

Reporting
Trooper Potts in
1915

The Trooper Potts VC Memorial Site



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THE HERO INTERVIEWED A THRILLING NARRATIVE

When the Chronicle representative went to 54 Edghill Street on Sunday morning to offer his congratulations to the first Berkshire VC of the war he found him engaged with his father and sister singing and playing some of the hymns which have been familiar to him from childhood. The incident was illustrative of the unpretentiousness and modesty of his character - that while all the country was ringing with his praise, the hero himself should be found in the midst of the quiet family engaged in such a homely occupation as this. His frank bearing and modest acceptance of congratulations have greatly impressed all who have come in contact with him, and it is evident that he does not mean to be spoiled by success.

"When we were charging up the hill I received a shrapnel bullet which went through my thigh and completely knocked me off my feet" he said "and there where I fell I had to lie. I had been there about half an hour when Andrews crawled up to me; he was badly wounded in the groin. We were in some sort of pathway between some shrubs and here we stayed all night. It was very cold and we kept warm by huddling close together."

One dramatic and terrible incident occurred during the long and weary night. To give Trooper Potts own words "While Andrews and I were lying there a Bucks Hussar crawled towards us and Andrews moved along to make room for him. He was suffering from a bullet wound in the leg. The poor chap had not been there five minutes when another shell came over and smashed both his legs. He lingered on till the morning and then died.

"My wound was bleeding and every time Andrews moved his wound began to bleed - his was a great deal worse than mine.

"We were suffering terribly from thirst, but the next day was worse. It seemed as though we should go mad for want of a drink. We did not see any Turks, although bullets were dropping around us. When night came we decided if possible to make a move. We first crawled from one body to another getting water. How welcome it was. I recognised the bodies of several of my late comrades. Fighting was going on all around us. One bullet actually grazed my ear but somehow we managed it.

"We went about 200 yards and hid that night in some shrubs. Short as the distance seemed it took us three hours to cover. There we remained the whole night and the whole of the next day. Shells continually dropped near us. we waited till evening. The about six o'clock the final journey was commenced. We had not proceeded more than half a dozen yards before Andrews had to give up. I knew that if my comrade was left there it would have meant certain death.

"There were a number of shovels lying about. I fixed one to his equipment. Using this as a sledge I dragged him to our lines. The distance covered was three quarters of a mile. This

took me about 3 ½ hours - till 9.30 - and all the time we were in great danger of being killed. We were fired on several times by the enemy and we had some very narrow escapes. I had to stop about every six yards, so difficult was it to make progress and at frequent intervals I had to put Andrew's disabled leg on the top of the other one letting that rest on the ground. After a terrible journey we struck a British trench. I felt pretty well done up but Andrews was rael bad when we reached the British lines."

Trooper Potts says he was close to the burning shrub but luckily the wind blew the flames off in a different direction.

"I think I am extra lucky to have come off so well" said the gallant trooper.

MANY CONGRATULATIONS

Trooper Potts has, in addition to the messages received from the Mayor and the Berks Territorial Association, received upwards of 80 letters and telegrams congratulating him on the great honour which has been bestowed on him. These have been received from Lieutenant Colonel Henderson MP, Major Wigan both of whom wired as well as wrote. Captain Slaughter, the members of his own regiment, Colonel Karlake and all ranks of the (2nd) 1st Berks Yeomanry etc.

Reading's VC on Monday visited the Pulsometer Engineering Works and was accorded a most hearty welcome. He has also been to his old school, Wokingham Road and Katesgrove Council Schools where the reception given him was most cordial, hearty cheers being raised.

Many houses in Edgehill Street have been decorated in honour of Trooper Potts.

Trooper Andrews, whom he rescued is still lying in hospital at Malta. He is said to be very ill.