

638 Lance Corporal Philip de Quetteville Robin, 10th Battalion KIA 28 April 1915



Photograph: P04633.001

Philip de Quetteville Robin was born at Norwood, Adelaide, on 10 August 1884. As a student of the prestigious St Peters College, he showed a particular talent for Australian Rules football and was noted for his fine character and sense of fair play both on and off the field. In 1907 Robin was selected to play for the Norwood Redlegs second team. He quickly proved himself and was elevated to the first team the following year.

Over the next seven years he became one of the best wingmen in the country and represented South Australia in each of those years, including at the 1911 Football Carnival, where South Australia defeated Victoria to become Australian champions. Robin won Norwood's Best and Fairest that year as well.

He was working at Murray Bridge as an accountant for the Bank of Adelaide when the First World War began and was among the first to enlist into the 10th Battalion, which was forming at Morphettville Racecourse, and embarked with his unit from Adelaide in October. In Egypt, he sought and was granted permission to marry Nellie Honeywill, his sweetheart from Adelaide who was working as a nurse in England. She travelled from London to Cairo for the wedding, which took place on Sunday 17 January 1915. After a brief honeymoon, Nellie returned to London.

Robin was a member of the scouting platoon under the command of Eric Talbot Smith, and it was in this capacity he landed on Gallipoli in the first wave in the early hours of 25 April 1915. Robin and Private Arthur Seaforth Blackburn made their way inland to Scrubby Knoll, the morning's objective for the landing force. They were the only two soldiers to reach this point, but were soon forced to retire by a large force of Turkish soldiers, who were moving towards their position.

On April 28, Robin was killed in action. The manner of his death is unknown and his body was not recovered. He is commemorated at the Lone Pine Memorial, Gallipoli. Philip Robin became the first footballer from South Australia to be killed during the war. In a final blow to the Robin and Honeywill families, Nellie and her infant son died soon after she had given birth on 22 November 1915.