

William was born in Melbourne in 1892, the son of Frank and Emily Beaton. In 1901 he is shown in the census to be in Dundee, Scotland with his parents and he went to the Blackness and the Wormit Public Schools in Dundee in the early 1900's. It would appear he returned to Australia in 1911, his parents remaining in Dundee.

In 1914 he married Stella Hahn in Redfern before enlisting in E Company, AN&MEF on 11th August 1914. He stated that he was a Motor Driver, was 25 (in fact he was 22) and gave his mother in Scotland as his next of kin.

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

On 31st June 1915 he enlisted in the 7th Light Horse but suffered from various medical conditions and in April 1916 he was transferred to the 35th battalion, regimental number 2191, and left Australia aboard the ANCHISIS on 28th August 1916, arriving in Devonport on 11th October.

On 20th Jan 1917 he went to France and was accidentally wounded with a bayonet to the cheek on 29th March. On 7th April he was appointed Lance corporal and was gassed on 7th June, being transferred to hospital in the UK, returning to his unit on 14th December.

On 6th May 1918 William was again wounded, this time with a gunshot wound to the left arm and again was evacuated to the UK, this time not returning to active service.

Between 5th April and mid-September 1919, he did Oxy-Acetylene training with Gilcrist Brothers in Dundee, finally returning to Australia aboard the ASCANUS, leaving on 23rd September and arriving in Sydney on 10th November 1919. He was discharged on 29th December 1919.