

GREAT WAR STORIES

# Sergeant James Gilbert Morrison

## Remembering the sacrifices of those with SC connections who served their country 100 years ago

CAROL BELL

James Morrison was a labourer for Polson & Carradus of Windsor (inland from Oamaru) when he enlisted as a private with the Otago Infantry Battalion on August 21, 1914.

His next of kin were James and Sarah Morrison of 11 Clyde St in Timaru, and his religion was given as Presbyterian.

His parents' address has also been noted as Waikouaiti.

Morrison embarked for Suez with the Main Body at Port Chalmers on October 16, 1914 on the troopship Ruapehu or Hawkes Bay and was part of the single largest group of New Zealanders ever to leave the country as Britain accepted New Zealand's offer of an expeditionary force of about 8000 men.

Recruiting had begun on August 8 so the response, so early in the conflict, was overwhelming as thousands of young men rushed to volunteer.

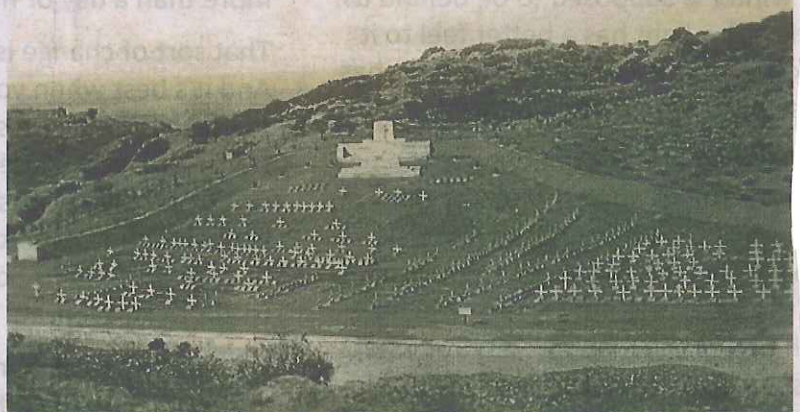
They were transported in 10 troopships, which the government had requisitioned from commercial shipping lines.

Before they were loaded with men, horses, ammunition, equipment and supplies the ships were hurriedly repainted a uniform Admiralty grey – one ship was completely repainted in less than four days.

Morrison's war was short.

He was promoted to sergeant in the Dardanelles on May 6, 1915 and killed in action on July 13, 1915, aged 29.

SHRAPNEL VALLEY CEMETERY.



He was buried in the Shrapnel Valley Cemetery on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

*The Timaru Herald* of August 8, 1915 noted: *Death of Timaru Man* – Mrs S. Morrison of Timaru has received the following telegram from the Minister of Defence (the Hon. James Allen): 'Regret to advise you cable received this day reports that your son, 8-759 Sergeant James Gilbert Morrison was killed in action July 13, 1915. Please accept my sincerest sympathy in the loss which you and New Zealand has suffered'. Sergt Morrison was well known in Timaru, where he was employed for eight years in Mr P.G. Allen's seed shop. He took a prominent part in local sports. His father is caretaker of Chalmers Church.

Shrapnel Valley Cemetery on the Gallipoli Peninsula.



SERGEANT J. G. MORRISON, Otago Infantry Battalion, Killed in action.

■ This is part of the SCRoll project. You can find SCRoll stories, hosted by the South Canterbury Museum, at [museum.timaru.govt.nz/scroll](http://museum.timaru.govt.nz/scroll)