

William was born on 17th March 1881 at Randwick, the son of Robert Graham and his wife Isabella, nee Johnston. William joined the NSW Bushman, in C Squadron as a trooper, regimental number 461 and spent 1900 in South Africa at the Boer War. Not long after his return in 1901, his father died.

On 11th August 1914 he joined A Company, AN&MEF stating that he was an engine driver and single, giving his brother Albert, at 22 Kippax St, Surry Hills as his next of kin. On 20th October he transferred to the Works Dept and returned from Rabaul and was discharged, term expires, on 4th March 1915 having completed 206 days service.

On 7th March 1915 he joined B Company, 18th Battalion, regimental number 555, as an acting sergeant and was confirmed in the rank on 29th March. He left Sydney on 25th May aboard the Ceramic and, after a period of training in Egypt, landed on Gallipoli on 22nd August. The following day he was made acting Regimental Sergeant Major. He left Gallipoli at the end of December returning to Alexandria on 19th Jan 1916 after a stay on Mudros.

With the battalion he moved to France in March and he was appointed 2nd Lieutenant on 16th August 1916. On 26th August 1916 he was Mentioned in Despatches (MID) for "... his excellent work as Regimental Sergeant Major of the 18th Battalion from 10th April 1916 to 16th August 1916 on which latter date he was promoted to Commissioned rank. His work has been marked by coolness and courage at all times particularly during the period 28th July to 5th August when his Bn. Was in action at POZIERES. His work during the attack on the German second line trenches west of POZIERES on the night of 4th/5th August 1916 is deserving of the highest praise. He kept a constant stream of grenades, R.E. stores and water going towards the captured positions and paid several visits to the new trenches in order to ascertain requirements, each time passing through very heavy hostile shell fire. His courage and cheery disposition in the face of danger has exerted a most beneficial influence on all ranks in the Bn."

On 9th December 1916 he was promoted Lieutenant and in November 1917 was awarded the Military Cross for "... conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. He rendered invaluable assistance in collecting rifle grenades from casualties under heavy machine gun and shell fire, and sending them forward to where they were needed to stop an enemy bombing attack. His skilful organisation of carrying parties and maintenance of the supply of ammunition during a very critical period was most marked."

It should also be noted that in August 1916 he was recommended for a DCM, but this recommendation would appear to have been replaced by the MID.

On 20th December 1917 he was promoted Captain and on 9th August 1918 received a gunshot wound to the right shoulder resulting in him being evacuated on the PRINCESS ELIZABETH to England where he was admitted to the 5th Auxiliary Hospital. He left the UK aboard the MARGHA on 18th Jan 1919, arriving in Melbourne on 5th March before proceeding by boat to Sydney, where his Commission was terminated, medically unfit, on 2nd May 1919.



In 1927 he married Mabel Fowler and died on 22nd October 1930. A coroner's report found that he had poisoned himself whilst temporarily mentally deranged.

William is buried at Rockdale Cemetery.

