

July 11, 1919 Genesee News
Letter from Siberia: Lieutenant Herbert Martinson Writes
interestingly of Skirmishes With the Bolsheviks:

- The following interesting letter has been received by the Martinson family from their son and brother, Lieutenant Herbert Martinson, who is with the American forces in Siberia:

I suppose by this time that you will think that I am in the hands of the Bolsheviks and held for ransom, but no such luck.

When he first came up here we were not supposed to be in open warfare with the Bolsheviks. But our duty was to go to the railway from any unlawful interference so that the coal from Souchan mines could reach Vladivostok. but since then things have changed for the better.

The first thing that happened when we first came up here was the capture of Mr. Artz. A wealthy mine owner, by the Bolsheviks. General Graves sent an order to us directing us to do everything that we could to get him released. Major Cutrer sent Mr. Graves and myself back to the hills to see if we could locate the prison of this man. We rode all through the back country and through the Bolshevik lines for five days till we finally located this man at a place called Mnogoydolnayo. (pronounce it) The Bolshevik leader would not release him unless we had a paper from Chevchenco. The big leader authorizing it. So we had to ride back to a place called Novo Russyskays, where we had dinner with the big chief and his leaders. He finally consented to release Mr. Artz and turn him over to the Americans providing I would ride back to Mnogoydolnayo that night and take them to her headquarters the next day, so we had to do it, making it about a 50mile ride that day. Believe me we were mighty glad to get back home and get a good rest. But not nearly as glad as Mr. Artz, Who had given up hope of ever coming to alive. You see the Bolsheviks do not keep prisoners of war, anyone of them that captured belong to a wealthy family or one who has a fair education is either tortured or killed at once.

The place where we have our headquarters is called Shkotova And is a place that the Bolsheviks have twice rated and tried to drive the Russian troops out of, but so far have not succeeded. When I was in

the Bolshevik lines they told me that they were going to destroy the railway that we are guarding as it carried supplies to the Russian troops and not to them. I told him that if they interfered with the railroad in any way that they would have to fight, so we were not surprised to hear a few days later that they fired into one of the passenger trains and killed a Russian colonel. As soon as we got the information that the active had been committed, we had a company of 250 men on the trail after them, and located a band of them about 12 o'clock noon we had some hard fighting but drove them for a distance of about 5 miles. We went back to the camp to wait and see if they would try anything like that again. We had three men wounded, and several badly scarred, but you will have to hand it to the Yanks for the way they handled themselves under fire. As soon as Major Cutrer saw that it would come to a showdown with them he ordered for companies from the base at Vladivostok which I arrived here the following night about 1 o'clock. This addition gave us a total of about 1000 men, six machine guns and 2 one pounder guns. So that we were willing for them to start something, which they did.

They were all ganged up at a place called Krolevts ready to cut down on anyone they had it in for, so Major Cutrer arranged a fine plan to catch as many of them as possible. E Company and two machine guns were sent around one way while the rest of the outfit of about 600 men were sent to attack from the front. We left here on the train about 2 o'clock in the morning and they were outside of their town by daylight. As soon as they saw us coming, they beat it for the hills back of the town, so we had a real fight to get them out of the hills. We had a few men wounded but none killed, while the Bolsheviks had a large number of their men killed and a few captured. During the fight the chief of staff of the Bolsheviks was killed and his horse taken. Since that time, they've been hard to find, most of them having gone to a better hunting ground, where there are not so many Yanks. This is the first wise thing they have done since I have been here. We are expecting trouble up at the mines that we are guarding, but God help them if they start anything, for we won't.

I saw Don the other day. He is adjutant to Major Alderdice who went through here to take command of the main guard on Sauchou. I understand he's going back on the mainline soon.

