

BUYING MILITARY CLOTHING

Civilians Have No Right to Government Property

At Warminster on Thursday, before Mr. G. N. Temple and the Rev. G. Atwood, Charles Blake, who said he had been working for the Great Western Railway Company for 24 years, and was a ganger at Wylye, was charged with being in unlawful possession of a pair of khaki trousers, the property of H. M. Government.

Sergt. W. H. Brown, of the military food police, stated that on the 24th September he saw defendant wearing the pair of khaki trousers produced, and on calling the Wyle stationmaster's attention to it, the defendant said he bought them from Hancock's, Salisbury, and later he said he bought them from Pte. Chalk, of the 8th Norfolk Regiment (now in France) and gave him 5s. for them, when new the trousers cost 9s, 6d. Defendant said the sergeant's evidence was correct, and stated that Pte. Chalk came to his house and asked if his wife could stay there in lodgings. They took her in, and while she was there he left those trousers and told defendant he did not particularly want them, but wanted to get a shilling or two as he was going on leave. He (defendant) gave Chalk 5s. for them, and had been wearing them ever since. He had seen the sergeant several times, and wondered he did not speak to him before. Chalk said it was a pair of trousers he had left off and did not want.

The Clerk: Of course, the trousers belong to the Government, and he had no right to sell them at all. Defendant said there had never been anything against him in his life.

The Chairman (Mr. Temple) said they had had cases before in that Court with regard to the unlawful possession of military stores, and it had been pointed out by Chairman of that Bench that soldiers had no right whatever to sell stores or give them away. The public ought to know this by this time, for they had cases constantly coming up. The public must understand that the law gave no right to buy, and a soldier had no authority or right to sell his clothes. Defendant would have to pay a fine of 5s.

Defendant: Rather a dear pair of trousers.

The Chairman: We are letting you off very lightly.

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