

William was born in 1891 in Balsham, Cambridgeshire, the son of Albert Charles and Mary Brown. He shows on the UK 1891 census as being with his parents in Cambridgeshire, in the 1901 census with his Uncle and Aunt in Kent and then back with his parents in 1911 as a "Hay Presser".

On 11th August 1914 William joined E Company of the AN&MEF. On his Attestation he stated that he was single and a labourer. He gave his father at 9 Chimney Lane, Balsham as his next of kin.

William returned from Rabaul and was discharged, term expired, on 28th Jan 1915 having served 171 days.

He attempted to join the AIF on 1st March 1915 but was discharged 7 days later as medically unfit.

Later the same month on the 15th he successfully enlisted as a driver in the 53rd Battalion, and left Australia aboard the CERAMIC on 25th June 1915. He was wounded on Gallipoli on 27th August 1915 and was evacuated from the Peninsular, rejoining his unit on 12th October. During the first few months of 1916, whilst in Alexandria he suffered several bouts of Malaria and moved to France with the battalion on 26th June 1916.

He was appointed Lance Corporal on 27th August 1916 and was awarded the Military Medal for his actions on 1st September 1918. The recommendation for this award reads as follows: -

"For conspicuous bravery during the attack on PERONNE on the 1st September 1918. This N.C.O. was in charge of the limbers bringing up rations on the night of 1st. inst. Owing to very heavy casualties it was impossible to send ration parties any great distance and consequently orders were issued for the limbers to come as far forward as possible.

Lance Corporal Brown on three occasions was caught in an enemy barrage and forced to go back a considerable distance to avoid the destruction of his limbers and animals. In spite of this he returned on each occasion and the fourth attempt was able to bring the rations to within 800 yards of the front line.

It was owing to the skill and bravery shown by this N.C.O. that the rations were able to be taken to the front line that night as had they been dumped any further back, the carrying forward of these would have been impossible."

On 18th Jan 1919 William was promoted Corporal and returned from England aboard the KILDONIAN CASTLE, arriving back in Australia on 9th May 1919 where he was discharged on 20th July 1919.