

MELBOURNE

James

Service No: 2515



BASIC INFORMATION

Name James Melbourne

Service number: 2515

Date of enlistment: 21/3/1915

Age at Enlistment: 28 years

Civil Occupation: Groom

Weight: 10 stone 11 lbs

Chest measurement: 35 ½ -37 ½ inches

Complexion: Dark

Eye colour: Blue

Hair colour: Dark

Father: Charles Melbourne

Mother: Sarah

Married: Florence Jones



James Melbourne

Courtesy National Archives of Australia

Life Story

James Melbourne was born in the York area around 1876. His father, Charles, was a former convict who had arrived on the *Edwin Fox* in 1856. He worked as a labourer and orderly at York Hospital. James' mother was an Aboriginal woman named Sarah.

In the early 1880s, James (known as Jimmy) was placed in Bishop Hale's Institute for Native and Half-Caste Children in Perth. He was around the age of four at the time. Children in the Institute were later moved to the Swan Native and Half-Caste Mission that was established in the Guildford/Middle Swan area in 1888.

After several years at the Mission, Jimmy returned to York, where he worked for a local businessman. By the mid-1890s, Jimmy was becoming well known for his prowess in football, athletics, cricket and boxing. He also obtained a jockey's licence in 1896.

From 1897, Jimmy began to appear in the courts for minor offences and spent time in prison for petty crimes.

He began playing Australian Rules football for West Perth in 1900. Jimmy was a member of their Premiership team in 1901 and played four games with South Fremantle in 1902, before playing for Subiaco in 1903 and 1904. He then joined the Collie Football Association and, later, the Bunbury Football Association, where he played until 1908.

Jimmy married Florence Jones in Perth on the 19th October 1908, but the marriage was unhappy, with the couple appearing in court on several occasions. Jimmy and Florence moved to Melbourne in 1912, where Jimmy was listed as a champion woodchopper in 1914.

James Melbourne enlisted on the 21st March 1915 and was assigned to the 5th Battalion, 7th Reinforcements.

He arrived in Egypt but was admitted to hospital in November 2015 with a fractured hand.

In March 1916, Jimmy was admitted to the No. 3 Australian General Hospital suffering mild tuberculosis.

Finally, on the 21st May 1916 Jimmy was returned to Australia and admitted to the No. 11 Australian General Hospital, where he was frequently reported as Absent Without Leave.

Jimmy was eventually discharged on the 22nd September 1917, due to deafness, and given a pension of three pounds per fortnight.

After the War, Jimmy separated from his wife, remarrying in 1936. He continued to have trouble with the law, and he, and his future wife Mary (Molly) Edith MacWilliams, were both goaled in 1935.

Jimmy Melbourne was murdered in his home on the 13th December 1937. His landlord was convicted of his manslaughter and sentenced to five years' prison.

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