

I: Did you ever experience kangaroo court?

M: Yes, we were put in the guardhouse (Sept. 24, 1918) where there was about one hundred soldiers in there, who were AWOL and there was about six C.O.'s in there. That was not the kangaroo court. When I was taken out of the guardhouse I was put in what you called a police--it was a guardhouse where you got your sentence already and you were on your way to Leavenworth. Another guardhouse is where you got kangaroo court. Well, they charged you, of course, for breaking into the guardhouse without the permission of the inmates on the inside. Of course, the only thing they would tell you was that you were guilty and your sentence was twenty-five hard stripes.

I: Did this happen to you more than once?

M: Just once, the kangaroo court.

I: One day or one night?

M: One day. Where I got my most mistreatment was when they were trying to drown me.

I: Where was this?

M: Well, we were in the company and were about to be transferred to the disciplinary barracks the next day. And of course these soldiers knew this and before that time I had had my nose broke. I was knocked down because I would not obey this one commander, and I was sick. My head and eyes were black and blue. Then they came in that night, the soldiers came in that night. They had decided among themselves that they were going to see what they could do with me. They got us out of our bunks in the evening and took us under the shower and they had these brushes and they scrubbed you a while and they wanted to see if you wouldn't promise to wear the uniform. When I got this one time, I had to report it because I was sick, on top of being black and blue in my face. And I heard them when I was in line going to the infirmary, I heard them say, "Here comes the C.O." And when I got out of the line I couldn't breath because my nose was smashed in and they wanted to give me two little white capsules for my ailment--for breaking my nose and for when I was sick. The minute they appeared to me, I said "Don't take them because you are going to die before (long if you do.)" And I had a doctor friend tell me after I got home from camp, I asked him and he said, "Well, if you would've

took those, you would have never saw daylight the next day.\*\*

Well, that was then. The worst of it was, they took you out that evening and took others out too and put them under the shower--they yielded right away. They promised to wear the uniform. When they come to me I didn't do that and they tore the clothes off of my back and put me down head first in a tub of water and first tried to scrub me, you see, they took those hard brushes. And they took the brooms that were half worn out and got over my body, and I was just like pins all over my body.\*\*Sanford Yoder can tell you all of that. He come there the next day and saw me after I was over in another building. And they took me and stuck me in a tub of water and every once in a while they would let me out and ask me and I would say, "No, I still can't do it. I can't do it." And finally I guess they saw that they can't do anything with me. And finally they let me go. I heard one officer talk to another officer. He said, "We got our orders not to draw blood on him," But they did, and my body was just bleeding and I thought that this was the last time that I would go down into the water. And then they took me in and they threwed me on the bed. They took my bedding all away, nothing but bare springs on my bunk. It was a cold chilly September night after I was sick a whole week on this other deal, and they put me on the bed there, and I didn't have my clothes, no bedding--they had taken my clothes, my suitcases and everything--everything I had, they had taken that all. There I was, you know, shaking like a leaf.

I: Was this the time the sergeant came to you on your bunk?

M: Yes. He was trying to help me out because he knew that I was the one that was persecuted that night. He said, "Is there anything that I can do for you?" I said, "Try to get me some clothes, because I don't have no clothes, and I have nothing." He got me some clothes and some other things too, like a towel so I could rub myself dry. He just sat there and kept on crying. He said, "That was too much for me," and just before that time he was pretty hard. So he wanted to know what else he could do and I said he could try and get my clothes and my suitacse. And he finally got them, and I said I have nothing to sleep on and he finally got my bedding back too. But he keep coming back to know what else he could do for me. There was a billfold which had about seventeen dollars in it and some other things, but he came back and said he couldn't find it. So I had to do without that.

I: Was this the last time you were treated so roughly?

M: That was still in the company, you see--when I got over to the guardhouse it was different.

I: Did you have bad treatment again?

M: Yes, but not so bad as in the company. Then when I got to Fort Leavenworth of course, you were a prisoner like the rest of them. I was treated fairly well at Fort Leavenworth. But, of course, you were among prisoners and the best thing you could do there was not to say anything. If you squealed on anything you just didn't know what in the world would happen.

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\*After this episode, Miller was unable to breath through his nose until corrective surgery following his discharge.

\*\*Miller wrote in a letter over fifty years later, "I had big yellow spots on my body from the scrubbing that night that finally healed after three months or so."