

**Summary of Service:**

**2nd Battalion:** (Strength 29 officers 1,066 soldiers) 12th December 1899: Orders to mobilize received at Dublin. 22nd December 1899: Moved to Badajos Barracks, Aldershot as part of 15th Brigade, 7th Division. 13th January 1900: Embarked Southampton. 3rd February 1900: Battalion disembarked Cape Town. 6th February 1900: Mounted Infantry Company (formerly D Company) departs for Orange River Station (see below). 8th April 1901: Klerksdorp. 16th October 1902: Bloemfontein. 20th May 1904: Battalion embarked at Cape Town. 9th June 1904: Disembarked at Southampton.

**3rd (Militia) Battalion:** 23rd January 1900: Mobilized at Brecon. 14th February 1900: Embarked at Queenstown. 8th March 1900: Arrived Cape Town. 1st March 1902: Embarked Cape Town for UK.

**Mounted Infantry Section:** 9th October 1899: Detachment of 34 left Dublin. 22nd October 1899: Detachment embarked Tilbury as part of 2nd Mounted Infantry Battalion. 13th November 1899: Arrived at Cape Town for Naauwport. 31st May 1901: Klerksdorp. 7th May 1904: Rejoined 2nd Battalion from Ladybrand.

**Mounted Infantry Company:** (Strength: 5 officers 135 soldiers) 6th February 1900: Mounted Infantry Company (formerly D Company 2nd Bn SWB) departs for Orange River Station (see below) as part of 8th Battalion Mounted Infantry. May 1901: Assigned at 15th Battalion Mounted Infantry. 31st May 1902: Frankfort and Ladybrand. May 1902: Rejoined 2nd Bn. SWB.

**1st Volunteer Active Service Company** (Strength: 110): 29th January 1900: Volunteers departed home locations. 14th February 1900: Depart Portsmouth aboard SS Greek. 9th March 1900: Disembarked Cape Town. 8th May 1900: Company joined 2nd Battalion South Wales Borderers at Osfontein as 1 Company. 29th April 1901: Company embarked at Cape Town aboard SS Idaho. 21st May 1901: Disembarked at Southampton.

**2nd Volunteer Active Service Company** (Strength: 113): 15th February 1901: Mobilized at Brecon. 31st March 1901: Embarked at Southampton. 16th April 1901: Arrived at Cape Town. 5th-20th September 1901: Company joined 2nd Battalion South Wales Borderers at Klerksdorp as 1 Company. 4th June 1902: Company embarked at Cape Town aboard SS Syria. 25th June 1902: Disembarked at Portsmouth.

**Draft** – sometimes referred to as 3rd Volunteer Active Service Company (Strength: 31): February 1902: Mobilized at Brecon. 15th April 1902: Draft joined 2nd Battalion South Wales Borderers at Klerksdorp. 9th July 1902: Embarked at Cape Town aboard SS German. 2nd August 1902: Arrived Newport, South Wales.

On 11th October 1899, war broke out between Great Britain and the Dutch Boers of the Transvaal and Orange Free State. The 1st Battalion South Wales Borderers was in India; the 2nd Battalion, having just moved to Ireland, was not included in the Army Corps originally dispatched to the Cape from Great Britain. The 'Black Week' of December 1899, with the reverses at Magersfontein, Colenso and Stormberg, forced the Government to send out more troops, and thus it came about that on 3rd February 1900, the 2nd Battalion landed at Cape Town. A party of an officer and 33 men had gone out with the original expedition as part of the 2nd Mounted Infantry, and on reaching the Orange River, D Company, the battalion's Mounted Infantry Company, was detached to join the 8th Mounted Infantry.

The 2nd South Wales Borderers formed part of the 15th Brigade of the 7th Division, being brigaded with the 2nd Cheshire, 1st East Lancashire, and 2nd North Staffordshire. In February and March 1900, the battalion took part in Lord Roberts's operations for the relief of Kimberley, receiving its baptism of fire at Jacobsdal on 15th February. It was represented by its Mounted Infantry Companies at Cronje's Surrender at Paardeberg on 27th February.

On 28th March 1900, the 7th Division moved out from Bloemfontein to cross the Modder River north of that place at Glen, and to attack the Boers eight miles further north at Karree Siding in order to cover the reconstruction of the Glen railway bridge. On 29th March, the attack was launched and was completely successful, at a cost of only 200 casualties to the whole Division.

On 23rd January 1900, the 3rd (Militia) Battalion had been called up and embodied at Brecon, and then sent to Dublin to take over the duties left behind by the 2nd Battalion. On 4th February, the battalion almost without exception volunteered for active service, and landed at Cape Town on 8th March. It was sent up to Kimberley to guard the communications on the left flank of Lord Roberts's advance on Pretoria.

This advance began in the first week in May. On 12th May 1900, Kroonstad was reached, 100 miles from Karree Siding. After a ten day's halt the march was resumed. On 31st May Johannesburg was reached and Pretoria five days' later. There was little or no fighting, the 2nd Battalion having only one casualty.

Meanwhile in the west the 3rd (Militia) Battalion was advancing under Lord Methuen, covering seventy miles in three days without losing a man.

After the capture of Pretoria Lord Roberts pushed eastwards towards Delagoa Bay in conjunction with General Buller's Field Force from Natal. Organised resistance by the Boer armies ceased on 24th September 1900, when they were finally dispersed at Koomati Poort, 200 miles east of Pretoria, and 100 miles from the coast of Lorenzo Marques. In these operations, the 2nd Battalion took no part, having been left to garrison Johannesburg.

From this time on to the signing of Peace at Vereeniging on 31st May 1902, the war developed into guerilla warfare, an affair of block houses, barbed wire fences, flying columns, convoys and isolated actions. In this period the battalions of the South Wales Borderers saw no sustained fighting, but had some hard marching and sharp actions, and individuals had many chances of showing their initiative.

One march of 36 miles surprised Potchefstroom at dawn and caught 80 Boers. A Mounted Infantry patrol captured six Frenchmen, part of a train-wrecking gang, and earned a telegram of commendation from Lord Roberts himself. Another Mounted Infantry patrol charged a party of Boers attacking a post, the corporal in command winning the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

Attacks were frequently made on companies escorting convoys and much good work was done in getting them through. The total casualties of the 2nd Battalion during the war were 2 officers and 32 men killed, 1 officer and 94 men died of disease, 4 officers and 83 men wounded, or 216 casualties in all. Those of the 3rd (Militia) Battalion totalled 6 officers and 47 men, of whom 3 officers and 7 men were killed.

For his services during the war, Colonel Roche was awarded a CB and other awards to the 2nd Battalion included four DSOs, and eleven DCMs. While Colonel Healey received a CMG, and 3rd (Militia) Battalion two DSOs and three DCMs.

It is of historical interest to note that one company of the 2nd Battalion was composed of a detachment from each of the Volunteer Battalions of the Regiment. This was the first war in which the Volunteers of the Regiment fought with their comrades of the Line. The company acquitted itself with every credit and each battalion was subsequently awarded the Battle Honour 'South Africa 1900-1902'. Their titles in 1900 were:

1st (Brecknockshire) Volunteer Battalion, The South Wales Borderers;  
2nd Volunteer Battalion, The South Wales Borderers;  
3rd Volunteer Battalion, The South Wales Borderers;  
4th Volunteer Battalion, The South Wales Borderers;  
5th Volunteer Battalion, The South Wales Borderers.

In 1908 when the old Volunteers were merged into the new Territorial Force under Mr. Haldane's re-organisation, these Volunteer Battalions became respectively:

Brecknockshire Battalion, The South Wales Borderers TF;  
1st (Rifle) Battalion, The Monmouthshire Regiment TF;  
2nd Battalion, The Monmouthshire Regiment TF;  
3rd Battalion, The Monmouthshire Regiment TF;  
7th Battalion, The Royal Welch Fusiliers TF.