

ABOUT THE VISIT.

Generally, press visits are to huge works, sometimes to shadow factories. This is a smallish factory, making anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns.

This is one of the Royal Ordnance Factories, administered by the Ministry of Supply. These factories have been greatly increased in number since the outbreak of war, and in those existing before the war production has been stepped-up.

At this particular factory building was started in April of last year, production begun in October, and the first complete gun was turned out in the following January. Production is now ahead of schedule.

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The girl workers include former waitresses, shop assistants, nurses, barmaids, domestic servants. Some are married, with husbands in the Army to which this factory supplies anti-tank guns and anti-aircraft guns.

Girls do a variety of jobs, from simple machining to the more difficult honing and boring and rifling; from plain filing to fitting (with an accuracy of two-ten-thousandths of an inch); from sweeping floors to examination. Girls operate trucks and overhead cranes, and they work as "slingers" - slinging the guns by ropes before they are lifted by the cranes.

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Each girl is interviewed on arrival at the factory to discover the job for which she is probably best suited. She then starts in the shop for which she is selected. To do her job properly she must learn such things as gauge-reading, which she is taught in a "class" at the factory during working hours.

Beside each shop is a rest room for the girls. A medical block is equipped to deal with accident or illness, with doctor and nurse in attendance.

A canteen provides good meals, and is fitted with a stage for entertainment. E.N.S.A. concerts are arranged weekly and the factory has its own band and "local talent" for its own shows. Sometimes there is dancing during the lunch break. Every Saturday there is a tea dance.

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In this factory there is an ingenious scheme to check production, linked with the simplification of work for unskilled girls. Drawings are made of every part of the guns produced in the factory and these show the method by which each operation is to be done. Thus much of the skilled work is actually done in the drawing office.

This system is carried into a check of production. By means of a number of tables track is kept of every part being made, so that the right material arrives at the right bench in the right quantity at the right time.

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