



BRAND FAMILY

Family History

James Brand moved to York from Albany as a young man during the 1880s. He was a keen sportsman and athlete, competing in foot races and hurdles, and riding in hunts. James won a gold medal for the best all-rounder in the York Football Club, and he also won swimming races in the Avon River.

During his first few years in York, James caught the eye of local girl Ada Tomkinson. They married in 1890 and had seven children together, although only five survived to adulthood.

The Brand family would have been considered middle working-class. James' primary occupation was to convey the mail between the York Post Office and Railway Station, but he also had a farming property at Talbot Brook to which the family eventually moved.

Edith Eunice, James and Ada's eldest daughter became a schoolteacher and taught at Talbot School between 1913 and 1915, then at Qualen School from 1921 to 1926.

BRAND

Percy Usherwood

James

Service No: 3107



BASIC INFORMATION

Name: Percy Usherwood James Brand

Service Number: 3107

Date of Enlistment: 12/4/1916

Age at Enlistment: 20 years 8 months

Civil Occupation: Farmer

Medals, Honours, Awards: British War Medal, Victory Medal

Height: 5 Feet 6 inches (167.6 cm)

Weight: 128 lbs. (58 kg)

Chest Measurement: 32 – 36 inches

Complexion: Fresh

Eye Colour: Blue

Hair Colour: Dark Brown

Father: James Brand

Mother: Ada Tomkinson

Siblings: Gratin/Grattan Leslie, Edith Eunice Violet, Cecil Thomas, Iris Jessie and Merville George

Married: Nellie McCarthy



Studio portrait of Percy Usherwood James Brand
Courtesy State Library of West Australia

Life Story

Percy was born in York in 1895. Along with his four siblings, he attended the York Infant School and York State School. Percy's name can be found on the school's Honour Roll, currently housed at York District High School.

After leaving school, Percy worked as a telegraph messenger in York, based inside the York Post Office. As Percy's father, James, had held the tender to transfer the mail from the Post Office to the Railway Station for many years, it is likely that he helped his son get the position.

Percy obviously showed initiative and drive because, late in 1911, he was promoted to a Telephonist (Grade I) at York, with a salary of £52 per annum. This was a good wage and meant that Percy was now working above the social class into which he had been born.

However, this was not enough for Percy and, in 1912, he was promoted to Telephonist Grade II at Kalgoorlie with a salary of £72 per annum. While working in Kalgoorlie Percy probably met his future wife, Nellie McCarthy, who lived there, though they would not marry until after the War.

Percy returned to York when his father started farming the Talbot property full-time.

Percy enlisted on the 12th April 1916, following his younger brother, Cecil, who had enlisted a fortnight earlier.

with them who are keeping them going. Two of our York boys did some splendid work out on that stunt, and they deserved D.C.M.'s. I refer to Percy Brand and Leslie Austin. Percy is a machine gunner, and Leslie was an ammunition carrier. Time and time over again Percy was responsible for holding the Turks in check, and delaying their advance by the effective use of his machine gun. At one stage the Turks got right up to within a dozen yards of his position, only to be mown down and forced to retire by Percy's gun, supported by a dozen rifles. He carried on for two days and nights, fighting all the time without a feed or any sleep, and with a bruised knee got early in the game through falling over a bit of a cliff in a hurry to get from one position to another. In the last rearguard he and an assistant were left to cover the the withdrawal of the rearguard. He held on firing all the time until the rest of the party had got into position a mile or more in the rear. Things looked bad for him then for the Turks were within 100 yards of him and on three sides. Yet he got out in spite of a heavy fire of rifles and machine guns. And he delayed the enemy's advance and enabled our fellows to take up another position. Les. Austin was a veritable camel and aeroplane combined during the whole stunt. He seemed to be in all parts of the

An excerpt from a letter Frank
Wiseman wrote to Miss
Thielemann

Published in the Eastern Districts'
8/11/1918.

It gives a glowing account of Percy
Davies and Leslie Austin's actions
while under fire.

After completing basic training, Percy sailed for Egypt from Fremantle aboard the *Clan MacCorquodale* on the 13th February, 1917. He served with the 10th Light Horse before being trained to use a Hotchkiss gun in late 1917. The Hotchkiss gun was a machine gun that was extremely heavy and hard to use, but lethal to the enemy. York man Frank Wiseman wrote of Percy Brand's heroic actions, holding his position for two days without food or sleep while under enemy fire during the Battle of El-Salt in May 1918.

Percy was injured during this action; on the night of the 2nd May, he fell down a small cliff while running and carrying his machine gun to another position, damaging his knee. Percy was cautioned and had to prove that the injury was not self-inflicted, because he failed to report it until several days had passed.

For the remainder of the War, Percy was transferred between hospitals and rest camps due to his injured knee. He returned to Australia aboard the *Delta*, disembarking at Fremantle on the 26th August 1919.

After his return, Percy travelled to Coolgardie and married Nellie McCarthy in 1921. The couple returned later that year to the Avon Valley where their first child, Pauline Iris, was born. She was followed by a second daughter, Shirley Eunice, in 1923.

James, Percy's father, died mid-1925 and the Talbot farm was transferred to Percy and his brother Cecil. He lived there with his family for a short while before moving to Perth to work as a bus and taxi driver in the late 1920s. Percy had a few encounters with the law while living in Perth and was charged with several minor driving offences.

Driving a bus or taxi was not for Percy and, by the early 1930s, he and his family had moved to Marvel Loch in the Goldfields, to go prospecting. He joined his brother Merville's lease and the pair formed Brand Bros. They jointly owned the Firelight mine, initially having their ore crushed at other stamping mills before they set up their own three-headed mill in the late 1940s.

Percy was a respected member of the Marvel Loch community. He was a member of the Marvel Loch Rifle Club (and club captain in 1947) and heavily involved with the local R.S.L. and fundraising events for the Southern Cross Hospital.

When World War Two broke out, Percy's youngest daughter, Shirley, enlisted in the Australian Women's Army. She served from the 19th July 1942 until the 25th March 1946.

Percy died at Marvel Loch on the 13th August 1963 but was buried at Karrakatta Cemetery. After his death, Nellie moved back to Perth and rented several homes around the Wembley area until her death in 1978.

Acknowledgements

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Margaret Watkins

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BRAND

Cecil Thomas

Service No: 853



Studio portrait of Cecil Thomas Brand
Courtesy State Library of West Australia.

BASIC INFORMATION

Name: Cecil Thomas Brand

Service Number: 853

Date of Enlistment: 20/3/1916

Age at Enlistment: 19 years

Civil Occupation: Farm Hand

Medals, Honours, Awards: British War Medal, Victory Medal

Height: 5 Feet 5 ½ inches

Weight: 132 lbs

Chest Measurement: 34 inches

Complexion: Dark

Eye Colour: Blue

Hair Colour: Dark Brown

Father: James Brand

Mother: Ada Tomkinson

Siblings: Gratin/Grattan Leslie, Edith Eunice Violet, Percy Usherwood James, Iris Jessie and Merville George

Married: 1. Annie/Anne Josephine Cherry
2. Jessie Higton



Life Story

Cecil was born in York in 1896 and, like his brother Percy, was educated at the York State School, with his name also on the school's Honour Roll. When aged not quite fifteen, Cecil followed in Percy's footsteps and was appointed a telegraph messenger in the Postal and Telegraph Department at York, in July 1911.

However, in mid-1914, Cecil's appointment was terminated and it is likely he was working on the family's farm at Talbot, as obituaries published at the time of his father's death in 1925 stated it was around this time that his father's health started to deteriorate.

Cecil enlisted on the 20th March, 1916 and, on the 6th May, having completed a five weeks' Non Commissioned Officer (N.C.O.) course at Belmont, he was attached to the 1st Reinforcements, 44th Battalion, D Company, albeit as a Private. On the 6th June he embarked *Suevic* at Fremantle; disembarking Plymouth on the 21st July.

While still in training in England, Cecil was transferred, on the 9th September, to the 51st Battalion, which had suffered severe casualties in France from mid-August to early September. He remained with the 13th Training Battalion to complete his training before embarking for France on the 2nd November, being Taken on Strength with the 51st Battalion on the 17th November.

On the 5th March 1917, Cecil was admitted to hospital with influenza, re-joining his unit on the 16th March. Later that year, on the 13th November, he was admitted to 13th Field Ambulance with venereal disease, transferred to the 7th Convalescent Depot and then admitted, on the 16th November, to the 39th Hospital at Le Havre, where he remained until discharged to Base on the 24th December (a total of 49 days).

Cecil's designation changed to Driver on the 1st January, 1918, the day before he re-joined his unit. Granted leave for the U.K. (known as "Blighty Leave"), on the 1st October, he was admitted to the 2nd Scottish Hospital in Edinburgh on the 14th with influenza. On the 28th October, he transferred to the 1st Auxiliary Hospital, Harefield, before being discharged to N.4 Commonwealth Depot, Hurdcott, on the 30th October. Cecil remained at Hurdcott until the 18th December, when he embarked *Aeneas* for return to Australia for Debility.

Cecil disembarked at Albany on the 27th January, 1919 where he, and all other W.A. service personnel disembarking the ship, were placed in the quarantine station there for three days because there had been a case of pneumonic influenza on board the ship in early January. However, on the 1st February, all 104 service personnel, including six cot cases and one nurse, boarded a train at Albany bound for Perth. He was finally discharged from service on the 22nd March.

Cecil became engaged to Anne Cherry early in 1920, and they married in 1921. In August that year, Anne was reported to have attended the annual Catholic Ball in York and, in 1922, Cecil was reported as playing with the Rovers Football Team in York.

However, by 1925 they were both enrolled on the Perth electoral roll, living at 63 Hill Street, with Cecil's occupation listed as "smallgoodsman". On the 4th April, Cecil and Anne were listed as passengers on the SS *Karoola*, which had departed Fremantle that day, bound for the eastern states. This was two months before the death of Cecil's father, James.

Cecil and Percy were both named on the certificate of title for a grazing lease of 1500 acres at Talbot, with all associated house, sheds, stables, etc., when the lease was put out to tenders in March 1926 (having inherited the property from their father who died in 1925). A 1926 memorial notice placed by Cecil and Babe, Anne's nickname, on the first anniversary of James Brand's death gave their address as Sydney.

Cecil and Anne remained enrolled on electoral rolls in New South Wales throughout the late 1920s and 1930s, with Anne dying there in October, 1940.

In 1941, Cecil remarried, in Victoria, to Jessie Higton. They were enrolled together on electoral rolls at Lewisham, New South Wales, throughout the 1940s and 1950s, until Cecil's death in June 1956. He was buried in the Rookwood General Cemetery. Jessie remained at the same address until her death in 1970.



Courtesy A.I.F. Project

Acknowledgements

The following people and organisations helped with the research to compile this booklet.

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