

Samuel was born on 22nd November 1893 in Queensland, the son of George Bridgland and Marion Gardner Bridgland, nee Rankine. George and Marion were married in Queensland on 8th March 1891.

On 11th August 1914, Samuel enlisted in C Company, AN&MEF stating that he was a carpenter by trade and stated that he was married at the time, giving a Mrs Bridgland, 49 William St, Paddington. It is not clear who he was referring to here, possibly his future wife Jane Eleanor Dinan, whom he married shortly after returning from the UK, but before he was discharged. His mother was residing at Mullumbimby at this time, as indicated on his second enlistment when he stated he was single and gave his mother as his next of kin.

Samuel returned from Rabaul and was discharged, term expired, on 4th March 1915 having completed 206 days service.

On 23rd March 1915, Samuel enlisted in B Company, 20th Battalion, regimental number 493, and sailed with the battalion for the Middle East aboard the BERRIMA, leaving Sydney on 26th June 1915. With the battalion, he arrived on Gallipoli on 27th July 1915 and remained there until the battalion was withdrawn on 20th December.

The battalion moved to France in March 1916 and on 5th May, at Bois-Grenier, he was captured by the Germans and remained a prisoner for the duration of the war. In a report on the capture, Pte Alfred Bridal, B Coy, 20th Battalion was interviewed as follows –

“Informant states that on 5th May, 1916, at Bois-Grenier a raid was made on our trenches and eleven of our men, amongst them the four mentioned above [Samuel was one of the four] were believed to have been captured and taken over the German lines. There was no trace of them to be found in the trench after the raiding party had been repelled, and it was possible to make such a thorough search that there is practically no chance that they were (***) in the trench and not found.”

This raid earned the 20th the dubious honour of being the first Australian battalion to be raided by the Germans. The Germans reported that he was at Lager Kommandantur in Germany. He was released at the end of the war and made his way to Calais where on 4th December 1918 he travelled across the Channel to the UK.

He returned to Australia aboard the Armagh in April 1919 and was discharged on 19th July after he had married Jean Eleanor Dinan on 7th June.

