

Anthony Thomas Gammon Tribunal Reports

Military Service Tribunals- Transcriptions of Newspaper Reports

ATG-001

From Bexhill Chronicle 15th July 1916 – Local Tribunal

“Thomas Gammon (38), married, stationer, toy and fancy dealer, of St Leonard’s road, claimed exemption on conscientious grounds.

The town clerk read the answers given by the Appellant to the list of questions framed for this class of objector by the authorities.

Mr Gammon said that as a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's son, he was for bidden to take part in military service, but was willing to take up work of a national character, not connected with the military.

The military authorities did not assent to the application for exemption. The Town Clerk read over the replies to the questions, in which Mr Gammon said he would take part in non--competent work if not part of the actual Army work, and quoted St John X3 I I I, 36, and other texts. They were forbidden, he claimed, to use carnal weapons. Mr Gammon added in his answers that he had been converted in January 1913. He had a certificate to prove that, to the effect that he then made a profession, he was a member of the Church of God, and if he were to join in military service he would be put out of fellowship. He had asked for admission to the Fellowship, in April 1914, and had been received in September of the same year.

The Town Clerk: Are you a member of any other religious or political body? Mr Gammon: I am not permitted to join any other body. Up to the present he had not been called upon to make any great sacrifice on account of his religion, except and staining from worldly pleasures, but now war when the time had come he was prepared to make any sacrifice rather than disobey God by joining in military service. He was prepared to leave his business, do farm work or anything else, provided it was in accordance with the will of God. The Mayor asked Mr Gammon if he was of the opinion that a man ought not under any circumstances to fight? The reply was that no Christian could fight if it acted in obedience to the law of God. The Mayor: Are not the Belgians Christians? They may be nominally Christians; God has never recognised the nation as in the true sense Christians, as converted men and women. The Mayor: But Christ said he would not allow His enemies to trial? He has promised to defend them. The Mayor: But He did not defend the Belgians, who were Christians? It may have been because they were nominal ones. The Mayor: Would you allow your own wife and family to be treated as the Belgians were, and not resist: I cannot say what I should do, but I should seek help from God. The Mayor: If the Germans were to try to do to your wife and family what they have done to the Belgians, would you not offer resistance? We must obey God’s word. The Mayor: You will be in the considerable minority in the kingdom of Heaven? There will be a full house in heaven. The Mayor: You bring contempt on your profession of religion by what you say. There was no reply. Ald Gibb: You don't think there are Christians fighting for us? Oh, yes, there are but they are not obeying God. Ald Gibb: Is it not the most practical demonstration of religion to assist those around you when they are in trouble? The most practical demonstration of religion is to obey God. The Christians who are fighting are active in disobedience to God. The Mayor: What about the Israelites? They were under another dispensation. The Mayor: has the Bible ever said the Israelites were disobeying God? There are two dispensations. The Mayor: then do you say God said one thing at one time and another at another? The law came from God under the new dispensation, and I am bound by it. The Mayor (after consultation with his colleagues): the Tribunal exempt you from combatant service; you have to undertake any other form of service.”

Anthony Thomas Gammon Tribunal Reports

ATG-002

From Bexhill Chronicle 5th August 1916 – Page 2 – Appeals Tribunal

“A MATTER OF PRAYER”

“Thomas Gammon (38), married, stationer, toy and fancy dealer, of St Leonards Road, appealed for total exemption on conscientious grounds, having obtained exemption only from combatant service at the hearing of the case before the local Tribunal. In his appeal he stated that he conscientiously objected to military service as he recognised no other authority all or than God's authority as revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ. If he entered the army he should have to give implicit obedience to others; he would even if he were in the non-combatant services be a part of the army, and engaged in warfare even if he were a non-combatant. He was, however, ready, though he could not do non-combatant work, to do civil work, which was not opposed to the will of God. In reply to Major Grantham, who asked him who would be the judge of what was work not opposed to the will of God, Mr Gammon said he objected to do military service of any kind, but was ready to do national service. The Chairman: You are ready to do national service? Who is to judge what is really national and not military service? Mr Gammon: I did not understand that that question was to be put to me. The Chairman: But it must be asked. Who is to judge or interpret what is or what is not national service? Mr Gammon: It must be judged by the Word of God. The Chairman: Then as to what you should do or not do you will have to be the sole judge? Mr Gammon: I am afraid I must; I will make it a matter of prayer. The Chairman: You have got to be the sole judge? Mr Gammon: No, I don't say that. It must be decided by the Word of God. The Chairman: But you have to be the sole judge as to how the Word of God is to be interpreted? Mr Gammon: I must be guided entirely by the Word of God. The Chairman: What I mean is this, suppose you were told to do work of national importance and you said it was not, what then would happen? Mr Gammon: I believe God would tell me. Councillor Perrins: And you don't believe He would tell the Chairman? The Chairman: The appeal must be dismissed. Mr Gammon asked for leave to appeal the Chairman: No. The Central Tribunal has already decided a similar case.”

ATG-003

From Bexhill Chronicle 9th September 1916 – Appeals Tribunal

COURT-MARTIALLED

BEXHILL “CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR”

DISOBEDIENCE AT CHICHESTER

The case of Mr A. T. Gammon, jun., of St Leonards road, will be fresh in the recollection of our readers – a conscientious objector who first appeared before the Local Tribunal at Bexhill, then before the East Sussex Appeal Tribunal at Hastings, and afterwards before the Bench at the Cantaloupe Road Police Station, where he was charged with failing to surrender for Military Service, and was fined 40s. and handed over to the military authorities.

On Monday last he appeared before a Court Martial, the charge against him being disobedience, he having refused to be medically examined at Chichester.

He was found guilty, and it was announced at the end of the sitting of the court that the sentence will be promulgated in due course

Anthony Thomas Gammon Tribunal Reports

ATG-004

From Bexhill Observer 15th July 1916 – Local Tribunal

“Christians” – New Style

STRANGE IDEAS AT BEXHILL

At the sitting of the Bexhill Tribunal on Wednesday, Arthur Thomas Gammon, 38, stationer, toy and fancy goods dealer, applied on conscientious grounds. As a follower of Jesus Christ, he said that he was forbidden to take part in military service. He was willing to do work of national importance under the civil authorities. He could not do non-combatant work, as that was an essential part of the Army, and he must not engage in warfare. He would not use of arms in any dispute, however justify. He was forbidden to put himself under the authority of man. He had held these opinions ever since he was born again, in January 1913. He was a member of the Church of God, of which he became an accepted member in September 1914. Up to the present he had not been called upon to make any sacrifice, apart from worldly pleasures. He was prepared to suffer the consequences rather than disobey God. He was willing to do farm work or anything that was not forbidden by God. He had done no public philanthropic work. If someone attacked his family, God would help him.

The Mayor – Were the Belgians wrong in what they did?

Applicant – Not as a nation. It is wrong as Christians.

The Belgians were Christians. Were they wrong?—They may be Christians in a nominal way. God never considered a nation as a nation of Christians.

Should a man allow himself to be trampled on? – Yes.

He would be an exaggerated worm. Will the Kingdom of Heaven consist of men allowing themselves to be trodden upon by all the scoundrels of the world? – God will protect His own.

I always understood God help those who help themselves. Would you allow your wife to be treated as the Belgians were treated? – I cannot say.

If the Germans did, would you keep to your opinions? – Peter said that that he would not deny his master, but he did.

The Mayor thought that if Christians were such as applicant stated there were not many.

Applicant – There will be a full house in Heaven.

Alderman Gibb – Are you a Christian? – Yes

Are any Christians fighting? – Yes.

Don't you think that is a practical demonstration of Christianity? – No; I obey God.

The Mayor – What about the Israelites? – That law was given to them only.

Have you ever seen in the New Testament that they were wrong? – No. Law came by Moses, and grace by God.

Exemption from combatant service was granted.

Applicant said that he would appeal.

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ATG-005

From Bexhill Observer 15th July 1916 – Local Tribunal

On Wednesday, at the sitting of the East Sussex Appeal Tribunal at Hastings, before Lieut-Colonel A. S. Sutherland-Harris, J. P. In the chair, and others, A. T Gammon, a conscientious objector of Bexhill, appealed against the decision of the local Tribunal.

Mr Gammon in his written statement submitted that the exemption from combatant service, which had been granted, did not meet the case. "As one who had been brought from the power of Satan to the Kingdom of the Son of God, I own His authority."

All authority was given to Him in heaven and earth. By joining the Army in any capacity, Mr Gammon submitted that he would be expected to give implicit obedience to any command, and would be engaged in warfare even if in non-combatant service.

"We ought to obey God rather than man".

"We cannot obey two masters". Mr Gammon added, "I am willing to do civil work of national importance that is not opposed to the Word of God."

The Chairman – You conscientiously object to taking lives.

Appellant – To taking military service of any kind.

But you are willing to do national service? – Yes, Sir.

Any service of national importance?

Applicant said that he did not quite understand. No question was put to him on that, as to what work he would take. Anything not contrary to the Word of God he would be pleased to do.

The Chairman – Who is to judge?

Appellant – Well, it must be judged entirely on the Word of God.

You would have to be the sole judge, with the Word of God? – I am afraid I must. I must put it before God. I must make it a matter of prayer.

It comes back to this; that you are to be the sole judge. You have to be the sole judge, interpreting by the Word of God?

Appellant said that he did not like to put it that he would be the sole judge. He believed God would tell him from His Word whether he could do this or that.

The Chairman said it was a position that would not be recognised in any ordered state at all. The appeal must be dismissed.

Appellant asked if he could have leave to appeal further.

The Chairman replied in the negative. That had been decided in another case. The Chairman added; "You will have to go for non-combatant service"