

**Tribute to 2238 Private Charles Henry Otway, 1st Anzac Battalion, Imperial Camel Corps Brigade. Based on extracts from his Service Record held with the NAA: B2455, SERN2238, Bar Code Series 8001851 and supplemented with material from other sources, duly acknowledged.**

2238 Private Charles Henry Otway, was born in Beverley, near York, in Western Australia on 17 July 1896. Aged 21 years and 3 months he enlisted in the AIF at Blackboy Hill on 8 November 1915, about two months before Jim enlisted. Charles was the son of William and Susannah Otway of West Dale, Beverley, and his occupation was recorded as labourer.

On 4 January 1916 2238 Private Charles Otway was assigned to the 14/10 Light Horse Division before moving to the 15/10 Light Horse Regiment on 4 February 1916.

2238 Private Otway embarked on troopship H.M.A.T. ULYSSES A38 at Fremantle on 1 April 1916, on the same ship as Jim. Having completed his training at Moascar, in Egypt, Charles was attached to the 1st Anzac Battalion Imperial Camel Corps. (I.C.C.) on 9th September 1916. A week later, on 16 September, the I.C.C. went to Abbassia, a neighbourhood in Cairo, Egypt.

By 27 January 1917 the I.C.C. were probably at El Arish, near Gaza. On 23 April 1917 2238 Private Charles Otway was reported missing, near Gaza and again on 26 April, reported missing at Abu Sitta. And on 9 May 1917 it was confirmed by a Turkish Field Hospital that Charles Otway was a wounded prisoner of war. On 8 August 1917 a list from the Red Cross in Geneva confirmed that Private Charles was under treatment in a hospital having been interned in Damascus. Certified information received from AIF Headquarters List, 16 May 1917 confirmed 2238 Private Charles Otway had been missing since 19 April 1917.

**STATEMENT by Otway, Charles Henry, 2238.**

(a) no.2238 Tpr. Otway Charles Henry. No. 5 Coy. 1st Battn. Imperial Camel Corp. I.C.C.

(b) Gaza. 19th April 1917

(c) Stripped on Turkish position and left lying till next day, then taken to Hospital at Tel-el-Sharin. Not dressed for 6 days. Food twice a day, very poor.

(d) Treatment by Turks in hospital not too good. I had the same treatment as the Turkish Soldiers. After discharge treatment very rough. Worked under a German Company at Belemedik drilling in tunnels. Treatment good but worked ten hours a day. Others working with me were Sgt. A.J. Rowlings; Ptes McLean, Stranger and Nostrean. Other Australian prisoners seen at Belemedik:- Cpl. R. Peter, 1st, ALH Tpr. Gilbert 8th. ALH. And Pte. Wiffen. 14th Battn.

(f) Capt. Naylor. wounded and afterwards killed, last seen in the trenches.

Personal effects of Charles were returned to William Otway, the father of Charles, on the A18 troopship H.M.A.T. WILTSHIRE, on 19 March 1918.

At the end of World War I 2238 Private Charles Henry Otway, 2238, was repatriated ex Turkey and arrived in Alexandria, Egypt on 21 November 1918. He returned to Australia on the Australian H.M.A.T. SOMALI troopship having departed from Alexandria on 21 November 1918 and travelled via Cairo on 25 December before arriving at Fremantle on 21 January 1919.

2238 Private Otway was awarded two medals: the British War Medal 1914-1920 and the Victory Medal 1914-1919.

On 6 March 1919 2238 Private Charles Henry Otway, was discharged from the I.C.C.



**Australians of the Imperial Camel Corps on the sandhills in the desert, Egypt.**

AWM B01470



**H.M.A.T. SOMALI**

Courtesy of British Armed Forces

**OUTBREAK ON THE SOMALI.**  
**FREMANTLE, January 21.**  
The steamer Somali arrived to-day and reported that 29 cases of influenza had broken out among the soldiers during the voyage, but that all were now nearly convalescent. After having landed the Western Australians the vessel proceeded east. The steamers Burma and a Kroola are due to-morrow morning; but the authorities have not yet been notified whether there is illness on board. There are now one dangerous case, three serious, and seven ill cases, and one suspicious case; also several hundred convalescents and contacts at the Woodman's Point Quarantine Station.

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**Outbreak on the Somali**

The Register, Adelaide, 22 January 1919

## THE TROOPSHIP SOMALI.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

Melbourne, July 24.

In the House of Representatives to-day Mr. Burchell asked the Minister for Trade and Customs: (1) Whether he will cause full inquiry to be made into what is stated to be the fiasco attending the arrival of the troopship Somali at Fremantle recently; (2) Who was responsible for the statement that the soldiers were to be quarantined on the arrival of the troopship, thus misleading the public? (3) What action does he propose to take to avoid a repetition of trouble of this kind?

The Minister for Customs (Mr. Greene) replied that the Somali had reported by wireless that there had been a succession of cases of mild influenza and allied disorders. It was therefore necessary. In accordance with the procedure at that time in force, that the vessel and all the troops should be quarantined, and an announcement was accordingly properly made to that effect by the chief quarantine officer. Negotiations were however in progress with the State Government, with the object of agreeing upon a mutually acceptable policy permitting of modifications in the quarantine restrictions. An agreement having been reached with the State Government subsequent to the announcement above referred to it became possible to allow the Somali's troops to land and proceed to their homes, instead of spending seven days in quarantine. Any inconvenience caused by this change in the arrangements was more than offset by the advantage to the troops and the economy to the Commonwealth. As the changes made applied to all subsequent troopships no recurrence of the conditions was likely.

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**The Troopship Somali**  
The West Australian newspaper, 25 July 1919