

James was born in Surry Hills, NSW on 18th Jan 1889, the son of Alexander and Ada (nee South) Cameron. He joined the Government Printing Office, Sydney on 11th May 1905 and was a bookbinder by trade. He returned to that profession after the war.

He enlisted into D Company of the AN&MEF on 11th August 1914 and returned from Rabaul on 5th Feb 1915, where he was discharged as time expired.

James enlisted into the 6th Reinforcements of the 1st Battalion on 14th April 1915 (service number 2118) and left Sydney on 16th June 1915 aboard the KARoola. He joined his battalion on Gallipoli on 6th August and received a gunshot wound to his left knee on 27th August at Lone Pine. He was evacuated from Gallipoli and returned to Australia aboard the AENEAS, being discharged as Medically Unfit on 22nd March 1916.

Having recovered from his wound, James again enlisted on 12th October 1916, this time with the reinforcements for the 1st Anzac Cyclist Battalion (Service Number 790). He left Sydney aboard the ORSOVA on 2nd December 1916 arriving in Plymouth, England on 17th Jan 1917. On 6th March 1917, James was transferred to the 3rd Battalion and joined the battalion at Thillooy, just north of Albert.

On 6th August 1918 he was appointed Lance Corporal and won the Military Medal for his actions in September of that year, which saw the Battalion at Hargicourt. The recommendation for this award states: -

“For conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty near HARGICOURT from 18th to 21st Sept. 1918. S Company Signalling N.C.O. under heavy machine gun fire he established communication from the front line to Battalion Headquarters and maintained communications throughout, necessitating his working under very heavy shelling and machine gun fire. He did gallant and fearless service throughout and set a fine example.”

On 8th February he was made Acting Sergeant and on 5th July the same year he married Dorothy Florence Cannon of Kentishtown, at Holy Trinity Church, Haverstock Hill. He returned to Australia aboard the MAHANA, arriving in Sydney on 12th November 1919, and was discharged on 27th December.

James immediately went back to the Government Printing Office as a Bookbinder and in 1945 became a Sub-Overseer in the Bookbinding branch.

On 19th March 1942, James joined the 38th Battalion (Engineers) of the Volunteer Defence Force and served as a Warrant Officer Class 2 until discharge on 24th July 1943.