

## RICHARD W. PROCTER – Private 2516, 8<sup>th</sup> Manchester, 31<sup>st</sup> May 1915, Age 23

Richard William Procter (or Proctor) was born in Richmond in 1891, the son of Mary and John Procter, a Stockbroker and Accountant of Castle Terrace. Richard's Mother died in 1898 and his father later remarried.

In 1911, Richard and his younger brother Joseph were working as Grocer's assistants and they were living as boarders at 24 Tyson Street (off Drawton Street) in Bradford. Richard subsequently joined the 1/8<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Manchester Regiment (the Ardwick Battalion).



Figure 1 - East Lancashire Division Troops in the Trenches, Gallipoli

On Sept 9<sup>th</sup> 1914 the Manchester Brigade left by train for Southampton, and then travelled by boat to Alexandria via Gibraltar. After taking part in the annexation of Cyprus they returned to Egypt for 3 months training and on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1915 they boarded ships and set sail for the Dardanelles and the hell that was Gallipoli.

The eight month campaign in Gallipoli was fought by Commonwealth and French forces in an attempt to force Turkey out of the war, to relieve the deadlock of the Western Front in France and Belgium, and to open a supply route to Russia through the Dardanelles and the Black Sea. The Allies landed on the peninsula on 25-26 April 1915; the 29<sup>th</sup> Division at Cape Helles in the south and the Australian and New Zealand Corps north of Gaba Tepe on the west coast, an area soon known as Anzac. On 6 August, further landings were made at Suvla, just north of Anzac, and the climax of the campaign came in early August when simultaneous assaults were launched on all three fronts. However, the difficult terrain and stiff Turkish resistance soon led to the stalemate of trench warfare. From the end of August, no further serious action was fought and the lines remained unchanged. The peninsula was successfully evacuated in December and early January 1916.

The 14,224 men of the 42<sup>nd</sup> (East Lancashire) Division were in action almost immediately upon landing in May 1915 as they replaced the 23<sup>rd</sup> Division in the left centre of the front line.

The conditions at Gallipoli, for both sides, were truly appalling. In the summer, the heat was atrocious, and in conjunction with bad sanitation, led to so many flies that eating became extremely difficult. Corpses, left in the open, became bloated and stank. The precarious Allied bases were poorly situated and caused supply and shelter problems. In the winter, gales and rain caused as much discomfort. The front line trenches, exposed on the peninsula that was Gallipoli were under almost constant fire. The fighting was intense.

Extract from Sir Ian Hamilton's 2<sup>nd</sup> Gallipoli despatch <sup>[1]</sup>:

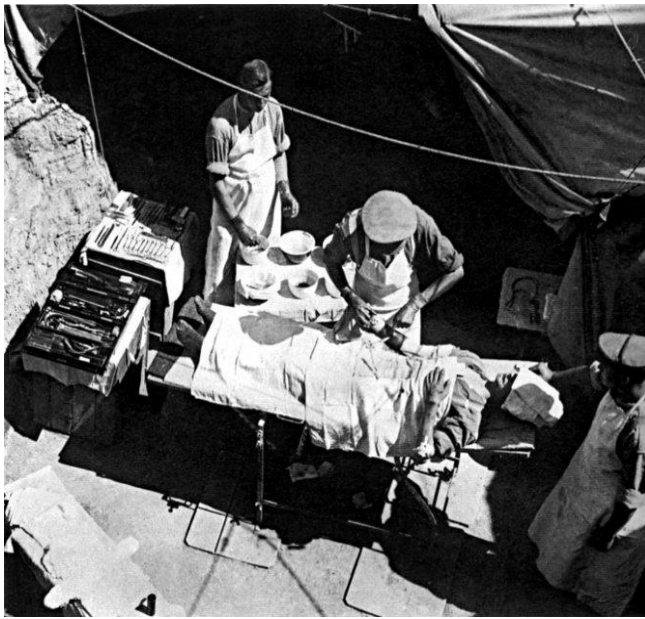


Figure 2 - Field Surgery Gallipoli - a surgeon removes a bullet from a soldier's arm in an East Lancashire Division field ambulance. (War Illustrated, Aug 1915)

*“From 25th May onwards the troops had been trying to work up within rushing distance of the enemy's front trenches. On the 25th May the Royal Naval and 42nd Divisions crept 100 yards nearer to the Turks, and on the night of 28th/29th May the whole of the British line made a further small advance. On that same night the French Corps Expeditdonnaire was successful in capturing a small redoubt on the extreme Turkish left west of the Kereves Dere. All Turkish counter-attacks during 29th May were repulsed. On the night of 30th May two of their many assaults effected temporary lodgment. But on both occasions they were driven out again with the bayonet. On every subsequent night up to that of the 3rd/4th June assaults were made upon the redoubt and upon our line, but at the end of that period our position remained intact.”*

It would have been during these battles, many of which were hand to hand and involved bayonet charges, that Richard was killed in action on the 31<sup>st</sup> May, aged 23.

Richard is commemorated on the [HELLES MEMORIAL](#) (Panels 158 to 170) which lists more than 21,000 names of those who died in the campaign and who have no known grave.



Figure 3 - Helles Memorial, Turkey

Sources:

- (1) [http://www.1914-1918.net/hamiltons\\_gallipoli\\_despatch\\_2.html](http://www.1914-1918.net/hamiltons_gallipoli_despatch_2.html)
- (2) Commonwealth War Graves Commission  
<https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/687233>
- (3) <http://www.themanchesters.org/8th%20batt.htm>