

Reporting
Trooper Potts in
1915

The Trooper Potts VC Memorial Site



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READING'S VC TROOPER POTTS SPLENDID BRAVERY REWARDED CHRONICLE INTERVIEW WITH THE HERO

Throughout the whol of Berkshire and especially in Reading, there was a thrill of pleasure on Friday evening and Saturday when it was announced that, in accordance with general expectation, Trooper Frederick William Owen Potts, Berkshire Yeomanry, of 54 Edgehill Street reading, son of Mr and Mrs Thomas Potts had been awarded the VC, being the first of such brilliant distinctions won by a member of a Berkshire Battalion during the present war. The honour is not only one which reflects great credit on Trooper Potts himself, but confers distinction on the twon of his birth and the regiment with which he is associated.

The official description of his heroic deed is as follows:-

For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to a wounded comrade in the Gallipoli Peninsula.

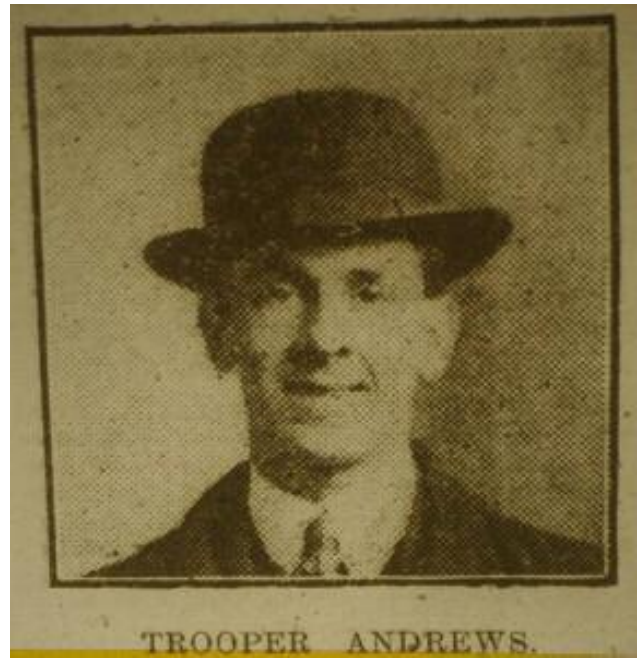
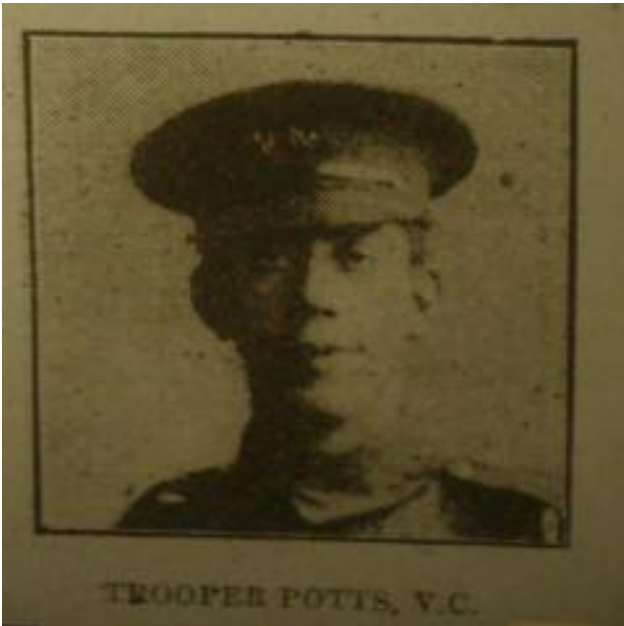
Although himself severely wounded in the thigh in the attack on Hill 70 on August 21st 1915, he remained out over 48 hours under the Turkish trenches with a private of his regiment, who was sverely wounded and unable to move, although he could himself have returned to safety.

Finally he fixed a shovel to the equipment of his wounded comrade, an, using this as a sledge, he dragged him back over 600 yards to our lines, though fired at by the Turks on the way. He reached our trenches at about 9.30 pm on August 23rd.

The story of his splendid action was first given to the world in the Chronicle of September 10th - some days ahead of contemporaries, and it is unnecessary to to repeated what was published at the time. The man whom he so gallantly rescued is Trooper Arthur Wilfrid Andrews of 12a West Street who was first reported as missing and wounded. Andrews had been in the Yeomanry for three years and was at the GWR Reading.

The deed is worthy of all the higher commendation because Andrews was not a personal chum of the hero. Potts had seen him at several Yeomanry camps and became better acquainted with him at Cairo where there slept opposite one another. To rescue a fellow soldier is always the Tommy's highest glory, and looking into Potts' open, frank and pleasant face, which betokened kindness of heart to an unusual degree, one was not surprised that he should have put aside all personal considerations to save the life of another.

Potts who was born at the house where his respected and proud parents still reside, was educated at Central and Wokingham Road Council Schools and has been for seven years with the Pulsometer



Engineering Company being a fitter under Mr Smith. He has been in the Berkshire Yeomanry for seven years and it is scarcely surprising to hear that he has not missed a day's camp or training during his association with it.

For three years Trooper Potts was a student in attendance at evening classes at University College Reading. He came to the college in order to study machine construction, mathematics and mechanics. The College authorities are naturally very proud of the fact that an old student should have gained this distinguished honour.

THE MAYOR'S CONGRATULATIONS

Naturally the news created widespread interest and was especially gratifying to all associated with the Berkshire Yeomanry.

The Mayor of Reading (Mr Leonard G Sutton) wired to his parents on Friday evening as follows:-

Please accept my heartiest congratulations on the high military honour your son has won, and my sincere hopes for his speedy recovery. Reading is proud of such a citizen.

Another telegram read:-

The President and members of the Berkshire Territorial Force Association heartily congratulate you on the honour conferred on your son for his gallant action - Secretary Berks Territorial Force Association, Reading

COL HENDERSON'S VISIT TO THE MOTHER

The mother and sister of Trooper Potts were also honoured by a visit on Saturday morning from Colonel Henderson MP commanding the Berkshire Yeomanry who has been invalided home and who warmly congratulated Mrs Potts on being the mother of such a brave man. Describing the incident later at the recruiting meeting, Colonel Henderson said that Mrs Potts received his

congratulations with a calm which became the mother of a gallant son, while the trooper's sister displayed enthusiastic joy. Captain Porter, secretary of the Berks Territorial Association accompanied Col Henderson. Special seats were reserved for Mr and Mrs at Saturday evening's demonstration and they were cordially cheer on the call of the Mayor of Reading.

TROOPER POTTS ARRIVES

To the surprise of his family - quite unexpected and unannounced - the new VC knocked at the door of his home on Saturday afternoon, and naturally received a cordial welcome from his family. He had been granted a few days leave from the Orchard Military Convalescent Hospital at Dartford, to which he had been removed on September 27th from the Dudley Road section of the 1st Southern General Hospital at Birmingham. Naturally everyone, including the neighbours, was quite taken aback at the hero's unexpected arrival, or there would doubtless have been a considerable demonstration. Though the shrapnel wound in the thigh which he received is making excellent progress and Trooper Potts looks wonderfully fit, it was deemed better that he should not be present at the Town Hall demonstration.



Potts with members of his family