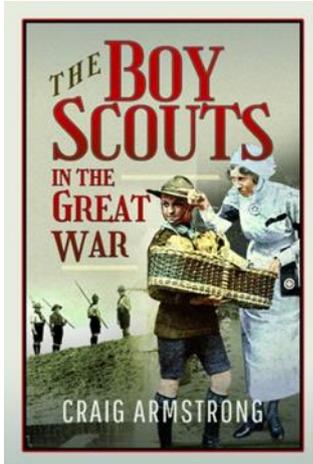


**BOOK REVIEW**  
**THE BOY SCOUTS**  
**In the Great War**  
**Craig Armstrong**  
**Pen & Sword Military 2021 (hb)**  
**ISBN: 978-1-52672-324-6**



The Boy Scouts Association was a young organisation being formed seven years before the outbreak of war in 1914. As a former cub and air scout this reviewer welcomes this modern history of the Boy Scout Association in the Great War. Modern readers may well find the ethos of duty, loyalty and honour somewhat over done this work certainly makes clear that these factors were a defining aspect of Scouting and were in keeping with the norms of the times as well as the Scout Law. It should therefore not be a surprise that many members of the Scout Association were keen to 'do their bit' for the war effort however as the author makes clear this enthusiasm had an effect on the leadership of the association as many leaders were in the

Territorial Force or the Reserves and were called up suffering a high casualty rate. Despite this the scouts did good work in a wide range of roles in the War Office and other Government departments as well as helping with various charities and were an effective body in supporting the war effort.

The book is well structured with chapters covering each year of the war sub-divided into Home Front and Military sections with many photographs, many of which are new to this reviewer. The scope of the effort of the Scouts is quite remarkable and the author does a good job in covering innumerable factors such as the potential militarisation of the scouts, (the government being very careful to employ scouts on 'non-military' work although where guarding culverts and tunnels fits in this view, I will let the reader decide. Although unsurprisingly not everyone was an advocate of scouting, some having quite disparaging views on the movement in general it seems scouts acquitted themselves well and this comprehensive history is to be welcomed and is a worthwhile addition to the shelves of those who have an interest in the Great War and social historiography of the time.

***Martin Willoughby***