

Report on Windbreaker Jerkins

WINDBREAKERS

Since the 25th of March 1941, more than two and a half year ago, Mrs. Charles E. Koëlla, wife of Professor Koëlla of the Romance Languages Department, has kept open house every Wednesday from 2:30 to 5 for women who would like to help making windbreaker jackets out of leftover leather from automobilupholstering. 3/4 min. x

The movement started in Detroit. Mrs. John N. Stalker of the Whittier, Detroit, got Mrs. Stewart Baits, the new Regent of the University of Michigan, interested in the movement and as a consequence through Mr. Baits, who is Vice President of the Hudson Motor Car Company, Mrs. Stalker got 23 tons of scrapleather.

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"Because of the interest of Mrs. Stewart Baits we have been able to make and ship 3255 leather windbreakers to the Allied Forces. Of this number 1140 have been made in Ann Arbor under the very competent direction of Mrs. Charles E. Koëlla," writes Mrs. John N. Stalker. x

Most of the women who have made jackets in Ann Arbor are wives of faculty members of the University.

In each bag there are nine pounds of scrapleather and linings for three jackets.

Three and a half tons of leather have passed through the hands of Mrs. Koëlla

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/ now*
The jackets are sent from New York under the auspices of the English Speaking Union, who at Dartmouth House in London give out the jackets. The late Lady Pound and Lady Louis Mountbatten is in charge of giving the jackets to the Royal Navy. The Royal Consul for Norway in London, Mrs. Koëlla's brother, is also distributing the jackets. The Ann Arbor Group has had letter of thanks both from Lady Pound, Lady Mountbatten and the Royal Norwegian Consul.

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The jackets are treated like gold by those who distribute them and all the persons who receive them say it is the best thing they get.

One sailor writes to a University Professors wife:
" The jacket has been a godsend to me. It keeps me fine and warm on the look-out at night, and not only that, but if we happen to be unlucky and have to take to the boats, it will be worth a weeks life to me, for I know what it is to be in a life boat without proper clothing having been unlucky twice in this war as far."

An American boy from Iron Mountain, Mich. writes: "I will always remember the person in the USA, who sent me that wonderful windbreaker."

Men on gun sites and those manning the guns on ships, the instructors who spend long hours watching their pupils through their tasks at Air stations, dispatchriders, coastal defense workers and watchers at observations posts, ground staffs of the aerodromes flare path and other night staffs on the dromes have the benefit of the jackets. In fact they go almost anywhere that men have to spend long hours in the open weather. November 3rd 120th x

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Next Wednesday, October 27th it will be the 119th meeting at the home of Mrs. Koëlla.

The women of Ann Arbor who have worked on this war project might be proud of themselves for having completed such a work, which shows that they have character, and also must be proud to know that

they indirectly have saved many lives from the icy waters and from the waters all over the world, for all over the world the Ann Arbor jackets have gone. And also it is nice that it is a Michigan project, nearly all the jackets are made in Detroit or in Ann Arbor, a very few in Pontiac and Plymouth.

Meritbadges have been given to the Ann Arbor women by the English Speaking ~~xxxxxx~~ Union.

A petty officer on a submarine writes:

" We become victims of the prevailing elements precisely the same as other ships. The bridge personnel each have a jerkin. We find them completely windproof, this is essential, for ordinary woolen garments are quite useless unless covered by wind resisting material. The jerkins were found ideal garments for the purpose and have created quite a fashion in apparel for wear on patrol."

The English Speaking Union writes: " The men tell us the jackets are one of the most useful things we send to England and among the forces the most desired."

From Ann Arbor jackets have been sent to also to:
 The King of Norway in exile in England,
 The Crown Prince of Norway " " "
 Hon. Winston Churchill
 Hon. A.V. Alexander, first Lord of the Admiralty
 Lady Alexander
 Lady Louis Mountbatten
 the late Sir Dudley Pound and
 the late Lady Pound.

The University Library Bookbinding department gave me 75 pounds of leftover leather from the bookbinding and of that leather jackets were given to University graduates now in service in Iceland and England, and also to Margaret Bourke-White.

many a dir of Univ. Hosp. Unit in England.

in New York. 1

Letter to Winston Churchill

Mrs. Walter Bowers Pillsbury

1811 Hermitage Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan

His Excellency
Hon. Winston Churchill

My dear Mr. Churchill,

Through the English Speaking Union a group of Michigan Women with headquarters in Detroit have been making and sending leather windbreakers to England for distribution to sailors, shore patrols, airmen and wherever else needx for such garments exists.

Our general Chairman, Mrs. John N. Stalker of Detroit has received from the Hudson Motor Company and other automobile firms all the leather used in these jackets, and from other generous citizens material for the linings which have been made up by t volunteer workers into these garments.

The Ann Arbor Group most of us wives of the Faculty of the University of Michigan, under our able chairman, Mrs. Charles E. Koëlla, ask you to accept one of these windbreakers, which I have been privileged to make, as a tribute to your world leadership and your magnificent courage. All of our workers have a personal share in this gift which we send as a token of our deep interest in and sincere admiration for Britains part in the war under your guidance.

Very sincerely yours

Marygaret Milbank Pillsbury

April First 1942.



Carl G. Breitenbach, of the United States Navy, assistant in naval science and tactics at the University. This was the first jacket made by the Ann Arbor group of women who have joined in the movement to supply them to British seamen and coast guard. Mrs. Charles E. Koella, chairs the committee that meets every Wednesday from 2 to 5:30, at her apartment the Cutting, 709 S. State Street. (*Ann Arbor News*, April 8, 1941)



Inspecting the first windbreaker jerkin for women in the British Service. From left, Mrs. Charles E. Koella, Mrs. John N. Stalker of Grosse Pointe Shores, and Mrs. Carl Dahlstrom. The jackets may be seen in the windows of the Elizabeth Dillon Shop, the C. J. Hutzler Shops, Jacobson's, and Slater's Book Store, also at the Michigan league and at the Women's Exchange in the Nickels Arcade, where the woman's jacket is shown. (*Ann Arbor News*, Thursday, October 2, 1941)



American servicemen in London receive Windbreaker Jerkins

These jackets are made interestingly. The cloth for the linings is contributed by various firms and individuals in Detroit – the headquarters of all the groups – and is sent to the Coverall Manufacturing Company in Detroit to be cut into the required shapes. Each jacket has three pieces – a back and the two halves of the front.

The leather is supplied by the Hudson Motor Car Company – they have contributed more than 19 tons since last year – and consists of old scrap of new leather.

Each worker receives a paper bag containing seven pounds of leather scraps and two complete linings. She must then buy her thread, machine-stitch the leather onto the lining in a crazy-quilt style and sew the three parts of the jacket together. When this has been completed, she sends each jacket plus 18 cents to Detroit where it is sent on to New York and from there to England. The 18 cents covers the cost of mailing and shipping the jackets.

In England they are distributed among the seamen, ambulance drivers, aviators and others who must be out-of doors in cold and raw weather. The Norwegians plying the coast of Scotland also have received them.

Notes to future wearers, along with gum, cigarettes, hard candies and trinkets of all sorts are often put into the pockets

Mrs. Pillsbury, in telling about the part she plays in all this, explained that many war-relief organizations have a social as well as a work side to them but that this one is not of that type. “Each of us sits at home at her own sewing machine, thinking her own thoughts,” she said, “and I think it shows that although our group is not so large, its members are most sincere in being willing to continue working in this way.” (*The Sorosis News* Feb 1942)



From left to right: Mrs. John N. Stalker of Grosse Point Shores and Mrs. Hermon H. Sanderson, of Detroit, (founders of the groups making windbreaker jackets and Mrs. Charles E. Koella, (chair of the Ann Arbor group) and Mrs. Walter B. Pillsbury. In celebration of the first anniversary of the groups, the women are inspecting the 50th jacket made by Mrs. Watler B. Pillsbury. (*Ann Arbor News*, thursday, March 26, 1942)



Mrs Roosevelt, at right, on her most recent trip to London.
(*The Michigan Daily*, January 21, 1943)

MRS. KOELLA . . .

Women and THE WAR



By **BEA BOUCHARD**

Mrs. Roosevelt, at right, on her most recent trip to London, inspects windbreaker jackets which are the handiwork of Mrs. Charles Koella, chairman and organizer of a group of Ann Arbor women who send their work to the English Speaking Union, in which building this picture was taken.

Internationally-minded Mrs. Koella, wife of Professor Charles Koella of the French department, is an example of a true patriot, not only of her native country, but the country of her adoption. Devoting her every free moment since March 1941, to the protection of soldiers, sailors and fliers from the cold, she and her committee have just completed their seven hundred and eighty-second garment.

Soldiers Grateful

Notes of gratitude have been received by Mrs. Koella and members of her committee from men in nearly

every branch of the numerous Allied services. The men intended to be benefitted primarily by these heavy garments are those in services which require long periods of time in open weather, such as coastal watchers and sailors.

As materials for their work, the University Library donated 75 pounds of leather to the group, which they had salvaged from old bookbindings. The first jackets were given to the doctors and nurses of the first hospital unit to be called from Ann Arbor. From that time on they have been sent to the English Speaking Union in London.

Save Old Clothes for Norway

In addition to the jackets, Mrs. Koella has been gathering old clothes which she is saving to assist in Norway, the country of her birth, from which place the Germans have plundered nearly every article of clothing available. She is saving this clothing until the day she can send it over.

In the last year, Mrs. Koella was Chancellor to the Royal Norwegian Legation in Washington, D.C. and came to this country on a diplomatic passport. Her brother is Royal Norwegian Consul in Norway for the Norwegian government in exile.



Mayor Leigh J. Young models one of the windbraker jackets. Mrs. Charles E. Koella (left) chair of the Ann Arbor unit, and Mrs. Walter B. Pillsbury (right), a member of the group since it was organized, and who made more than 200 jerkins in the first two years of the project. (*Ann Arbor News*, Friday, March 10, 1943)