

Private Trooper John Charles Henry SPEIRS (*aka Spiers and Spehrs*)

1917 Feb 3: John Charles Speirs enlisted in Albury, NSW. Undertook training at Showground Camp Sydney.

1917 May 10: Embarked from Melbourne on board **HMAT A42 Boorara**. AWM Embarkation Roll number: 11/14/1 with the **1st Anzac Battalion, Imperial Camel Brigade** (1917 Reinforcements). Age **38 yrs** Height: 6' 0" Weight: 178 lbs.

1917 May 22: Fremantle, W.A. on board **HMAT A42 Boorara** (weighed 5,923 tons with an average cruise speed of 10.5 knots or 19.44 kmph. The *Boorara* was previously a captured German vessel called *Pfalz*. It was manned by Australia officers and crew and transferred to Commonwealth Government Line on the 24th of June 1919).

May 1917: The EEF consolidated the now-surplus companies into a new unit, **the 4th (ANZAC) Battalion**. The addition of the 4th Battalion allowed the Brigade to have one battalion rotating through the **Camel Brigade's Training Depot at Abbassia** for rest and refitting while maintaining a strength of three battalions in the field.

1917 Jun 20: John Charles Speirs **disembarked at Suez**, Egypt and was sent to **Isolation Camp, Moascar**, Egypt, the site of the training area for the **1st and 2nd Australian and the New Zealand A Divisions**. The Isolation Camp was set up to screen soldiers arriving in Egypt as reinforcements. This happened because during 1915 as many soldiers arrived from Australia suffering from measles and other illness that soldiers get when crowded together for long periods. Most soldiers stayed around two weeks in the camp to see if the illness shows up then the soldier was passed on to the training unit. Other soldiers who had contracted an illness stayed longer till fit.

1917 Jul 16: After 26 days marched out of **Isolation Camp Moascar** and taken on strength of **Anzac Reserve Depot Corps, Abbassia, Egypt**.

1917 Aug: Suffering a further reverse during an attack on the **Sana Redoubt** in **Aug**, the battalions of the Imperial Camel Brigade were withdrawn for a rest. Subsequently, they participated in the victory in the **Battle of Beersheba on 31 Oct**.

1917 Sep 5: John suffered **sunstroke at Abbassia, Egypt** and was posted to No. 1 Battalion and joined **4th Anzac Battalion 17th Company Imperial Camel Brigade** and admitted 26th Stationery Hospital with **sunstroke**.

1917 Sep 12: Discharged to duty. Taken on strength **ANZ Base Depot. Co. 1st Imperial Camel Brigade** ex Hospital.

1917 Sep 16: Crimes, various 18 Sep 1917 *deprived* of 3 day's pay. *Forfeits* 1 day's pay under R.W.

1917 Sep 21: Posted to No. 1 Batt. **Joined Batt. No. 3 Company** ex Reserve Depot Company.

1917 Oct 4: Transferred to Hospital ex Unit.

1917 Dec 8: Admitted to **14th AGH** with **Hemiplegia right side**.

1917 Dec 28: Transferred to **HT Tofua** from No. 14 AGH for discharge. Embarked Suez for Australia. Disembarked Australia 31 Jan 1918.

1918 Mar 28: John discharged due to medical unfitness. Hemiplegia right side. Causes - sunstroke, injury, stroke, active service, strain resulting in paralysis of the arm, leg, and trunk on the same side of the body. John spent some time in his sister's private hospital in Albury and nursed by two of his sisters who were trained nurses. His mother Flora also resided for a time at the same address as her daughter's private hospital.