



# Kitchener's Army: The Raising of the New Armies 1914 - 1916

*Peter Simkins*

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Numbering over five million men, Britain's army in the First World War was the biggest in the country's history. Remarkably, nearly half those men who served in it were volunteers. 2,466,719 men enlisted between August 1914 and December 1915, many in response to the appeals of the Field-Marshal Lord Kitchener. How did Britain succeed in creating a mass army, almost from scratch, in the middle of a major war? What compelled so many men to volunteer and what happened to them once they had taken the King's shilling? Peter Simkins describes how Kitchener's New Armies were raised and reviews the main political, economic and social effects of the recruiting campaign. He examines the experiences and impressions of the officers and men who made up the New Armies. As well as analysing their motives for enlisting, he explores how they were fed, housed, equipped and trained before they set off for active service abroad. Drawing upon a wide variety of sources, ranging from government papers to the diaries and letters of individual soldiers, he questions long-held assumptions about the 'rush to the colours' and the nature of patriotism in 1914. The book will be of interest not only to those studying social, political and economic history, but also to general readers who wish to know more about the story of Britain's citizen soldiers in the Great War.

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