

William was born in Queanbeyan, the son of Samuel Hammond and Jane Bale, on 14th March 1888. In 1908, at Tumut, he married Florence Emmaline Haley and had four children, George (b. 1908), Mercia (b.1910), Gwendoline (b. 1912) and Ernest (b. 1913) before enlisting. Gwendoline had died the same year as her birth.

On 11th August 1914, he enlisted into E Company, AN&MEF, stating that he was a fireman and giving his wife at 212 Barcom Ave, Darlinghurst, as his next of kin.

William returned from Rabaul in December 1914. In a letter dated 25th Feb 1920 he recounts – “...returned as one of the guards with prisoners of war who were flogged, on the S S Morinda on December 13th, 1914” He was discharged on 30th December, having served 142 days.

William’s subsequent service with the AIF is turbulent, to say the least. He initially joined the 13th Battalion on 30th April 1915, regimental number 2104, and was on the embarkation role when the 13th sailed for Suez on the WANDILLA, departing Sydney 14th June 1916. However, he had reported sick and missed the voyage. He was reported as a deserter on 1st October 1915, and an arrest warrant issued, but he was subsequently discharged on 20th March 1916 – “at own request”.

He again enlisted on 8th June 1916, regimental number 2371, this time as part of the 5th reinforcements of the 53rd battalion. He departed Sydney on 14th September 1916, and whilst at sea was charged with “Conduct to the prejudice of god order and military discipline”, found guilty and served 168 hours detention. He disembarked at Plymouth on 2nd November 1916 and joined the 53rd Battalion, in France, on 23rd December 1916.

In Jan 1917 he did a musketry course and was posted to duty with the Brigade Band on 18th Jan.

On 11th April 1917, William fractured his right leg and was hospitalised until 12th March 1918 when he was subsequently posted to the Australian Divisional Base Depot. William was charged several times over the next few months with a range of offences ranging from drunkenness to AWOL. On 7th September 1917 he again was in hospital, this time with dysentery and again had several periods of AWOL. Eventually he was returned to Australia on the FIELD MARSHALL, departing UK on 12th March 1918 and arriving in Sydney on 23rd May.

He was discharged as medically unfit – dysentery – on 18th September 1918.

On 17th July 1941 he signed up again, service number N387014, and served with the 7th Garrison Battalion, being discharged on 1st November 1943 – “at own request – owing to age and medical class – age 56 – Class B.”

William died at Annandale in 1950.