

Bertie Truluck Tribunal Reports

Military Service Tribunals- Transcriptions of Newspaper Reports

From Bexhill Observer 4th March 1916– Local Tribunal

TRIBUNAL MEMBER AND A CHRISTIAN TENET

A young man named B. Trueluck, brother of the previous applicant, also asked for exemption on the ground of conscientious objection. He is the manager of an oil shop in Western-road, and in his application quoted a portion of Scripture.

The Mayor – Do you think it was wrong for David to kill Goliath? – No answer

The Mayor – That's a bit awkward, isn't it?

The Clerk – Do you realise that the liberties of the country are in peril at the present time? – Yes, I do.

Do you realise that the Army and Navy are protecting you? – Yes.

And you are quite ready to take advantage of their protection, at the same time thinking that they are not such good Christians as you? – I don't quite put it like that.

And so because you are a Christian you ask to be exempted from doing what the Army and Navy are doing?

That is your case, isn't it? – No answer.

The Mayor – Was the whole of the Israelites fighting in the Old Testament under the guidance of God? Take the case of Joshua if you like – Yes, I think it was, sir.

Then there can't be much wrong with it? – No, sir.

The Clerk – Well, what are your grounds? – I don't see the application of the text you quote, but what are your grounds for asking for exemption from combatant service? – As a Christian, it is contrary to Gods word.

Mr Moysey – Can't a man be a Christian and yet fight? – No

Then all the men in the Forces can't be Christians? – I would not say that.

The Clerk – you think you are the ideal form of Christian, and that all the members of the Army and Navy are not such an ideal? – I don't think that.

Do you think it right to accept all the privileges which is ours by reason of the risk run by the Army and Navy, and at the same time, feel you could not cooperate with them? – No answer.

You say you recognise the danger Britain citizenship is in at the present moment? – I say that.

The Mayor – Supposing the whole of the people of the country were Christians like you, what would become of England? – If we were all Christians, it would be a different matter.

The Clerk – If they were all Christians it would alter the matter? – Yes.

The Mayor – Suppose the Germans were not? – It is very difficult to answer these questions.

Councillor Wells – Do you believe in the tenet of Christianity, "Love thy brother as thyself?" – Certainly.

Do you think it loving your brother to let him be away at the trenches fighting, getting killed, wounded, or rheumatic, while you stop safe at home, softening and getting the benefit of your brothers' sufferings? Is that a Christian way of acting? – No answer.

Alderman Paton – If your mother or your sister were attacked, would you defend them or let them be killed in front of you? – No answer.

The Mayor – The Tribunal have decided that they cannot grant any exemption in this case.

From Bexhill Chronicle 25th March 1916– Appeals Tribunal

Would Not Shoot a German

Bertie Truluck claimed exemption from service in the Army on the ground of conscientious objection to taking life as contrary to the Word of God.

Mr Moody, who stated that he was a retired solicitor, appeared for the appellant, who was not able to state his grounds of objection intelligently at the previous hearing. He also had sent in a memorial.

The Chairman interrupted the speaker by saying that the Appeal Tribunal could not hear speeches.

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The appellant said he could not possibly take life, because it was contrary to God's Word and the teaching of the New Testament.

The Chairman: Not to save life? – I could not save life by killing anyone.

The Chairman: What religion are you? – That known as the Brethren, undenominational.

The Chairman: Is that the same as the lat applicant? – It's somewhat similar; we are known as the Brethren.

The Chairman: Is it one of its beliefs against fighting? – Yes. I was converted to God eight years ago, and I joined the Brethren. I think you will find that the majority of them against it.

Mr Perrins: Has it any written or printed statement showing in what they believe? – No.

Mr Perrins: How many services have you on Sunday? – The breaking of bread at the morning service, the School in the Afternoon, and, in the evening, Gospel Preaching.

Mr Perrins: Are you a regular attendant? – Yes.

The Chairman: What would you propose to do if the Germans landed at Bexhill? – If I had a gun I would not take it up to shoot against the Germans.

Mr Burton: That is a disgraceful thing for any Englishman to say.

The Chairman: What would you do if a German was close to you with a bayonet? – I should do the same.

Mr Perrins: What would you do in business if a person were underselling you? Would you fight him? – That is a different matter.

Major Grantham: How many similar sects of the Brethren are there? – There is no sect at all.

Major Grantham: You said you did not belong to the same body as the last applicant? – Ours is somewhat similar.

Major Grantham: How many similar sects are there? – Well, they are divided, I am sorry to say.

Major Grantham: How many divisions? – There are three in Bexhill.

Major Grantham: Some will take life and some won't do it – I think the majority are against taking life.

Major Grantham asked on what part of the Bible he based his own objection, and the appellant said Romans v. 8 supported the application.

Major Grantham: What is it? – Appellant repeated the text, "God commanded His Love", etc.

Major Grantham: And you think that supports your application? – Yes. When the love of God was shed abroad in their hearts it was contrary to Christ's teaching to use violence. Mr Moody here essayed to speak.

The Chairman: We cannot hear you; we can only hear the applicant. Mr Moody remains standing, and was again about to speak, when The Chairman said: You will sit down. We cannot hear you.

Mr Moody: I only want – – –

The Chairman: You will sit down. The tribunal have decided not to interfere with the decision of the Local Tribunal

From Bexhill Observer 25th March 1916 – Appeals Tribunal

A young man named Truluck, manager of an oil shop, said his conscience was bound by the Word of God, and he objected to fighting.

The local Tribunal had disallowed the contention, as appellant was unable to give intelligent answers to questions, though he appeared to be a man of average intelligence, and the Tribunal was not satisfied that the objection rested on moral or religious grounds.

Appellant said he could not possibly, under any circumstances, take life, as he knew that to be contrary to God's Word and the teaching of the New Testament.

The DPT-Mayor – Can you save life? – I cannot save life.

Would you help to protect life? – Quite so.

Truluck said he belonged to the Brethren. They were undenominational. The majority of the Brethren were opposed to fighting. He had been a regular attendant at the services and had belonged to the Brethren about seven years.

The Chairman – What would you do if the Germans landed at Bexhill?

Appellant – If I had a gun I would not pick it up against the Germans.

A Member – Disgraceful.

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The Deputy-Mayor – if a person in business were underselling you, what would you do? – That is a little difficult to answer.

Major Grantham asked how many similar sects there were.

Mr Truluck – They are divided, I am sorry to say, I think there are about three companies in Bexhill.

It appeared that Truluck had sent in a text, “God commended His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us,” and “The love of God is shared abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.”

A gentleman who said he was a retired solicitor wished to speak, but the Tribunal asked him to sit down.

The Chairman explained to him: “we can only hear you on facts, and these are all convictions.”

The Tribunal decided not to interfere with the Tribunal below. The appeal was dismissed.