

Thomas was born at Campsie, NSW, on 17th July 1894, the son of Thomas Chapman James and his wife Sarah Elizabeth James, nee Crossman.

On 11th August 1914 he enlisted in the AN&MEF and was posted to D Company. On enlistment he stated that he was a cabinet maker and single. Whilst in Rabaul he was mentioned in Garrison Orders re capture of the Komet. He returned to Australia and was discharged on 4th March 1915 having completed 206 days service.

He enlisted in the 20th Battalion, AIF, on 5th April. He was listed as a deserter and a Warrant issued for his arrest. This warrant was withdrawn after the war on 30th June 1920. Whilst listed as desertion at the time, Thomas had become very ill from malaria and took some time to recover,

On 19th July 1915 he again enlisted in the 20th Battalion, not mentioning his previous enlistment with that battalion. He embarked on the Euripides on 2nd November 1915 for the Middle east and was transferred to the 56th Battalion on 16th Feb 1916. He was appointed Lance Corporal on 2nd April and then promoted corporal on 26th May. He departed Alexandria and arrive at Marseilles, France, on 29th June 1916.

On 30th Sept 1916 he was awarded the Military Medal (MM) following the following recommendation:

“In front of FLEURBAIX, on the nights 15th/16th and 19th/20th September 1916, A/Sergeant James, who was the Senior N.C.O. of the Battalion Raiding Party, which raided the German trenches, displayed great initiative and enthusiasm during the whole of the preliminary training for both the above raids, and carried out his duties in a manner which did him very great credit.

During both raids A/Sergeant James was in command of the Right Party of the assault, and carried out his work in a cool and deliberate manner, which helped to inspire confidence into the men under his command. He moved along the German trenches supervising the work of the various details of his party, and his efficient control of his men did much towards the successful carrying out of the operations in his portion of the raided area.”

On 28th October 1916 Thomas was promoted sergeant and was transferred to an Officer Cadet Battalion in the UK on 1st Feb 1918.

On 30th June 1918 he completed the course, qualified for a commission and was appointed 2nd Lieutenant on 20th August. He returned to his battalion in France and was gassed on 30th September.

He was promoted Lieutenant on 23rd December 1918 and embarked on the BELTANA for return to Australia on 2nd June 1919. His appointment was terminated on 12th September 1919.

In 1921 he married Ellen Gertrude Alicia Peat and had two children. Ellen died in 1960 and on 20th December 1963 he married Amy Edith Peat.

Thomas die on 9th July 1973