

Summary of Service:

4th (Service) Battalion was formed at Brecon in August 1914 and moved to Park House Camp, Tidworth as part of 40th Brigade, 13th Division. October 1914: Chisledon, Wiltshire. December 1914: Moved to Cirencester in billets. March 1915: Moved to Woking, Surrey. 29th June 1915: Embarked from Avonmouth for Mudros arriving on 12th July 1915. 15th July 1915: Landed at Gallipoli. 8th January 1916: Evacuated to Mudros. 30th January 1916: Moved to Egypt. 15th February 1916: Embarked at Suez for Basra arriving on 4th March 1916. 31st October 1918: Part of 40th Brigade, 13th Division north of Kirkuk, Mesopotamia. April 1919: Amara, Iraq. 26th April 1919: Embarked from India for UK. 19th August 1919: Battalion received at Brecon.

The 4th (Service) Battalion, the first of the Service Battalions raised by Lord Kitchener, came into being on 7th August 1914, under Lieutenant Colonel FM Gillespie, then commanding the Depot, with a nucleus of regular officers and NCOs. It joined the 40th Brigade of the 13th Division and served in Gallipoli and in Mesopotamia. In these two campaigns it worthily upheld the traditions of the Twenty-Fourth and added two Victoria Crosses to the Roll.

GALLIPOLI - SARI BAIR

In July 1915, the 13th Division was sent to Gallipoli, together with four other Territorial and New Army Divisions in a final effort to capture the Peninsula. After a fortnight in the line at Cape Helles the Division was landed at Anzac and there took part in a great effort to capture the Sari Bair ridge in conjunction with a new landing by the other fresh Divisions at Suvla Bay, six miles to the north. The 40th Brigade was ordered to protect the left flank of the main attack. Its task was to make a night march of two miles northward along the coast, then to wheel half-right, and by a night attack capture Damakjelik Bair, a ridge which formed the lower end of one of the main spurs of Sari Bair.

At 8 p.m. on 6th August 1915 the advance started, the 4th Battalion having the honour of finding the advanced guard. After covering two miles of very broken and difficult ground covered with boulders and prickly scrub the battalion reached the nullah of the Achyl Dere, its deployment position. Here it was fired on from a trench on the far side, but D Company in the lead dashed across with a cheer and carried the trench with the bayonet. The battalion then crossed, wheeled to its right in the darkness, and by 1.30 a.m. after dealing with several parties of Turks on the way had secured its objective on Damakjelik Bair, a very fine piece of work.

On 9th August 1915 it met and defeated a most determined counterattack, but in doing so lost Lieutenant Colonel Gillespie, the Commanding Officer who had trained it to such a high standard of efficiency, and who had led it with such skill and resolution in its first action. He was killed early in the attack while directing the fire of machine gun. By 22nd August after further heavy fighting the Battalion had lost over 400 officers and men out of the 775 who had landed on 4th August.

The battalion served with distinction throughout the rest of the campaign. It was chosen as the rearguard in the evacuation of Suvla Bay in December 1915, an honour it had fully earned. After a spell in the line alongside the 2nd Battalion at Cape Helles, it shared with that battalion in the final evacuation of the Peninsula, its rearguard being among the last troops to leave.

MESOPOTAMIA 1916-1918
BAGHDAD

Despatched from Egypt to Mesopotamia in February 1916, the 13th Division took part in the sanguinary battles of the spring of 1916 fought by the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force in the vain efforts to relieve General Townshend in Kut. These actions consisted for the most part of desperate attacks on strongly entrenched lines carried out in cold, mud and rain, and in circumstances of the greatest hardships to the troops. The spirit of the 4th Battalion was more than equal to the demands made upon it. On 4th April 1916 the British attacked the Hanna position. The battalion pushed on under heavy machine gun fire over ground devoid of cover, and despite severe losses reached a line about 800 yards from the Turkish trenches. During the advance an officer fell and one of his men, going to his help, was hit and disabled. Captain Buchanan thereupon dashed out from behind cover and not only carried the officer in despite a heavy fire but, going out again, brought the private in also, for which gallantry he was awarded the Victoria Cross.

A few days later, on 8th April, came the night assault on the Turkish position at Sannaiyat, with the 4th Battalion in the front line. The attack failed with heavy loss, but the Regiment gained

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another Victoria Cross. Private Fynn, of C Company, crept out in broad daylight to two men who were lying within 300 yards of the Turkish line, bandaged them and brought them in.

After the failure to relieve Kut operations ceased till December 1916, by which time General Maude, the new Commander-in-Chief, had completed his organisation of the force and had put its administrative services and transport on a firm foundation. The 4th Battalion took a leading part in his victorious advance, smashing through the Turks in the battles for the recapture of Kut and, in the advance to Baghdad, the Battalion being the first British troops to enter the main city on 11th April 1917. After Baghdad came General Maude's operations for consolidating his position, the battalion having a particularly hard and gallant fight on the River Adhaim, where they were awarded a MC and no less than five DCMs for courage and leadership. They ultimately finished the campaign at Kirkuk, 200 miles beyond Baghdad and over 500 miles from the base at the head of the Persian Gulf.

