

A CANADIAN WAR STORY

ANDY THE RUNT.

Andrew Roberts is, as his name implies, of Scotch-Irish descent. Not only was Andy's mother Scotch and his father Irish, but his father was able to trace relationship to "Little Bobs" of famous military memory.

No wonder then that Andy when he attained the age of 18 lost no time in enlisting in the regiment in his Canadian home town. It is worth noting also, that Andy is as little in stature as "Bobs" himself, if not more so. Andy's schoolmates' estimate of his height can be judged from the fact that were he to cut his name on a board of the school fence thus, "A. Roberts," close underneath it and connected therewith was cut the following, "A Runt."

In due time he finished his training. Then the regiment went overseas, where it passed through Imperial sorting process, and Andy, in the wisdom of the military heads was assigned to a forestry corps. Notwithstanding the time came when he proved he had not learned in vain how to use the implements of actual warfare as well as a forester's axe and saw.

THE RAIDERS.

It was well along the third year of the war, when the enemy in one of his big drives was causing the Allies much anxiety, that the corps to which Andy belonged was at work in a large forest in France. The original location of the corps was well to the rear and to one side of the course the Huns were likely at any time to follow. It was also advantageously situated on the summit of a high ridge heavily wooded on the eastern slope.

Running along the edge of the forest at the foot of the slope in a deep gully was an unimportant stream which only became deep as it was fed by the heavy rains of autumn and spring. Well to the southern stretch of the stream and near to its source a bridge crossed the gully, and a hitherto peaceful hamlet of a few houses stood close by. In this particular drive by the Germans a small body of one of their divisions, who might properly be termed an unorganised party of raiders, became separated from the extreme wing of the army and were seen to be approaching at considerable distance by the residents of the hamlet.

Terror-stricken, their minds filled with knowledge of the awful atrocities committed by soldiers such as these, the peasants fled for safety over the bridge and up the slope into the forest, hoping to gain the top, where they knew the Forestry Regiment's plant was located, before the dreaded Huns could overtake them.

As it fortunately happened, Andy had been ordered to go prospecting as to what kind of timber might be obtainable lower down the slope. He carried his rifle and full supply of cartridges. The party of frightened peasants told him their story. Quickly sizing up the situation, "Andy" lost no time in directing the little party to a place where they would be safe from detection. He then hurried away in the direction of the bridge, and arriving about 300 yards from it, was able to see the marauders going in and out of the houses of the hamlet. He was able to count eleven men in the party, and decided he could by careful generalship dispose of them.

Realizing that the Huns, when they found the dwellings empty, would trace the villagers over the bridge, "Andy" concluded he should promptly open fire on them and be sure that each shot told, as it would not be safe to allow the unbroken squad to reach the bridge together and rush it in a body. He took aim at one who seemed to be acting as leader, and fired. The shot went home and the man dropped, while his comrades showed their surprise by standing as if rooted in their tracks. This gave the shrewd little Canuck an opportunity he was not slow in accepting to do some rapid firing, hoping to cause the enemy to suppose they were opposed by more than one man. This he apparently succeeded in doing for the time being, as the others sought cover; all but two who had gone down under Andy's aim, while a third was so badly wounded as to be unable to walk.

After awaiting developments for some time, the Huns began to regain courage and decided to make an effort to locate the slayer of their comrades and discover at the same time the inhabitants of the vacant houses whom they naturally expected their assailant belonged to.

Four of their number crawled from their places of hiding with the intention of fording the shallow stream, while the other three made as careful an approach as possible to the bridge.

From his post behind a tree Andy first saw the three dodging towards the bridge, and was waiting a good chance for a shot when his attention was drawn by the loud quacking of a flock of ducks which had been disturbed in the stream by the approach of the four soldiers, so that the Canadian saw them nearly as soon as did the ducks, and at the same time ascertained the tactics they proposed to carry out. As they were clearly visible a shot killed one, while a quick turn of the rifle from behind the tree towards the bridge caught one of the gang there napping who straightened out mortally wounded.

That was enough for the Germans, both at the bridge and the stream, and the five men raced back to the protection of the houses. Andy, at the same time, was able to fire two more shots in quick succession, wounding one more and causing the now thoroughly demoralized boches to believe there were at least two armed men against them with others available if necessary. They made no further attempt to discover the whereabouts of the villagers. With only four of their number fit for flight they got out of range with their one wounded comrade, the two other wounded having died.

BACK HOME.

Andy, after watching them until they disappeared in the distance, turned back towards his regiment's headquarters to report what had happened. The village refugees in the meanwhile having rested where Andy had directed them, proceeded on to the camp and told their story, whereupon a squad was quickly formed to go to Andy's relief. He consequently met them about half-way on their march down the slope, but returned with them to the forsaken hamlet where the proof of his statement was plainly to be seen. The dead bodies were buried, the Foresters returned to their camp and the next day escorted the villagers back to their homes.

Andy was not forgotten either by his

TO THE EDITOR.

A GERMAN MOTHER'S PLEA.

Here is an actual letter—the signature only has been altered—recently received in London, evidently written in all sincerity. It presents to the authorities half-a-dozen problems which are most difficult to solve. Should this German mother's request be met, and if not what answer should be sent to her? We invite our readers to say what they would do if they were obliged to take action upon it.—ED.

Very Respected Sir,
As I am not able to write the English language very well, allow me to refer my request to you in German.

Although I am German born, I lived eighteen years in Canada and my home and my four young children were there when I came here in 1914 on a visit. The outbreak of war prevented me then from returning to my family, and have been separated from them now for nearly five years. I heard from my sister very seldom as she is also living in Canada and looking after my children in my absence.

Well, my eldest son has been a private in the Canadian Army for a year, and for a short time past has been with the English Army of Occupation at St. Vith on Rhine.

My earnest request is, sir, that you will now be able to get me permission to see my son. Perhaps he might visit me here for a short time, or permission could be given to me to go and see him, even if I might be allowed to see him only in the presence of others I should be very glad, but you will understand how I, as a mother, long for my children. I do not even know the address of my son nor with what regiment he is serving, only that he enlisted on December 17th in Toronto, Ont., in a signal corps, came to England in March, and from there came to France. My son enlisted in the Army voluntarily—all this was told me by my sister.

I should like to enquire further whether it will soon be possible for us (I came together with a friend to Germany) to return home. Unfortunately we have no evidence that we have Canadian citizenship. My husband was a Protestant clergyman in a German community over there, but he has been dead now 10 years. I, as a widow, never worried about politics, and even on my journey here, I brought no papers of any sort.

Now I beg you earnestly if you can and will, to grant my request, and to give me assistance in returning to my children. I also request information as to the possibility of seeing my eldest son, Gotthard Christiansen. With sincere thanks in advance,

FRAU P. CHRISTIANSEN.

P.S.—An English prisoner with whom I was speaking advised me to apply to you.

Continued from Previous Column.

officers who commended him for promotion for valorous conduct in action, nor by the villagers, one pretty maid among whom so charmed Andy that he could not hide it from her and she was not slow in letting him see before the corps moved farther away that his admiration was reciprocated.

The last heard from our modest hero was that he had decided to be one of the Canadians whom an eminent authority recently said were marrying in the Old Country at the rate of 1200 a month, and that this was especially true of the Forestry Corps.