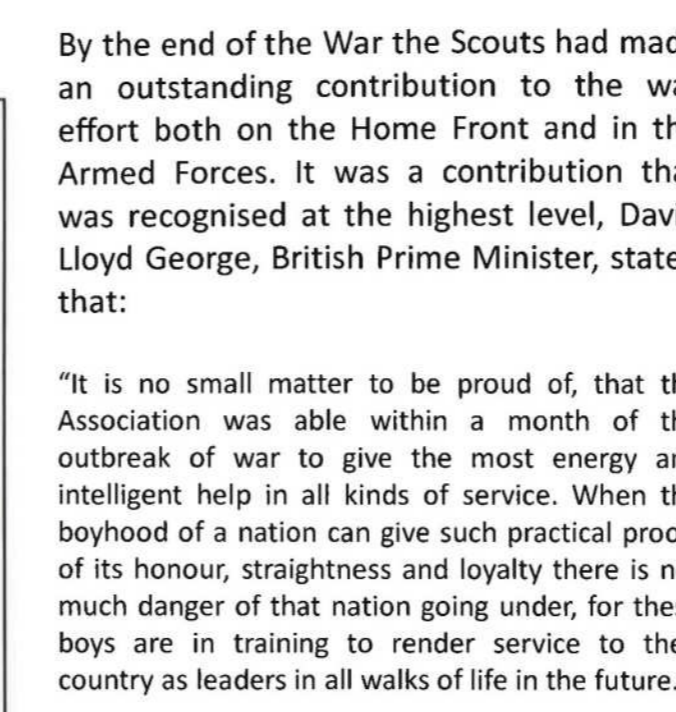
Postcard published by Inter-Art Co. London as part of their 'Artistique' series (right). The title - 'What Little We Do, We're Doing Well' is also written in French. Sent from France, the card is postmarked 1st August 1918. It is titled B.E.F (British Expeditionary Force) and has not been stamped or postmarked.

ANSWERING THE CALL

Some 48 000 older Scouts and Scoutmasters enlisted for service and could be found in all branches of the Armed forces.



A used postcard (above), acknowledging the role played by the Scouts on the home front, sent on 29th October 1914 from Palmer's Green, London to Harrow.



Unused postcard (right) 'Out for Victory'. There are no publishers' details provided on the reverse side other than a number 'No.515'.

THE BOY HERO : 'JACK' CORNWELL VC

At least 13 Victoria Crosses were awarded to former Scouts during the war. The youngest recipient being John 'Jack' Travers Cornwall, who at 16 years of age served on the Royal Navy's HMS Chester during the Battle of Jutland.

It was in his memory that Scouting's highest award for bravery, the Cornwall Badge was created. It remains one of the highest accolades a Scout can receive, for showing courage in great adversity.

Three months after the action, the Admiralty recognised 'Jutland Jack' with the following citation "The instance of devotion to duty by Boy (1st Class) John Travers Cornwall who was mortally wounded early in the action, but nevertheless remained standing alone at a most exposed post, quietly awaiting orders till the end of the action, with the gun's crew dead and wounded around him."



Two unused postcards depicting Jack Cornwall VC. Both printed by C.C. Publisher, London.

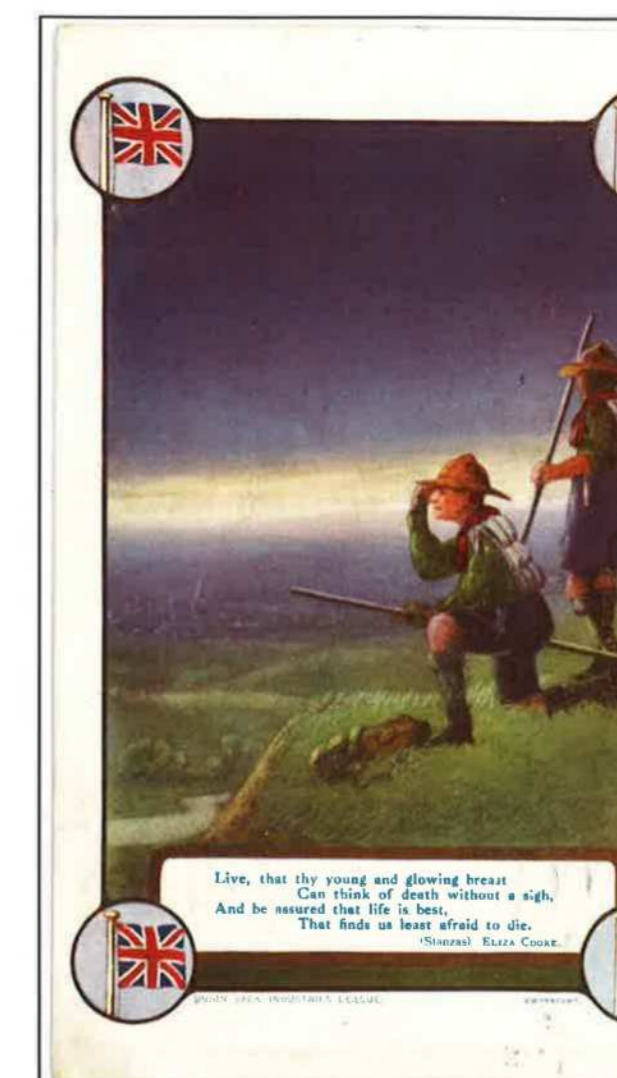


The top card depicts flags relating the message 'England expects that every man will do his duty', the signal sent by Vice-Admiral of the Royal Navy Horatio Nelson from his flagship HMS Victory as the Battle of Trafalgar was about to commence on 21 October 1805. The signal was relayed using the Royal Navy's numeric flag code.

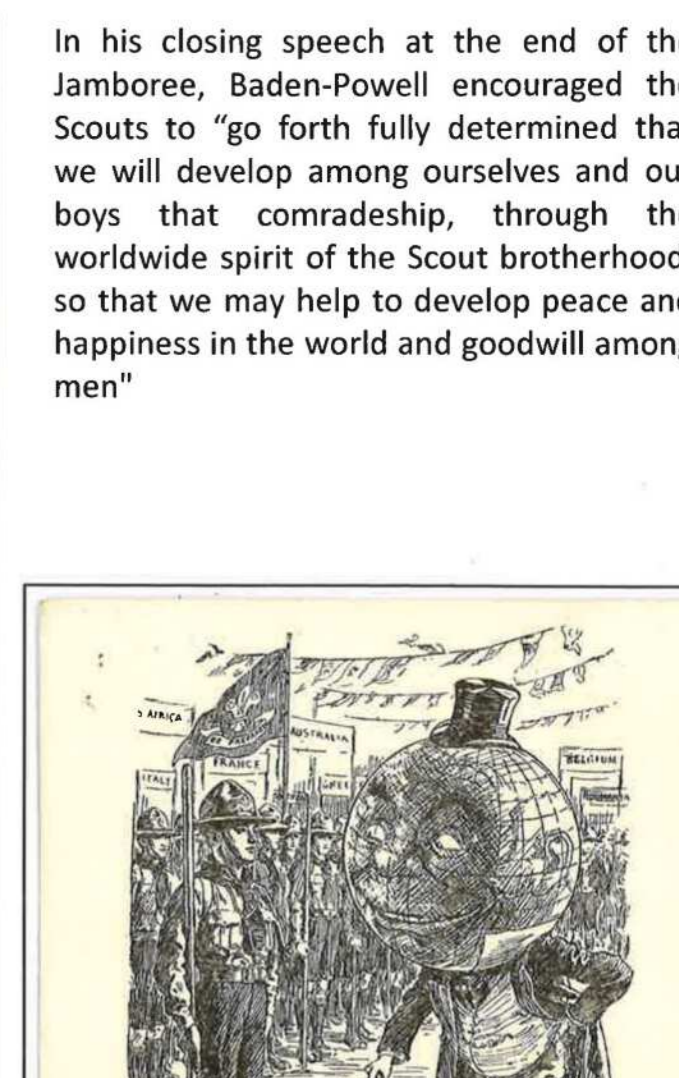
CONCLUDING HOSTILITIES

The first World War ended on the 11th November 1918. Despite the loss of many of their members, Scouting continued to flourish in the post war years.

Britain hosted the 1st World Scout Jamboree in August 1920, realizing Baden-Powell's vision for Scouting to become a worldwide movement of peace.



Produced for the Union Jack Industries League, by Woolstone Bros., London, Series No. 25. The card (above) has been postally used, sent from Huddersfield to Blackpool on the 24th June 1918.



Unused postcard (right) depicting the famous cartoon in Punch magazine on the 4th August 1920, referring to the 1st World Scout Jamboree in the context of the aftermath of World War I.

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As Britain entered the First World War on 4th August 1914 Robert Baden-Powell, founder of the Scout Movement, volunteered Scouts to support the war effort. They weren't to have a direct military role but could undertake work which released men for service in the Armed Forces. The skills the boys had already learned through Scouting proved very useful in carrying out a wide range of jobs, from working on farms, delivering messages, to guarding railway lines.

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will do his duty.**



**Only lend me a Gun, and
I'll soon show the Germans !**



“Be Prepared”

A postcard (left) depicting a Boy Scout, postally used and post marked 26th July 1914, a few days before Britain declares war on Germany. The slogans are amended (above right) to reflect the war effort.

Unused postcards (above middle and right). All postcards printed and published by J Salmon, Sevenoaks, England.

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DOING HIS LITTLE BIT.

Used but unposted card (right), published by Valentines.



~ PRISONERS OF WAR ~
"It's a long, long way to Tipperary!"

A used but unposted card titled 'Prisoners of War' (above). The postcard is dated on the reverse side, 2nd August 1915. Published by Raphael Tuck & Sons as one of their 'Oilette' series.



A bugler calling the 'Fall In' (above left), a used postcard sent from Northampton to Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, postmarked 18th August 1915. 'The Pride of the Scouts Brigade' (above right) posted to Warminster on the 8th July 1915. Published by Alfred Stiebel & Co, London, from their 'Modern Humour Series No, 4283. 'Guarding the Despatches' (bottom), posted Congleton to Manchester on 11th May 1915. From the Scouts in Action Series 6A, by Post Card Printing Craft Ltd, Mansfield.



USEFUL SERVICE

The Scouts were able to help with a multitude of tasks in support of the war effort. While farming, coast watching and carrying messages were some of the main activities, some Scouts were asked to take on other roles including guarding railway junctions, telegraph and telephone cables against enemy sabotage and suspected spies.

When the men of the Coastguard were called up to join the Royal Navy, Scouts took over their coast-watching duties. Between the 5th August 1914 and 7th March 1920 (when they were demobilized) about 32 000 Scouts passed through the coast-watching service.



An unused patriotic postcard (above left), depicting Scouts guarding the telegraph lines. The 'Premier' Series, publisher unknown. 'Leave it to Me,' a used postcard (above right), depicting a Scout patrolling the coast, cancelled on 31st December 1914. From the 'Red, White & Blue Series No.3, produced by Photochrom Co. Ltd, London and Tunbridge Wells.

SUPPORTING THE ARMED FORCES

Working with other charities, such as the YMCA, Scouts bought and supported the running of huts at Army camps in Belgium, France, Italy and Britain. These huts provided refreshments and entertainment and a place for men to relax when they weren't involved in fighting at the front.

The Scout Hut and Ambulance Fund was created to support this project as well as provide ambulance vehicles. Scouts found some innovative ways of raising money, for this fund. Collecting bottles, newspaper and scrap metal were some, just as the Scout depicted on the card 'Waiting for Bombs far right hopes to collect shell fragments.



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Two used, but not posted, patriotic Scout postcards published in France, which were part of a set of four cards, depicting a Scout and his Red Cross dog.

The French inscription (above) reads "Honor to the bold, proud and valiant dog, who comforts our dear fighters".

While the card (left) depicts the Scout with a message in his pocket, with the inscription "Never failing, proud and always brave, he is a true hero in difficult times".

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A comic unused Boy Scout postcard showing Boy Scouts thinking that the fat man must have stolen the 50 tons of Chemicals which is mentioned in the notice behind him. The sketch is by Donald McGill. Inter-Art Co., London. No. 1286.

In pre-war Britain, the growing military threat of Germany created a climate in which popular novels about espionage thrived. With the outbreak of war, an unprecedented 'spy mania' gripped Britain. Although 21 real German spies were arrested on 4th August 1914, thousands of imaginary acts of espionage were reported to the police and military authorities.



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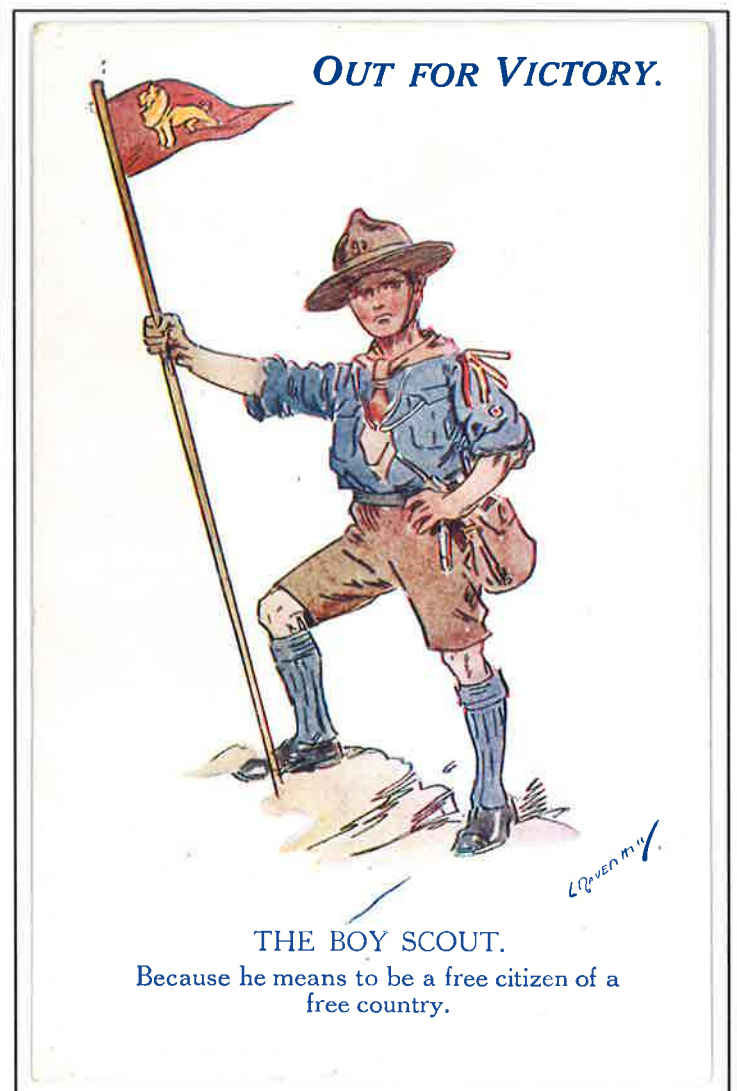


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Unused postcard (right) 'Out for Victory'. There are no publishers' details provided on the reverse side other than a number 'No.516'.

By the end of the War the Scouts had made an outstanding contribution to the war effort both on the Home Front and in the Armed Forces. It was a contribution that was recognised at the highest level, David Lloyd George, British Prime Minister, stated that:

"It is no small matter to be proud of, that the Association was able within a month of the outbreak of war to give the most energy and intelligent help in all kinds of service. When the boyhood of a nation can give such practical proofs of its honour, straightness and loyalty there is not much danger of that nation going under, for these boys are in training to render service to their country as leaders in all walks of life in the future."



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At least 19 Victoria Crosses were awarded to former Scouts during the war. The youngest recipient being John 'Jack' Travers Cornwell, who at 16 years of age served on the Royal Navy's HMS Chester during the Battle of Jutland.

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Two unused postcards depicting Jack Cornwell VC. Both printed by C.C Publisher, London.

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Unused postcard (right) depicting the famous cartoon in Punch magazine on the 4th August 1920, referring to the 1st World Scout Jamboree in the context of the aftermath of World War I.

In his closing speech at the end of the Jamboree, Baden-Powell encouraged the Scouts to "go forth fully determined that we will develop among ourselves and our boys that comradeship, through the worldwide spirit of the Scout brotherhood, so that we may help to develop peace and happiness in the world and goodwill among men"

