



# SEAMAN

## Albert Edward Robert

Service No: 2242



## Basic Information

Name: Albert Edward (Edwin) Robert Seaman

Service Number: 2242

Date of Enlistment: 30/3/1916

Age at Enlistment: 35 years

Civil Occupation: Farmer

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

Height: 5 Ft. 6 inches

Weight: 144 Lbs.

Chest Measurement: 37 ½ inches

Complexion: Dark

Eye Colour: Brown

Hair Colour: Black

Father: James Seaman

Mother: Elizabeth Ann Knight

Married: Isabella Fenton

Children: Elizabeth Isabel (1919), Violet Evelyn (1921), Samuel Albert (1922),  
Mabel Lillian (1924), Pamela Grace (1928).

### Family History

James Seaman, born around 1837, married Elizabeth Ann Knight in Poonindie, South Australia, in 1868. James was an illiterate shepherd. Elizabeth, born in 1949 at Windsor in Berkshire, England, was a servant. The couple's travels around South Australia can be tracked by the birthplaces of their six children:

- Evalyn/Evalyne Elizabeth Seaman and James Seaman (born 1869 and 1871) were born in Green Patch, South Australia.
- John Anson Seaman was born in 1873 at The Fountain (a locality of Flinders) in South Australia.
- Emma Laura Seaman and her brothers, Percy Frederick William Seaman and Albert Edwin/Edward Robert Seaman, were born in Port Lincoln, South Australia, in 1875, 1878 and 1880 respectively.
- Violet Mary Seaman was born in 1883, at Little Swamp, a locality of Port Lincoln.

At some point after 1883, Elizabeth and James separated, and she entered into a relationship with George Perman. They went on to have three daughters: Lessie Jane (born in 1887), Ivy Georgina and Grace Rubelle, before marrying, in Adelaide, in 1904. All three of their children were born in South Australia. Elizabeth's obituary in the Adelaide Chronicle, on the 28<sup>th</sup> June 1934, stated she had married George Perman in 1887, having been married at age nineteen to Mr W. Seaman and having resided for some years in Western Australia where her husband had died. As James was still alive in 1887, this is clearly an attempt to whitewash the truth.

It is unknown when the family moved to Western Australia, but James Seaman and his children were in South Australia in December 1889 when James was arrested for stealing a sheep. With James' arrest, his three youngest children – Albert, Percy and Violet – were sent to the Industrial School of Magill and Edwardstown and admitted there on the 17<sup>th</sup> January, 1890.

At the court hearing on February 20<sup>th</sup>, 1890, the Prosecutor claimed James Seaman had told his younger sons to catch a sheep, which he then killed and flayed, burying the skin in a wombat hole and feeding his family with the meat. Obviously, the family was struggling to make ends meet.

At the trial, Percy denied his father had told him to catch a sheep and said he had not done so. Albert refused to give any evidence in Court. In the hearing, James said he had been in the colony for thirty-six years and had troubled no-one. Interestingly, the newspaper mentioned in its report that James Seaman was a “man of colour.”

He was acquitted but the boys were returned to the Industrial School because they had been unlawfully in a paddock. There was no mention of the older children.

James died in 1899 at the Mt Eliza Depot in Perth. Originally used for convicts, after 1872, the site was used as an invalid depot, a poorhouse and an ‘Old Men’s Home’, until a new location for the Home was established in Claremont in 1906.

James was buried in the Mohommedan Cemetery at Karrakatta.

In 1898, Albert’s sister, Evelyn, who had married Joseph Ettridge in South Australia in 1892, died at Meckering. Her husband, who did contracting work, was first mentioned in newspaper reports at Meckering in 1896, and his 1915 obituary stated the couple had come to W.A. in 1896.

J.A. Seaman (most likely John Anson) was also in Meckering in 1898, advertising three blocks of land for sale at Meckering, with his contact address given as Post office, Northam.

In 1903, James Anson, John and Percival James, John and Percival were all enrolled on the 1903 electoral roll at Meckering. James and John were listed as farmers, and Percival was recorded as a labourer.

### Life Story

Albert is first recorded as being in W.A. in 1908, when it was reported that he had been awarded contracts for gravelling two roads by the Greenhills Road Board.

By late 1909, Albert living in the Malebelling area: he was the secretary of the Malebelling Cricket Club and listed on the electoral roll at Malebelling, along with John Anson and his wife, Elizabeth.

Between 1908 and 1916, Albert was farming at Malebelling and contracting for other work, including building the Doodenanning Rifle Range in 1912 and road building/gravelling for the York Road Board in 1914/1915.

He enlisted on the 30<sup>th</sup> March 1916, giving his address as Greenhills and embarked aboard HMAT *Miltiades* at Fremantle on the 9<sup>th</sup> August.

Arriving in Plymouth on the 25<sup>th</sup> November, Albert spent time with the 13<sup>th</sup> Training Battalion, before he proceeded overseas and was Taken on Strength with the 51<sup>st</sup> Battalion on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1916.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> July, 1917, Albert was admitted to hospital suffering from severe trench fever. After being sent to the 5<sup>th</sup> Australian General Hospital in Rouen, he was transferred back to the U.K and taken to Bath War Hospital before being moved to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Australian Auxiliary Hospital at Dartford. He was finally discharged on the 17<sup>th</sup> September and sent to the No.2 Command Depot at Weymouth.

Albert finally re-joined his unit in France on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1917 but was back in hospital on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 1918, suffering from trench feet. He returned to England again and was admitted to the 1<sup>st</sup> London Hospital at Camberwell, then the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Auxiliary Hospital in Harefield.



Albert was given two weeks' furlough after his discharge on the 4<sup>th</sup> March.

He married Isabella Fenton on the 20<sup>th</sup> March, 1918, at Carmoney Parish Church, Antrim, Ireland, but the honeymoon was short: Albert's furlough ended on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March, and he reported to the No. 4 Command Depot at Hurdcott.

After a period at the Overseas Training Depot, Albert proceeded overseas and re-joined his unit in the Field on the 6<sup>th</sup> July 1918. However, on the 18<sup>th</sup> August, he was Wounded in Action and admitted to the 13<sup>th</sup> Australian Field Ambulance with severe mustard gas poisoning. Albert was invalided to England on the 25<sup>th</sup> August and admitted to the Military Hospital at Sutton Veny.

After nearly a month in hospital and two weeks' furlough, Albert reported to the No. 2 Command Depot at Weymouth. He was marched in to the Overseas Training Brigade at Longbridge Deverill on the 2<sup>nd</sup> November.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> March 1919, Albert returned to Australia on the HT *Orsova*, where he was discharged as medically unfit. A medical certificate from the 8<sup>th</sup> Australian General Hospital at Fremantle listed his injuries as gas poisoning, trench fever, trench foot and a gunshot wound to the right arm (although there is nothing on his service record to indicate a gunshot wound). A medical report from Albert's time at the Military Hospital in Sutton Veny, where he was treated for gas poisoning, noted burns to his right shoulder and arm (most likely caused by contact with mustard gas).

Meanwhile, Albert's wife, Isabella, had given birth to his daughter, Elizabeth, in Northern Ireland. At some point, they joined him in Western Australia but, by February 1920, they were estranged, and Albert published a series of advertisements stating he would not take responsibility for his wife's debts, as she had left the home on January 21<sup>st</sup> 1920. The couple eventually reconciled, as their second daughter, Violet Evelyn, was born in 1922, and three more children followed.



In 1922, Albert was contracted by the York Municipal Council to gravel part of the Northam Road. Between May 1924 and 1927, he advertised as a general carrier and contracting service, giving his address as Quairading.

Isabella died in late 1928 after an operation at the York Hospital. She was buried at York Cemetery on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. A news report of her death stated that Albert had been left with five small children, the youngest being only two weeks old.

In July 1928, probably under the Soldier Settlement Scheme, Albert took up a block of land at Lake Carmody, where he farmed until 1937. His young family appears to have been in the care of relatives, as Pamela is known to have been living at Greenhills with the sons of John Anson Seaman and his wife, Elizabeth.

By 1943, Albert was living in Maylands and working as a labourer. His daughters, Violet and Elizabeth, were living with him.

In 1954, Albert was living at French's Siding, near Northam, with no occupation listed.

He died on the 30<sup>th</sup> October, 1960, at Tuart Hill.



## Acknowledgements

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Harvey, Heather

## References

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