

## Section 394

# Men Home on Leave

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Men did get leave occasionally, but it could often be a fraught experience. The one thing they did not want to do was to wear uniform whilst on leave but apparently fit young men in civvies were often abused by women and youths who saw it as their duty to shame men into enlisting. There was also a lot of paranoia about German spies.

Sgt Tiesteel described one incident when he was recuperating from wounds:-

I had a spell in hospital until my wound was healed up and later a few weeks leave. While on leave I walked into a miniature rifle range with my sister (learning to shoot was the fashion in those days) She was very keen to have a shoot so I paid for 20 rounds, but did not fire a round myself. There was quite a crowd of young fellows in the room, none of whom knew I was a soldier and they seemed to think it was very funny that I would not have a shot, although the old man in charge of the rifles kept pressing me to have five rounds. I was in civvies and seeing these other fellows treating me rather suspiciously I walked into the same place next morning and found the old man cleaning the rifles.

There was no one else in the room so I said to him "Let me have ten rounds please" He brought the target back and before he gave it to me he said "You did not shoot like that in your recruit course. eight bulls and two inners" "No" said I and then after I had told him who I was he told me that the young fellows the previous evening, because I would not have a shoot, had got the idea into their heads that I was a German spy and they had been talking of having me arrested.