

**CONSCIENTIOUS  
OBJECTION**

**to**

**Military Service**

**TEST CASE FOR  
CANADA**

**3314545**

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## FOREWORD

The personal history that is unfolded in the following pages is a unique account, a dramatic story of a man of courage and conviction under the most trying of circumstances. No attempt has been made to idealize the events contained herein nor to ascribe perfection to the central figure, as all human beings have their weaknesses as well as their strengths. The story and background thereof are recorded just as they happened.

There are certain elements in this history that one may classify as supernatural. The reader is left to decide for himself whether to accept these as miraculous or coincidental.

## INTRODUCTION

My father, John Henry Walter Evans, was born in Beamsville, Ontario, on December 11, 1894. He was the son of an English father and an Irish Canadian mother.

On March 19, 1902, when he was but seven years old, his mother died. The following January 1903, his father remarried, his second wife being his former wife's sister. About this time, my grandfather began to find an interest in the religious movement known as the Christadelphians, a Christian fundamentalist sect founded in the middle eighteenth century by Dr. John Thomas, an English physician. In June 1904 he was baptized into the Christadelphian faith, and was followed a few weeks later by his wife. Thus was brought about my father's association with the Christadelphian understanding of the Bible, a concept which they term the "Truth".

Although the family believed themselves to be considerably enlightened by this new found faith, which denied such doctrines as the immortality of the soul, the supernatural personal devil and the trinity, it was difficult to discard, at least from the subconscious, ingrained old country Irish superstitions which, due to the virtual absence of formal elementary education, found faint expression in certain habits and situations.

This old world carry-over cannot be entirely disassociated from my father's casual interest, as a youth, in the "revelations" of a carnival fortune teller. The first decade of the nineteenth century was an austere period in the history of Southern Ontario. My grandfather, an experienced brick maker was happy to manage a brickyard in Burlington for nine dollars per month, plus the use of a dwelling. Nevertheless I have often heard my father say: "There is one thing that can be said for 'the governor', although we had virtually nothing, we always had enough to eat."

But my father endured a severe upbringing. Hard work was the order of the day, along with rigorous chastisement for lack of expected performance. Failure to comply was met with a cuff, failure to succeed — with "the boots," loss of a conduct mark at school called for the lash at home. Army brutality when it came, was not a new experience for my father; he had known similar treatment before.

There were no leisure hours, except on Sunday, which welcome respite was more deeply appreciated as a divine provision than it is in our time. After school hours were spent cutting cordwood, shovelling snow, delivering groceries, tending horses and caring for a large vegetable garden. At the age of twelve he was detained from school to assist in the brickyard for a period of two months into the fall term.

The paradox of my grandfather's religious beliefs contrasted with his severe attitude towards his children, although perhaps inexcusable by comparison with the true well-balanced Christian standards, may best be explained as a vestige of the age of Dickens preserved in Canada.

There is no doubt, however, that the hardships of his early life were a fundamental factor in my father's ability to endure the trials which were to come upon him by virtue of his adoption of the "Truth".

As time progressed, my grandfather and his brother entered into partnership in a small contracting business and, at the age of eighteen, young John (my father) was employed in the business, where he remained until the fortunes of war placed him in a new and more significant role.

## **CHAPTER 1                      SHADES OF ENDOR**

The following account could have been omitted from this story, but in attempting to tell the whole truth, to avoid idealization of events and to indicate that we are dealing with the story of a man subject to fleshly notions, as well as spiritual ideals, it has been included. To omit these two events would be similar to eliminating all reference to the phrenological interests of Dr. Thomas from his biography, because, in the light of modern science, they tend to embarrass some brethren.

It should be borne in mind, however, that both of the incidents herein described occurred prior to my father's baptism; the first one when he was eighteen years old, the second when he was twenty-two years old.

His interest in the fortune tellers described below, was a casual one, having nothing whatsoever to do with belief in the occult, but rather reflecting the whim of a youth whose background touched upon old world superstition. The outcome of these experiences was quite unexpected, but in no way should be construed as to commend the practice. The reference to Endor was, in fact, suggested by my father himself.

The year 1913 celebrated one hundred years of peace between Canada and the United States. July saw the down town of Hamilton turned into a midway which among its attractions included a man, who for the "contribution" of fifty cents, would tell one's fortune. Young John's curiosity was aroused and he ventured into the fortune teller's booth because, as he later retold, "I was interested to hear what he had to say."

"We sat facing one another across a small table. The man unfolded past events in a rather convincing way and then proceeded into the present. Suddenly he stopped and looked at me across the table most intently and said, 'If you follow the dictates of your own heart, you are going to jail'. Then he went on to tell me more of the future."

This unexpected statement of the fortune-teller made an impression upon my father which he was able to recall almost sixty years later. He would be the first to admit that the future is known only to God. Nevertheless, although it is impossible to determine the true source of the fortune-teller's information, the time came when recollection of the incident brought no little comfort to the young man in solitary confinement in the dark.

Four more years rolled by and the year 1917 found Britain and her allies already three years locked in bitter conflict with Germany. John was engaged to be married and his uncle, also a relatively young man, had fallen in love. Once again Hamilton was visited by a fortune teller -- this time a woman. "My uncle", said John, "was quite anxious to hear what this 'gifted' lady could tell him about the future of his present romance; but not having enough courage to go by himself, he asked me if I would accompany him, which I consented to do."

"As we listened to the lady", explained my father, "I was really surprised to hear what she said about my uncle. You see, I knew the facts. When she was finished, just for the sake of conversation, I said to her, 'What do you know about me?' She replied 'Not very much. But', she continued, 'you are going overseas, and you are coming back.' "

"Now although the whole episode lingered in my mind, I didn't give it a great deal of thought at the time. I was married in September, as planned. However, the following January I received my military call-up and early in April I was on the high seas, bound for England."

A little thought on this event would soon bring one to the conclusion that the fortune-teller did not risk her reputation to any extent in making this prediction. Canada was in the process of passing the Military Service Act, which was to conscript initially all eligible young men between the ages of twenty and thirty-five. John was twenty-two. The possibility of his being drafted was relatively great. With respect to his returning home from overseas, the fortune-teller did not really specify whether dead or alive. John, of course, took the optimistic view.

The strangeness of this incident, however, was not so much what the fortune-teller said, but that in the little she did say, she should raise this particular subject; whereas an engaged young man would naturally think the fortune-teller would remain on a similar subject to that discussed with his uncle. It is probable that this unexpected sharp contrast of topics created a deeper impression on my father than may have otherwise occurred. In any case, it was his conviction that these two incidents were of divine provision for the purpose of bolstering his faith and confidence under future difficult conditions which otherwise might have appeared to have been hopeless.

## **CHAPTER 2 CHRISTADELPHIAN VIEWPOINT ON MILITARY SERVICE**

It is not the purpose of this book to deal at any length with the above subject. Most of the readers will be fully informed and in agreement with the stand taken by my father. For the benefit of the casual uninformed reader, however, and in order to add a certain completeness to this work, a few words of explanation are warranted.

Christadelphians may be described as biblical fundamentalists in the true sense of the meaning of the word "fundamental", but not in the present day popular notion expressed by such derogatory terms as "bible thumper", "holy roller", "gospel haller", and the like, which tend to insinuate religious imbalance and gullibility. Nor may they be classified as

originating from the American fundamentalist movement, which having formulated its five tenet doctrinal platform, reached its zenith in 1920, but was greatly weakened by the outcome of the famous Scopes trial in 1925. The Christadelphian sect originated quite independently in about 1848 under the leadership of John Thomas, M.D., who expressed the fundamentals of his Bible understanding in the book "Elpis Israel" (The Hope of Israel).

Christadelphians look for the literal establishment of the Kingdom of God upon the earth. They believe that all of history is progressing toward and will culminate in the setting up of an everlasting kingdom of peace and righteousness upon the earth. They are among the very few who associate the regathering of the nation of Israel to the land of Palestine with the second coming of Christ and the establishment of the Kingdom of God upon the earth.

It is their belief that this kingdom will not be realized by the desire or efforts of the nations of this earth, but rather despite the combined forces of all nations, blindly intent upon preventing it.

They believe that many major events in world history and their effect upon the nation of Israel have been foretold in Bible prophecy, which has been recorded by divine inspiration for the guidance of the believer, to help him understand which era in the divine plan his generation is witnessing. Under these conditions, they feel it is both foolish, futile and contrary to the divine will for them to attempt to play a part in the direction of political events upon any scale whatsoever, whether international, national or within the communities where they dwell. Correspondingly, they refuse to engage in any form of violence deemed to force the trend of events in a particular direction. Hence, when their native land goes to war, Christadelphians request exemption from military service.

From the standpoint of the individual, they have ample commands of Christ admonishing them to refrain from any harmful act against their neighbours, in the neighbourhood of the world. The expression of these commands is so explicit that clergymen have traditionally been granted exemption. Christadelphians describe their position as being "strangers" and "pilgrims" in the earth while they wait for the coming of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; who upon his return, will gather them unto him, along with the faithful resurrected dead and together they will subdue all national resistance and bring about world wide reformation on both a natural and spiritual level under the kingship of Christ himself, enthroned at the city of Jerusalem.

Consistent therefore, with their beliefs and in view of their stand on the question of military service, Christadelphians do not vote in political elections, nor do they run office. The majority also seek exemption from serving on jury.

They are, nevertheless, keen observers of the political scene -- "watchmen", to use a biblical term, for they realize that the record of the fulfillment of Bible prophecy is to be found in the daily newspaper.

A remarkable example of this "watching" process is contained in figure 2, a letter written in May of 1917 by Thomas A. Trussler, of Trout Creek, Ontario, and addressed to a Mr. Walter Hinton in Hamilton, Ontario. Mr. Trussler makes mention of three prophetic events having

to do with "Russia", the "Euphrates Power" and a "little Jewish kingdom", respectively. With respect to Russia, Mr. Trussler was referring to the 38th chapter of Ezekiel's prophecy which depicts an invasion of the land of Israel by a confederation of nations understood to be under the direction of Russia. As of May 11, the date of the letter, Russia was in a state of revolution, and was under a provisional government with republican leanings. Mr. Trussler felt that the prophecy pictured an autocratic type of leadership. By October, however, when the Bolsheviks took over, the dictatorial characteristic for which Mr. Trussler sought had occurred, and has not changed to this day. The impending confrontation between Russia and her allies and Israel is, in our generation, everyday news.

Mr. Trussler's reference to the "drying up of the Euphrates power" deals with the 16th chapter of Revelations and has to do with the dissolution of the Ottoman Turkish Empire which reached its completion on October 1, 1918, when General Edmund Allenby, Commander-in-Chief of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force captured Damascus, bringing about the surrender of the Turkish army.

The significance of the removal of Turkish influence in Palestine had to do with the establishment of a new Jewish state in the original territory which it occupied in biblical times. One can imagine the pleasure and satisfaction of Mr. Trussler when it was announced by the Balfour declaration in November 1917 that "His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people." This event had been looked for by Christadelphians for about seventy years. Present day "watchers" wait expectantly for this great prophetic Gogian (Russian) invasion which they believe will occur very | near to the time of the second coming of Christ.

The Christadelphian endeavours to be a peaceful law abiding citizen, an asset to his community. He refuses to become involved in acts of civil disobedience and deplors rioting and disorders and any action involving violence. Although he refuses to bear arms for the country in which he dwells, or for any other government, he would in no wise be a partaker in or be a party to any act calculated to endanger any country or community or government thereof.

Where the laws of the land, in his understanding, conflict with the laws of God, as in the case of The Military Service Act of 1917, he is obliged to obey God rather than man at any cost, be it life itself. This book considers just such a case and illustrates an example of commendable conduct under very severe circumstances.

### **CHAPTER 3                      THE MILITARY SERVICE ACT**

Early in the Spring of 1917, it was authoritatively stated that, owing to the necessity of prosecuting the war to a successful issue, Canada would have to supply more men than was forthcoming from ordinary enlistment, and that one hundred thousand men would, that year, have to be raised by selective conscription. Thus, on August 29, 1917, Royal assent was given to The Military Service Act. In a circular, dated September 26, 1917, the Military

Service Council provided advance notification of the significant terms of the act, among which was a statement covering grounds for exemption:

"The grounds on which exemption may be claimed (which are similar to the grounds recognized in Great Britain and the United States) are as follows:" Then followed a list of six categories, the last of which, item (f) stated: "that he conscientiously objects to the under-taking of combatant service, and is prohibited from doing so by tenets and articles of faith in effect on the sixth day of July, 1917, of any organized religious denomination existing and well-recognized in Canada at such date, and to which he in good faith belongs."

In actual fact, when the act was put into effect, it was soon discovered that the application of the clause dealing with conscientious objection was not similar to that of Great Britain, nor did it ever become similar throughout the duration of the war. This situation brought considerable hardship upon a number of Christadelphian young men and their families.

The difficulty arose because, although the act granted exemption from combatant service, it did not grant exemption from military service, whereas the British Act did grant such exemption. Under the Canadian Act, a conscientious objector was expected to be willing to serve in the army virtually in any capacity short of bearing arms. This situation was not acceptable to the Christadelphian body, who were not seeking merely to be excused from the harsh aspects of battle, but from any association with military service in any mode whatsoever. They were willing to undertake any work of national importance, be it on farms, in the forest or in industry, as long as it was not under the control of the armed forces.

This position was considered not only correct from a religious standpoint, but also from a practical one. Those persons granted exemption from combatant service were subject to reclassification at any time to combatant categories. Moreover, the experience of others proved at non-combatant personnel serving at the front as stretcher bearers and the like, under emergency conditions, had on occasion been pressed into combatant service; under which condition, refusal to comply could result in court-martial and even execution. An extract from the report of the Canadian Christadelphian Standing Committee published in 1919 bears upon this point. "Your Committee was greatly perturbed at the knowledge the above (M.S. Act) supplied. It was seen at once that the Act fell away behind the English Act No. 2, whereas we had felt assured that Canada would not enact provisions inferior to those of the mother country. The Canadian Act, as it stood, provided the granting of absolute exemption from all military service for all and every consideration but religious conscientious objection; which from a Christadelphian standpoint, means there was no exemption at all, for it is a well known fact, that in the army, non-combatant service is a misnomer, every man is a soldier and must fight when called upon to do so."

It would appear that Canada was determined to disallow status of religious objectors, if not in word, then certainly in effect. For, following the M.S. Act proper there came into existence on October 7, 1917, an appendix to the Act — the War Time Elections Act — containing clause 67A.2, stipulating that: "all those who vote at Dominion elections subsequent to October 7, 1917, shall be held ineligible and incompetent to apply for or to

be granted exemption from combatant military or naval service on conscientious grounds." Fortunately this act did not damage the Christadelphian position.

#### **CHAPTER 4 THE CANADIAN CHRISTADELPHIAN STANDING COMMITTEE**

When the shadow of military conscription began to loom on the Canadian horizon, a body was formed under the name of the Canadian Christadelphian Standing Committee whose purpose was designed:

- (a). To secure official recognition of the Christadelphian Church of Canada as being opposed to military service and to obtain exemption for its members from military and naval service of any kind, whether combatant or non-combatant.
- (b). To endeavour, by means of making representation to the Canadian Government, and armed forces, to secure the release of conscripted Christadelphians from military service or imprisonment permitting them to engage in civilian work of national importance.
- (c). To maintain contact with and provide, when possible, for the well-being of conscripted Christadelphians.

These latter two functions (b) and (c) developed when the C.C.S. Committee began to come to grips with the M.S. Act in action.

This committee represented 1,002 Christadelphians in Canada residing in all provinces of Canada, except Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

The C.C.S.C. Report states on page 3: "There were seventy-three brethren who came under the operation of the Military Service Act: forty-nine of these were exempted from combatant service, some because of religious belief, some because their occupations were considered of importance to the state, others being medically unfit; two renounced their faith to join the army, two permitted themselves to be persuaded to join non-combatant corps, and lost their place among the faithful; nineteen brethren suffered imprisonment, being refused (by the Tribunal) exemption from combatant service, two of these were ruthlessly shipped overseas, suffering many and varied punishments and imprisonment, two confined for several months in cells at, Hamilton jail, three were sentenced to serve in Kingston Penitentiary for long terms; one contracted influenza of the severe type prevalent at the time and died in the military hospital, and one was removed to an asylum and died there."

Early in 1917, when the probability of conscription became apparent, the Committee petitioned the Canadian Parliament praying to be relieved from military service, should conscription come. This petition stated the grounds on which exemption was sought and further based its plea upon the historic precedent that Christadelphians had maintained this stand since the time of the American Civil War, noting that the name Christadelphian was



The decision to be baptized is therefore one involving a grave responsibility on the part of the candidate who must reach that decision without exterior influence or pressure; for involved in this act are the elements of belief, faith and repentance, none of which can be inculcated by the insistence of others.

Associated with most Christadelphian church communities is a Sunday school which normally contains members in various stages of religious training, ranging from tiny tots to senior students ready for baptism. Under normal circumstances, as already discussed, application for baptism is made by the Sunday school student when he, in his own discretion, feels that the proper time has come. In this event, the student submits to an oral examination by the Examining Committee of the Ecclesia (church body) in order to verify that he does indeed possess the necessary knowledge and understanding.

With the sudden advent of conscription and in view of the lack of proper provision in the act for total exemption, the ecclesias found themselves in a strange and difficult situation. A Sunday school student could not, under the terms of the M.S. Act be considered to be a member of a religious body, because he was not yet bound by the articles of faith of that body. Yet a Sunday school student could be of military age and subject to military call up, with absolutely no provision in the M.S. Act for exemption on religious grounds. Although a baptized member had little grounds under the act, the Sunday school student had none at all.

It was therefore deemed advisable under the circumstances to recommend to these senior students subject to call up, that if they were contemplating baptism in the indefinite future and if their convictions were such that they, in any event, would take a stand as a conscientious objector to military service, they should consider baptism in the immediate future in order not to place themselves in an unnecessarily difficult situation.

Under these conditions, a number of young men throughout Canada were examined and baptized, among whom was my father, on October 28, 1917, at the age of 22 years.

The Governor General's call occurred, as was stated, on October 12th. Less than one month later, on November 2, an event occurred which one might think was providentially timed to strengthen the confidence of the brotherhood and encourage the young men who may have suffered certain mental discomfort in considering baptism under the pressure of the expediency of the times. For almost seventy years Christadelphians had been waiting for the fulfilment of prophecy signalling the return of the Jews to their national homeland. Suddenly it happened, the historic Balfour Declaration was announced to the world.

The Great War was indeed a unique event which stirred the Christadelphian body in depth. Of the one thousand and two Canadian members alive during the war years, two hundred and seventy (27%) were baptized from 1914 to 1918.



but that if I were ready at about 8.00 o'clock the next morning, we would walk down to the armouries together, (a distance somewhat over two miles).

Arriving at the armouries in the morning as planned, I sat around all day waiting for the next development which did not occur until the evening. At last the Provost Marshall (the head of the military police) sent for me and I went in to see him. He said, "Evans, I have had men out investigating you all day. It is our general practice to send defaulters down to the Police Station for the night. But I would feel awfully bad to send a man like you to the Police Station. There are lots of blankets out there. Make yourself as comfortable as you can. Your escort will be around in the morning."

A few minutes later my father came in to see if I was still there. I told him what the Provost Marshall had said and suggested that if he approached the P.M. and assured him that I would be back at 8 o'clock in the morning, he may let me go home for the night. The P.M. consenting to this arrangement and stating that he felt there was a good probability that I would be granted total exemption, we went home for the night.

The next morning, Brother John P. Kirwin, along with my father, a soldier escort and myself took the train to the military camp at Niagara Falls, located near Lundy's Lane (a historic site from the War of 1812). We arrived at the camp in the afternoon with our papers and forms all prepared to hand to the officer in charge.

At this point a very unfortunate thing happened. Just before we arrived, a brother who lived in Niagara Falls had visited the camp and had informed Adjutant Gilles-water (assistant to the commanding officer) that I was coming down and that I was a conscientious objector, but that there was nothing in the world to keep me from putting on a uniform. When Brother Kirwin and my father and I walked in and told the Adjutant that I could not put on the uniform, he immediately said, looking at my father and Brother Kirwin, "Now you fellows get out of here or I'll call the police and take you out."

Now I would like to draw particular attention to this event because the officer acted on impulse triggered by what the Niagara Falls brother had told him. This brother was not acquainted with what was being done, or what was going on at all, and should never have gone near that officer. As a consequence of his misinforming the officer, orders were immediately given that I should be dressed in a uniform, while my father and Bro. Kirwin were sent away.

Now I have reason to believe that later on the Adjutant was sorry that he had given that order.

Two sergeant majors dressed me and put my civilian clothes in a suitcase. The authorities were confused. It had not been expected that there were any religious groups in Canada that could meet the stipulations of the M.S. Act. The Christadelphians could, however, mainly because they did not vote. The camp had received no instructions concerning me and they didn't know what to do. I was the first case of this kind as far as the Niagara camp was concerned. They permitted me, therefore, to accompany my father and Brother Kirwin to the home of the brother in Niagara Falls for the night.

In the morning, I returned to the camp alone. Having still not come to any decision, I was given a week's leave of absence.

In a week's time I received a call from the Camp stating that they were now prepared to deal with my case. My father and I therefore returned to Niagara Falls. When I reported, I was in civilian clothes; the uniform that I had been given was in my suitcase.

As soon as the Adjutant saw me, he immediately turned to a sergeant major and said, "Detail men to dress this young man." This time there were four sergeant majors and they dressed me in military attire right down to the skin, even to the tying of my shoe laces. The fact that four sergeant majors dressed me, followed me all through my military experience. I was often pointed out as "the man it took four sergeant majors to dress." I should perhaps point out that while this operation was taking place, I was not fighting their efforts, but I was certainly not co-operating with the officers.

While I was being dressed, the Adjutant who had become a little better acquainted with my father, took him aside into another room and explained to him what the army intended to do in my case. He stated that the army (no doubt at the request of the Government) had decided to make me a test case, intending to employ any necessary method to break down my resistance and force me to be a soldier. "If your son can stand up to it", my father was told, "he will come out alright. If not, it will be bad for him."

I remained in the camp overnight and in the morning I was transferred to the armouries in Niagara Falls. Having refused to button up my tunic, I was handcuffed with my hands behind my back, by a very officious sergeant, who later exhibited a sadistic bent. He then placed me in a room with other prisoners, some of whom were soldiers and some aliens (Niagara Falls being a border city).

While we were waiting dinner, I became acquainted with two of the other military prisoners in the room. The one was named Martel, the son of a Doctor Martel in Toronto. The other was called "Black Jack" — I never did find out his real name. He was a stoical sort of chap, but tough as they come.

I should like to remind the readers at this time that I had now entered a contest with the Canadian Army. They were bent on making a soldier of me; I was determined to resist their every effort in that direction. I therefore refused to shine my shoes, polish the brass buttons on my tunic, or do anything that could be construed as bending to military discipline.

But let me point out that throughout all my resistance, I was careful not to convey an attitude of hostile rebellion, insolence, disrespect or contempt in my speech to a military officer or prison guard. I fully realized that I was walking along a very critical path. My actions in the eyes of the Army, could only be interpreted as being disrespectful, since they did not have any true appreciation of my position as a conscientious objector. But in my communication with them, I determined to "abstain from all appearance of evil."

Lunch time finally came, and an officious sergeant entered the room carrying dinner plates. Setting the plates down on a bench, he said to me, (my tunic still being unbuttoned), "Here's your dinner and these other fellows are going to eat it." Black Jack and Martel offered to feed me, but I thought it expedient to decline. After lunch, the sergeant returned, grabbed me by the scruff of the neck and shoved me up the hall and into another room where two soldiers were waiting. He removed my handcuffs and speaking to the two soldiers, he told them to use their own discretion, but to make me button up my tunic. Then he left the room. The soldiers, men in their forties, were reluctant to act, thus when the sergeant returned, his orders had not been carried out.

He then put the handcuffs back on with my hands once more behind my back, and taking me by the collar, he pulled me violently back and forth up the hall into another room. This room was filled with chairs stacked up waist high. An aisle extended from the door along one wall to the centre of the room where it turned 90 degrees and continued down the length of the room.

The sergeant stood with his back to the wall, at the far end of the centre aisle, and the two soldiers walked me toward him, my handcuffs having been removed once again. When we were close enough, they gave me a quick push toward the sergeant who met me with a violent blow of his right fist on the bridge of the nose. The blood flew and my tunic was soon badly stained. When they saw what they had done, they were afraid. They removed my tunic, took it away, cleaned the blood off it, pressed it and very quietly brought it back and put it on me.

This kind of treatment, which I soon found out was quite illegal, did not endear the average rank and file to the army. I was later told that this same sergeant who had done me injury nearly lost his life at the hands of an infuriated cook, who had heard the commotion while he was working in his kitchen just below the chair-filled room. When he found out what the sergeant had done, the cook swung at him with a meat axe. The sergeant ducked and fled from the kitchen without injury.

The following Sunday, my father and sister came down to see me. By this time I had two beautiful black eyes. The sergeant would not permit them to come into the armouries, but he allowed me to go outside. He, no doubt, was ashamed to face my family in view of my condition. As I was going outside, he threatened me of what would happen if I breathed a word about the treatment I had received. I realized then that he had stepped beyond his authority and was afraid that his deeds would be found out by his superiors.

The next day while we were being prepared to be transferred to Oshawa, Brother Hill, the chairman of the Standing Committee, along with Sister Hill, came down from Toronto to see me. While in the presence of Adjutant Gilleswater, Brother Hill spotted my black eye and said, "What happened to you?" "Well," I said, "it took a pair of handcuffs and three of the King's men to do that." This information coming to the attention of the Adjutant, started a chain of events, the outcome of which I was to learn in an English prison.

On March 25, I was included in the overseas draft and placed under escort. Word got around the camp that, "They are going to take Evans to the station in hand-cuffs." When

this came to the ears of Adjutant Gilleswater, he put a stop to the rumour in a hurry. There was going to be no handcuffs for Evans. In fact, his attitude had changed so markedly that when we were getting on the train, he said to me, "Evans, is there anything I can do for you?" "Well," I said, "I'd like to turn some money over to my wife." He put his hand in his pocket and handed me his cheque book and fountain pen.

We boarded the train bound for Oshawa. Passing through Hamilton, we arrived at the Toronto Union Station where our train stopped alongside a bonded express car loaded with liquor. The train no sooner came to rest when our fellows were out of the coaches and into the express car, unloading it into our train. I was one of five prisoners in the coach, along with seven bottles of liquor for the five of us. By the time we arrived at Oshawa, I was about the only sober man on the train.

The reader must appreciate the true nature of this situation. Here was a man already considered to be a legal offender, finding himself in the midst of a serious robbery, which, had it been perpetrated by civilians, would have incurred several years jail sentence. Had, therefore, the smell of liquor been found upon my father, it would have given the authorities an excellent opportunity to depreciate his conscientious stand.

When our train approached Oshawa, Martel, seeing that there was a couple of bottles of liquor left, smashed the necks off the bottles and downed the lot. When we got to Oshawa, Martel was unconscious; they thought he was going to die. They just took him by the legs and arms like a piece of baggage and threw him up on top wagon loaded with army supplies, which was drawn over to the Oshawa Armouries. They laid him on a couch. Nothing more could be done but to sit by wait for him to die.

Now all we had had to eat since breakfast was a little cheese sandwich, so that Martel had very little in his stomach other than liquor. After awhile, as we looked on, Martel started to vomit, expelling great quantities of his stomach's contents. The stench became so he that everyone was forced to leave the room. Surprisingly enough, after awhile he regained consciousness and we were all taken over to the town lock-up. This was type of man who was yet to play a significant role, insuring my physical safety in events to come.

The Oshawa lock-up was not the common variety of jail. Instead of being placed in the usual type of cell with bars, we were placed in portable steel cages constructed from woven flat steel strapping, assembled in such a way as to allow about one and one-half inches of Space between the flat straps. There were no sanitary conveniences in the cages and since the doors were locked, we would not use the facilities of the building proper without calling a guard. Had a fire occurred while we were there, we would have been as helpless as rats in a trap.

After three days, an officer came in on an inspection tour and condemned the place as unfit for human habitation. We were therefore removed, the other prisoners released, while I was assigned to work in the armoury kitchen, which I agreed to do, since such work was not contrary to my conscientious stand. One of our tasks in kitchen duty was to dispense food to the men, which was done cafeteria style. In this capacity, I always attempted to make a favourable impression with the men, which as it happened, worked to my advantage.

We remained at Oshawa from March 25th until April 4th when we departed for Halifax. While in Oshawa, the army attempted to "sow a little discord among brethren", by the use of an old trick to promote a cleavage between the Standing Committee and myself. They wrote a letter to Brother Hill, Chairman of the Stand Committee in which they accused me of being stubborn unco-operative and reluctant to work. Nothing could have been further from the truth, because I welcomed every opportunity to be occupied in any way which would remove me from military activities. It would, of course, have been futile for the army to complain to the Standing Committee about my lack of co-operation in military affairs for all knew full well that my purpose was to offer one hundred per cent resistance in this respect. Brother Hill received the letter in all good faith and in turn wrote me a very fatherly letter, exhorting me to co-operate with the authorities where I could and not to cause unnecessary trouble.

Right away I knew what was going on. I therefore wrote brother Hill a "fatherly" letter in return, pointing out to him that if the authorities could drive a wedge between him and me, they would have the battle half won. I also suggested that he should not pay any attention to such reports, but rather concentrate on his committee work and leave the rest to me. It is fortunate that this understanding was reached early in my army experience, for had this ruse been used later, when I was overseas, it may have been more successful. As it happened, the committee was immune to the effects of any further evil ports about me that they might receive.

There was a cocky little sergeant, who got it into his head that he was going to make Evans a soldier. He was going to perform wonders. However, a day or two before he attempted to implement his plan, Black Jack and Martel came to me and said, "Evans, we're broke, lend us a couple of dollars." Well, I knew that I would never see the two dollars again, but I thought to myself that it could be money well spent. So I gave the money to them.

One night, the little sergeant, along with a gang of men he had gathered, were going to take me up to the front end of the armoury where it was quiet and remote from the frequented area. They had it arranged that, "if Evans will not put on his putties and behave in a military manner, we will knock hell right out of him."

Martel and Black Jack got wind of what was about to happen and as I was being led up the corridor toward the showdown location, someone gave me a poke in the back, I looked back over my shoulder and saw my friend Martel. He said, "Stay with it Evans, we're right behind you." I took another look to see what was going on, and to my astonishment and relief, Black Jack and Martel were coming with what appeared to be the whole regiment.

Under these conditions, if the sergeant and his gang had laid one hand on me, there would have been a riot of no mean proportion. Terrified that a melee would occur and realizing that his scheme had been thwarted, the sergeant lost no time in getting me into the guardroom, where I was left unmolested.

This particular night, the sergeant of the guard was one of the four sergeant majors who had been detailed to dress me at the Niagara Falls camp. I lay down on the floor, wrapped

myself in a blanket and tried to get some sleep. Sleep was impossible, however, because the guards were continually coming in and out of the room. At midnight a lunch was brought in for the guards, according to the normal routine. The sergeant major called to me and said, "Evans, are you awake?" I said "Yes." Then he said, "Could you eat a piece of pie?" "I'll try awfully hard", I replied. "Come and get it, then", he said. So I got up and sat down with the guard at the table, had a piece of pie and a cup of coffee with him and then went back to my "bunk" on the floor.

While I lay there turning these events over in my mind, I thought to myself: "Now here is a man who wants to be tough. He would like to be able to say that he had made Evans change his mind", but I knew that in the bottom of his heart was a friendly place for me.

The time finally came for us to go to Halifax en route overseas. About this time, due to civil unrest in Quebec over the conscription issue, it appeared that we were to be diverted to that province to quell possible riots. Circumstances changed, however, and our destination was scheduled for Halifax, once again.

We were all equipped and our train was standing at the east end of Oshawa. Just before boarding the train, the major gave a speech to the men followed by another by the captain. When these were finished, someone shouted, "Three cheers for Major Baxter", and of course everybody cheered. This was followed by similar cheers for various other officers. Finally someone yelled, "And three cheers for Evans." You should have heard them — the loudest cheer of all — followed by a "tiger". I knew that I had nothing to fear of what was ahead — I had lots of friends.

It took about four days to reach Halifax, where we were loaded on a big C.P.R. boat called the Metagama, which set sail on April 4, 1918.

At this point in the war, the Canadian Standing Committee had already visited Ottawa and had submitted letters and appeals in order to gain exemption for the Christadelphian conscripts. They had received polite acknowledgements, but no satisfaction nor positive action.

The report states (page 18): "With these replies, we felt we would have to possess our souls in patience and not press the government too hard for fear of being turned down all together and lose our objective. The war had, by this time, gone adversely for the British army, and the Government had become excited with Orders-in-Council becoming the order of the day — but not our kind, and among other things, one cancelling all exemptions for young men ages twenty-one and twenty-two. This was interpreted by the tribunals to quash those for religious beliefs.

Those brethren in these ages, therefore, who had exemption from combatant service were called to the army, also the medically classed B and C men were up for non-combatant service — a circumstance it will be remembered was said (by the Government) would not likely arise before we got relief from the Government to cover our case for total exemption. This condition also affected some of our brethren who were medically classed B and C men".

## CHAPTER 7

## ON THE HIGH SEAS

Late in the afternoon of April 4, we were standing on the deck of the Metagamma looking up at the Citadel of Halifax where we could see the ancient cannons protruding from the historic fort. While we were taking in these sights, the Carpathia, the boat that just six years previously had rescued some of the survivors of the Titanic, came into port loaded with American troops. They were all over the ship — on the decks, along the yard arms, in the rigging — any place to which a man could hang on, they were there; and the bands were playing. It was a magnificent spectacle. The sergeant major who had befriended me was standing there beside me. He looked at me and said, "Evans, what do you think of it?" I said "It's quite a sight, isn't it?" And then he said, "Are you going to change your mind?" I said, as politely as I could, "No, this could not in any way influence me to change my mind." He shook his head and said, "You're a sticker, aren't you."

Our orderly corporal on the boat was a carpenter by trade, a chap that I knew back home. He is over eighty now and I occasionally meet him on the street. We stop and have a little chat — about the past.

He covered for me the first ten days of our fourteen day passage. He would answer my name on parade, while I kept out of sight. In this way, I could avoid being called upon for various duties, which I would have to refuse to do in any case, and risk severe penalties for refusing to obey orders. I could see no point in asking for trouble if it was unnecessary.

At last he came to me and said, "I've answered your name ever since we set sail. They're beginning to check more closely now, and you'll have to appear on parade this morning yourself."

Now I knew that as far as the army was concerned, I had reported for parade every day. If I had at this time refused to go on parade, they would immediately have found out, and it would no doubt have come to light that I had never been on parade; in which case the army would know someone had been answering my name. This could involve both my friend and myself in trouble. I therefore decided that my best choice was to appear on parade.

When we lined up for parade, who should be the officer in charge but my friend, the sergeant major. He announced, "I want forty-five men for fatigue duty", and he started to count down the line. His intention was to include me in the count, but I happened to be the forty-sixth man. Seeing that he had made a mistake, he said, "I think I will need one more", which included me. However, when the parade was dismissed, I simply departed and made no attempt to get involved in the fatigue duty.

In about one hour's time, another parade was called which placed me in somewhat of a dilemma. I was supposed to be doing fatigue duty, but had avoided it. I began to worry that if I didn't show up on this parade, my friend might run into trouble. This probably was not good thinking on my part, because, assuming that I was occupied with previous duties, the

officer in charge would not be looking for me on this parade. Circumstances, however, turned my error into a benefit. I appeared on parade only to find the same sergeant major in charge. He spotted me immediately and said, "Evans, I thought you were on fatigue duty. Do you refuse to do it?" I said "Yes."

Without a moment's delay they held a drum-head court -martial right on the spot, presided over by the sergeant major and other officers. They sentenced me to stand in fore-castle of the ship from daylight until dark for remainder of the voyage. At this time we were four days out of Liverpool. This sentence was certainly not one which could be called enjoyable, but it served the purpose of keeping me off parade which invariably would have involved me in duties which I would have to refuse, and perhaps suffer more severe consequences than this sentence imposed.

The weather was good, the sun shining and just a gentle roll on the sea. By the time afternoon came, the action of the sun and breeze, along with the soothing motion of the ship began to lull me to sleep. Unable to resist the urge, I sat down. Not many minutes passed before an officer and two privates marched up. As they approached, I stood up, but kept my hands in my pockets. "Get your hands out of your pockets", snarled one of the privates and struck me a blow in the chest with his fist. This action was seen by the officers on the bridge.

Later on in the day, just at dusk, a sergeant came up and said, "Evans, you are relieved" — and he went on, "Let me tell you that no man in the army has any business or authority to hit you, nor do you have to stand for all the cursing you are getting either." I thanked him for the information, realizing that there was little to be gained for me to register a protest.

That evening, one of the fellows told me that a request had been issued around the ship for volunteers — professional boxers indeed, to stand two hours on and four hours off to make sure that I did not sit down. You see, at this time, twenty-two years of age with a background of hard manual labour, I was in the pink of condition, and looked the part. I suppose they thought I might resort to violence as I grew weary of this punishment. Although the weather was favourable, I faced the fine salt spray off the ocean all day. The salt crusted on my face, causing it to be very chapped and sore. Shaving became quite painful.

At the end of the second day, my friend the sergeant major, perhaps feeling a twinge of conscience, came up to relieve me. As we walked back down the deck, he said, "Now Evans, the boys have been talking it over, and they have decided that to-night after dark, they are going to throw you overboard." "Well", I said, "If you happen to be there when they throw me over, you see that they give me time to take off this life belt." (Everybody on the ship wore a big cork lifebelt). He dropped his head and away he went leaving me standing there. I knew that I had hit him below the belt.

## CHAPTER 8

## WE ARRIVE IN ENGLAND

On April 19, we passed the south coast of Ireland, through St. George's channel and entered the Irish Sea. From thence we passed into Liverpool Bay and on into the River Mersey. Sailing up the river, we arrived at Liverpool at about nine o'clock in the evening. We remained on the boat overnight.

I slept so soundly that last night on board ship that I didn't wake up in time for breakfast. That was the only meal I missed during the whole ten-day voyage.

We disembarked and went on a route march around Liverpool. I think this was done for both the benefit of the troops and to increase the morale of the city people. Then we boarded the train and journeyed the entire day, not knowing the whereabouts of our final destination. In the evening we came to a large city. "Where are we?", someone asked. "This is London", was the reply.

Our train stopped alongside another train carrying troops who were on leave from France. You can imagine the effect that a trainload of battle-weary soldiers would have on a group of raw recruits such as ours. The stories of misery and death that were told by these war-torn men left our fellows with little enthusiasm by the time our train pulled out again.

At about midnight we arrived at the town of Farnham in Surrey, which was the end of our journey by rail. When we got off the train, the rain was coming down in buckets and we had a three and one-half mile walk still ahead of us. Our route lay along the main highway coming from south London. At about two o'clock in the morning we got to Frensham Pond Camp. This was the place where Kitchener trained his first army. It was all tents, acres and acres of tents.

As soon as we stepped off the main road, we were over our shoe tops in mud and water. Each man wore an overcoat and carried his kit bag along with two blankets wrapped bandolier fashion around his shoulders. Everything was soaked. We were located eight men to a tent. The floor of the tent was composed of loose planks laid side by side on the ground. These were literally floating. When a man stood on one end of a plank it submerged and water splashed over the floor.

We deposited our gear in the tent and then proceeded to a field kitchen located in the middle of a large muddy expanse. Each soldier carried a mess tin into which was placed a little scoop of mulligan stew. This along with a cup of strong tea was our meal. By the time we carried it back to our tent, there was more water in the tin than there was stew.

After eating, we were told to report for an extra blanket. When I went to get mine, my friend the sergeant major was standing beside another sergeant major who was giving out the blankets. "This is Evans", said my friend to the other, "He's a conscientious objector." "We'll soon change his mind about that", said the other sergeant major, "We'll get that out

of his head in a hurry." My friend replied, "No you won't. If they were going to change Evans, they would have done it before this. They'll never change him."

I went back to the tent and lay down with the others on those wet boards, hoping to get a little sleep.

In the morning as I was coming out of our tent, my sergeant major friend called me over to meet another officer with whom he had been talking. "Salute the officer", he said, when I drew near, but I refused.

So they put up a special tent, set apart from the others, which was considered to be a jail. I was then placed in the jail. I fared rather well under these conditions, however, for strange as it may seem, the man who was in charge of food rationing was a chap that I had known as a boy in Milton, Ontario. We recognized one another and perhaps for old time's sake, he gave orders to those dispensing food, "See that Evans is fed." And he reminded them every day, "See that Evans is fed."

While we were in this camp, due partly to the damp living conditions, three hundred men came down with mumps, and I was one of them. One morning as I was getting dressed, I could feel a strange sensation in my face and it seemed to me to be somewhat swollen. I spoke to the sergeant on guard and asked him if he could see anything unusual about my face. "I don't know", he replied, but turning to the corporal, he said, "Corporal take this man around to the M.O. (medical officer) for an examination."

When the M.O. finished his examination, his opinion coincided with my own. "Yes", he stated, "I think you have the mumps. Wrap yourself in a blanket and keep warm as you can, until we can get an ambulance to take you to the hospital". I returned to my tent, wrapped in a blanket and lay down once again on the floor.

In the afternoon, the ambulance arrived and took me to Bramshott Hospital, a few miles south of Frensham Pond in the county of Hants (properly known as Hampshire). Because I was a prisoner, they could have put me behind barbed wire; however they didn't. I was put into a hut with eight other fellows where I developed a severe, typical case of mumps. I was confined to bed for twenty-one days, during which time my temperature reached one hundred and five degrees, and I developed painful complications.

At the end of the third week I was allowed to get up for an hour or so per day. The army rules and regulations limited a person suffering from mumps to twenty eight days confinement, and they saw to it that this time was not exceeded. I was therefore returned to Frensham Pond camp exactly according to the book on the twenty-fifth day of May.

Frensham Pond Camp was a segregation camp where newly arriving soldiers from overseas were placed upon the boat. The purpose of this camp was provide a period of observation in order to be sure that the presence of contagious disease would be detected and confined and not allowed to be further spread throughout other camps. In our case, the camp truly served its purpose.

After this period of isolation, the troops were then transferred to a training camp at Whitley.

On the Sunday morning after I arrived at Frensham Pond two big Irish policemen came to transfer me to the Eighth Reserve at Whitley. It was a seven mile walk and I was equipped with a kit bag and a winter overcoat. Having spent three weeks in bed and only a few hours a day up thereafter, I was certainly in no fit condition to undertake such a journey. When we finally arrived at Whitley, we were drenched from the sudden downpours of rain common to England, and I had a blister under each foot as big as a silver dollar.

However, I did not complain to anybody. The walk, although painful towards the end, was not without some enjoyment. The policemen were considerate fellows and as we walked along, they pointed out to me many sites of historic interest. The one that sticks in my mind was a crossroad called Hind Head. It seems that years ago three highwaymen murdered a sailor there and robbed him. They were apprehended and sentenced to be hanged on a gibbet at the cross-roads until the birds ate the flesh off their bones.

We arrived at the Eighth Reserve at Whitley just at dinner time. The food at this camp was fairly good. We were fed lots of Australian rabbit and mulligan made from Australian mutton, and on the whole, it was satisfactory.

At Whitley I resided in the guard house along with a professional Irish soldier who was awaiting trial on the grounds of desertion. He was every inch a soldier, nevertheless, a good friend of mine. It was an experience to watch him shave in the morning. He had a little straight razor which he kept honed to a fine edge. Without the use of a mirror, he could lather up and shave while everyone else was thinking about it.

This man had the job of sweeping and dusting the orderly room every morning before office hours. This duty afforded him an opportunity to inspect the papers of the day and often he would return and tell me what was in store for me. One day he came back and told me that the commanding officer had refused to have any part in making me soldier. A few days later, however, he reported, "Evans, word has come from Ottawa that the C.O. is commanded to deal with you. He's going to send you to the 'Glass House'."

The "Glass House" meant Wandsworth Military Prison in London, a dreaded institution known for its reputation of having broken the most hardened offenders. This sentence was pronounced on June 20, 1918, while my transfer to the prison did not occur until June 25th.

During these intervening few days, I had two visitors that deserve a word of mention. The first was a Brother May from London. When he arrived, he found the spirit of the camp so favourable toward me that he applied to the C.O. on my behalf requesting a two weeks' leave for me to go to London. The Commanding Officer, a Mr. Kingegar, also a Canadian from Hamilton, and a very fine chap, turned down the request. "I can't give him a leave", he said, "because we know him. If he got one foot outside the fence of this camp, he would take off that uniform. There is only one thing I'd like to do better than that. I'd like to send him back to Canada."

My second visitor was a Brother Grear, a middle aged man also from London. This was the first time he had ever been out of London in his life. He told me that while I was in Wandsworth, no one would be allowed to see me. He therefore had decided to visit me before I went.

Two other events occurred in those few days which gave me considerable courage to face the unknown perils of Wandsworth. One morning a young fellow who had run afoul of the King's orders landed in the guard house. As he came through the door, he exclaimed, "I'd like to meet that conscientious objector." My friend, the Irish policeman replied, "Well, here he is, meet him." He strode over to shake hands and said, "Evans, I don't suppose you know it, but you are a mighty popular man in this camp." He continued, "Do you know what the C.O. told us on the parade ground the other morning?" I said "No." "Well," he said, "He told us that if every man in the British army was as good a man as you are, we would have licked the Germans three years ago."

The next Sunday afternoon, the sergeant of the guard for that day came into the cells to talk to me. He was a nice little fellow from Toronto and he had a military ribbon on his chest. He said, "Evans, do you see this ribbon?" I said "Yes." He said "This is a medal for distinguished bravery in the presence of the enemy." He paused and then confessed, "I haven't got half the guts you've got. Where you're going, you'll have to stand to attention and say 'sir' to men who aren't fit to clean your shoes." He went on, "I'm writing home to my mother tonight and I'm going to tell her all about it."

In the morning at breakfast time, he walked in from the guard room to the cells and in front of about twenty men, he poured half the milk he had for his porridge on mine. (The sergeants got milk on their porridge, but of course, the privates did not). Then without saying a word, he turned around and walked out again.

## **CHAPTER 9                      THE GLASS HOUSE**

The day finally arrived when I was to be taken to Wandsworth Military Prison in South London. It was the 25th of June and I was put in the custody of a young corporal to make the trip. I refused to carry my kit bag, which meant that the corporal was forced to carry it. He was a pretty good fellow and probably had a little sympathy with my stand, for he carried the kit bag without argument. When we arrived in London and found ourselves standing before the bars of the prison door, he handed me the kit bag and said, "Well, Evans, from here on it will be between you and them."

It was noon when I entered the prison, and thus before being actually registered, I was served lunch. This consisted of the head of a cod fish served in a tomato can. I am sure this was deliberately done as an indication of the treatment that I could expect, if I refused to obey orders. I simply set the can aside — they knew it was not fit to eat.

The prison was made up of several cell blocks enclosing a central hall. In the middle of this hall and located on a platform about five feet off the floor was a prison officer. I was given a

card and ordered to take it to the officer on the platform "on the double". I started to walk the platform. Suddenly someone grabbed me by seat of the pants and the scruff of the neck and I was forcibly doubled across the floor and up the platform steps to the officer. The officer looked at my papers and assigned me to cell G.4.5 (Block G, Fourth floor, cell five). As I was being escorted to this cell, I was threatened by a sergeant major from Edmonton who told me that I would be badly handled by the officers and abused if I continued to disobey orders. What he told me greatly discomfited me, so that I did not sleep.

In the afternoon when the soldiers came in off parade, the sergeant of the parade came in to see me. "My, my", he said, "What have you been doing? You're up for office." — meaning that I was being charged with an offense and would have to appear before the prison commander. "I wouldn't know", was my response. The sergeant then withdrew from my cell and I was left undisturbed until the morning.

My cell was furnished with a bed constructed from three nine-inch-wide planks raised up off the floor by batten strips which held the planks together. I was given three blankets and two sheets. The rest of my furniture consisted of a small stool and table. When morning arrived, I was served a pint of oatmeal porridge without milk or sugar. This was my first and last breakfast during my sojourn in this prison.

After breakfast, the same officer returned. He complimented me on the tidiness of my cell, objecting only to my tunic buttons being unpolished. He wanted to send me out on parade, but I refused to go; knowing that I would be in greater potential peril on a parade ground than I would be in my cell. Infuriated by my refusal, he began to curse and commence a violent physical attack. He struck both sides of my head simultaneously with his hands, attempting to produce pain by suddenly increasing the pressure on my ear drums. Then he banged my head against the brick wall, struck me in the stomach with his fist and continued battering me around the cell until he was exhausted.

His object was to try to make me fight. If I had retaliated, he could have either accused me of being a traitor to my cause, or otherwise, depending upon his disposition, he could have called for reinforcements which may have cost me my life. I offered no resistance, although my actual urge to kill him was very great, and I could have done so had I yielded to the temptation. Nevertheless I did not yield nor did I complain. Thus, as was the experience of our Lord, my strength also was being perfected in weakness.

At about 9.00 A.M. I was paraded before the commanding officer of the prison and crimed because I had not run the previous day. The C.O. sat with his head down and his eyes fastened upon his desk. He never looked up during my brief trial. "Three days solitary confinement, punishment diet number 1; twenty-one days punishment diet number two", was his sentence. Punishment diet number 1 consisted of six ounces of bread and a drink of water morning and evening. Punishment diet number two, in addition to that specified by diet number 1, provided one pint of thin porridge for breakfast and a pound of potatoes for dinner.

I was returned to my cell and spent the next three days in peace and quiet. Each morning and evening the guard would bring the little bun of bread, which he proceeded to drop at

my doorway and kick it into my cell. It would roll across the floor and hit the far wall. Then I would go over like a dog and pick it up and eat it.

My cell was about twelve feet long and seven feet wide, the ceiling was an eight foot high brick arch. The floor was paved with asphalt. The toilet facilities consisted of one aluminium pot. Under solitary confinement conditions, all furniture, plank-bed, small table and stool were removed each morning and placed outside the cell, to guard against a prisoner attempting to commit suicide, all items such as suspenders, shoe laces, and handkerchiefs were removed. Your options were either to walk about your cell holding your trousers up or sit on the floor.

On the fourth day, my punishment diet No. 1 having come to an end, they brought me a pound of boiled potatoes for dinner. They were the size of marbles; I counted twenty-one potatoes in the pound. I said to myself, "I'm hungry, but I don't have to eat that." So I sent them back. My forbearance did me no good, however. For when the two guards returned to gather up the dishes, they instantly devoured the pound of potatoes themselves, so that no one knew that I had refused to eat them.

This same day the officer returned to my cell giving me military command, which I refused to obey. Once again I was subjected to the same violent treatment as before. He finally left my cell, being in a state of angry frustration and did not return again for another few days. I was then taken before the C.O. again, who on account of my continued refusal to obey orders, reinstated my punishment diet number 1 for another three days.

Once again, after three days, the same officer returned and once again gave me a military command. Upon my refusal, he attempted to strike me in the stomach with his fist, but I instinctively lifted my knee to fend off the blow, which resulted in his finger being hurt. This made him all the more furious and he left my cell, returning in a short time with other officers who dragged me from my cell, pressing my arms behind my back and willfully pushed me headlong down a flight of winding stairs. I was able to save myself from serious permanent injury by leaning against the central steel pole which supported the staircase, as I stumbled round and round to the bottom.

When I landed at the bottom, another officer lugged me by the ear to a place where he wished me to go on parade. I still refused to take military commands and was hauled back to my cell by two officers, who twisted my arms behind my back like a butcher would twist a cow's tail going into a slaughter house.

They left me in my cell — buttons torn off my clothes, my thumb badly wrenched, my arms and shoulders sore and my neck bleeding where they had dug their finger nails into it. All this was inflicted on me without cause whatsoever, inasmuch as I never attempted to resist or use violence in any form. Again I was re-sentenced to three more days of punishment diet No. 1.

On the ninth day of this starvation diet, the sergeant, along with two men entered my cell. He took my overcoat, placed it on the floor and had his two assistants, one at each end,

rolling it up bandolier fashion. "Now you get down in the middle", he said, "and roll it up too, so that you'll see how it's done." I said, "No, that coat will do me just the way it is."

At this retort, the sergeant flew into a rage and began to belabor me with a heavy rope. Prisoners were often given cell tasks, one of which was the making of halter shanks. These were made from pieces of seven-eighths inch diameter brand new rope, as hard as a brick. With such an instrument, about three feet, six inches long, doubled in his hand to form a protruding loop, the sergeant went at me with all his might and flogged me mercilessly. There was no recourse but to endure the punishment. Retaliation was out, although the temptation to react violently was very strong. At that time the sergeant would have been no match for me had I taken the initiative. There was no way of escape, no place to hide—nothing to do but let him expend his sadistic energy.

Strange as it may seem, in the excitement and shock of the situation, I never really felt the rope. But after a few days, I began to feel the effects of my beating. At first I did not know what was troubling me. My back felt like it was made of boards. Why I did not instantly connect my strange feelings with the flogging, I do not know, perhaps my bread and water diet was also having an effect. Suddenly, it came to me: "The rope!" I turned my shirt down off my shoulders and looked. The sight of my back caused me great alarm. It was as green as grass. I looked like I had gangrene. I fell into a state of panic and frustration. Not knowing what to do, and being virtually beside myself, I began to walk up and down the cell like a caged animal, as hard as I could, until I walked it out of my mind. But I never complained.

One day a guard came into my cell and said, "Look, Evans, they want you downstairs. If you will go peaceably you'll help me. If you refuse to go, we will have to make you go. If we can't make you go, the prison officials will complain that we are not efficient. Come on", he said, "let's go and not have any monkey business." He seemed to be a decent sort of fellow, so I said, "All right, I'll go."

We entered a room set up for a military law court, where I soon found out that I was to substantiate evidence concerning the abuse I had received by the barbaric sergeant at Niagara Falls. They had the complete details on the case which they presented to me concerning which I affirmed was a true account of the incident. I was then taken back to my cell.

After this, except for the continuation of my bread and water diet, I received no further brutal treatment. It must have seemed ironical to some in that court room to hear a prisoner substantiating evidence concerning the preparation of a military legal charge against a malefactor in Canada, when far more atrocious acts were being committed against the same prisoner by the same body that was supposedly defending him, in the very building which housed the court.

Towards the end of my sojourn at Wandsworth, a doctor visited the cells, conducted by a sergeant. My history was recorded on a card outside my cell. When the doctor read it, he exclaimed, "My, my, that's an awful stretch! Is that man all right?" "He seems to be," the sergeant said. "Well, you better let me see him", said the doctor.

As the cell door opened, I sprang to attention not in a military sense, but rather to indicate to the doctor that by no means was I the worse for my punishment. The doctor looked me up and down and said, "Are you all right?" "Yes sir", I said, "I'm fine." He went on, "Do you mean to stand there and tell me that you feel fine?" "Yes sir," I said, "I do." "Well," he continued, "It's not for me to argue with you, but I think you're awfully foolish. You know a lot of that prophecy that you believe in has already been fulfilled." "Yes", I replied, "I know that's our assurance that the rest will be fulfilled." With that the doctor departed.

During these last few days' imprisonment, at about o'clock on a Sunday afternoon, six guards walked into my cell. At first I wondered if they were going to make an all-out offensive to make me come to heel. This however, was not the case.

The fact was that my behaviour had aroused the curiosity of virtually the whole prison. These men simply could not comprehend why a man should be willing to stand up to so much punishment as I had endured. They actually thought that in some way or other my motive was for money. They could not be satisfied until they found the answer for themselves. We talked for about three-quarters of an hour and I explained my position to them as completely as I could in that length of time. Finally one fellow said, "It's about five o'clock — time for supper — we better get back."

When they had all left my cell, the first one to leave returned and in the privacy of a moment he said, "Well Evans, I don't mind telling you, you are the best d\*\*n specimen of a man we ever had in the place." Then he too bid me farewell.

Throughout the ordeal of my sentence at Wandsworth, my health remained in an excellent state. All my normal bodily functions operated without fail. I did suffer a considerable loss in weight to the extent that I could take the button hole on the front of my trousers, wrap my trousers around my waist and fasten the button hole over my suspender button at the back. Apart from this and a severe bruising, I was in good condition.

## **CHAPTER 10                      THE REACTION SETS IN**

It was Saturday afternoon, July 17, 1918 when I was released from Wandsworth. A sergeant and a corporal came to escort me back to Whitley in Surrey, the camp of the Eighth Reserve. We took the London District Electric Railroad from Wandsworth to Waterloo Station. From there we boarded a train which took us to the town of Godalming, a picturesque little town in Surrey.

From Godalming we walked the seven miles to the Eighth Reserve at Whitley — up and down the hills of Surrey on the seventeenth of July, wearing a winter overcoat and carrying a kit bag. "Give Evans a hand with the kit bag," the sergeant said to the corporal. "If we don't make time, we'll miss supper to-night." We settled down to a steady walk — seven miles after four weeks on a starvation diet.

When we arrived at the camp, we proceeded to the orderly room where my escort said to the orderly sergeant, "Evans hasn't eaten since Wednesday." This was on Saturday evening. The orderly sergeant began searching for an order book. "What are you looking for?" said another sergeant. "An order blank", said the first. "Well," said the other, "you better watch what you're doing with an order blank, or you'll be in the Glass House yourself." "I don't care what they do with me", said the first, "Evans is going to eat." He wrote out the order. No one actually realized that it was twenty-four days since I had eaten a proper meal, not just three days.

We went back to our hut and from there to the cookhouse. I knew that it would be dangerous for me to eat very much after having been almost a month with virtually nothing to eat. I limited myself to a mere bite or two. I was afraid to eat any more.

At the Whitley camp it was customary to give the men an occasional evening lunch. It just so happened that my arrival coincided with one of those special nights. Along about eight o'clock, some of the boys told me, "Evans, they're dishing out split pea soup to-night and it ought to be pretty good. Come and get your share."

I went to the kitchen, got my ration of soup and began to eat. I had eaten only three or four spoonfuls when I thought I must surely be going to die. I couldn't get my breath. I thought my end had come. Acting almost instinctively, I began to run up and down between the huts until this strange reaction wore off. Presumably the heat and consistency of the soup reacting upon my empty and shrunken stomach, produced this terrible sensation.

It would seem that I was to have little rest this night. As the evening stretched on, the men began to return to the hut. They were happy to see me back — so happy in fact that they decided to celebrate. They took two or three of the hut's fire-pails, emptied out the water, took them up to the canteen and brought them back filled with beer. Then they blanketed the windows to prevent the light being visible in the event of a zeppelin raid and then settled down to a night of merriment. Needless to say, after my recent experience in attempting to eat pea soup, I had very little of the refreshments supplied. The party continued all night long, interrupted only by the military policeman who shouted as he made his rounds, "Pipe down, you fellows, you're making too much noise."

When a man has served time in the "Glass House," military law demanded that he be given a four-day rest period before being required to do work. During this rest period, I gradually began to recuperate, but not without some difficulty. At breakfast on Sunday morning, I ate a little more than I had the day before and at dinner time when they served cold Australian mutton, brussels sprouts and new potatoes, I had a little more and I really enjoyed it. However, on Monday when I undertook to write a letter, I began to shake so badly that I could not control either the pen or the paper. This spell also in due course subsided.

One day during my four-day rest period, I went out in the evening with a couple of the other boys for a walk around the camp. As we walked, we passed the police station where sitting outside were the two big policemen who had brought me back from Frensham Pond. One of them said, "How did you get along with them up there, lad?" Without answering, I turned my shirt down off my shoulders. Keep in mind, a couple of weeks had passed since I had

received the beating with the rope. When he saw my back, the tears welled up in his eyes and came down his cheeks. "Man", he said, "they did everything they dared but shoot you."

On a couple of occasions during my stay at Whitley, one of the Irish policemen requested the authorities that I be allowed to do some work in the stables. When I arrived at the stables, the policeman would produce a letter from his girlfriend for me to read to him. He was illiterate. This man would have been about fifty years old, and apart from his army service, he had worked in the steel mills all his working life.

A night or so later I was sitting on my bed in the hut near the main door. It was too early to go to bed, and impossible to sleep in any case until the boys were all back and settled down. As I sat there, the door opened and who should walk in but my friend the sergeant major. He was a big husky Scotsman. I would have hated to have met this fellow behind a bayonet in the field. He came over and stood in front of me and I wondered what he had in mind.

He said, "Evans, there were seven sons in our family; six of them have died over there and I'm on draft." And he continued, "I would go away feeling a whole lot better if I thought I had your pardon for any part I had to play in your experience." I shook hands with him and assured him he had nothing to fear as far as I was concerned. I wished him all the luck in the world and I knew that he went away feeling much better than when he came. He too was killed in France.

I have never forgotten this incident. Here was a man, a Roman Catholic, who came to the conclusion that he had done me wrong, and he knew that the onus was upon him to seek my forgiveness if he wanted to receive it. And so with humble and contrite heart, he approached me man to man and asked for it. Herein is a lesson reminding us that we too must humble ourselves in the eyes of our Creator and be willing to seek His forgiveness. For unless we seek and unless we ask, we do not receive.

Near the end of my rest period, I began to wonder what event was in store for me. Having served time in Wandsworth, I was now supposed to be a soldier. Therefore, lest there be any misunderstanding, I went to the office of the Provost Sergeant. His name was Miller, formerly a member of the Hamilton Police Force. We were known to one another back home. I said to him, "Now sergeant, I have no more intention of soldiering now than when I came here in the first place. So you might as well put me in the clink right now." "All right," he said, "You're in the guard room now." The guard house was divided into three rooms: a waiting room, the office of the sergeant of the guard, and a cell block.

After a day or so in the cells, I was brought before the Commanding Officer. "Well, Evans," he said, "word has come from Ottawa that you are to be given your choice of any job in any branch of the service you wish to serve." "Well, sir," I said, "I certainly appreciate the consideration, but if I have to continue to wear a uniform, I'll have to say no."

In the army, if you don't make a choice, they choose for you. Thus it was decided forthwith that I should be transferred to the Railroad Troops.

The camp of the Railroad Troops was situated outside the town of Purfleet in Essex, just east of London. Admission to a new camp involved reporting to the guard house, presenting one's credentials and then being assigned to quarters. Since I was still a prisoner, I remained in the guard house.

Prisoners entering the guard house were at first confined to one large room while waiting to be sentenced. After being tried and sentenced, they were transferred into cells on the opposite side of the house. There were about five cells to a block with a corridor about eight feet wide in front of them.

In the pre-trial detention room, there was no furniture. Everyone slept on the floor rolled up in blankets like caterpillars in cocoons. There must have been twenty-five men there at one time; and a sinister lot they were. It appeared that for the most part, my floor-sharing companions were recruited from the "jungles" of Chicago. One old man, about sixty years of age, had served the greater part of his life in prison for murdering his wife. There were confessed second storey men who entertained the guards by describing their proficiency at illegal breaking and entering. Some were somber and said very little.

Among the soldiers in the detention room with me was an Irish lad. He had come all the way from France to see his mother in Ireland. When he reached his mother, he found her in very poor health. He was worried that either she would die before he returned again, or that he might be killed in France. He resolved, therefore, to stay a few extra days with her. When he decided to return to France, it began to dawn upon him that he did not know where his unit would be located. Fearing that he may become lost, he concluded that his safest course was to give himself up. The camp of the Railroad Troops was the most convenient depot for this purpose.

This night he was bedded down on the opposite side of the room from me. After a while he got up and walking across the darkened room without stepping on any of the other men on the floor, he lay down again beside me and whispered in my ear, "I guess you and I are the only two in the room who haven't spent most of our lives in prison." He was held under arrest for safe keeping until the next draft took him back to France.

Our camp was composed partly of Canadian troops and partly of British troops. All were fed with British Imperial rations, which were never as good as those of Canadian camps. I was told that just before my arrival they had been served green peas for breakfast, dinner and supper for three consecutive days — nothing else, just peas. For three days previous to that, the ration was boiled turnips — breakfast, dinner and supper.

Not long after my admission to the guard house, Sergeant Major Hargreaves, the camp commander came in to see me. He was a tall fine looking cavalry man, a real gentleman. He assured me that I would have a good time there; that these fellows were all non-combatants and they all navied on the railroad. "Well, Major," I said, "If they are all non-combatants, what are they doing carrying around those rifles and bayonets out there?" He passed off the remark and we continued chatting for a few moments. As he was leaving, one

of the guards said, "What do you think of Evans?" The major replied, "Evans and I are going to get along all right." And we did; he never tried to do any bullying.

One day a sergeant named Curtis, a handy man for the provost marshal's office, who controlled the handling of prisoners in the guard house, came in and ordered all men out on drill. Fearing that he had an ulterior motive, I refused to go. Upon my refusal, he led me to a dark cell at the end of the row. This cell was normally kept empty. He opened the door and said, "Get in." And he slammed the door and put a padlock on it. This occurred just after lunch, and I remained in the cell, without supper until breakfast the next morning.

Ordinarily if a man was put in such a cell, he would yell and shout and make a nuisance of himself. I had even seen it happen at another camp that three or four guards would come in and gag such a person. In the morning at breakfast, the sergeant returned, unlocked the door, swung it open, threw the lock across the floor and then left. One of the fellows who had been sleeping just outside the cell door said to me, "Evans, you had that sergeant nearly crazy last night." I said, "Oh, what happened?" He questioned, "Didn't you hear him come in and unlock that door?" "No", I replied, "I never heard anything." "Well", said the fellow, "he unlocked that door every thirty minutes as regular as a clock all night long." "Well", said I, "It didn't bother me a bit, I slept through it all." "It may not have bothered you", he went on, "but you certainly crucified that sergeant last night." Apparently what had given the sergeant so much concern was the fact that two men had hanged themselves in that very cell before I was there. He had expected that I would have put up a fuss. But the fact that I unwittingly slept peacefully through it all, caused him considerable uneasiness.

One day during a period when our rations consisted of beans three times a day, to the great delight of all, a tin of jam was thrown in to offset the monotony of the beans. The boys used to sing a little song — "What do you want with eggs and ham when you got plum and apple jam." It became rather serious, however, when you consider that this relatively small tin of jam had to be divided among as many as twenty men. The question was: "Who is going to divide the jam?" I could see that before that question was answered, there was going to be a fight and I wondered how these fellows from Chicago would make out. Surprisingly enough, just at the point where it appeared that someone was going to get hurt, the Chicago boys stepped in and stopped the fracas.

As time went on, the guard room gang changed as new men replaced those who had completed their term. One day in came another tin of jam and the same argument started, "Who's going to divide the jam?" said one of the newcomers. "I am" said another. "Oh no you aren't!" exclaimed one of the Chicago boys. "Well, who is then?", asked the first. "Evans will divide the jam", shouted another. "Will you do it, Evans?" "If that's what you want", I said, "Give me the can."

Assuming the attitude of a sergeant, I issued the command, "All right men, fall in." Without a protest, they lined up in single file and approached my position. I had a big spoon and I put one level spoonful of jam on each man's mess tin. When the last man had passed me, I said, "Now is there a man in the room who would like to trade his jam for the can?" A Chicago boy spoke up, "The can's your's, Evans." With that they all sat down with their backs against the wall and ate lunch. It was so quiet you could have heard a pin drop.

Now I took a little pride in this particular situation. Here I was, a conscientious objector, something to be ridiculed, spit upon and beaten. Yet I stood there holding the respect of that entire crew, many of whom would have been classed with the dregs of humanity.

## **CHAPTER 12                      ON DRAFT FOR FRANCE**

As time passed, I found myself virtually unoccupied except for eating, sleeping and standing around. Eventually I came once again before the commanding officer.

"Now, Evans", he said, "I have considerable sympathy for your case. I would like very much to do something for you, but I'm entirely helpless to do anything about your problem. My duty here is to make soldiers." Feeling that the officer was sincere, I said, "Sir, I probably understand your position in this matter a good deal better than you do mine. You do your duty, sir, and I'll do mine." "Will you accept my punishment?" he asked. "I see no reason why I shouldn't", I responded. With that he passed sentence — "Remanded for the first draft to France — 20 day detention."

In all my experiences, it seemed that I was never without a friend. When I returned to the guard-house, a chap stepped over to me and said, "Evans, how did you make out?" "I'm remanded for the first draft to France", I replied, "and I would like to get a letter away to London just as soon as possible." "Leave it to me", he responded. He left the guard-room returning shortly with writing paper, pencil, envelope and a stamp.

Asking permission of no one, I stood with my arm and paper against the wall and wrote a letter to the Standing Committee in London. I explained my present situation and stated that I would attempt to get a release from the guard-house, which would give me an opportunity to be taken to the main headquarters at Purfleet House in the town of Purfleet. I suggested to the Committee that they too should contact Purfleet House. Thus, with the Standing Committee working in conjunction with the Supreme Command, I felt that I might get a favourable hearing. Looking back, I often wonder how I ever had the nerve to suggest a course of action to a committee of Englishmen!

One morning, while we passed the time until we were to sail for France, a corporal came into the guard-house and said, "Evans, they want you down at the end of the camp." I went with him down to an old stable, which at one time would have held about four horses. The stalls had been removed and the floor was covered with fresh straw. This building was used as a gas warfare instruction chamber.

Standing in the middle of the road in front of the stable was an officer who I could see as we approached, was eyeing me up and down. I also was eyeing him up and down and was coming to the conclusion that he was not such a bad fellow. "Now Evans", he said, when I came up to him, "we're going to put you in tear gas. If that doesn't do you any good, we're going to put you into mustard gas, and you will be one sore boy when you come out of that."

And if that doesn't do you any good, we're just going to knock hell right out of you. Which do you want first?" "Just whatever you like," I replied.

The gas instructor had a mask on and he had another in his hand. "Come on, Evans", he commanded. I went with him to the stable door. He opened the door and shoved me into the chamber. It was filled with dense clouds of tear gas. From the outside you could see it oozing out through cracks in the walls. We were in there for just a moment or two when the instructor turned to me and holding out the spare mask, he shouted, "Here, put this mask on, put this mask on. You'll die in here, you'll die in here." "All right", I replied, "let's die here." Completely startled by my response, he ran to the door and kicked it as a signal to those on the outside that he wanted out. When the door was opened, we both got out as quickly as possible, but the instructor actually ran over to the officer, saluted and said, "Sir, that Evans is a d\*\*n good man."

This turn of events caused the officer to have second thoughts about any further efforts to force my cooperation, so they contented themselves with showing me the various kinds of gas crystals that could be used to generate lethal fumes, with their characteristic odours. This was my first experience with gas, but there was more to follow.

Some days later, they returned to give me another "lesson" in gas warfare. This time they brought handcuffs and a stretcher. Now, I am not entirely certain that the stretcher was intended for me. There were other men taking this training also. It may have been a precautionary measure in case of accidental mishap.

We were taken to an old greenhouse, a building about, thirty feet long and constructed partly below ground level. Only the glazed portions were above ground. This building was filled with chlorine gas. They put a gas mask on me and took me into the greenhouse along with the sergeant major and other men who were undergoing similar training. Unfortunately my mask was improperly fitted and was leaking. With my hands handcuffed behind my back, I could not adjust the mask, nor could I readily communicate my problem to the others. I certainly got a belly-full of chlorine. Even the sergeant major noticed it when we got out of the chamber. "Evans", he said, "You've got a touch of gas", and I concurred. He passed the situation off by remarking, "Oh, it will wear off."

When I went back to the guard-house, a big husky young Polish chap came in and seeing that I was gasping for breath began to shout, "They've gassed Evans, they've gassed Evans." He was so incensed and upset that he was ready to tear the place apart. I had quite a time calming him down, and assuring him that I was all right. But he exclaimed urgently, "Evans, head for the M.O.; you won't be able to speak in the morning." "Don't worry", I replied, "I'll be all right, don't bother about me." Fortunately the gas effect did wear off, but it took about three days before I was back to normal.

Thus ended my experience with gas. On page 23 of my pay-book was written: "This man refused to take anti-gas training — he was instructed in the wearing of respirator etc. and was compulsorily passed through gas having done no standard tests."

As the time drew near for our departure for France, men were systematically drawn from the guard-house and outfitted with full army kit. But they never came after me. One day a seasoned professional soldier who happened to be sitting near me in the guard-room said, "Evans, I don't believe they are going to put you on draft."

The night before our contingent left for France, I was rolled up in my blankets sleeping on the guard-room floor over against the wall, which was my usual position. When I awakened in the morning, the draft had gone. I had slept through the whole affair and had been completely oblivious to the exodus.

That morning I was taken before the C.O. who reported that word had come from headquarters that under no circumstances was I to be sent to France, but that I was to be remanded for a district court-martial. My only words to him were: "Thank you sir." The word 'district' used in conjunction with court-martial refers to a number of camps in the same area presided over by the same judge.

## **CHAPTER 13            COURT-MARTIALLED**

Having been spared from the draft to France, but now facing a district court-martial, the importance of getting to Purfleet House and contacting the Standing Committee was still foremost in my mind. I had told the Committee in my letter that I was going to try to get out of the guard-house and get to Purfleet, but I did not have the faintest idea of how to do it.

One day, into the guard house came a pleasant and bright young chap from headquarters in Purfleet. He had run afoul of the King's rules and regulations and had landed in jail himself. He was a quiet fellow and kept pretty much to himself. After a few days he came to me very confidentially and said, "Evans, I've been keeping company with a girl in London. Her father runs a chain of fish and chips shops right across London. She's coming down to visit me on Sunday afternoon, and I'd like to propose marriage to her, but I haven't the slightest idea of how to do it. Could you tell me how?" "Well," I replied, "I think we can manage that", and I proceeded to supply his deficiency.

When Sunday came and the girl arrived from London, the sergeant of the guard gave the young chap an hour out of jail to visit with his sweetheart. When he returned, he was walking on air; everything had worked perfectly and he expressed himself as being eternally in my debt. Almost every day he would say, "Evans, I wish there was something I could do for you." For awhile I only half listened to him, but one day as he continued to express his gratitude, an idea flashed through my mind.

"Maybe there is something you can do for me", I said. "What is it?" he replied. "You come from headquarters?" "Yes", he said. "You know the ropes pretty well," I continued. "Yes, I do", he retorted. "Can you tell me how to get out of here and get to the high command at Purfleet House?" I asked. "Well", he explained, "you stay awake until midnight to-night, and when the officer of the day comes in to count the prisoners, stand up and address him and

tell him you wish to be paraded to headquarters in Purfleet. He has to do it. He cannot refuse you."

That night, therefore, I carefully followed the instructions of my young friend. When I voiced my request, the officer answered me sarcastically and threatened what I was going to get if I did not change "my antics". Albeit, I ignored his caustic remarks and pressed my request until he agreed to comply.

My company left for France on August 6, whereas, as it worked out, the date of my imprisonment was August 27th. I had written to the Standing Committee previous to the August 6th date and had also made application to go to Purfleet House. Between August 6th and August 27th, I do not know what action was taken by the Standing Committee; but whether as a result of my efforts or by coincidence, the Canadian Standing Committee who visited Ottawa on August 20th were informed by Major Gregor Barclay, assistant to the Advocate General O. M. Biggar, that "first thing that morning, London had been cabled to send John H. Evans back at once to be dealt with here, and that the release will be decided upon."

This order from Canada failed to produce action, seeing that in actual fact I did not leave England until December 2, 1918. The reason for its failure I do not know. One can only speculate. It is possible that:

- (a). The cable was not actually sent.
- (b). The cable did not find its way to the proper authorities.
- (c). Seeing that I was subject to court-martial, my case may have been considered to have gone too far to change the procedure at that time.

Whatever the reason, the authorities did not inform the Canadian Standing Committee of my status or whereabouts. This information had to come from the Standing Committee in England. For some time Canada lost all Contact with me. One of our older sisters in Hamilton has often remarked that she well remembers the day when a cablegram arrived from England bearing the words "Have located Evans."

On the day of my court-martial I was taken to Purfleet along with another prisoner, a Jewish barber from Winnipeg, named Goldstein, who had been virtually kidnapped into the service. He had been advised by his lawyer to desert in order to place himself in a position to be heard. The night before the trial we had been given papers containing a summary of accusations against us.

I met Brother F. G. Jannaway (ADMIN'S NOTE: see discussion that follows regarding the change in the name) of the British Standing Committee in the office of the Battalion Sergeant Major. Bro. Jannaway had arrived from London that morning. The first thing the Battalion Sergeant Major did was to congratulate me on my "efficiency". He was referring to his approval of my conduct, in view of my beliefs and in the face of the harsh treatment I had received. Then he said, "Evans, it's all right for this man (Bro. Jannaway) to sit in court with you, but he will not be allowed to speak." Brother Jannaway agreed that this would be quite acceptable.

When the trial opened, all the prisoners were sworn in at once. Mr. Goldstein who had his lawyer with him, was heard first. The lawyer's words were brief and to the point. "If this court has any right to sentence this man, then sentence him, but I'd like to have him in a higher court." Immediately the court agreed to give him his discharge. It appears that to avoid the embarrassment of the truth in this case, the court, in conjunction with authorities in London, realizing that Goldstein had been improperly treated, took the expedient way out.

When my case came up, the adjutant read out the charges against me. The president of the court, an imperial major from Liverpool then addressed me. He was a typical, old style British soldier. "How do you plead", he asked, "guilty or not guilty." "Guilty, sir", I said. Also in the court-room was a little corporal who had been summoned to give evidence against me. He was very nervous and the day was quite warm. Sweat was pouring off him. I felt sorry for him, as I supposed he was wishing to be a thousand miles away from that court-room. When I pleaded guilty, I could see that he was greatly relieved, knowing that his testimony would not be required. The president of the court then informed me, "You realize, if you plead guilty, this court has no alternative but to find you guilty?" "Yes sir", I said, "I understand that." "Have you anything to say that might mitigate your punishment," he queried. "Yes sir," I affirmed, "I have."

I was never in better form than I was that morning as I started to make my defence. Commencing with the American Civil War, I traced the history of the Christadelphian sect to that present time, weaving into my story cardinal points of doctrine that pertained to my military stand. When I finally completed my testimony, the old major said, "Do you have proof of the things you have told the court this morning?" "Well, sir", I replied, "while I have no physical evidence with me to substantiate my testimony, I do know what I have told the court to be the facts." Then the adjutant, referring to Brother Jannaway, addressed the president saying, "Are you going to allow this man to speak?" The old major was quick to reply, "Yes."

Brother Jannaway was a little man, but exhibited an imposing appearance and personality. In my opinion he was a man "raised up" for the purpose in England at that time. Arising to his feet, Bro. Jannaway's first words were: "Gentlemen, I have the proof of what Evans has told the court this morning", and he went on, "When sentence is passed, I should like to be notified." This the court promised to do.

In a court-martial proceeding, at that time, the court did not pass sentence, but only made a recommendation for punishment or otherwise, which had to be ratified in another court in London, before the sentence could be implemented. Thus for several days I continued to be around the guard-room awaiting word of my sentence. With time on my hands and the memories of Wandsworth still clearly engrained on my mind, I began to be apprehensive about what punishment should be handed down by the court. I was afraid lest they send me back to the "Glass House" again and I began to make up my mind that in such an event, I should go on a hunger strike and die there.

That night as I lay down on my blanket on the floor, with my shoes under my head for a pillow, I prayed to God that He might show me in a dream what my end would be.

And dream I did.

I dreamed that a corporal came to the guard-house door and led me out right on to the parade ground where the whole regiment was assembled. There were drums stacked and every officer occupied his station. The parade ground was on a slope; thus as I approached, I could see every man and every man could see me. The corporal escorted me to a pre-established point within arm's reach of the sergeant major. The sergeant major then reached out in full ceremonial manner, snatching my hat from my head and threw it in the dust. Then the adjutant began reading out my crimes against the good conduct of the Canadian Army, finally completing his charge with the pronouncement that I should be confined under penal servitude at hard labour for a period of twelve months.

Then my dream changed and I found myself being taken to a large prison. I was ushered through a door into a broad prison corridor and told to report to the guard at the side door. Gazing down the corridor I observed an old man waiting by a side door. I started to walk toward him and as I approached, he called out, "Court-Martial, you're late." I thought to myself, "What difference does that make, I'm not going any place." Then he said, "Come, walk to and fro on this wall." I stepped past him, and went down a few steps on to a stone coping, about twenty inches wide and about seventy-five feet long, running along the front of a cellar area-way. I walked the full length of the wall. The sun was shining brightly and as I looked up I could see that the ivy growing up the prison wall was just beginning to turn colour. I said to myself in my dream, "I know now that I do not walk alone."

Three days after my dream, I was informed that I should be prepared to be "read out" the next morning. Being "read out" refers to the imposition of the sentence of a court-martial. In the morning they came, just as they had done in my dream and took me out on to the parade ground, where there must have been a thousand men assembled. And just as my dream had portrayed, my hat was thrown in the dust, the charges against me "read out" and my sentence pronounced.

When the ceremony ended and the regiment was dismissed, as I began walking back to the guard-room, a soldier came up and said to me, "Evans, when the sergeant major threw your hat in the dust this morning, there wasn't a man in the battalion that didn't want to break ranks and mob him." And he continued defiantly, "What could they have done?" "It was a good thing you didn't do it," I replied with a somewhat astonished expression. "I certainly appreciate knowing that the men felt so sympathetic toward me, but", I went on, "had you broken ranks and mobbed the officer, I would have been executed for promoting mutiny and many men would have been killed or injured and others court-martialled and perhaps shot for taking part. As things stand, I'll be all right, don't worry about me."

## CHAPTER 14      PENTONVILLE PRISON

Three days after being "read out", word came that I should get ready to travel. I was taken down to the Provost Marshal's office where I met the man who was given the job of taking me to Pentonville Prison in London. He was a tall, well-dressed good looking corporal.

We went to London by train and my escort pointed out to me many interesting historic sites en route. We passed the home of Guy Fawkes, a lovely mansion just outside North Barking. Fawkes was the man who, in the year 1605 attempted to blow up the parliament buildings in London.

At one point where we had to change trains, the corporal left me on the station platform and went away for quite some time. I had no idea where he went or what he was doing. When he returned, I began to laugh. "What are you laughing at?" he said in sympathetic amusement. "Oh nothing", I chuckled; but he knew what it was. "Well, Evans", he said smiling, "if you want to run away, I'll let you. Away you go", he motioned, realizing of course, that I had more common sense than to run away.

As we continued on our journey, the corporal quipped, "Well Evans, you can tell your friends that you travelled on four different railroads on your way to jail in London." Then in a more serious vein he said, "We must get to Pentonville by noon hour, otherwise we shall have to go back to Purfleet and start all over again tomorrow." Apparently the prison would admit new inmates only until twelve noon each day.

We arrived at King's Cross Station, our last stop, from which we could walk to the prison. It was just twelve o'clock when we approached the main entrance. The guard was just commencing to close the big gates. My escort shouted to the guard across the street, "Wait a minute, I've got a man for you." We passed through the gate and the old guard shut it behind us.

When we came up to his desk at the prison door, he said, "What was your trouble, lad?" I answered, "I'm a conscientious objector." "Well," he said sadly, "I'm afraid my wife would have very little sympathy for you. We've lost all we had over there." My heart sank at these words, and a wave of sincere sympathy swept through me, as I contemplated the anguish of that elderly couple whose sons had all been slain in that accursed war.

I bade farewell to my escort and a guard accompanied me into the prison. As we walked along he asked me, "Are you willing to work?" "If you'll work", he continued, "you won't be in here very long." He then put me in a cell and left me for awhile, returning a little later with my dinner.

It was twelve noon on the 27th day of August when I entered Pentonville Prison. By ten o'clock in the morning the following day I had been "processed," which involved a bath, a hair-cut as well as prison clothes and shoes. Unlike the other prisoners, court-martials did not wear the common prison garb. I was given a nice grey suit which included trousers, a

military type tunic and a cadet type hat. There were no marks or identification on it. The other prisoners wore banana yellow suits bearing what was termed the "British Broad Arrow" marking all over the suit.

The guard then opened my cell door and led me out into the corridor and told me to report to the guard at the side door, just as he had done in my dream. As I walked out and came to within speaking distance of the guard, he called out, "Come, court-martial, you're late." What he actually meant was that the group with whom I was to exercise had already gone. So he said, "Come, walk to and fro on the wall." This was the very wall I had seen in my dream; every block, every crack was the same. Turning around and looking up, my eyes fell upon the ivy, just beginning to turn colour, exactly as I had dreamed it. I then knew, most assuredly that I was not walking alone.

Pentonville Prison was opened in 1842 and is the oldest prison in London, with the exception of the famous Tower of London. It was designed for solitary confinement in cells measuring thirteen feet long, seven feet broad and nine feet high. There were five halls of such cells. I discovered that I was in the same prison where Sir Roger Casement, the Irish revolutionary had been imprisoned and executed in 1916. When we went out to exercise each morning, we passed his grave. Sometimes we would cross the very track upon which he would have walked from the death-cell to the hanging-house.

When a man was executed in the prison, he was buried alongside of the wall which ran right around the prison. There was a considerable row of graves to be seen there. At each grave, bricks were cut out of the wall and a six inch square stone bearing the initials of the deceased was set into the cavity.

In the afternoon my warden gave me my bed which was made from three ten-inch-wide planks raised up slightly from the floor by means of cleats. On top of the planks was placed a thin straw mattress about two and one-half inches thick. A small straw-filled pillow was also supplied. Surprisingly enough, this bed became very comfortable after awhile. I could not have asked for an improvement.

Before I was taken from Purfleet to go to Pentonville, one of the Chicago boys, a rather bright but serious chap who found out that I was to serve a twelve month term, took me aside and talked to me like a father would to his only son, about life in prison. He told me things to do and things not to do; one of which was that under no circumstances should I trade library books with the man in the next cell to me. It sounded like an innocent thing to do; that if I had a book and my neighbour had a book and there remained a few days before the prison librarian came around, that we should trade books.

I heeded my instructions, however, and on faith, as it were, refrained from trading books. I later found that the prison officials were very much opposed to book trading and would at times make a cell search when their suspicions were aroused. A book could be used, presumably, for the transfer of messages and even articles from cell to cell. Thus by abiding by this advice, before I knew the reason why, I was prevented from getting into serious trouble or being innocently involved in a prison plot.

Another piece of advice which my Chicago "tutor" gave me was that I should trust no one, regardless of who he was or where he came from — not a soul, and he gave me a considerable lecture; every bit of which I carefully noted in my memory.

One day the chap in the next cell informed me that the Quakers had been watching me from the time I had stepped off the boat at Liverpool, and that all I had to do was to say the word and they would be at my side. I do not know where he got his information, but I thanked him and explained that I was already in the charge of a committee. Some people in my situation, on account of the apparent ineffectiveness of the Standing Committee, may have been tempted to resort to the aid of the Quakers. But I was not at all worried, and with my Chicago advisor's admonition still fresh in my memory, I took no chances.

I used the term "apparent ineffectiveness" with respect to the Standing Committee, not to suggest that there was fault to be found with the Committee, but to indicate its helplessness in my case. The following letter, written by Brother Walter Hinton, to Brother Jannaway adequately illustrates the point. The letter copy was so faint and tattered that a suitable photographic reproduction could not be made. It is reproduced here in exactly the same form as the copy.

322 Caroline St., S., Hamilton, Ont., October 8/18

Dear Brother Jannaway;—

The arranging Brethren have instructed me to write and thank you for the interest you have taken in the case of our Brother John Evans. It has been a source of comfort to us to know that a reliable brother was doing all that could be done for him, and I can assure you that your kindness has been greatly appreciated by all of our brethren and sisters, also the kindness of the brethren associated with you in this work. Please convey our thanks to them.

We are entirely ignorant of conditions existing in the English prison, and we are therefore helpless to do anything ourselves, so if it is at all possible for any of your brethren to visit our brother, we shall be grateful for it. We are well aware of the fact that visiting cannot be done without incurring some expense, so we are enclosing an order for three pounds (£3.), for your use; more will be sent from time to time, as you may need it, so do not hesitate to let us know when more is needed. Realizing our helplessness in the way we do, we ask you to let us defray all expenses of any brother you may choose to send.

Again thanking you for your kindness, I remain, Your brother in Christ,  
ENC.

Hamilton Christadelphian Ecclesia  
Recital Hall, Conservatory of Music

As time went on, I increased in favour with prison personnel. One morning a warder opened my door and gave me a chevron. "Sew this on your sleeve", he said, "We want to make you a corporal." I should point out here that the term "corporal" had nothing whatsoever to do with military affairs. It was merely a means of recognizing the good behaviour of a prisoner and entitled him to more privileges, such as permission to have a visitor once in awhile and being put in a greater position of trust.

My first month at Pentonville was occupied in the repairing of mail bags which were made out of heavy canvas. This work was done in the cell. Each morning we were taken out for an hour's exercise and each Wednesday we took a bath. There were no toilet facilities in the cell, only a masonry pot. The meals were plain and simple. Breakfast consisted of a pint of porridge with no sugar or milk. Lunch was often bean and barley soup. A typical supper would consist of bread, cocoa and a piece of codfish served in a tin can.

After a month of cell work, a prisoner was allowed to work in the prison shop. The shop was like a medium size factory containing sewing machinery and employed about one hundred men. My task consisted of sewing pockets on letter carriers' bags. Shop work was carried out for six hours per day.

The first day I entered the shop someone said, "Hello, Canada, we've been expecting you." Another said, "Never mind, Canada, you'll be home for Christmas." Some of the inmates were school teachers and were, like myself, conscientious objectors.

Everything in prison was done to a certain routine. In the morning you arose, dressed and stood your bed up against the wall. Breakfast was followed by exercise, then cell or shop work and finally, after supper, reading time until "lights out" at nine o'clock. Each cell was equipped with a stool and a small table over which hung an electric light. Between the time that night fell and until "lights out" it was necessary to suspend a blanket across the cell window as an air raid precaution. Previous to my arrival, a bomb from a Zeppelin had fallen just at the side door of the prison, leaving a crater big enough to bury a truck.

There were no inside sanitary plumbing facilities at Pentonville when I was there. The water closets were located in the prison yard, placed back to back in rows. The passage of time brought me a second chevron and more "privileges". For instance when we were on exercise in the yard, the guard, seeing my chevrons would call out my number and order me to check the toilets. When he called out, "Sixty-eight, check the toilets", I would go and flush all the toilets, see that no one was hiding, then returning to the exercise line and report as I passed, "All correct, sir." Thus the routine went on.

One day I was called into the office of the prison governor. "Would you like a visitor?" he said. "Yes, I would," I replied. "All right" he said, after which I was returned to my cell. In a few day's time I was informed one afternoon that I had a visitor.

I was taken to a room of such elegant decoration as I had never seen before. It was all trimmed with rich oak. In the centre of the room was a solid oak table about five feet by seven feet, and about one and one-half inches thick. There were no screens or bars in the room, nothing of a prison atmosphere whatsoever. Sitting at the table was Brother John Oowler, a man of about forty-five years of age. Brother Oowler operated an importing business in London. He was well dressed and sported a moustache and spats. The guard declared, "Now, gentlemen, there is nothing to pass over the table."

We had a memorable little meeting. We read the ninth Psalm which contained those comforting words: "The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of

trouble. And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee; for thou Lord has not forsaken them that seek thee."

After this we had a prayer and a fine visit together. The time passed quickly and soon the warder returned and said, "Gentlemen, I hate to break up this nice visit, but the young man's supper is getting cold." Shaking hands and bidding Brother Owlser farewell, I went back into the prison corridor only to find that everything was quiet, the cells were all locked and I was locked out. I walked up and down the corridor until a young guard came along who returned me to my cell again.

Being very much aware that my conduct in prison was being fully observed and noted, I was careful in my selection of books from the library, to choose only those that would be acceptable to the prison officials. One such book was a story of the great Boer War. I was just five years old when that war took place, but strangely enough, I remembered certain things about it — names of generals, places and certain events such as the relief of Ladysmith and I always wanted to know more about it. It was a bigger than average book, about two and one-half inches thick, a lot of reading. I read this book, along with the life of General Gordon, Hiawatha and several others, which time had never afforded me the opportunity of doing. I also read the Bible through twice during this time.

Certain events stay in one's mind more permanently than others. I recall one Sunday as I was sitting in my cell, a church service was being held in the prison. I did not know whether it was in the chapel or in a corridor, but I will always remember the singing. There must have been a hundred or more voices by the sound of it, singing old church hymns. As I listened to these lofty melodies flooding the prison corridors, I thought that in all my life I had never heard anything so beautiful.

## **CHAPTER 15                      HOMEWARD BOUND**

The following Sunday, October 13, 1918, while I was sitting as usual in my cell, the assistant governor of the prison came to my cell and after establishing my identification, he told me that I was going to be released under special orders from the home secretary of Great Britain. "Bring your sheets and your pillow slip," he said, "and come down to the desk." Well, I guess I just stood there looking at him in astonishment. "Come, come," he said, "you're going out."

I picked up my bedding as requested and followed him down to the desk. I had had neither a shave nor a hair cut in over two months. I am sure I could have passed for a "hillbilly". One of the guards who began to size up the situation commented: "We can't let this young man go out on the street looking like that." So they hunted up a pair of clippers and made a notable contribution to my appearance before allowing me to venture forth.

I was assigned to a sergeant and a corporal, who were to escort me back to Purfleet. As we left the prison, the corporal suggested: "Our train doesn't leave until three o'clock. Let's catch a double deck bus and take Evans on a tour of London." We boarded one of these

famous London buses and were fortunate enough to get front seats on the top deck, from which vantage point we enjoyed a considerable tour of old London. The end of our tour brought us to Fenchard Street Station from which we boarded our train for Purfleet, arriving back just about supper time.

On the way, the corporal remarked, "Now, Evans, you are going back to Canada, and they must intend to send you back very soon, otherwise they would not have released you on a Sunday." As I soon discovered, my departure time was scheduled for Wednesday, October 16th.

When the day arrived, I was escorted to Tilbury docks, where a tender was tied in readiness to transfer me, along with other conscientious objectors to a ship out in the Thames estuary. I boarded the tender, but the purser, upon examining my papers, found them out of order and refused to take me. This was quite a let-down. I was taken back to Purfleet where I spent another six weeks in the guard-house doing little else but eating, sleeping and putting in time.

It is interesting to note that the letter sent by Brother Hinton to Brother Jannaway, being dated October 8th, would not have reached its destination until I was out of Pentonville, and back at the guard-house in Purfleet. Whether or not Brother Jannaway was informed of my release from Pentonville, I do not know. It is most likely that the Canadian Standing Committee was never able to determine my whereabouts, except for one brief period, as I mentioned previously. During this six-week period, I was refused any privileges, even mail.

Meanwhile the Canadian Standing Committee continued its persistent effort to gain recognition from the Canadian Government for Christadelphian conscientious objectors. As late as October 5th, the Committee received a telegram from Ottawa, (see page 26 of C.S.C. Report) which stated: "Government consider inadvisable to sanction any special provision for Christadelphians..."

This government policy, followed by my release from Pentonville only eight days later and again followed by my re-internment three days after that, indicated either a seriously disorganized government operation or a very deliberate attempt to frustrate the Standing Committee, while at the same time endeavouring to break my spirit by psychological means. As I look back on this whole affair, I wonder if a mixture of the two was not evident. Fortunately, however, for all concerned, during this six-week period of confinement, the war came to an end, thus bringing about a change in my situation which could not have otherwise been accomplished.

On December the second, at five o'clock in the morning, after six weeks of waiting, I was awakened, taken down to the cook-house where I was given a breakfast of oatmeal porridge, a smoked cisco, a piece of bread and a cup of tea. From there we walked back down to the station where the train was standing. As I got on board, my sergeant escort put me in charge of a corporal from Belleville, Ontario, and we became, as it were, buddies until we arrived at his home town.

Our point of embarkation was Southampton where we boarded the Aquitania, a brand new ship ready to make her maiden voyage. She was designed as a passenger ship and although not yet completed, she was carrying ten thousand Canadians back home.

As we walked up the gang plank, we could see the ship's military commander along with a few other officers standing at the top. One of the officers was a Lieutenant Heath of Hamilton, with whom I had a speaking acquaintance back home. I had often met him and his wife as they passed our Conservatory of Music meeting hall, on Sundays. When we approached the officers, Lieutenant Heath said, "Evans, is this as far as you got?" "Yes, sir," I replied. Then the corporal informed the commander that he was my escort and he explained to the commander concerning my situation. This seemed to worry the commander who began to consider putting me down in the hold. Heath, however, came to my rescue, and explained to the commander, "Evans is all right; he wants to get home to his wife and family just as much as the rest of us, don't you, Evans?" "Yes, sir, that's right," I replied instantly, and with that, the commander was satisfied and gave my escort and me the freedom of the ship.

We were five days crossing the Atlantic, arriving at Halifax on December 7th. From Halifax, we travelled by rail to Belleville where my escort bade me farewell. I was the only man on the train who did not have a pass. This fact was publicized a little by some of the men in their exuberance, but I had had too much experience by this time to be disturbed by sarcasm.

At one of our stops along the way, the women of the town brought cakes and pies down to the station for the soldiers. When I accepted a piece of cake from one of the ladies, a fanatical sergeant major began to berate me severely in front of the whole group. He raved like a maniac and derided me mercilessly in front of the women. They, however, were quite uninfluenced by his tirade and calmly continued to distribute their baked goods, which we all enjoyed very much.

When at last we arrived at Toronto, I was escorted to Parks School Barracks, where, upon our arrival, we found a considerable assembly of soldiers, along with many wives and sweethearts. Although it was two o'clock in the morning, the ship's commander was there in good form, entertaining the ladies. My escort and I stood for a few moments looking on.

When at last my hunger pangs got the better of my patience, I turned to my escort and referring to the commander, said, "Never mind him, get me a cup of tea and a roast beef sandwich." Without a word he turned on his heel and left the officer and in a few moments came back bearing the food I had requested. This action on my part may have seemed a little strange, but it must be understood that I was a prisoner and as such was not in a position to move about freely. My escort, no doubt, was just as hungry as I was, since neither of us had eaten since supper, nor had we had any sleep. Hence his willingness to obey my "command" was not difficult to understand.

The weather was unseasonably cold that year, the temperature being close to zero upon our arrival in Toronto. After having eaten, I proceeded downstairs to the cells where it was

warmer and where I could find a suitable bed in which to catch a few remaining hours of sleep that night.

I was under open arrest at the barracks for several days and was given the job of tending a few huge pot-bellied coal stoves which were used to heat the barrack's dining-room. Each stove was five feet high and took half a bag of coal at each feeding. I made it my business to do an expert job of this assignment keeping the stoves properly blackened in the cooler sections and carefully whitewashing the parts which got red hot. The cook was so impressed with my performance that he offered to give me a special dinner if I would tend his stove in the same way. This I agreed to do and that evening I enjoyed a tasty dinner in the company of the orderly officer.

In due course I was transferred to another military camp located on the grounds of The Canadian National Exhibition in south Toronto. Here I was also under open arrest and had the freedom of the camp. Often, especially in the evenings, I used to take long walks all around the grounds. It put in the time, provided me with exercise and a time to think clearly as I paced through the brisk December air.

There was a little sergeant in the camp who displayed more than a normal share of conceit. One day he approached me and said, "Evans, come with me." I went with him into the basement of one of the exhibition buildings. The sergeant opened a door and pushed me into a room which was about forty feet long and twelve feet wide. Along one side of the room was a platform built up about two feet above the floor. At the mid-length of this platform was another section which projected out towards the centre of the room. Standing shoulder to shoulder along the platform was a row of about twenty officers.

The sergeant led me to about the mid-point of the group, and then, in a very annoyed sort of voice demanded, "Now, Evans, what's this all about?" After having experienced so much abuse and ill-treatment over the past months, having returned to Canada, the war being over, this question and the setting in which it was framed did nothing more than annoy me.

Deliberately taking my time, I ran my eyes along the row, looking each officer up and down and straight in the eye. Among the officers was a man with whom I had become acquainted. I did not know his name, but it had been rumoured that his wife was a Christadelphian. We had spoken to one another several times and I had wondered about his interest in me. Having eyed the officers and collected my thoughts, I spoke slowly and deliberately, my voice commencing at a low pitch and finally ending in a louder assertive tone. "Sirs," I said, "I am a conscientious objector. I refuse to be a soldier, in fact, I refuse to act in a soldierly manner at all."

At this point, my officer acquaintance took two steps forward along the projecting portion of the platform, sprang to attention, clicked his heels and said, "That's right, Evans, if you're going to do it, do it right." Well, if the floor could have opened up and swallowed the little sergeant who was standing beside me, he would have been a happy man. As it was, he slunk out of the room like a dog with his tail between his legs, not even waiting to see if I was coming or staying. The group of officers then broke up and nothing more came of the incident.

Some time later I was paraded before Major Black, a great disciplinarian, who without giving me a chance to speak, said, "Twenty-eight days detention." "Sir," I said, "I refuse your punishment." I knew that twenty-eight days detention meant twenty-eight days of the Canadian version of the "Glass House," which in this case was Stanley Barracks. A sergeant major gave me a shove out of the door and took me over to the quartermaster's stores to be outfitted for my detention period.

I knew that they would not accept me at Stanley Barracks unless I had a full kit, and I had made up my mind that I would have no part of this outfitting. I stood before the quartermaster sergeant watching him stack up equipment for me. The pile grew bigger and bigger. Finally I said, "Sergeant, you might as well stop, because I won't accept a square inch of that stuff." At that moment I walked the battalion sergeant major who was going to help the quartermaster sergeant assemble my kit. "Major," I said, "let's get this straight; you may hang me, shoot me or starve me to death, but I will not accept a scrap of this stuff." These words, as if by magic, brought a halt to the whole proceedings. The sergeant major politely excused himself and slipped away. I was taken to one of the exhibition ticket offices which was used for a guard-house and nothing more came of this incident either.

While I was in this guard-house, my officer acquaintance came in one day and said, "I thought you had been sentenced to twenty-eight days in Stanley Barracks." "Yes, sir," I said, "but I refused the major's punishment; and he should have put me over for a district court-martial, but he didn't do it." They thought that they were going to get away with that, thinking that I was unacquainted with military law. "Well," he said, "they can't keep you here; they have to do something different than this." Whether he talked to his superiors about this or not, I never did find out.

Just a few days before Christmas, an old school chum of mine, a man by the name of Laing was acting as sergeant of the guard. "Jack," he said, "to-morrow afternoon Colonel Butcher, the camp commandant is coming in on an inspection tour. If I were you, I'd be prepared to give him a little talk. He's not a bad head, and it might not do any harm." I thanked my friend and sure enough, at about four o'clock the next day, in comes Colonel Butcher. I was in a line of about twenty prisoners, as Colonel Butcher walked past on his inspection tour. He walked up to the top of the line and then came back, stopping directly in front of me. Looking me up and down, he said, "What's a man like you doing in here?" Now at that time I did not realize that Colonel Butcher was actually looking for me that day. I did not find out until some time later that my wife, having heard that I was back in Canada, came down to Toronto and made an appeal before the Colonel for my release and discharge, explaining to him at that time some of the circumstances of my case.

Being somewhat prepared for this opportunity, I replied to the colonel, "Sir, I have just returned from overseas as of the second of December. I have not been granted a single day's leave to go home to see my wife and family. Would you soldier under those circumstances?" "No," he replied, "I would not." You see, it was assumed that every soldier coming home from overseas was entitled to immediate leave to visit his wife and family. The colonel's unexpected reply precipitated a discussion wherein the guards forgot they

were guards and the prisoners forgot they were prisoners and all were standing around in a circle with the colonel and I in the middle, vigorously discussing my case.

Eventually I said to the colonel, "Sir, if you will give me a week's leave to go home to my wife and family, I'll be back on time, even if I have to walk." "Evans", the colonel replied, "I believe you would. You have been most unjustly treated." He continued, "Would you be willing to put in writing what you told me this afternoon?" "Yes, sir", I said, "I would." Turning to the sergeant, he said, "Sergeant, you see that Evans has every facility to put his statement in writing. I'll be back at four o'clock to-morrow to pick it up personally."

I was then provided with paper and all necessary items with which to work, and I sat up most of the night writing out my whole story, including dates and times, names and places, which at that time were fresh in my mind. The following day Colonel Butcher, true to his word, returned to pick up my statement.

First World War military uniforms were equipped with brass buttons and other brass items. The soldiers seemed to do nothing but polish brass — an endless job. I, however, had never shined a button. When the colonel came in, his first words were, "What I'd like you to do is to shine up your brass. I'm going to give you a week's leave and when you come back, we are going to see about getting your discharge." "Just one more thing", he continued, "when you come back from the Administration Building to the Dufferin St. gate, if you meet an officer on the sidewalk, salute him; and what you do when you get outside that gate, I don't care." I promised that I would live up to his requests.

This leave that I had been promised did not actually take place until a day or so after Christmas. However, the guard house gang were provided with a delicious Christmas dinner which helped to diminish the disappointment of being deprived of the company of our families on Christmas Day.

When the time came, a young corporal from the Administration Building was sent over to get me. As we walked together, the young chap remarked, "You know, I've heard so much about you, with all the talk going on, that when the colonel sent me to get you, I hesitated to come. The colonel, noticing my reluctance exclaimed, 'Go get the man, he won't bite you'."

When we got to the Administration Building, Colonel Butcher and Major Black, along with a couple of other officers were waiting for us. The first thing Major Black did was to apologize for having sentenced me to twenty-eight days detention. He explained, "I didn't know your story, Evans. I can tell you, you were railroaded overseas. If you had a mind to do it, there is no reason why you could not make every man who had a finger in the pie, smart and smart good." Then the colonel said, "Evans, have you enough money to see you through your leave." I replied, "Yes sir, I'm all set." We shook hands and they wished me all the luck in the world and I left for home.

The termination of my leave came on New Year's day. I was attending the Hamilton Ecclesia's New Year's tea at the Conservatory of Music meeting hall in uniform. At about eight o'clock in the evening, I slipped away from the hall and boarded a train for Toronto

and Exhibition Camp. After about a week's time I was given my discharge. I was surprised to find, when I got it, that it was an honourable discharge—honourable inasmuch as it was not dishonourable. It was the same document that any soldier would receive on account of demobilization.

My discharge at this time seemed to indicate a recognition on the part of the army that I had been wrongfully treated, rather than indicating any change in the attitude of the Canadian Government. It was not until the Second World War that the government admitted error in this respect.

I was informed that there was two hundred dollars pay waiting for me at the paymaster's office, but I declined the opportunity to take it. The only money I received from the army during the ten months of my sojourn was twenty dollars which I received from the paymaster on the boat during our return trip to Canada. I was called to the paymaster's office. When I arrived, there was twenty dollars lying on the desk for me. I explained to the young fellow handling the money that I had not been accepting money from the army. "I don't care what you do", he said, "as long as you get it out of here." I knew if I did not put it in my pocket, someone else would; so I thought I might as well accept it. This then was my sole financial remittance from the army.

Now, whether my service was of any importance to the purpose of God or not, I don't know. I suppose we will have to wait until the judgment of Christ.

## **EPILOGUE**

The substance of my father's personal experience in this story was tape recorded during the summer of 1969. The recording was then typed and during the fall of the same year, we reviewed the account, page by page, adding other details and points of clarification. At this time my father was in failing health and a trip to England which we were considering to take in the Spring of 1970 for the purpose of visiting some of the areas mentioned in this account, had to be put aside in the hope that another year might effect an improvement in his health.

Meanwhile, I commenced the formal arrangement of my father's story in its present form, contacting him from time to time for further information. His knowledge of detail was remarkable, considering that the events in the account occurred over fifty years ago. Throughout my lifetime, I have heard him rehearse many elements of his experience many times. The story was always the same, it never varied nor did it suffer from exaggeration over the years. The memory of these events was indelibly written in his mind.

But with all the anguish he suffered and the abuse he received, he bore no resentment nor harboured any grudge against the society of his day. But rather, he returned to his family and community, took up where he had left off and for the next half century led a highly

commendable life, both in his church and within his social structure. Those who knew him will attest to this fact. In his opinion, this was nothing more than his Christian duty.

On June the sixth, 1971, his health further deteriorating, he suffered a fatal heart attack and passed away in his sleep, while visiting his son, Brother Ronald Evans, and his family in Parry Sound, Ontario.

He was laid to rest on June the ninth, in Hamilton's Woodland Cemetery. "We have come to a time", said Brother K. G. McPhee, who conducted the funeral service, "when moral issues which should be straightforward and clear-cut have been blurred with psychological considerations, modernization of morality, situation ethics and a great variety of philosophies. When John Evans was approaching manhood, the issues were still being set forth in stark relief. The fact of God was accepted. Men and women made a choice to be on God's side, or not to be; and John chose to be on God's side. He chose, as did Joshua and his family, 'to serve the Lord'."

My father's friends and relatives paid tribute to him with many flowers, and forty-one trees were planted in Israel in his memory. This especially would have touched his heart for in the land of Israel and in the Hope of Israel lay his foremost desire.

In the Spring of 1966, my father and I, along with four other Christadelphians took a trip to Israel. One of my foremost recollections was when, on one of the most beautiful spring days that I have ever experienced, we stood on the northern slopes of the shore of the Sea of Galilee, looking down toward the azure sea across a carpet of green grass, decorated with a profusion of wild flowers. It was in this very place where, almost two thousand years ago, Jesus of Nazareth taught the multitude of his followers with the words, "Consider the lilies of the field..."

It was upon such a beautiful Spring day as this that we laid our father to rest. The sun shining upon his oaken casket reflected golden beams, which in the minds of a mother and sons, betokened the character of the man it bore. In due course, a stone was erected to mark his grave, upon which was engraved, "Awaiting the Resurrection".

It is the opinion of this writer that the faith and fortitude of men like my father, during the "great conflict", won a significant victory, establishing a freedom that had hitherto not been recognized by the Government of Canada. The Great War was considered to have been a war to end war. In this purpose it failed utterly.

In the opinion of the Christadelphians of Canada, the war brought about two principal events. The more important one was the destruction of the Turkish power in Palestine, thus preparing the way for the establishment of the State of Israel. The second, which was put into effect during the Second World War, was the Canadian Alternative Service Act, which provided a way by which sincere Canadian men, whose religious conscience forbade their doing violence to their neighbours, could be recognized by an enlightened government.

This need was highlighted in 1917 by Britain's Lord Hugh Cecil at the time of the conscription issue in England:

"State worship is undoubtedly the poison which has affected Germany. My country right or wrong, is a popular version of the doctrine that the state has the right to insist upon implicit obedience, but is itself above the law and above morality. By firmly resisting this doctrine, British statesmen are doing more for the cause of liberty than would be gained by forcing a small body of conscientious objectors into the army, or penalizing them for refusing to serve."

(C.C.S.C. Report pages 48 and 49).

THE END.