



In Memory of

**Trooper**

**ROBERT JOHN WILKINSON**

**1052, Imperial Camel Corp, Australian Company**

who died age 22

on 10<sup>th</sup> June 1916

Son of widowed Emma Lily Wilkinson, of Granville near Parramatta,  
New South Wales

Remembered with honour  
CHATBY MEMORIAL, EGYPT



TROOPER  
**ROBERT JOHN WILKINSON**  
AUSTRALIAN COY, IMPERIAL CAMEL CORPS  
SERVICE NO: 1052



A Sydney man by birth **Robert John Wilkinson** is an unusual case among the war dead. His journey to the Middle East ended at sea not long after he left Australia; his resting place became the Indian Ocean rather than the graveyards of Egypt or Sinai.

Robert was the son of widowed Emma Lily Wilkinson, of Granville near Parramatta, a printer and machinist by trade, when he enlisted at Liverpool in Sydney's west. He took his medical on 9 January 1916, but for an unknown reason was not sworn in until 20 January. He was slight in stature, at just under 5'5" and 110 pounds. He had a fair complexion, grey eyes and brown hair and was of the Church of England religion. His initial training complete, he was posted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Light Horse Regiment reinforcements. However, before he was able to embark he was re-posted, this time to the newly-formed Imperial Camel Corps (ICC). He embarked in Sydney aboard the

RMS *Morea* on 27 May 1916, as a member of the 1916 General Reinforcements, the Australian Company ICC.

The *Morea* docked in Fremantle before its crossing of the Indian Ocean. The files do not state whether Robert and his companions had shore-leave, but when the ship left Fremantle on 6 June, Robert was most likely already carrying a serious chest infection. Within a day or so of leaving Fremantle Robert presented sick at the ship's hospital. The ship's surgeon monitored his condition but he rapidly deteriorated. On 10 June he died and was buried at sea in the "South Indian Ocean". The ship's surgeon wrote on his death certificate that he succumbed to "syncope following pneumonia." According to the practices of the Imperial War Graves Commission (now the Commonwealth WGC) established in the 1920s, Robert's name was inscribed on the Chatby Memorial at Alexandria. This was done as the destination of Robert's ship was Egypt; the Memorial commemorates those who have no known grave in the area of the Middle Eastern Expeditionary Force.

Mrs Wilkinson received the gratuity, medals and mementoes for Robert's brief, but tragic, period of service. Robert was 22 when he died.

He was a student at Toowoomba Grammar School from 1<sup>st</sup> January 1902 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 1903.

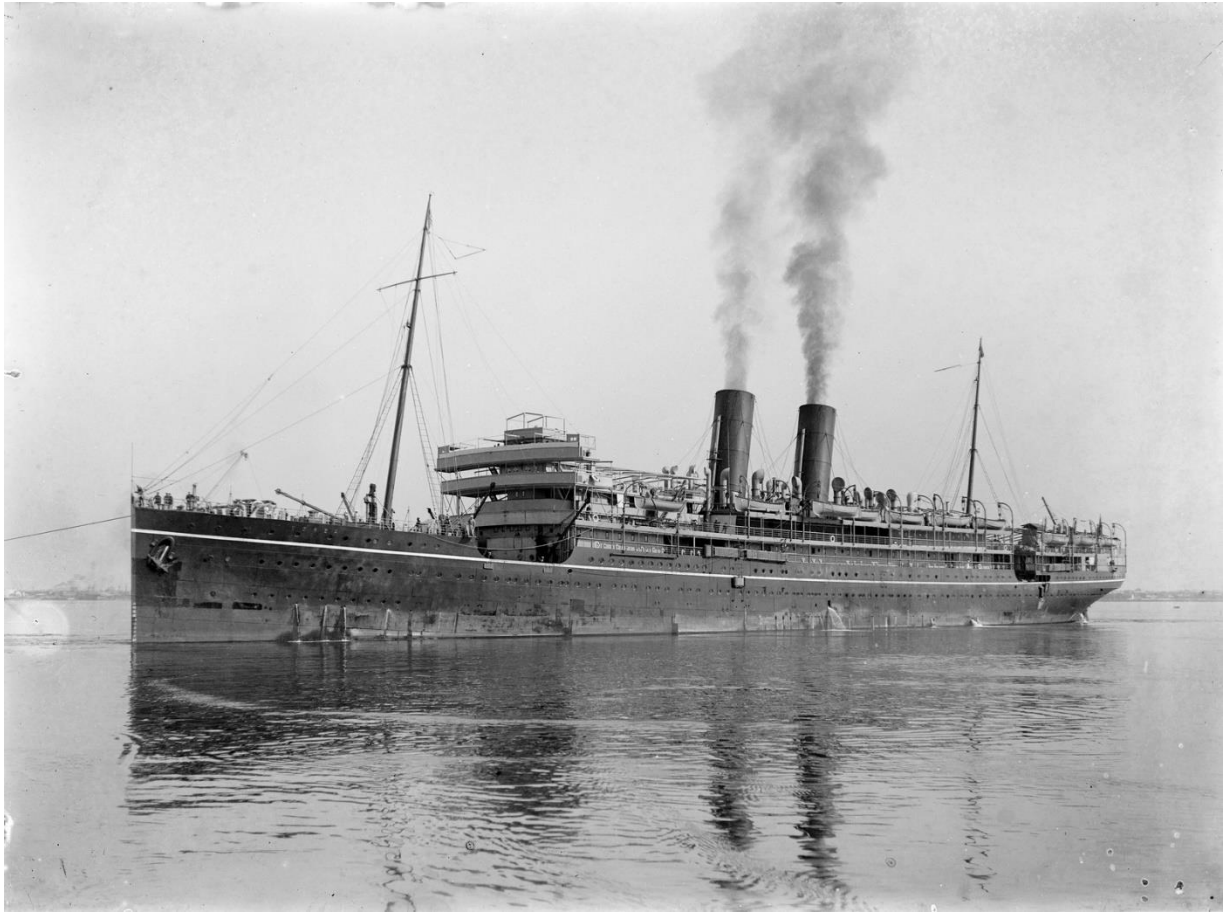
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*HMAS Morea – State Library of Victoria*