

= Lord Kitchener Wants You =

Lord Kitchener Wants You was a 1914 advertisement by Alfred Leete which was developed into a recruitment poster . It depicted Lord Kitchener , the British Secretary of State for War , above the words " WANTS YOU " . Kitchener , wearing the cap of a British Field Marshal , stares and points at the viewer calling them to enlist in the British Army against the Central Powers . The image is considered one of the most iconic and enduring images of World War I. A hugely influential image and slogan , it has also inspired imitations in other countries , from the United States to the Soviet Union .

= = Development = =

Prior to the institution of conscription in 1916 , the United Kingdom relied upon volunteers for military service . Until the outbreak of the First World War , recruiting posters had not been used in Britain on a regular basis since the Napoleonic Wars . UK government advertisements for contract work were handled by His Majesty 's Stationery Office , who passed this task onto the publishers of R. F. White & Sons in order to avoid paying the government rate to newspaper publishers . As war loomed in late 1913 the number of advertising contracts expanded to include other firms . J. E. B. Seely , then the Secretary of State for War , awarded Sir Hedley Le Bas , Eric Field , and their Caxton Advertising Agency a contract to advertise for recruits in the major UK newspapers . Eric Field designed a prototype full @-@ page advertisement with the Coat of Arms of King George V and the phrase " Your King and Country Need You . " Britain declared war on the German Empire on 4 August 1914 and the first run of the full @-@ page ran the next day in those newspapers owned by Lord Northcliffe .

Prime Minister of the United Kingdom H. H. Asquith had appointed Kitchener as Secretary of State for War . Kitchener was the first currently serving soldier to hold the post and was given the task of recruiting a large army to fight Germany . Unlike some of his contemporaries who expected a short conflict , Kitchener foresaw a much longer war requiring hundreds of thousands of enlistees . According to Gary S. Messinger , Kitchener reacted well to Field 's advertisement although insisting " that the ads should all end with ' God Save the King ' and that they should not be changed from the original text , except to say ' Lord Kitchener needs YOU . ' " In the following months Le Bas formed an advisory committee of ad men to develop further newspaper recruiting advertisements , most of which ran vertically 11 inches ( 28 cm ) , two columns wide .

Alfred Leete , one Caxton 's illustrators , designed the now @-@ famous image as a cover illustration for the 5 September 1914 issue of London Opinion , a popular weekly magazine , taking cues from Field 's earlier recruiting advertisement . At the time , the magazine had a circulation of 300 @, @ 000 . In response to requests for reproductions , the magazine offered postcard @-@ sized copies for sale . The Parliamentary Recruiting Committee obtained permission to use the design in poster form . A similar poster used the words " YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOU " .

Kitchener , a " figure of absolute will and power , an emblem of British masculinity " , was a natural subject for Leete 's artwork as his name was directly attached to the recruiting efforts and the newly @-@ forming Kitchener 's Army . Le Bas of Caxton Advertising ( for whom Leete worked ) chose Kitchener for the advertisement because Kitchener was " the only soldier with a great war name , won in the field , within the memory of the thousands of men the country wanted . " Kitchener made his name in the Sudan Campaign , avenging the death of General Gordon with brutality and efficiency . He became a hero of " New Imperialism " alongside other widely regarded figures in Britain like Field Marshal Wolseley and Field Marshal Roberts . Kitchener 's appearance including his bushy mustache and court dress jacket was reminiscent of romanticized Victorian era styles . Kitchener , 6 ft 2 in ( 188 cm ) tall and powerfully built , was for many the personification of military ethos so popular in the present Edwardian era . After the scorched earth tactics and hard @-@ fought victory of the Second Boer War , Kitchener represented a return to the military victories of the colonial era . The fact that Kitchener 's name is not used in the poster demonstrates how easily he was visually recognized . David Lubin opines that the image may be one of the earliest successful

celebrity endorsements as the commercial practice expanded greatly in the 1920s . Keith Surridge posits that Kitchener 's features evoked the harsh , feared militarism of the Germans which bode well for British fortune in the war . Kitchener would not see the end of the war ; he died onboard HMS Hampshire in 1916 .

= = Original versions by Alfred Leete = =

= = Impact = =

Leete 's drawing of Kitchener was the most famous image used in the British Army recruitment campaign of World War I. It continues to be considered a masterful piece of wartime propaganda as well as an enduring and iconic image of the war .

Recruitment posters in general have often been seen as a driving force helping to bring more than a million men into the Army . September 1914 , coincident with publication of Leete 's image , saw the highest number of volunteers enlisted . The Times recorded the scene in London on 3 January 1915 ; " Posters appealing to recruits are to be seen on every hoarding , in most windows , in omnibuses , tramcars and commercial vans . The great base of Nelson 's Column is covered with them . Their number and variety are remarkable . Everywhere Lord Kitchener sternly points a monstrously big finger , exclaiming ' I Want You ' " . One contemporaneous publication decried the use of advertising methods to enlist soldiers : " the cold , basilisk eye of a gaudily @-@ lithographed Kitchener rivets itself upon the possible recruit and the outstretched finger of the British Minister of War is levelled at him like some revolver , with the words , ' I want you . ' The idea is stolen from the advertisement of a 5c . American cigar . " Although it became one of the most famous posters in history , its widespread circulation did not halt the decline in recruiting .

The use of Kitchener 's image for recruiting posters was so widespread that Lady Asquith referred to the Field Marshal simply as " the Poster . "

The placement of the Kitchener posters including Alfred Leete 's design has been examined and questioned following an Imperial War Museum publication in 1997 . The War Museum suggested that the poster itself was a " non event " and was made popular by postwar advertising by the war museum , perhaps conflating Leete 's design with the so @-@ called " 30 @-@ word " poster , an official product from the Parliamentary Recruitment Committee . The 30 @-@ word design was the most popular recruitment poster at the time having been printed ten times the volume of Leete 's image . Leete 's image has been praised for being more arresting while his accompanying text is also far less verbose . The official wording , taken from a Kitchener speech , may seem more fitting for a character in a Henry James novel . The 30 @-@ word recruiting poster was developed as Britons ' collective hopes of the war being over by Christmas were dashed in January 1915 and volunteer enlistments fell . A 2013 book researched by James Taylor counters the popular belief that the Leete design was an influential recruitment tool during the war . He claims the original artwork was acquired by the Imperial War Museum in 1917 and catalogued as a poster in error . Though the image of Kitchener ( Britain 's most popular soldier ) inspired several other poster designs , Taylor says he can find no evidence in photographs of the time that the Leete poster was used , although a photograph from 15 December 1914 taken at the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway station in Liverpool clearly depicts Leete 's depiction among other recruiting posters .

The effectiveness of the image upon the viewer is attributed to what E. B. Goldstein has called the ' differential rotation effect . ' Because of this effect , Kitchener 's eyes and his foreshortened arm and hand appear to follow the viewer regardless of the viewer 's orientation to the artwork . Historian Carlo Ginzburg compared Leete 's image of Kitchener to similar images of Christ and Alexander the Great as depicting the viewer 's contact with a powerful figure . Pearl James commented on Ginzburg 's analysis agreeing that the strength of the connotation lies with a clever use of discursive psychology and that art historical methods better illuminate why this image has such resonance . The capitalized word " YOU " grabs the reader , bringing them directly to Kitchener 's message . The textual focus on " you " engages the reader about their own participation in the war . Nicholas Hiley

differs in that Leete 's portrayal of Kitchener is less about immediate recruiting statistics but the myth that has grown around the image , including ironic parodies . Leete 's Kitchener poster caught the attention of a then eleven @-@ year @-@ old George Orwell , who may have used as it the basis for his description of the " Big Brother " posters in his novel 1984 .

In 1997 the British Army created a recruiting ad re @-@ using Leete 's image substituting Kitchener 's face with that of a British Army non @-@ commissioned officer of African descent . Leete 's image of Kitchener is featured on a 2014 £ 2 coin produced by sculptor John Bergdahl for the Royal Mint . The coin was the first of a five @-@ year series to commemorate the centennial of the war . Use of Leete 's image of Kitchener has been criticized by some for its pro @-@ war connotation in light of the human losses of the First World War and the violence of Kitchener 's campaign in Sudan . In July 2014 , one of only four original posters known to exist went to auction for more than £ 10 @,@ 000 . The other three originals exist on display in State Library of Victoria , the Museum of Brands , Packaging and Advertising , and the Imperial War Museum . Leete 's design was also used for a corn maze in the Skylark Garden Centre in Wimblington to mark the centenary of World War I.

= = Imitations = =

The image of Lord Kitchener with his hand pointing directly at the viewer has inspired numerous imitations :