

Robert joined the AN&MEF on 11th August 1914 and stated on his attestation papers that he was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, was 34 years old, single, and a cook by trade. He gave his father, Robert Allan of 97 Viewforth St, Edinburgh, as his next of kin. He stated that he had previously spent 1 and a half years in the South African Constabulary.

Robert returned from Rabaul and was discharged on 4th March 1915, time expired, after 206 days service.

On 15th March 1915, Robert joined the 20th Battalion (B Company), Regimental Number 478. The battalion left Australia on 26th June 1915 aboard the BERRIMA for Suez. Together with the rest of the battalion, Robert arrived on ANZAC Cove on 27th August. On 14th September Robert contracted pneumonia and was hospitalised until 12th October when he returned to the Cove.

Shortly before the withdrawal from Gallipoli, Robert was wounded with a "Shell Splash to the face".

He remained with the battalion which left Alexandria on 18th March 1916 aboard the IGNOMA, arriving in Marseilles on the 25th. On 29th July he was appointed Lance Corporal and was again wounded on 15th November 1916, this time with a gunshot wound to the right thigh which required him to be evacuated, not rejoining his unit again until 25th June 1917, being immediately promoted, firstly to Corporal and then to Sergeant.

On 20th September 1917 Robert was wounded a third time, this time in the right leg. He was again hospitalised, not returning to his battalion until 2nd Feb 1918. Only back on the front two months, he was wounded for the fourth time, this time in the back with a bullet penetrating his lung. He returned to Australia aboard the GAIKA, leaving the UK on 8th November 1918, arriving in Sydney on 29th December. Robert was eventually discharged on 4th May 1920.