

## James Edward Smith

James Edward Smith was born in Shepparton in 1898, the third of five children born to Annie Smith (nee Vickery) and William Benjamin Smith. Annie had been born at Kilmore, the daughter of Euphemia and Abraham Vickery of Glenaroua, and had married William Smith, Railway Employee, in 1893, settling in Shepparton.

James enlisted in Melbourne on January 19, 1917 at the age of 19, Registration No 6892, and gave his address as Glenaroua via High Camp, his occupation as Farm Labourer, and his next of kin as his uncle, Abraham Vickery, of Glenaroua via High Camp, because both his parents were dead. James's father William had died in 1909 and both his mother, Annie, and his brother, had died in 1915, so James and his three sisters had come to live with their Uncle Abraham and Aunt Elizabeth, unmarried siblings, who had continued to live in the family home on their farm at Glenaroua, after the death of their parents, Abraham and Euphemia Vickery. (James's grandparents).

James enlisted in the 22<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 19<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements, and embarked from Melbourne on board HMAS Ascanius on May 11, 1917. His rank on enlistment was Private.

On March 4, 1918, James embarked for France from Southampton. The 22<sup>nd</sup> Battalion had returned to the Somme Valley in 1918, and in March and April they helped stop the German Spring Offensive. At the end of August and early September, they helped capture Mont St Quentin.

James was wounded in action on October 3, 1918 and on October 13, 1918, he was admitted to Graylingwell War Hospital, England, suffering from a mild gunshot wound to his right elbow. His Uncle Abraham was notified on October 22 that James had been wounded then on November 6 he was notified of James's actual condition. This news was reported in the Kilmore Free Press on November 7, 1918.

On December 2, 1918, James was transferred to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Auxiliary Hospital. He was discharged from hospital on furlough from February 27, 1919 to March 13, 1919, with an extension granted till March 17, 1919.

James was married in England on April 21, 1919 to Isabella Mabel Soulsby, known as Mabel, at The Mission Chapel in Brinscombe, Stroud, Gloucester. Mabel was a Postal Assistant and Postmaster's daughter.

James Smith returned to Australia on June, 16, 1919, on the "Ormonde," disembarking on August 1, 1919. The Kilmore Free Press of August 28, 1919, reported that James was welcomed home at a Soldiers' Welcome function at Glenaroua on August 11, where he was presented with a cheque for £25.

He was discharged at Melbourne on November 23, 1919 and awarded the 1914 - 15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. He was listed on the Honour Roll of Glenaroua Presbyterian Church.

James and his wife lived in Essendon but then settled in Geelong West. James worked as an electrician. They had no children and James died in Geelong West on December 15, 1977, aged 80. His wife Mabel having predeceased him in 1966, James Smith was survived by two of his sisters, Ruby and Mary.