

**HEROES AND
HEROIC DEEDS OF
THE GREAT WAR**

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Heroes and heroic deeds of the great war by Donald A. Mackenzie

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DONALD A. MACKENZIE

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Photo. Bassano

LORD KITCHENER

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BY

DONALD A. MACKENZIE



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CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	3
LORD KITCHENER	11
GENERAL JOFFRE	30
FIELD-MARSHAL SIR JOHN FRENCH	36
MATCHLESS FIGHTING-MEN	45
A GROUP OF HEROES	59
BRAVE FRENCH BOYS	77
INDIANS' DARING FEATS	99
THE FIGHTING FLYING-MEN	113
THE LIGHT SIDE OF WAR	125
HEROIC ARMY DOCTORS	140
ADMIRAL SIR JOHN JELlicOE	144
OUR HUMANE AND FEARLESS SEAMEN	152
BATTLES WITH SEA-RAIDERS	163
HOW THE OCEANS WERE MADE FREE	177
THE HEROES OF GALLIPOLI	187
THE NEW ARMIES IN ACTION	191

LIST OF PLATES

	Page
LORD KITCHENER	<i>Frontispiece</i>
THE KING AND QUEEN VISITING WOUNDED INDIANS	16
GENERAL JOFFRE	37
FIELD-MARSHAL SIR JOHN FRENCH	44
FIRING THE BRIDGE	65
THE CHARGE OF THE 9TH LANCERS AT MONS	80
ALPINE CHASSEURS ON SKIS MAKING A BAYONET CHARGE OVER THE SNOW	97
INDIAN GALLANTRY AT THE FRONT	112
THE "HAWK" AND THE "DOVE"	129
ADMIRAL SIR JOHN JELlicOE	144
AVOIDING A TORPEDO BY RAPID MANŒUVRING	161
THE LAST OF THE <i>EMDEN</i>	176

HEROES AND HEROIC DEEDS OF THE GREAT WAR

Introduction

Never before in the history of the world has war been waged on such a gigantic scale. Never before have such vast armies been gathered together, or so many different nations and races been drawn into conflict. It is no exaggeration to say that the ultimate result of this great war will affect the future of every people on the face of the globe.

Great Britain and her allies are fighting in defence of human freedom and the rights of small nations, and also to secure the blessings of an enduring peace. For many years Germany engaged in making elaborate military and naval preparations to crush rival States and found a world-wide empire which would bring her immense power and riches. Her leaders have openly boasted that the Germans are the most cultured and capable people in

the world, and on that assumption based the claim that they have a right to control other nations. This war has revealed the violent methods by which they hoped to realize their ambitions. The Government of the Kaiser has broken international laws and at least one international treaty, while the German soldiers have committed terrible atrocities with intent to terrorize their opponents. In Belgium, for instance, they have destroyed beautiful, ancient buildings, laid waste towns and villages, and ruthlessly slain, not only unarmed men, but even women and children.

The immediate cause of the war was the attempt made by Germany's ally, Austria, to coerce the little kingdom of Serbia. Russia intervened so as to secure peace and an honourable agreement, whereupon Germany declared war against Russia and its ally, France. To strike a sudden and heavy blow at France a German army invaded Belgium, expecting to sweep through it with little delay. But the Belgian forces set up a gallant and unexpected resistance which greatly hampered the operations of the Kaiser's soldiers.

It was because Belgium was invaded that Great Britain declared war. The neutrality and independence of that small nation had been guaranteed by a treaty signed by Britain and

Germany among others. It was a dishonourable act on the part of Germany to break this treaty, and it was the duty of our country to take up arms against the guilty Power.

Great Britain was not prepared on the outbreak of war for military operations on a large scale. We could send only a comparatively small army to the Continent to assist the Belgians and French to retard the advance of the German millions; but the courage and skill displayed by our soldiers served to baffle and delay the huge forces to which they found themselves opposed. From the outset they have proved themselves superior fighting-men to the Germans. In consequence, time has been gained to gradually increase our Expeditionary Force so as to ensure ultimate victory. Meanwhile our fleet has maintained Britain's command of the sea, and completely suspended Germany's overseas mercantile trade.

As soon as war was declared the entire British Empire rallied to support the Home Government. Offers of men, food supplies, and treasure were at once made by the various dependencies and dominions, and ere long transports began to convey troops to the seat of war from India, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, while in South Africa effective

measures were taken to suppress a revolt which was fostered by German intrigues. Thus in the hour of trial the Empire was more closely united by the spirit of loyalty that prevails among its freedom-loving peoples.

A wave of intense patriotism swept over the British Isles, and all classes were moved by the common desire to resist the military ambitions of Germany and to take adequate measures which would ensure peace in the future, so that the highest ideals of humanity might be realized. Political differences were set aside, and a deep sense of public duty was everywhere aroused. Young men responded eagerly to the call to arms, and began to enlist in their thousands to fight for their native land. Rich men and poor men, workers and employers, abandoned their usual occupations and joined the colours. Business men left their desks, workers hastened from factory, mine, and yard, agriculturists turned from harvest-fields, and actors, artists, musicians, and writers became the military comrades of labourers, eager and proud to serve their King and country. Women volunteered as nurses, or engaged in various forms of emergency work, while large sums of money were subscribed to provide comforts for fighting-men and assist all those to whom war brings hardship and suffering.