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ROOPS' MORALE ON WEST COAST HIGHLY PRAISED

Church Reaches Thousands Through Chaplains, Padre Says

GREAT BEHAVIOUR

"The chaplaincy service is providing the church with an extraordinary opportunity to reach thousands of men who have had little or no previous contact with vital, evangelical Christianity," Capt. the Rev. John F. Holliday declared last evening in speaking to a large congregation in Charlton Avenue Baptist Church. Captain Holliday, who is home on a brief furlough after six months' service as a chaplain with the Canadian Army units on the Pacific coast, spoke to his former congregation on How God Goes Before An Army Chaplain.

In giving a few of many instances of remarkable guidance in carrying on his work and contacts with the men, Captain Holliday stated, "Apart from the separation from loved ones and friends, I was never happier in Christian service." He paid a tribute to the officers and men with whom he had been associated.

"From the commanding officer of my regiment to the humblest gunner, I have had nothing but kindness, friendliness and co-operation."

Praises Morale

Praising the morale of the troops, he said: "In spite of the fact that until recently many of the men to whom I ministered were quartered in tents, with few comforts and almost no recreational facilities, they were exceptionally cheerful and amenable to discipline. Tributes to their fine behaviour were received from police and civic officials in the communities where they were quartered. This was in the face of extreme discomforts at times. In a single night as many as 24 tents blew down in one camp during the spring. But those boys, recruited from British Columbia factories and offices and prairie farms, took it all with amazing cheerfulness."

"I never was busier," Captain Holliday continued. "Every day from morning until late night, life was crammed full of welfare problems, marriage investigations, visits to huts and tents where men were quartered, to military hospitals and regimental aid posts, to detention barracks and calls at the homes of soldiers. In six months, I had conversations with 7,000 soldiers or their relatives. A large number of these provided opportunities to recommend Christ as Saviour and Friend and Helper. Indeed, there were many cases in which the Spirit of God had gone before the army chaplain preparing the heart of the soldier for spiritual dealing which made it easy to tell him of the heavenly friend."

Easy to Approach

"The uniform does not alter a man's heart," commented the speaker. "Whether a man wears a uniform or not, the same social problems, moral perils and spiritual dangers are met with. But I would say from my experience that the men in the camps and barracks are easier to approach about spiritual things than people in civilian life. They expect the chaplain to bring to them a touch of the other world and are disappointed if he does not."

Continuing to comment on the attitude of the men, Captain Holliday said, "Many a time after giving spiritual counsel to a soldier lad, I have wondered whether it would be resented and then shyly he has said 'Padre, I'm so glad you spoke to me like this. It is just what I needed.'"

Captain Holliday affirmed that he would not for anything want to miss the honour and opportunity of ministering to men in the service for the duration of the war.

Among his investigations connected with those to whom he was chaplain, he found that in 120 marriages, only two did not marry the girls whom they had known back home for years. Another interesting fact brought out was that 60 per cent. of the boys in that group never touched beer, and 20 per cent. took only a bottle now and again. He also spoke of the remarkably good food provided for the men.