

Summary of Service:

1st Battalion: 4 November 1899: Aldershot, Hampshire (strength: 28 officers and 823 soldiers). Sailed aboard the SS Kildonan Castle. 26 November 1899: Disembarked at Port Elizabeth, South Africa. 4th February 1900: Joined 18th Brigade under command Brigadier-General TE Stephenson, as part of 4th Division. 31st May 1902: Reitfontein West, Pretoria. 12th July 1904: Left South Africa for Gravesend, Kent.

3rd (Militia) Battalion: 3rd December 1899: Mobilized at Cardiff (strength: 31 officers and 580 soldiers). 12th February 1900: Embarked from Southampton aboard SS Majestic for South Africa (31 officers and 580 men). 1st March 1900: Arrived in Cape Town, South Africa. 8th February 1902: Entrained for Cape Town for UK. 8th March 1902: Disembodied at Cardiff.

Mounted Infantry Company: (strength: 3 officers and 106 soldiers). Served as B Company of the composite 6th Battalion Mounted Infantry.

Mounted Infantry Company: (strength: unknown). Served as No. 3 Company of the composite 22nd Battalion Mounted Infantry. The company consisted of volunteers from The Royal West Surreys, Royal Welsh Fusiliers, Welsh Regiment, Gloucestershire Regiment and the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry.

1st Volunteer Service Company: 9th March 1900: Arrived in South Africa. 10th October 1900: Left the 1st Battalion at Codwan. 8th April 1901: Embarked from sailing from South Africa. (Strength: 4 Officers, 1 Colour Sergeant, 7 Sergeants, 9 Corporals, 3 Lance Corporals, 2 Drummers, 111 Privates, of whom 3 Privates died of disease).

2nd Volunteer Service Company: 29th April 1901: Company joined 1st Battalion at Nelspruit. 26th May 1902: Left the 1st Battalion. (Strength: 2 Officers, 1 Colour Sergeant, 6 Sergeants, 3 Corporals, 10 Lance Corporals, 2 Drummers, 82 Privates, of whom 23 soldiers volunteered from the 1st Volunteer Battalion; 27 soldiers volunteered from the 2nd Volunteer Battalion; 30 soldiers volunteered from the 3rd Volunteer Battalion; 24 soldiers volunteered from the 3rd (Glamorgan) Volunteer Battalion).

3rd Volunteer Service Company: 3rd April 1902: Arrived in South Africa. 10th April 1902: Joined the 1st Battalion at Rietfontein West. 4th July 1902: Left 1st Battalion. (Strength: 1 Officer, 1 Colour Sergeant Instructor, 3 Sergeants, 1 Corporal, 2 Lance Corporals, 1 Bugler, 45 Privates, of whom 1 Sergeant and 2 Privates had previously served in South Africa with the 1st Volunteer Service Company).

Services of the 1st Battalion The Welsh Regiment

In October 1899, the Republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State declared war on Great Britain. The subject of the quarrel no longer matters.

At first the war went badly for the British. Ladysmith and Kimberley were besieged and attempts to relieve them failed. By this time the 1st Battalion The Welsh Regiment was on its way to South Africa. Lord Roberts had been appointed to the command and the 1st Battalion was to form part of his force. The first object was to relieve Kimberley. Skilful planning and organisation beforehand were the foundations of success in this move.

When all was ready the attack was launched. General John French with his cavalry dashed for Kimberley and relieved it whilst the infantry marched fast to cut off the Boer main force retiring from the siege. Hard marching did it and Cronje, the Boer commander, took up his position at Paardeberg in an entrenched position on the Modder River.

The actual battle was fought on the 18th February 1900, in which the 1st Battalion was heavily engaged and received special mention for a gallant charge. On the 27th February, Cronje with his men surrendered. On March the 7th, the advance was continued on Bloemfontein, the capital of the Orange Free State.

On the 10th March a strong force of Boers barred the way at Driefontein posted on the heights. The 1st Battalion were ordered to storm the heights, whilst the Yorkshires and the Essex moved round on either flank. The ground was bare, and afforded no cover. The advance was made fifty yards at a time under heavy fire. Two more battalions were thrown into the fight, and eventually the whole line fixed bayonets and charged. The Boers fled to their horses and disappeared, our cavalry failing to round them up. In this action the Battalion lost 140 men, amongst them the Adjutant, Captain DAN Lomax, who had behaved with the greatest gallantry.

The advance continued, and Bloemfontein was entered unopposed. Preparations were then pushed forward for the advance on Pretoria. This advance was again one of hard and constant marching Pretoria was entered on 5th June 1900, after little fighting.

After the capture of Pretoria the Battalion was engaged at the action of Diamond Hill. Then it did garrison duty in various parts, until peace was declared in 1902. Out of this war has risen the new Dominion, the Union of South Africa. For its services in South Africa, including those soldiers who served with the Mounted Infantry, the 1st Battalion was awarded 2 Companions of the Bath, 6 Distinguished Service Orders and 12 Distinguished Conduct Medals. Losses include 5 officers and 67 soldiers killed in action and died of wounds; and 4 officers and 113 soldiers died of disease and accidents.

Services of the 3rd (Militia) Battalion The Welsh Regiment

The 3rd Battalion was embodied permanent service on 3rd December 1899, all ranks volunteered for foreign service, and embarked for South Africa on 12th February 1900. The strength of the Battalion was 31 officers and 580 soldiers (186 Militia Reservists of the Battalion having been previously withdrawn for Line service in South Africa) with Lieutenant Colonel AT Perkins commanding. On its arrival in South Africa on 1st March 1900, the Battalion proceeded to De Aar, and on 15th March, formed part of the Flying Column under General Lord Kitchener, which was operating between De Aar and Prieska, the Rebels evading the Column by crossing the Orange River. On 3rd April 1900, part of Battalion consisting of 12 officers and 240 soldiers under Colonel Perkins was sent on convoy duty to Prieska. On 20th April 1900, a large reconnaissance force composed of Prieska mounted troops 2 guns of 44th Royal Field Artillery, and 3rd Welsh across the Orange River. After the battle of Kies near Kenhardt on 16th August, the Battalion moved to Vryburg. On 22nd November 1900 while on convoy duty 2 officers and 200 soldiers, under Colonel Milne DSO, were sent to Schweitzer Reneke to repulsing a determined attack made on the Convoy at Du Toits Kopje. When the detachment returned to Vryburg, they had to repulse another heavy attack by 500 Boers.

On 2nd January 1901, a detachment of the Battalion (4 officers and 200 soldiers under Colonel Perkins) was again on convoy duty, this time to Kuruman returning via Swatfontein, distance about 280 miles. The garrison at Kuruman was strengthened on 3rd April 1901 by a detachment of consisting of Lieutenant Linton and 40 soldiers. Later whilst on convoy duty to Kuruman, Colonel Perkins with a detachment of 6 officers and soldiers, the convoy was fired on while passing a house flying the White Flag. The house was burnt and three Boers captured (two brothers named Poetgeter and one Botha), who were subsequently tried at Vryburg. On the 28th September 1901, the Battalion Headquarters moved by march route to Kimberley for duty in the blockhouses south of that station, and column duty under Lord Methuen. The Battalion entrained for Cape Town 8th February 1902, en route for England, and was disembodied at Cardiff on 8th March 1902. The Battalion was awarded 1 Companion of the Bath, 2 Distinguished Service Orders and 3 Distinguished Conduct Medals.

Copy of Order issued by Lieutenant-General Lord Methuen, Commanding 1st Division Western Transvaal, on 15th February 1902:

'The GOC Western Transvaal wishes to record his appreciation of the work performed by the 3rd Welsh Regiment during the time the Headquarters of that Battalion served at Vryburg. The Town was in the centre of a rebellious district, and the Battalion had to find the escort of two large convoys to Kuruman, 80 miles distant, a duty, which was carried out successfully on both occasions. No doubt the safety of Vryburg was secured to a great extent by the careful manner in which the duty was carried out by this Battalion.'

3rd Battalion casualties in South Africa: Killed and died of disease, etc., Captain HW Masterman, Sergeant-Major Murphy, and 33 soldiers.