

# Taffy

*Author: J Boyd Nicholson (Former Editor of Counsel Magazine)*

Taffy is the nickname for a Welshman. I have known a few Taffy's along the way, but one stands out in my memory.

We met in an Air Force canteen in London during World War II. I had left the noise and smoke of the tearoom area to find a quiet spot alone on a stairway to drink my mug of hot tea. It wasn't long till my quiet was interrupted by another airman wanting to know if he could sit there with me. He was, I judged, about ten years older than I and looked pale and unwell. "I'm Taffy," he said, sitting down. I could tell by the white flash in his cap that he too was on air crew training. As it turned out, we were both waiting for a posting to Initial Wing any day.

"I think we should stick together," he said. His farewell from the previous unit had involved some heavy drinking. Up until then, he had never tasted alcohol and the results were gastronomically devastating, crowned with a thundering headache and a smiting conscience. It was an opportunity, of course, to tell him about the Saviour.

He sat quietly listening. Then with bowed head and downcast eyes, he told me he knew the gospel. His mother was a praying Christian.

As far as "sticking together," we had little choice in the matter. Men were being shipped all over the country, even overseas. But when the postings came through, there were our names on the same list, posted to the same town in England.

Newquay was a beautiful resort on the Cornwall coast where the Air Force had taken over the hotels along the seafront to accommodate the men. The hotels had been suitably stripped to the boards for our basic comfort.

Well, we were in the same town. That was something. There we were lined up at the railway station according to which hotel we were being sent, Yes! There we were, put in the same flight, going to the same hotel! Of course, by now I was convinced the Lord was at work; this was confirmed when we were assigned the same room – just the two of us!

The Welsh love to sing. Taffy had a rich baritone voice and in the evenings often would lie on his bunk and regale my Scottish ear with some of his country's beautiful songs. One of these, all in Welsh, was about a field of daffodils. I heard it so often I learned the strange sounding words.

Taffy failed the course and halfway through was posted to another unit. We had become good friends and we lay on our bunks much of the last night he was there, talking about the things of God and eternity. It was war and young men were dying; I was deeply concerned about his eternal soul. I appealed to him to trust the Saviour, but his quiet response was, "Yes, Boyd, I will ... someday."

Years of war ground on and regularly Taffy was prayed for. One day while flying, I became deeply concerned about him. I had no idea where he had gone or if he was even still alive. If I had remembered his address, I could have written him, but it was a Welsh address with unusual names, So I asked the Lord to return his address to my memory. Before I landed, the complete details came back to me. Indeed to this day I have not forgotten that address!

I wrote him at once to discover he had married and his home was now in Birmingham in the Midlands. Try as I might, I never did get to see him.

The war ended. Twenty five years later, I was visiting the UK from Canada and found myself in Birmingham. I remembered that Taffy lived there. I searched the phone book and discovered

among many with the same name, one that had his initials. I phoned and the greeting on the other end was unmistakably a son of Wales! I spoke without divulging my identity and began by quoting the words of the Welsh song of the daffodils from Newquay days. "Boyd! Where are you?" He almost leapt into the phone.

We were only five minutes away and soon at the door. There he was, the same, yet like us all, a bit older. The visit was wonderful, but there was one question I was waiting to ask. Had he ever trusted the Saviour? "No, not yet, but I will ... someday."

Another dozen years rolled by, and Taffy was not forgotten at the Throne of Grace. Again we were back near Birmingham. Without any advance notice, we located his new address and went to the door unannounced. He opened the door and after a joyous greeting, I asked him, "Well Taffy, God has spared you these many years. What about it now?"

"Yes, Boyd, at last, I'm saved and on the way to heaven!" What joy! What thanksgiving to the God who had heard a mother's prayers and would not let her boy go. Shortly after, he died of a heart attack. Oh, what mercy his *some day* wasn't too late!

Praying these many years for a loved one? Faint not! Remember Taffy ... and all those years.