6566981 15th Line,
East Zorra Township

As the Germans mounted a spring offensive in March 1918, military recruitment became more aggressive. Young Mennonite men were occasionally "apprehended" as "defaulters."

In May 1918, while working on Simon Jutzi's farm in East Zorra Township, cousins Dan and Willie Brenneman were apprehended by military police and taken to the headquarters of the Western Ontario Regiment in London. Dan's daughter Beatrice recalled her father's story:

> When Dad and Willie got to camp they refused to put on uniforms so the soldiers would put them on them.
>
> They would sometimes go on a hunger strike and refused to eat. The military police threatened to shoot them the next day if they wouldn't put on the uniforms. Sometimes they would put them in water and threatened to drown them.

Church leaders worked with Members of Parliament to get the men released. They were detained for about six weeks.

Mennonite Archives of Ontario

Carling Heights Military Camp, London, Ontario. Before the creation of Camp Borden in 1916, there were 16,000 men in training at Carling Heights.

Tavistock May 25th 1918

S.F. Coffman, Vineland, Ont.

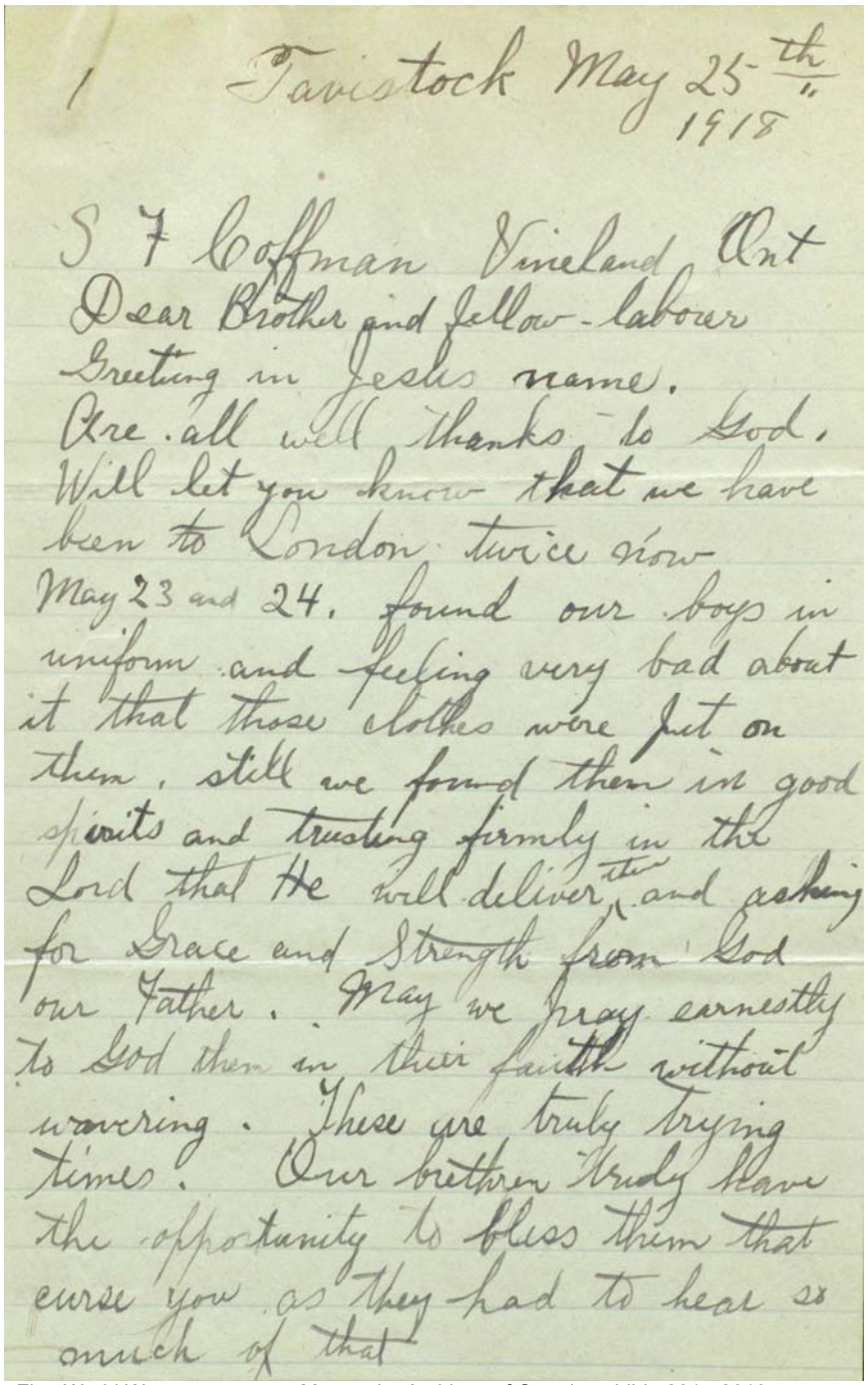
Dear Brother and fellow-labour,

Greetings in Jesus name. Are all well thanks to God.

Will let you know that we have been to London twice now, May 23 and 24. Found our boys in uniform and feeling very bad about it that those clothes were put on them.

Still we found them in good spirits and trusting firmly in the Lord that He will deliver them and asking for Grace and Strength from God our Father.

May we pray earnestly to God then in their faith without wavering. These are truly trying times...



1 Tavistock May 25th 1918

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May 23 and 24. found our boys in uniform and feeling very bad about it that those clothes were put on them. still we found them in good spirits and trusting firmly in the Lord that He will deliver them and asking for Grace and Strength from God our Father. May we pray earnestly to God then in their faith without wavering. These are truly trying times. Our brethren truly have the opportunity to bless them that curse you as they had to hear so much of that

It made my heart sad for their souls of these men how they take the name of God in vain to blaspheme and mock such the like as I never had heard before, so that I felt we do not earnestly enough proclaim and bring the Saviour to the dying world, to bring the Gospel of Peace and Good Will to all men.

The boys were very thankful when we told them what was being done for them, and were hoping and praying for deliverance if it is God's will. May God so direct the officers that they may not go beyond their power.

The parents were very much hurt, but as Paul says: We are troubled on every side yet not distressed. We are perplexed to do good to them that despitefully use you, and pray for them that persecute you. ...

[The boys were] sent to Jail for over night or a couple of hours and then taken before the Colonel who tried to persuade them to obey orders to drill and to be cursed and swore at, yet not in despair. ...

Trusting that the Lord will so direct us and guide us all to do His will and let us continue to pray that we all can stand united in Christian love, striving together under the banner of our Heavenly King Emmanuel to fight the good fight of faith.

Your brother in Christian love,

Jacob R. Bender