

Strong Army manifests our Will for Freedom

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STRONG ARMY MANIFESTS OUR WILL FOR FREEDOM.

(The following article is reproduced from an issue of the "Liverpool Daily Post", by courtesy of the Editor.)

Revised regulations for Switzerland's army of citizen-soldiers, who keep their equipment at home and stand ready for instant mobilisation, will come into force in October.

The regulations, including several new items which did not figure in previous editions are designed to create a common conception of duty, discipline and comradeship.

They apply alike to the Commander-in-Chief and to the simple soldier, who does annual periods of military training between the ages of nineteen and sixty.

The first section of the regulations states:

"The army's mission is to ensure the independence of the country against foreign powers and to maintain internal calm and order.

"Our army rests on centuries-old tradition. The old Confederation already knew compulsory (military) service.

"And still to-day, a strong army composed of all able-bodied men, with its roots in the nation itself, manifests abroad our firm will for independence.

"On the respect which it inspires, depends first and foremost the possibility of maintaining our neutrality in case of danger; and if we are attacked, its fighting value must permit us to defend our independence to the last."

Women are mentioned for the first time in the new regulations.

Swiss soldiers are instructed to treat all women in the voluntary auxiliary services as comrades enjoying equal rights in the army.

A new section warns the soldier against "careless talk" about military matters in peace or war.

The soldier is expressly forbidden to make use of his army rank or duty to gain material advantages in civilian life.

Soldiers on leave are forbidden, without the express permission of the commanding officers: to cross the national frontier, to take part in sports competitions, to pilot private aircraft or gliders and to make excursions in the high mountains.

Soldiers in uniform are also forbidden to gamble in casinos.

Annexed to the regulations are brief summaries of the 1949 Geneva Red Cross conventions on the pro-

tection of war victims. The soldier is given a clear outline of his obligations towards civilians, prisoners-of-war and wounded enemies.

A second annex contains the instructions of the Swiss Federal Council concerning protection of the country's works of art.

These instructions lay down that operations likely to damage churches and buildings or objects of historical, artistic or scientific value should be avoided wherever possible. Buildings which are themselves works of art or which contains works of art, they state, should not be used for military purposes so as to avoid incitements for troops in combat to fire upon them.

The regulations include the Swiss Army's articles of war, the first two of which read:—

"The country entrusts itself to the Army. Consequently every soldier is responsible for his part in maintaining the independence inherited from our ancestors; responsible also for the victory and honour of the Army.

"Faithful to their oath, officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the Swiss Army will carry out their duty to the death."

Concerning the qualities required of a leader, the regulations state:

"The leader must never lose sight of the fact that he has to set an example on which everything may often depend. In all situations, he will be guided by his conscience alone, by the requirements of his duty as a soldier.

"Loftiness of soul, self-control, sense of honour: those are the qualities which make the real leader."

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