

Robert was born in Newbury, Berkshire, England, the son of Mark Parsons and his wife Sarah, nee Banning. On the 1901 Census he was shown as living at home and a Chemist shop Assistant. In 1902 he Joined the Berkshire Volunteers where he served for three years. He then joined the Imperial Yeomanry where he served for a further 3 years.

In June 1909 he left England on the SS MORAVIAN, arriving in Melbourne on 21st July 1909.

On enlistment in the AN&MEF he stated that he was a shopman and was assigned to G Company. He returned from Rabaul and was discharged on 4th March 1915, having completed 206 days service.

On 25th March 1915 he enlisted in the AIF as part of the 2nd Reinforcements, 19th Battalion. He left Sydney on 19th June 1915 aboard the KANOWNA. He received a gunshot wound to the wrist on Gallipoli on 7th November and was admitted to hospital on Malta on 12th November. He was transferred to England where, on 17th March 1916 he boarded the SUEVIC in Portland, arriving back in Sydney on 22nd April. He was discharged as Medically Unfit on 20th August 1916.