

# **‘Fear No Evil’**

**By a Former Bomb Disposal Expert**

**Edited by EDITH M. MORRISON**

## **Foreword**

‘Religion is a crutch, a prop for old age,’ argued the young infantry man. He went on ‘It is a good thing for old men, old women and young girls.’

In front of the captive audience in the barrack room, he was stating the age old concept of why Christ has no part to play in the life of a vigorous young man serving in the ranks of the Armed Services.

This little book has been written to refute that argument, and to advance the counter argument, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the soldier’s best Friend; whether he be serving in the tension laden streets of Ulster; or the comparative calm of the barrack room.

The subject of our book is George Ferguson, a bomb disposal officer, who has been decorated twice for gallantry by H.M. the Queen. George is a brave man, admired for his professionalism as a soldier, and accepted by all as a ‘man amongst men.’ He is known as a committed Christian, serving the Lord Jesus Christ in all that his Saviour would require of him.

He is a man who has proved God at the sharp end of war. As he pulls on his body armour and helmet he prays; as he advances towards the explosive device, he asks the Lord to concentrate his mind on thwarting the evil designs of the terrorist; as he stoops over the bomb, he has the assurance that ‘standing somewhere in the shadows is Jesus’.

Friend, read George’s story. It is from the battle front where God confronts Satan and his cohorts. It is also a story which encourages the Christian and begs the question, yet again, ‘Who is on the Lord’s side? Who will fight the foe?’  
Soldier or airman without Christ, what is your answer?

Jim Moore, Northern Ireland 1988

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## Chapter 1

### **Danger Ahead**

Crossmaglen!

The very name spells danger to every soldier in Northern Ireland. Not far from there I was engaged in a life and death situation as a bomb disposal expert, on my second tour of duty in the Province.

News had reached us that there was a bomb in the railway station in a little village.

When my team arrived we found the train had been pushed out of the station, and several of the carriages were ablaze. It was our job to prevent more damage by defusing any bombs on the train.

‘Right Sir, I’ve discovered that we’ve got a situation where three bombs have exploded and we don’t know if there are any more,’ I told my boss when he arrived. ‘I’m letting the fire brigade deal with the blaze remotely. Then we can go in and see what’s happening.’

‘That’s fine,’ agreed my boss.

A short time later I was informed that two more bombs had been found in one of the carriages not on fire.

I reported this to my superior officer, ‘I’m going in to deal with these two bombs. Trouble is, because of their position I can’t get my remote equipment into that carriage, so I’m going to do it manually. I don’t expect anything untoward because someone has been in and spotted them. They’re inside two duffle bags lying in the luggage department.’

‘Carry on,’ replied my boss.

The previous bombs had been incendiaries, so as a double precaution I put on both flash and anti-bomb kits.

It was necessary to walk up the steep embankment to board the train. My only worry was how to clamber onto it with all my heavy, cumbersome kit. ‘I’ve got to get in there and get the job done properly. Just give me the strength to do it,’ I prayed inwardly.

Somehow I managed to get myself and kit into the carriage where there were two bombs. One was just in front of me and the other to my right. I attached the kit to the one in front of me and went to do the same to the second bomb. As I did so, it partially began to function, that is, explode! The dreaded moment had come! I knew it would go off in a few seconds, because of the way it was functioning! My instant reaction was, ‘I don’t want this bomb to go off on the train, because that’s what I’m here to prevent.’ So I seized hold of the device and threw it off the train with all my might.

It only partially exploded. It turned out my decision had been the right one for the bomb was an incendiary device. Had it gone off on the train it would have burned ferociously and created great damage.

Lying on the embankment I made the two bombs completely harmless.

The nerve-racking ordeal was still not over as it was necessary to go back on the train, this time feeling tired and exhausted to search for more bombs. Thankfully, there were none.

## Chapter 2

### **An Important Childhood Decision**

I have been asked, 'Did you feel afraid when doing those nerve-racking jobs?'

Yes, I did have fear. Not of death, as I will explain later, but of the pain my death would have caused my wife, family and comrades. This would have unsettled them. That fear was not with me on the job, when my mind was completely occupied with what I was doing and for which I had received intensive training. I spent several years in bomb disposal work, nine months of which were continuous, so I had plenty of time and many occasions to learn how to overcome fear. That is why I am writing this booklet, that others may share this secret.

To put it in a nutshell, it came to me through seeing God take a hand in my life and learning, bit by bit to know and obey him.

It is possible to contact God at a very early age. For me it happened when I was eight and my brother nine years of age. Something happened then which had wonderful and far reaching consequences.

My father was in the Army and that is the reason I have been all over the world. My mother is Italian and my father an Ulsterman, so it is not surprising that in nineteen fifty nine when I was eight and my brother nine, we found ourselves living for some months with our grand parents in Belfast. We went regularly to church with them and were taken to Sunday school.

We were also sent to the mid-week meeting for children. One night a visiting speaker made it clear to us, that we can get to know God, the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe. This God is a holy God who hates our sin but loves us. He came into this world in the Person of Jesus Christ. He was crucified, taking the punishment for our sins, because of his great love for us. All we have to do to go to heaven is to thank him for his suffering and death for us, be sorry for our sins and promise with his help to do them no more. We must ask him to take control of our lives.

We didn't understand all he was saying, but in utter sincerity we asked Jesus to be our Saviour. All I can recall after that is going home jumping up and down for joy and running along the Shankill Road and saying, 'We're saved.'

'A childish emotional experience,' you may think. Yet the fact is, with hindsight, I can trace God's hand upon me for good right from that time. The timing of all major events in my life, from then on all pointed in the right and best direction, as my story reveals.

## Chapter 3

### Marriage and Children

I joined the Army as a lad of fifteen and went to Chepstow to train. This was followed by two years in Germany as a regular soldier and then two years in England. There I married and eventually we had a daughter we named Rachel. I was then an acting Staff Sergeant and was expecting to be posted to Germany.

The fact of becoming parents made a moral and spiritual impact on us, as we realised our responsibilities towards bringing Rachel up in the best possible manner. To this end we had her christened in the camp Anglican Church, even though I was far from living a Christian life myself. Yet we both knew that this one act would do neither her nor us any good. Not long afterwards we were posted to Germany and for a time we forgot all our good intentions.

In Germany three incidents affected our lives and my later intention to give my life completely over to Christ's control. Again I could look back and see the hand of God directing my life.

The first was a letter from my brother, Bill, which I received the Christmas before nineteen seventy seven. He was then a Staff Sergeant in the Royal Engineers in Hong Kong. He wrote that he had got in touch with some Christian people there. He asked, 'George, do you remember that feeling of joy we had going down the Shankill Road, after we both decided to follow Christ? I've got it again, I've found Christ as my Saviour.'

Recalling my childhood's spiritual experience, I began to want the joy he obviously had. Thoughts of God were generated again.

Another incident in which I saw the direct power of God was when some Mormons knocked on our door. Only my wife was home. By this time both of us were really seeking God. She declined to talk to them because I was not at home. They didn't return.

I am sure that had they done so we would have accepted their faith. At the age of eight I had trusted my life to God and he had prevented me from taking a wrong turning by adopting one of the many false cults around today.

A third incident occurred which resulted in my wife and I making an important decision, which changed the whole course and motivation of our lives. It was as a result of this decision that we both learned the secret of overcoming fear.

## Chapter 4

### Pressures Removed

Lindsey, my wife used to be in the Army, and one Friday evening her ex-Army friend Anne invited us to a rally. (Unknown to us Anne had become a Christian). We agreed to go, thinking it was a car rally. In reality it was a Christian meeting during which a talk was given to the children by a missionary from the local Brake Bible School. She told of the love of Christ for children in China, which made us realise his love for us as well.

After this meeting we talked to a Scripture Reader with regards to Christianity and found him a very sympathetic and gracious person. We made arrangements to go to the Sunday afternoon meeting with S.A.S.R.A. (The Soldiers' and Airmen's Scripture Readers Association), to see what they did, which was to tell the good news of Christ.

On Saturday night, Lindsey realised her need as a sinner, and asked the Lord Jesus Christ to save her from sin and its eternal punishment.

Then I started going to Bible Studies and realized my life style was not compatible with Christianity. So, at the age of twenty six, repenting of my sin, I gave my whole life over for him to control. From that time my life had a purpose. The directing hand of God could be seen more and more clearly in my life.

I was then an ammunition technician looking after storage of military ammunition, and part of my job was bomb disposal.

Not long after this I was due for a tour in Northern Ireland to do bomb disposal. I should have been sent over earlier, as prior to nineteen seventy eight, I was overdue a tour. The timing of this tour was important, as if I had come over earlier I would still have been in my unsaved state. This probably would have meant I would not have had the moral strength to withstand the pressures of being away from home, and being engaged in dangerous work.

Leaving a wife and family to come for a tour in Northern Ireland, involves all sorts of problems. Soldiers were being killed. Others found the pressure of work wrecking their marriages. We would have had a double pressure. Lindsey would have been worried as to whether or not I would have been killed, and also worried in case I would not want to return to her.

But once we had both committed our lives to Christ, all such pressures were removed. There was earthly human worry, but Lindsey knew that if I were killed I would be waiting for her in Heaven. If I came back, it would be to continue life with her, because marriage is biblical and lasting.

Not only were pressures removed but I grew in the knowledge of God, through reading his Word, the Bible. If you doubt the truth of the Bible, just trust in what it says. Obey it. That is what I did and found it to be utterly reliable as a guide to life. A godly Scripture Reader

gave me such a grounding in the Bible, that when I was isolated in Omagh on my first tour, I could find my own way through the book and found strength, direction and comfort.

At that time I was in communication with a fellow bomb disposal man in Germany. He was a believer in the 'Divine Light Mission,' but he wrote to me enquiring about the Christian faith. In order to answer him I had to search the Bible which gave me greater knowledge and encouragement. Through our discussions he realized his cult was corrupt and stopped being a follower. Only this year he and his wife became Christians.

Not only did I learn at that time to search and obey the Bible, I also learned why I should pray or talk to God and how to do it. Daily I read the Bible and prayed while in camp. Although well trained to do my job, I knew I needed God's help, being always apprehensive, fearing the unknown more than anything else, never knowing what the terrorist would do next. To cover every eventuality I relied upon my training. The worst part of my job was travelling to the bomb and during the R.S.P. (Render Safe Procedure), when the bomb was neutralized.

On the way to an incident, I prayed all the time. On arrival the usual procedures were gone through. In any spare moments, such as rest periods, I would also commit the job to God. On its completion it was a real pleasure to thank him for his help and protection!

I also prayed for my team and the other guys out on the ground, who were at more risk than we were. If the alarm were false, we were at no risk at all, but those out on the cordon could have been shot at, if the device had been placed merely to lure them into danger.

One particular nerve-racking incident made me realize more than ever how good it was to be able to pray and have the presence of Christ with me, through his Spirit, at all times. I knew then how great must be the loneliness of those who face death without him.

## Chapter 5

### Victory Over Fear

In this particular incident the terrorist had laid five devices in a little village. None of them had functioned, so it was our job to defuse them all. One was in a position where we couldn't use our remote equipment, so it was necessary for me to walk up to it. The imminent danger helped me to concentrate my mind on the job.

I knew the bomb could have been different from what was normally expected. In that case I could have been killed. It turned out to be the standard device. I was safe!

This incident made me think a lot of my fellow bomb disposal men, who, having put on their special suits, walk forward and are totally on their own. It was a great comfort to me to know I would never have to face such isolation. God was always with me and I believed his Word which promised, 'And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God....' (Romans 8:28). This is a fact of life I have proved over and over again.

It was natural to be worried as to whether something unexpected would happen. However, my main worry was that if the bomb exploded, would sufficient evidence remain to ensure that the next man would not be killed by the same kind of device?

I had no fear of death itself knowing I would go to Heaven, and it was comforting to know my wife shared my belief.

Suppose I were injured? Well, I've seen so many Christians handicapped in various ways, yet God is still helping and using them. I knew he could do the same for me.

There are times when I question my role in the Army. 'Why am I doing this? Is it worth while? Am I just another bit of cannon fodder?' These are very natural reactions, but I know in my heart it is better for a Christian to be out there defusing bombs, than for a man totally unprepared to face his maker.

From Northern Ireland I went back to Germany, and there I learned how to overcome a different form of fear.

## Chapter 6

### Tale of the Unexpected

Two incidents happened which showed how God can change people, and also how the devil, or Satan tried to trip me up to ruin my Christian character. I know many people do not believe in the personality of Satan. However Christians do, for they feel his power to tempt them. Others, calling themselves Satanists actually worship him.

The first incident happened just after I became a Christian. In the Sergeants' Mess there was a Christmas draw every year. From about June the men bought tickets in order to have a splendid function. At that time I was a W.O.2. (Warrant Officer Class 2).

Christianity and gambling are not compatible. Buying tickets for a draw is a form of gambling, for the principle behind gambling is to get something for nothing at the expense of others. It is also a form of pleasure that ruins lives of many people. So I decided not to take part in the draw as a help and example to others.

This decision led me into difficulties! I knew the only way I could not take part was to obtain permission from the Regimental Sergeant Major (R.S.M. W.O.1.). There is a big gap between my rank which was W.O.2. and his.

'If I can only find him on his own, I might be able to persuade him,' I thought, praying that this would happen. On opening his door, there he was with two clerks!

'This is it,' I thought, knowing that such men never like to lose face in front of others.

'What do you want?' he asked.

'I want to talk to you about the Christmas draw tickets Sir.'

'OK, what about them?'

'Well I'm a Christian and I don't believe in gambling.'

'I'm a Christian too!' he argued.

'I'm a practising Christian,' I said. 'I don't believe gambling or draw tickets are conducive to my way of life.'

'Oh! See the treasurer. You don't have to take them.'

That was certainly an answer to prayer, and showed God changing the man's attitude. He was normally such a vociferous man, and would usually not have responded like that.

When I came across to Northern Ireland in nineteen eighty six the same situation arose in Lisburn. In that camp there was a formidable Garrison Sergeant Major, a W.O.1. as this was my own rank, it was just a case of going down to see him, to get out of the draw.

At first I felt tempted to buy tickets and not put them in, but decided against this, God upholding me and showing me to be open and honest in all things. To my surprise he merely said, 'It's alright George. I know all about you. You don't want Christmas draw tickets. You don't have to buy them. Just see the treasurer.' Had I not approached him he would have wondered if I had dropped my Christian faith. Behind the whole incident, I could plainly see Satan at work trying to destroy my witness to others of my faith in Christ.

My wife and I declined to take strong drink because of the evil consequences to those who take too much or spend more than they can afford on it.

## Chapter 7

### **Blessings in Bessbrook**

After being on various tours in England, Germany and the Falklands, I was sent back to Northern Ireland on a second tour. This time I was stationed in the village of Bessbrook.

Conditions there were not pleasant, but there were great compensations. One was the Army Scripture Reader who would travel all the way from Belfast, on the off chance of seeing me. He never knew whether or not I would be in, or even if I would be called out while he was there, because I was on duty twenty four hours a day seven days a week. He did all this just to share Christian friendship with me. At this time, the only other Christian friendship I had was with two Christian policemen and a Christian medic.

It was at this time and in this area that I was delivered from the dangerous fire bomb situation, which I have already described.

In spite of the obvious dangers of such situations, it was imperative that I should sleep at night. This I managed to do, because of my training to cover every eventuality and because I looked upon my job as every day work.

I found it a great responsibility looking after the men in my team, and I tried whenever possible to talk to them of their sin and need for salvation.

They listened, I think people are very open to Christianity in the Province when death is staring them in the face, but once removed, they forget all about it, because death is not so imminent. Yet it could come just as quickly through a car accident or heart attack!

One of my men, my chief clerk, did commit his life to Christ. One day we discussed Christ, sin and salvation in depth.

‘All you have to do to become a Christian is to follow a few simple steps,’ I explained to him. ‘Pray a simple prayer confessing your sins and accepting Christ as your Saviour. I’ll pray it for you and you can pray it after me.’

We did this, kneeling by his bed. I felt great because I was leading someone into a life of peace, direction and satisfaction through faith in Christ.

‘This is fantastic,’ he said. ‘The load has been lifted off my back.’

## Chapter 8

### At Buckingham Palace

After being in Bessbrook I returned to Germany for a short time. I was then posted to Lisburn for another tour where the daily running of the bomb disposal teams in the Province became my responsibility.

I found a great burden to speak to all the operators specifically about Christ, giving them helpful publications such as 'Right with God,' and 'The Reason Why' by John Blanchard.

While still in the Province I received news that I was invited to Buckingham Palace to be decorated for gallantry. (The editor has asked me to include an account of this incident).

As a family, we were naturally honoured and delighted at the prospect of meeting the Queen and receiving the award.

I was glad to receive the award at Buckingham Palace as a reflection on God's people, and to show that a Christian soldier could achieve and perform as well as a non Christian.

My wife and father were with me on my first visit to the Palace. I was overawed by its splendour and felt humbled that I should be decorated by the Queen.

The first award was not really for my conduct in any one incident, but for the amount of work in which I had been involved. In the late seventies I arrived in Northern Ireland at a time of heightened work. There were more bombs around, and I appeared to be doing more work than the guys before me.

As I spoke with the Queen I wanted to tell her only of my purpose in life, to serve God and in so doing, serve her.

It was a remarkable occasion matched only by my second visit, when my wife and two daughters were with me. Her Majesty expressed her pleasure at being able to present the award again, and I was very much aware of my duty as a Christian and ambassador for God in that situation.

The second award was given for much the same reasons as the first, that is, facing more danger because of more work.

## Chapter 9

### The Way to Peace

Today I am a Commissioned Officer on the administrative side of the Army, and no longer in direct contact with bomb disposal men, but I am being used by God to help with the work of S.A.S.R.A.

I've never once had any regrets about being a Christian. It was the best thing that happened to my wife, many of my relations and me.

My message to soldiers is that Christianity is not a crutch to lean on, but a way of life that is compatible with soldiering. Being a follower of Christ will make a man a better soldier. Working for Christ will make a man an even better worker for his Commanding Officer. It is not necessary to be a hard swearing, hard drinking man to be a first class soldier. Not only does his Commanding Officer get the best, but Christ gets the glory.

If you are a Christian, always make it known. In time you will win the respect and even the hearts of your comrades. There is some pressure from non Christians, but there is now more openness to Christianity in the barracks.

Wholeheartedly, I would encourage any soldier to become a Christian, for it is certainly the best decision I ever made in my life and my wife is in full agreement.

For our marriage, our common love for Christ has united us. The pressures that would have been there without Christ, are absent. We have this unity, that should our human side fail we can rely on Christ to help us. Any separation is reduced, because we both pray to the one God and we found this unity even when I was in the Falklands.

To rely on Someone other than money, is security. It is victory over all fear. It is a victory which can come to any soldier who will commit his life to Christ. Through accepting Christ as your Saviour you can receive eternal life. How do you think God will act towards you if you reject his son and refuse to accept his great gift? You will be separated from him and happiness for ever, and such separation is hell, which Christ described as eternal fire. (Luke 16:23-26)

You matter very much to God. He loves you, died for you and wants you to receive eternal life as it states in his Word, the Bible, 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' (John 3:16)

If you want to know more, find a Bible and read John's Gospel. If you wish to repent of your sins, and give your life completely to Christ, pray, 'Lord Jesus Christ, I am sorry for the wrong things that I have thought, said and done and for the right things I should have done, but didn't. Please forgive me and take over my life.'

To live a successful Christian life, read the Bible, pray and get to know other Christians. Tell others you are now a saved man.

You will find members of S.A.S.R.A. only too willing to help you along the Christian pathway.

If you are a Christian and a civilian, join a lively Bible believing church where Salvation through the death and resurrection of Christ is preached.

Christians reading this story, please pray for our soldiers. You have seen their need.