

The British Red Cross Society.

THE UNIFORM OF VOLUNTARY AID DETACHMENTS.

Considerable dissatisfaction is felt at the adoption by the British Red Cross Society of a uniform for the Women's Detachments which closely approximates to that of the trained nurse. This applies especially to the indoor uniform, which is a blue-grey dress of Oxford shirting, with turn-over collars and cuffs, white linen apron, and Sister Dora cap. The outdoor uniform is a plain coat or cloak with sleeves, and a cap of blue serge of approved shape, and the Badge of the Society with a Red Cross in the centre. The adoption of this uniform is optional, but if any Detachment wishes to wear one it must be that selected by the Executive Committee.

Trained nurses cannot prevent the adoption of their professional uniform by unprofessional persons, but they have every right to object to its official sanction by a Society such as the British Red Cross Society, for the use of untrained women.

Another important point is that the formation of Voluntary Aid Detachments is essentially intended to be a popular movement, and the cost of the uniform to many women whose assistance it is desired to enlist would be prohibitive.

We estimate that not allowing for the cost of making dresses the price of the necessary uniform would be between £3 and £4. As this would be worn but rarely, it would be somewhat of a white elephant when procured, and further we understand that while the nurses object to the adoption of their uniform by the British Red Cross Society, the members of the Voluntary Aid Detachments object to be dressed as nurses, so there is discontent all round. It would have been quite easy to design a working costume, in a washing material suitable for the purpose, at the cost of a few shillings, and had any practical Matron been associated with the Red Cross Committee we have no doubt she would have given them this advice.

It is thoroughly unpractical that for these Voluntary Aid Detachments so elaborate a dress should have been designed.

To quote from Form D 7.

UNIFORM FOR WOMEN'S DETACHMENTS.

The uniforms for all ranks of Women's Detachments shall be of the same pattern with the exceptions described hereunder for officers:—

For Outdoor Use.—Cloak of blue serge, stand and fall collar, fall 4 in. deep. Turn-back cuffs, 5 in. deep. Waist belt 2 in. wide, four special British

Red Cross Society buttons to front, two side slit pockets, and one inside breast pocket. Body lined 19 in. with scarlet serge, sleeves lined with glissade. Shoulder straps 2½ in. wide at base. Shoulder badges consisting of Cross between the words Red Cross and name of county, arranged elliptically in gilding metal. Red Cross Brassard (arm badge).

Cap.—Blue serge, pattern approved shape, with Badge of Society 1 inch in diameter, with Red Cross centre and county scroll with number of detachment.

Commandant and Hon. Commandant.—Red Canton dress instead of blue grey.

Quartermaster, Lady Superintendent, and Trained Nurse.—Navy blue Canton dress instead of blue grey.

For Use Whilst at Work.—Dress of blue-grey Oxford shirting, according to pattern, and is in one length from throat to ankle, and can be worn over ordinary dress in cold weather, and as the dress itself in warm weather. It is buttoned in front under a 2 in. box pleat, slightly gathered in front at shoulder and neck, being finished with an inch-wide neck band on which to fasten soft, white collar. The sleeve is a small bishop shape, with a 3 in. wristband fastening with two buttons, the bottom skirt having a 2 in. hem, and two 1 in. tucks. The waist of costume is held in by a black leather belt passing through the narrow straps of the material at back and sides and through the box-pleat in front.

Soft White Linen Collar.—To be worn with dress, consisting of two parts (2 to 2½ in. deep), a stand-up, slightly-shaped collar of double linen, and a turnover part fixed into the top, and falling over to lower edge of same, having button-holes in the under collar, back and front, to fasten invisibly on to neckband of costume.

Over Sleeves.—Of white linen, same shape as lower part of costume sleeve, the band being full large to slip on easily and not buttoned; length when finished to be 10 inches.

Panel Apron.—To be linen, having a panel front, continuing in straps (without join) over the shoulder and slightly shaped skirt sides, on both of which is a large square pocket, stitched in with skirt sides to panel front, the other side having a narrow strip continuing on the pocket, and stitched up to be held by the 2 in. waistband, which is fixed to sides of apron at the waist, passing under the panel front, and fastening at back with linen button, the straps crossing over and also buttoning on to the band, about 5 inches from either side of centre back. The Red Cross of Turkey twill (measuring 1½ inches each way) is sewn on 2 inches down from the top of bib part of panel, the bottom of the apron being finished with a 2-inch hem.

White Lawn Cap.—Sister Dora pattern in one piece, having a 3-inch hem to turn over in front, which is square, the other part being rounded, having a narrow hem and a flat tape stitched round the hem, and 1½ inches in from the edge, through which a narrow tape is run for drawing up.

Brassard.—The Brassard is to be of white calico, 4 inches wide when turned in, with cross of red Turkey twill sewn on and placed in centre. Position

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