



COLLINS

James Edward

Service No: 7144

Family History

James William Collins, born in Hertford, England, in 1846, was the son of a farm labourer. In 1863, he was charged with “maliciously and feloniously” firing a haystack and transported to the Swan River Colony on the *Merchantman*.

James received his Ticket of Leave in 1866 and, by 1867, was working as a farm labourer for Mr S. Parker at York. He remained in the employment of the Parker family until he received his certificate of Freedom in 1872.

James married Sarah Ann Warren, the daughter of William Warren and Jane Henshaw, in York in 1871. William was a convict who arrived in Fremantle on the *Pyrenees* in 1851. A tailor by trade, he operated a business in York for many years. William married Jane Henshaw at York in 1863 and his daughter, Sarah, was born in 1855.

James William and Sarah gave birth to a son, William Thomas James in 1873, before they moved to the Dongara area. The couple went on to have ten more children, and Sarah worked as a midwife in the District.

James died in Geraldton in 1927. Sarah died in Perth in 1938.

Like his brother James, William Frederick, the youngest son of James and Sarah, also joined the army. He enlisted in the A.I.F. on the 13th March 1915 (Service Number 5672) and was Killed in Action, in France, on the 11th May 1917, aged twenty years and two months.

BASIC INFORMATION

Name: James Edward Collins

Service number: 7144

Date of enlistment: 27/2/1917

Age at Enlistment: 36 years 3 months

Civil Occupation: Blacksmith

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

Height: 5 feet 10 inches

Weight: 168 pounds

Chest measurement: 35 inches

Complexion: Fair

Eye Colour: Blue

Hair Colour: Auburn

Father: James William Collins

Mother: Sarah Warren

Siblings: William Thomas b. 1873; Elizabeth Jane b.1875; Henry Joseph b.1877; Hannah Amelia b.1879; Selina Maude b.1884; Alice 1886; Silas John b. 1890; Melbourne b.1892 William Frederick b.1896; Sophy b.1899.

Married: Violet Mabel Bradshaw

Life Story

James Edward, son of Sarah and James William Collins, was born in Dongara in 1881.

He worked as a boundary rider and horse breaker before signing up in 1902 at Geraldton to join the 1st Imperial Bushmen in the Boer War (Service Number 1126).

James married Violet Mabel Bradshaw (known as Mabel) at York in 1903 and the couple remained in the York district for many years. Their first five children were born in the York area and the family grew up as part of the community.

Ruby Violet Maud (known as Coll) was born in 1904, Verna was born in 1905, Madeline M. (known as Lina) was born in 1907, Beryl D. (known as Val) was born in 1912 and Rita Amy was born in 1914. Norman Edward, their last child, was born in 1923.

By the time he enlisted in the A.I.F., in November 1916, James was working as a blacksmith and the family were living in Tenth Road, York. He stated his permanent address was "Woodside" via York and claimed to have served for three months in the Citizens' Forces at Geraldton.

On the 1st December 1916, James became a sapper with the Tunnelling Company Reinforcements. He embarked from Melbourne aboard A9 HMAT *Shropshire* on the 11th May 1917 and marched in to Parkhouse Camp, in the United Kingdom, on the 20th July.

James proceeded overseas to France on the 18th August 1917 and was Taken on Strength with the 2nd Australian Tunnelling Company.

On the 12th March 1918, James was Wounded in Action when he was gassed by a mustard gas shell. He was admitted to the 12th General Hospital at Rouen before being transported back to England on the 29th March.

James was admitted to the Bath War Hospital and remained there until the 25th May 1918, when he was transferred to the 19th Auxiliary Hospital at Dartford.

James was finally discharged from hospital and returned to Hurdcott Camp on the 31st May 1918. He re-joined the Overseas Training Brigade at the end of July and was back in France by the end of August. However, James' health appeared to be declining; he was in and out of hospital over the next few months and did not return to the Field until the beginning of December.

Then, on the 31st January, James was hospitalised with influenza. Discharged on the 4th February, he finally left France on the 7th March 1919 on the first leg of his journey home.

James returned to Australia on the *Ormonde* on the 16th June 1919. He was assessed at the 8th General Hospital in Fremantle and diagnosed with rheumatism before finally being discharged on the 19th September to return to his family.

Mabel and James' last child, Norman, was born in 1923. However, the marriage was not to last. Norman died two years' later and, by 1928, Mabel was living in Suffolk Street, in Victoria Park. Around 1935, she wrote to the Department of Defence asking for her husband's medals, stating that, as far as she knew, "he did not get them." At this point, James was known to be living in the Wellington District with a woman named Rose Ferrier.

Later that year, Mabel took up employment as the Matron at the Unemployed Boys' Farm at Wokalup, near Harvey. She remained there for at least two years.

In 1943, James collapsed while riding a bicycle in Mungalup, near Collie. He was taken to Collie Hospital where he died. Interestingly, James was described in the newspaper as a widower, probably because his partner, Rose, had died a few years' earlier. His legal wife, Mabel, lived on until 1945.

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