

Squire, TA

Thomas Arthur Squire was born on 13 March 1893 and he was baptised at St Paul's Church, Hammersmith on 16 April of that year. His father, also Thomas Arthur Squire, was a Gas Mantle Manufacturer, of Agate Road, Brackenbury Village, born in 1867. He had married Emma Wiseman Tones in 1889. Thomas was the third child, the first and only son. At the Census of 1901, the family had moved to 35 Paddenswick Road, Hammersmith. Thomas had two elder sisters, Daphne (1890) and Eva (1891). There were four further daughters, Dora (1895), Brenda (1896) who died in early infancy, Hilda (1898) and Sybil (1901). After early education at Elgin House Private school, Goldhawk Road, he joined Latymer School on the 8th of September, 1903, being placed in class I a. He left on July 9th 1909, from class VI c having sat the Cambridge Local Exams at the 'Junior' level in July 1908 and 'Satisfied the Examiners'. A photograph shows him in the garden at 35 Paddenswick Road with his eldest sister Daphne at around 1909, about the time of his entry to Latymer.

After leaving school, he joined his father in the production of Gas Mantles. He spent 6 years at this job, until he joined the City of London Yeomanry at the outset of the War (a territorial unit known as "Rough Riders"). A photograph shows him in uniform at home on Christmas Day 1914.

Thomas Squire's enlistment in the City of London Yeomanry is recorded in the October 1914 edition of the Latymer School Magazine. This regiment of four squadrons was assigned to the London Mounted Brigade, 2nd Mounted Division.

On 11 April 1915, the regiment embarked on Scotia and arrived off Cape Helles, Gallipoli on 28 April expecting to land. However, on 1 May it departed again, arriving at Alexandria on 6 May being posted to the Suez Canal Defences (near Ismaïlia) by the middle of May. Tom took part in mounted patrols on his horse Dommi to prevent mine laying on the Suez canal railway.

Its parent brigade was designated 4th (London) Mounted Brigade. The regiment eventually was dismounted in August 1915 for late service in the Gallipoli Campaign. It left a squadron headquarters and two troops (about 100 officers and men) in Egypt to look after the horses.

The regiment landed at Suvla Bay on the morning of 18 August and moved into reserve positions at Karakol Dagħ. It moved to "C" Beach, Lala Baba on 20 August. On 21 August it advanced to Chocolate Hill under heavy fire and took part in the attack on Hill 112. Due to losses during the Battle of Scimitar Hill and wastage during August 1915, the 2nd Mounted Division had to be reorganised. The regiment formed part of a battalion sized unit, the 4th London Regiment. This regiment left Gallipoli, embarking for Mudros on 2 November and returning to Egypt in December 1915 where it was reformed and remounted. A [letter](#) to his parents after he had returned to Egypt describes his Gallipoli experiences.

The regiment (and its brigade) left the 2nd Mounted Division on 18 January 1916 and was sent to Abbassia in the Nile Delta where it once again served as part of the Suez Canal Defences. In March 1916, the brigade was redesignated as 8th Mounted Brigade. From November 1916 to June 1917, the regiment took part in the Salonika Campaign, serving as GHQ Troops, seeing little action.

The regiment arrived back in Egypt from Salonika with its Brigade on 8 June 1917. It moved forward and joined the newly formed Yeomanry Mounted Division on 21 July 1917 at el Fuqari. From 31 October it took part in the Third Battle of Gaza, including the Battle of Beersheba and the Capture of the Sheria Position. It took part in the Battle of Mughar Ridge on 13 and 14 November and the Battle of Nebi Samwil for 17 to 24 November. There, the yeomanry were confronted by a strong position of 3,000 infantry supported by artillery on the Zeitun ridge west of Bireh. During a back and forwards battle the yeomanry did at one stage capture the position, but were forced back again on 21 November. From 27 to 29 November, it withstood the Turkish counter-attacks during the Capture of

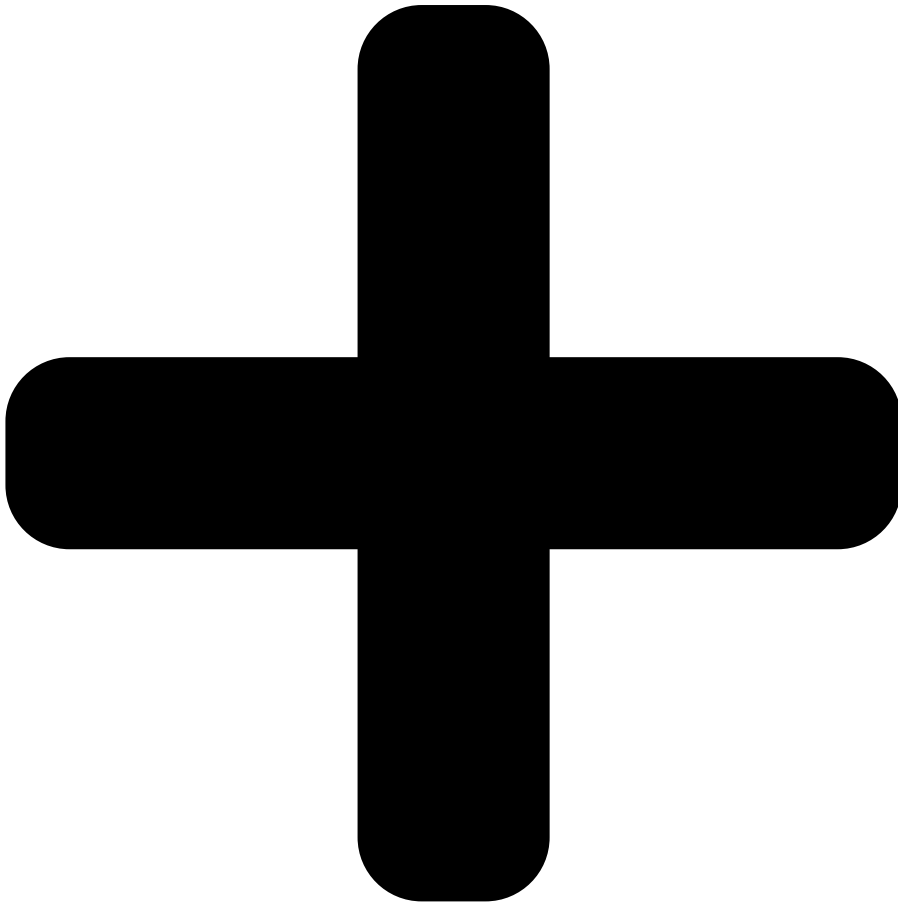
Jerusalem.

Thomas had risen to the rank of Sergeant at the time of his death, of wounds on 30 November 1917, as reported in the December 1917 edition of Latymer's Magazine. It is not clear on what date he would have received his fatal injuries. His medal card confirms that he was with the unit from the outset in May 1915, so would probably have served in all four of its locations, Egypt, un-mounted in Gallipoli, Salonika and Palestine, though he would have been spared the ordeal of Gallipoli had he been in the lucky 100 that stayed in Egypt to look after the horses. Thus his war service would have mirrored the experiences of [Private Leonard Dunckley](#), who served in the 3rd County of London Yeomanry (The Sharpshooters). His grave lies at the Cairo Memorial Cemetery, which suggests his wounds allowed evacuation to a base hospital facility. Information from his great nephew indicates that Thomas was wounded by a Turkish sniper near Ramallah, Palestine a week or so before he died of his wounds in Cairo.

Thomas's father will have received his son's medals, the 1915 Star, War and Victory medals. The headstone is inscribed: *"In God's Keeping"*.

TOM SQUIRE'S GALLIPOLI EXPERIENCES





At Suvla Bay – T. Squire



18 December 1915

Dear Mother and Father

I am going to try to tell you in this letter a little bit of my doings on Gallipoli. It will take bit of time because my thumb is still the same. I have by me a few notes made on the Peninsula, which I could not send then because of the Censor. They will help to jog my memory and keep me from exaggerating.

Part One

Those men including myself who chanced to be detailed to go on the horse boat (which by the way was a mistake and quite unnecessary), landed on Suvla Bay on Sunday morning August 22nd 5 o'clock after standing on deck of the small Greek steamer which acted as transport all night. It was so overcrowded that there was hardly room to sit down anywhere and no food of any kind to be procured. The landing went off very well and we were very lucky in not getting one shell as most of the other landings before and after got a share of it. The best part of the first day was spent in doing fatigues and making ourselves comfortable in dug-outs but at 4 o'clock we were ordered to proceed across to Lala Baba and joined our different units who, as you know, had made their advance on the 21st (the day before). The sixty of us who made up this party consisted of odd men of all regiments of the division.

We had very little idea of where we were going and only vague rumours concerning the division so that it was with rather mixed feelings that we started out. I remember shaking hands with Vigers and Evans and promising to write their people if anything happened to them as they promised to do the same for me. To imagine the place we had to cross think of a valley like Seaton with a sea front of a mile and a half, a sandy waste stretching inland bordered by a range of hills two miles away and strongly held by the Turks. Our line of 60 men advanced in single file towards the sea edge and we were allowed to get a quarter of a mile by the Turks before they started. We of course at that time had no idea where Lala Baba was or even the Turks and it was a big shock when the first

shell came right in the middle of us, fortunately doing no harm other than setting our nerves a bit.

It must have been a beautiful target for the Turks to see our line right against the edge for a mile and a half with the setting sun as a background.

We got one or two more shrapnel shells before it was thoroughly brought home to us what we were in for. One man got hit in the leg and one behind me sat down and cried and refused to go on. I encouraged him or rather made some attempt to and he eventually got up and followed us. I must have had a sauce for I was in the biggest funk imaginable and it would have taken the slightest thing to have me turn around and bolt but I had enough sense to see that whatever I did would not get me away from those awful shells.

Altogether about 30 shells were fired at us at intervals of 30 seconds between each one. You cannot imagine the awful suspense of those 30 seconds but it was nothing to the hearing of the shot being fired and the shrieking shell gradually coming nearer until it finally burst right in the midst of us. It takes quite 4 or 5 seconds for the shells to reach you after the report. The Turks had our range beautifully, nearly every shot falling in our lines. Of course we were extended in line to the extent of about 4 yards between each man but it seemed miraculous to me to think that only 3 men were hit. On reaching the other side of the valley, we had a long drink of water from a well and sat down under cover and seriously cleaned the rifles having an idea that they would soon be of use to us. They needed cleaning badly because on hearing the first few reports we flopped down on the sand as flat as possible giving little thought to our rifles. I think we all had sandy noses too. A move forward was made again after a half an hours rest and we were very agreeably surprised to run into our Division in a very few minutes. They were very pleased to see us but seemed thoroughly shaken with their previous night's experiences. My own troop had suffered

heavier than any other in the Brigade, our officer, two sergeants and three men being killed and four or five wounded. I saw Frank Squire here and that was the only time that I ever saw him, he appeared thoroughly shaken and nervy.

Part Two

At 7 o'clock that evening the Division fell in and under cover of darkness we covered the same ground as the advance the day before and gained Chocolate Hill which is about a mile and a half inland. It was during this march that I spoke to Major Knollys for the last time. He asked me in his bluff manner what I thought of things which is more than any we have now would do. It was quite 11 o'clock before Chocolate Hill was reached and we were told to dig ourselves in before daybreak as the place was bound to be shelled. Glover, Kemp and myself made a rough little dugout and slept packed like three sardines.

In the morning rations of bully, tea and biscuits were issued and I volunteered to get some water. There was such a rush for it that we had to line up in some kind of order. We had not been there two minutes before a shell came and laid two men out. On a second one coming we were ordered to get back to our dugouts. About two o'clock we were ordered further up the hill to make fresh dugouts. Just about this time a few shells came over, one hitting Major Knollys very badly in the ankle. His leg had to be taken off just the below the knee, again later on above the knee and finally he died through gangrene setting in.

Well, we had a hell of a time in the heat and the flies, cutting away thick shrub with absurd little entrenching tools and digging away rock with a couple of spades and picks between a troop of 40 men. The fear of shells put some vim into us and we made some impression on the hill before teatime. It was quite a fortnight before we left Chocolate Hill and the whole time we were exposed to shrapnel fire of the Turks. One day we had as many as 67 casualties of our

Division which at the time would number less than 2500 men. We would hear a shell whizzing towards us and every time a cry "Stretcher Bearer" would be heard meaning that some poor blighter had been hit. There were a few casualties during that fortnight in our regiment, one sergeant and two or three men in my troop being hit.

Our time was occupied by doing odd fatigues, such as carrying rations to the first line trenches, picking up dead mens' equipment etc. I had a pretty narrow escape on the latter job. The Turks sighted us (a party of eight) and sent a few shells over us, one bursting so that a couple of the bullets hit the ground within a yard either side of me but no damage was done. There is nothing more desolate looking than to see all this equipment lying about. I picked up quite a number of rifles, haversacks, water-bottles, spades and even a saddle but did not come across any dead in my section of ground but the stench was pretty bad especially over the graves, many of the dead just being covered over with earth. After the first few days most of these fatigues were done at night if possible because of the casualties they caused in the day.

During our stay at Chocolate Hill I spent 24 hours in the first line trenches with the Inniskillins. There were twenty of us altogether and we were sent to reinforce them. They were a decent lot of fellows and treated us very well. We had a rest there from shelling but had to be careful of the snipers who were rather hot just here. I had a bullet whistle past my ear while going to make some tea. We had a pretty lively time with these snipers while returning at night to Chocolate Hill. They seemed to be behind our lines and some of the flashes of the rifles did not seem to be more than 20 yards away but fortunately no damage was done.

Part Three

On September 4th at 7.30 p.m. in the dark we left loaded up almost to breaking point for the second line trenches. It was only a short way but it was agony under the loads of

equipments and spades etc. and through the head of the line continually halting in order to hear the word passed up from the rear that it was in touch. It was 11 o'clock before we got there and because I had had a night's rest in the past six days I was put on sentry. Water was a bit of a bother to get here, the well being a good half mile away but whenever it was my turn to fetch water the place was not shelled. The heat and flies during the day was really torture and the men began to go sick. My section at Chocolate Hill was composed of 5 men: Corporal Sutherland, a Bookmaker and ex Boer War fellow, a fellow of the name of Scott and Kemp, Glover and myself. The first two went sick before we came to these trenches but we last three had make up our minds to outlast the others (I won).

I thought I was rather favoured here once but luck even greater than usual. I had just left my dug-out on a digging fatigue when a shrapnel bullet came in – it hitting the sand just where I was lying. Coming back from the digging a shrapnel shell burst right over the part of the trench that we were digging and had just left. There was not much else of interest, one or two casualties only occurring. I don't know if Eva remembers a fellow of the name of Jefferson who joined when we did and used to play rugby for the Regiment. He was a stretcher bearer but while getting wood on the first day he was killed by shrapnel. On Wednesday morning September 8th (?) these trenches were left for those of the first line about 100 yards away. In these we were doing two hours guard, two hours digging and two hours sleep all through day and night but the sleep was not nearly two hours because by the time we had walked back to the dug-out and turned in and were awakened again by your relief ten minutes earlier in order to go away again , you lost a good half hour. We had three men killed in one day only while in these trenches and a good many wounded. The Turks could infilade with their guns and snipers. Once while cooking our dinner Glover and myself were smothered in earth by a shell but no damage was done.

We used to take it in turns to pot at a sniper who was covering a Turkish sapping party 150 yards away. I had a few shots but did not consider it worth while dirtying me rifle for him as we hardly ever saw him and used to fire at the place where he was likely to show up. Fellows now started to go sick in earnest. When you read this letter you cannot imagine the strain on the nerves waking up in the morning with the hopeless feeling of knowing that all we could do was to dodge shells and never knowing what fatigues you might be detailed for. If water was required and it was twice a day, it had to be fetched from out in the open. Twice I climbed down a well myself to fill the water bottle having to go down at least 14 feet.

On Friday Sept 17th the first line was evacuated by us for the second line again. This is where I found that snug little dug-out that I described to Dora once. These trenches on the whole really were more dangerous than those we had left although they were called rest trenches. Our day was filled up with digging to improve the trenches and cooking but no sentries had to be posted. I had a very narrow squeak here. One evening I was standing about two feet away from a very small tree and directly behind it when a bullet came hitting the trunk that was no thicker than a broom handle and deflecting it just enough to miss me. It was a stray bullet but if it had not been for that trunk I might not be writing this. We had a few more casualties here, one affecting me more than any of the previous. I might have mentioned to Dora that I had run up against a fellow in my Troop who reminded me very much of Slicer Brown. He was quite a decent fellow who I chummed up with more than anybody else in the Troop. It was about 6 o'clock and we were all cooking our tea when a couple of shells came over laying poor Rimmer out. He died in a few minutes. The callousness of it was brought home to me still more when coming back with water from the well at 7 o'clock and in the dark I met half a dozen men carrying something in a blanket and I realised it was Rimmer that they were going to

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