

WOMEN COOKS COURSE AT TRENTHAM COLONEL'S PRAISE

To be required to prepare for one day's menu 30 gallons of barley soup and brown stew for 100, savoury rice for 400, potato, ham, and cheese savoury for 100, fruit scones for 150, stewed pears and custard for 400, fruit squares for 100, and to cook vegetables for 500 is all in the day's work for the W.A.A.C.s undergoing a cookery course at the Trentham Army School of Instruction. The work is shared by the eighteen girls who are taking the three-weeks' course. They have expert cooks and supervisors, but even so it is a task which to the layman seems worse than formidable, and it was a revelation to the representative of the "Evening Post" when taken on a tour of inspection of the cookhouse and its precincts to see with what ease such a task can be accomplished by those who have the confidence which comes from sound instruction and supervision.

WOMEN COOKS

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Warrant Officer Elwick is the cook instructor. He said the girls, all of whom had volunteered for the work, had proved apt pupils and that at the end of the course they would pass out as cooks or assistant cooks and would take the place of men in various camps. Some may even go overseas. He did not consider the three-weeks' course quite long enough, but said that as instruction extended over ten hours a day, with one to two hours given to lectures, a very great deal was accomplished in the time. The girls were taught all the ways of economising. All surplus fat was rendered down for pastry-making, etc., all stale bread was crumbled for use in puddings, and so on. The girls were also taught how to cut down a sheep, and how to handle and carve the various joints. They also learnt how to use an Alder-shot oven—a field oven in which the food is cooked in the stored heat after the embers have been removed. "I didn't know cooking could be so interesting," said one.

APPETISING ODOURS.

The cookhouse with its great central fire-heated oven and its steam jacket boilers and numerous time and labour-saving devices presented a picture of orderliness and was a harbourer of appetising odours. Trays of potatoes sizzled in fat on top of the ovens awaiting their turn inside, where the joints of meats were then roasting. Girls were stoking the fires and keeping an eye on the meat. Trays and trays of halved pears, already cooked, completely occupied one long bench, whilst over the way a girl was stirring the custard to go with them; it was being cooked in a 20-gallon boiler.

Other boilers were filled with freshly-cut cabbage and others with potatoes ready for cooking. "We do try not to cook the vegetables too much," said Subaltern Daisy Isaacs, who is in charge of all women in the Army School of Instruction.

"NO CUSHY JOBS HERE."

Miss Isaacs expressed her pride in the girls. "There are no cushy jobs out here," he said. "The girls are up at five in the morning, and they work hard throughout the day, not only those in the cookhouse, but those doing other jobs in the quartermaster's stores, etc. People who say there are too many girls in the Army do not know the facts. We could certainly do with more here."

Colonel D. T. Maxwell, Commandant, Army School of Instruction, and Captain A. Taylor, Adjutant, paid tributes to the girls. "I have the greatest admiration for them," said Colonel Maxwell. "They are doing a magnificent job."

Two women who were specially mentioned for the fine service they are giving were Miss M. Maddever, who, before joining the W.A.A.C.s, was organiser for the women's institutes, and Miss Ethel Burnett, who was once head mistress of Kelburn Normal School. They are in charge of the 65 W.A.A.C.s on the messing staff at Trentham, Miss Burnett being in charge of the cookhouse section.

But in spite of the hard work they are doing, or perhaps because of it, the girls were obviously getting a lot of fun out of the life, which must also be a very healthy one, as Miss Isaacs said they had only one girl in hospital and she was an appendix case.