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10 ***HE WAS BUSY BATHING THE BABY BUT  
HE SIGNED FOR C.D.***

WE knocked on the first door. When a man opened it, we stated our business and he asked us inside.

Through an open door a girl of about 10 could be seen washing up in the kitchen. Two smaller children played in front of the fire in the cosy living room.

“I am sorry,” the man said, “I would like to help, but I lost my wife two years ago. I live alone with the children.”

20 There was no need to say any more. Here was a man who could not be expected to give any time to Civil Defence work, but there were plenty more on the Meadowside housing estate who could.

That was why a mixed C.D. team of wardens, fire officers, welfare and ambulance workers and members of the National Hospital Service Reserve were spending a cold Spring evening in an exhaustive house to house canvass in Knaresborough.

I went along to note the response of ordinary men and women, tackled in their own homes, to the call for recruits. My chief impressions are of no hostility, little enthusiasm, but a willingness to give the canvassers a hearing.

**Interest**

30 The inevitable group of small boys attracted by the fire engine, ambulance, and rescue vehicle, gathered to listen with interest to our briefing which took place at the junction of Stockwell Road and Boroughbridge Road.

“The main target is rescue workers,” said Mr F. Keighley, Area C.D. Officer, and veteran of 34 similar house to house campaigns all over the West Riding. “It’s no use leaving a form,” He cautioned. “If you don’t sign them up at once, you never will.”

But Chief Wardens are human. “Where there is a space on the form to enter the age of the volunteer, it is only necessary to put ‘over 30’ in the case of a woman,” he added.

We split up into twos and got to work. I went with Mr. Keighley whose canvassing methods are direct, forceful and successful. They are also capable, incidentally, of tiring a man many years his junior.

10 “Good evening,” said Mr Keighley, as soon as a door was opened. “You are just the man we want.” Unfortunately that was sometimes as far as we got.

## Impossible

In the course of a hectic two hours I heard every imaginable reason why it was impossible for a man or woman to join any branch of the Civil Defence services. Most of the reasons were genuine and we didn't press the point.

"It is no use signing an unwilling volunteer," said Mr Keighley. "He will never attend for training."

In that one evening the team signed 21 recruits, 11 of them were women. The totals were: Rescue six, wardens four (one woman), ambulance four (three women), welfare four (all women) and National Hospital Service Reserve three (all women).

- 10 At every door the team hammered home the theme: "We need you now. It is no use waiting until trouble starts and then volunteering for training."

Everybody agreed but . . . "I'm on shift work and my wife is on the nervous side. She would not be much use to you," said one man ungallantly.

"My husband has T.B., and I go out to work," said a woman. "I just can't manage it," said a transport driver. "I leave home at 5a.m. and I don't get back until 7pm some weeks."

The main difficulty, of course, was with ex-Servicemen of the 1939-45 war, worried about their liability under Class "Z" reserve. The answer to that one is to sign them up subject to permission from Service records offices.

About one in four "Z" men are cleared to join C.D. units.

- 20 One man told us he would like to help but had been badly injured in the last war. We signed him provisionally for H.Q. duties at a report centre.

"I am busy bathing the youngster and the wife is out," said one householder. Mr Keighley was sympathetic, but pointed out: "It's only one night a week we need you."

Before he went back to his domestic tasks the man signed for rescue work. I don't know what his wife said when she returned.

All the recruits gained on this house to house canvass in Knaresborough will begin their basic training in autumn.

The C.D. Services need volunteers – and need them now. Knaresborough, in particular, needs men for rescue work and women for welfare section.

