

John was born in Chester, England in 1887, the son of Samuel and Sarah Clemence. He came to Australia in 1908 aboard the WAKOOL, leaving the UK on 22nd July. In 1912 he married Mary N.E. Julian in Sydney.

On 11th August 1914 he joined E Company, AN&MEF stating that he was married, an Auctioneer and gave his wife at "Longerawa", Watson's Bay as his next of kin. He returned from Rabaul and was discharged, term expired, on 18th Jan 1915 having completed 161 days service.

On 17th May 1915 he joined the AIF as part of the 2nd Reinforcements of the 17th Battalion but was discharged, at the request of his wife, on 16th July.

He again enlisted on 29th July 1915, this time with the 9th Reinforcements for the 13th battalion, regimental number 2938, and stated on his application that he was an Articled Clerk. He left Australia aboard the ARGYLLSHIRE on 30th September 1915.

On 3rd March 1916 he transferred to the 45th Battalion and was appointed Lance Corporal on 22nd April 1916. He was accidentally wounded with a gunshot wound to the back and was transferred to England, not rejoining his unit until 19th November.

He was again wounded with multiple gunshot wounds and was transferred to Hospital in Herne Bay, Kent. Whilst convalescing he was promoted to Corporal on 15th July 1917, rejoining his unit on 30th September 1918.

John returned to Australia aboard the ARMAGH and was discharged on 20th May 1919.