

# *James Brack MC*



*9 September 1978*

*Age: 90*

*This is the story of James Brack MC – War hero, our hero; family man; my grandfather, my Pa. He knew me from the day I was born, and I knew him till the day he died.*

Steven Hurren





James Brack (Jim) was born on 10 May 1888 in Mansfield, Victoria; to parents William and Mary (nee McKinnon). Following his schooling, his time in the workforce was with the Post Master General's Department in country Victoria, including his birthplace of Mansfield and in Warburton, where he met his future wife Frances Lillian Downey (born 20 May 1891); who was a teacher serving in areas of country Victoria, including Warburton which was her place of birth and home town.

VICTORIA (AUSTRALIA).

**“EXTRACT” OF BIRTH-ENTRY.**

Office of the Victorian Government Statist,  
RECORDS OFFICE, QUEEN-STREET,  
Melbourne, H. 7. 27.

Re Application Fol. 44046

MEMO.

According to the Registers in this Office,  
James son of  
William McKeever Brack and  
Mary Jean  
nee McKinnon

was born at Mansfield  
on the 10<sup>th</sup> May 1888

The Official Number of the entry is 13143/88

**A. M. LAUGHTON,**  
Government Statist.

N.B.—The Fee for a Search or Uncertified Extract is 2/6 for Registrations made on or after 1st July, 1853, or 1/6 for those made prior to that date. A **Certificate** of above entry will be supplied for an additional fee of 5/-. In all correspondence bearing on the entry, the “Application Folio No. and the Official Number” must be quoted.

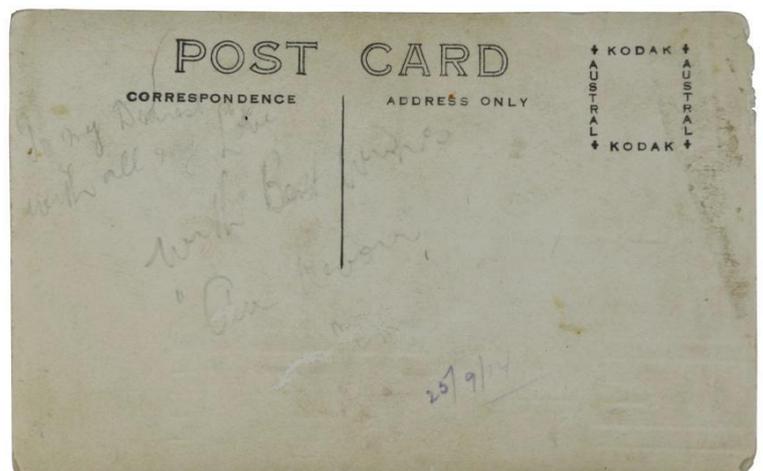
Uncertified “Extracts” of Birth are usually regarded as sufficient as proof of age for Assurance purposes, Examinations and Appointments (Commonwealth, State, and private), requirements of the Factories Act, and for dealings in the Titles Office; but for Legal purposes and for transmission to places outside Australia and New Zealand “Certificates” are necessary.

N. 251/4. 22. —1250.

The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria on 28 June 1914 triggered a chain of events that resulted in World War I. At this point, Europe was at the brink of war, with Germany siding with Austria-Hungary, and Russia siding with the Serbians. On 28 July 1914 Austria-Hungary (with the backing of Germany) declared war on Serbia. Germany then declared war on Russia on 1 August, and on France on 3 August.

On 4 August, German troops marched on France and the route they took went through Belgium; and since Britain had agreed to maintain the neutrality of Belgium, they immediately declared war on Germany. As part of the British Empire, Australia was now at war.

Jim volunteered to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) on 19 August 1914 at the age of 26. He was the 706<sup>th</sup> volunteer. His enlistment as a Sapper (Regimental Number 27) with the 1<sup>st</sup> Division Signal Company was 15 days after the declaration of war, and nine days after recruiting for the AIF commenced. He and Lil were already engaged to be married at this time.



*To my Dearest*

*with all my Love*

*with Best Wishes "Au Revoir"*

*Jim 25/9/14*

After initial training, Jim embarked from Melbourne on 20 October 1914 and then from King George Sound Albany on 1 November 1914 on the transport ship HMAT *Karoo* A10 bound for England and then across the English Channel to France, but the ships were ordered to disembark the force in Egypt. The ships docked at Alexandria on 3 December 1914. From 4 December 1914 till March 1915 the troops of the AIF trained at British military camps around Cairo.



*Sapper Brack at training camp in Egypt*

On 5 April 1915, 1<sup>st</sup> Division Signals Company, First Division Engineers (AIF), within which Jim Brack was a Sapper, joined the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force (MEF) in Egypt in preparation to seize the Gallipoli peninsula. During training in Egypt, the Australians and New Zealanders were combined into one corps – the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. Commanded by a British-Indian Army officer, Lieutenant-General William Birdwood, these men were soon known as 'the Anzacs'.



Early on the morning of 25 April 1915, Allied forces landed on the Gallipoli peninsula in Ottoman Turkey – the invasion being to eliminate Turkish forces and open up the Dardanelles for the passage of the Navy to attack Constantinople (now Istanbul). Troops of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) landed north of Gaba Tepe (Kabatepe) headland, on a beach later called 'Anzac Cove'. Jim was part of the Engineering Corps that landed in the second wave of the assault on what is now known as Anzac Day.



*1<sup>st</sup> Division settling on the Beach, 10 am 25<sup>th</sup> April 1915*

Fighting in the landings and early battles resulted in heavy casualties on both sides. The unhygienic conditions for soldiers on Gallipoli caused serious illnesses. As the campaign moved on, men were evacuated because of illness and as a result of wounds sustained during the conflict. Jim contracted malaria on 6 November 1915 and was evacuated on the Hospital Ship *Delta* to Alexandria on 21 November 1915 for treatment at No 17 British General Hospital, being discharged on 8 December. He was a first day Anzac, served at Gallipoli for seven months and was only evacuated from the offensive due to his illness. To end the Gallipoli campaign, from late December till early January, the remnants of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force (MEF) were evacuated in a masterful secret withdrawal operation.

During his time at Gallipoli Jim transferred from the 1<sup>st</sup> Division Signal Company to Divisional Head Quarters on 2 May 1915, was promoted to Corporal on 27 July 1915, and to Sergeant on 17 August 1915.

Sergeant Brack returned to duty in Alexandria on 1 February 1916, and was transferred to the 4<sup>th</sup> Division Signal Company at the 1<sup>st</sup> AIF camp at Tel-El-Kebir, Egypt on 6 March 1916. On 2 June 1916 he embarked from Alexandria on the HMT *Kingstonian* bound for the port city of Marseilles, France, where he joined the BEF on 10 June 1916. On 25 July 1916 he was commissioned 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant.



Lieutenant Brack was transferred to 47<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion “in the Field” in France on 28 July 1916. The Battalion relocating to Albert (the main town behind the lines for the Allies on the 1916 Somme battlefields) at the beginning of August.

On 7 August 1916 the 47<sup>th</sup> relieved the 48<sup>th</sup> in the newly won trenches at Pozieres, and it was in turn relieved by the survivors of the 48<sup>th</sup> five days later. This was the 47<sup>th</sup> first experience of war. The 47<sup>th</sup> then entered the lines in front of Mouquet Farm with the rest of the 4<sup>th</sup> Division on 30 August 1916. The Battle of Mouquet Farm was a significant (and bloody) operation and part of the Battle of the Somme. On 5 September 1916 the 4<sup>th</sup> Division was relieved by the Canadians. The Australians never captured the farm and suffered many casualties during the operation.

On 14 September 1916 the 4<sup>th</sup> Division moved to Belgium, fighting at the northern end of the Ypres salient. At the end of October the Division moved back to the small village of Dernacourt for training, located near the township of Albert in the Somme, and the 47<sup>th</sup> Battalion was back fighting in the front line at Bernafay Wood from 12 November until it was relieved on the night of 19 November (the day after the official end of the Somme Offensive) and moved into switch trenches till 3 December. Training then resumed at Dernancourt and Flesselles for the remainder of December. However, Brack had been admitted to the 38<sup>th</sup> Casualty Clearing Station on 18 November and then evacuated to the 8<sup>th</sup> General Hospital in Rouen on 20 November. He was discharged from hospital on 26 November and transferred to the 4<sup>th</sup> Australian Divisional Base Depot at Etaples and then to the Reinforcement Camp on 29 November. He rejoined the 47<sup>th</sup> Battalion on 16 December.

The 47<sup>th</sup> moved to Guedecourt and into the front line in January 1917, to be relieved on 24 February. 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Brack was promoted to Lieutenant, 47<sup>th</sup> Battalion on 9 February 1917. (He was at that time detached for duty to 4<sup>th</sup> Division Signal Company from 8 January to 20 March.) From 24 February and well into March, the 4<sup>th</sup> Division pursued the withdrawing Germans until they stopped behind the prepared defences of the Hindenburg Line, near the small village of Bullecourt.

An attack was launched on Bullecourt on 11 April 1917 by the 4<sup>th</sup> Australian and 62<sup>nd</sup> British Divisions. The attack was a humiliation and resulted in disaster, and a catastrophe for the 4<sup>th</sup> Division, which suffered severely and was withdrawn to recover. Much, however, was made of the division's achievement in breaking in to the Hindenburg Line.

Alexander Imlay had transferred as second in command of the 47<sup>th</sup> Battalion on 7 January 1917, and promoted to lieutenant colonel on 2 May.

The 47<sup>th</sup> spent the weeks following the disaster at Bullecourt rebuilding and by 4 May reinforcements had brought the division back up to full strength. By the end of May the Australians were planning for the Messines offensive.

On 7 June the Australian infantry attacked on the Western Front near the village of Messines in West Flanders, Belgium, spearheaded by the 47<sup>th</sup> Battalion. Despite the fierce fighting, heavy casualties and the loss of officers, the depleted 47<sup>th</sup> reached its final objective of the Oosttaverne Line late on the same afternoon. Success had been costly, but it had been decisively won, and the 47<sup>th</sup> was relieved on the night of 12 June. Lieutenant Brack was promoted to Captain on 20 July 1917.

The Battle of Messines was however only a preliminary operation to clear the flank for the great thrust that was to be made presently from Ypres. Nevertheless, Messines was far more than a subsidiary fight, it was a revelation.

After Messines, the Allied forces launched their assault around the Belgian town of Ypres, which began on 31 July 1917. They initially made significant progress, but slowed over the next two months in the face of rain and fierce German resistance. All five Australian divisions took part in this, the Third Battle of Ypres, which was in fact a series of battles culminating in the Battle of Passchendaele.



*Australians moving over the checkboards at dusk, Ypres 1917.*

On 26 September the 4<sup>th</sup> Division led an infantry advance in the Battle of Polygon Wood where they secured their objectives with little difficulty, and thwarted several counter-attacks to consolidate their gain. With fewer casualties, and fresher than expected, the Division remained in the front line and was part of the attack that completed the occupation of Broodseinde Ridge by 4 October, thus protecting the southern flank of the Allied line and permitting attacks on Passchendaele Ridge.

On 11 October the 47<sup>th</sup> marched to their jumping off point in front of Zonnebeke. Orders were received for the attack on Passchendaele Ridge, and at 5.20am on 12 October the Battalion launched their attack up Keilberg Spur, on the right of the Ypres-Roulers railway, with their objective being Assyria.

Despite the deplorable conditions, the troops made excellent progress with no fighting up to Decoy Wood, almost half way to their objective. Moving out from the very boggy Decoy Wood toward the low crest beneath the village of Passchendaele, the men of the 47<sup>th</sup> came under fire from the pillboxes known as Vienna Cottage on the left and Assyria on the right. They later stormed and captured their objective - Assyria, and dug in and organised the defence.

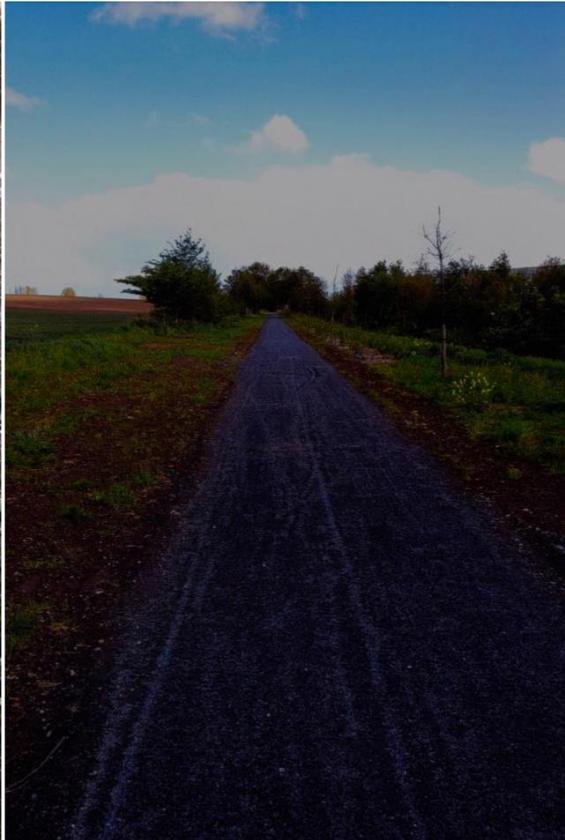


*Ypres-Roulers railway, where the 4<sup>th</sup> Australian Division advanced on 12 October from Defy Crossing - the furthest point reached by the Australians in the series of advances made by them in the Third Battle of Ypres.*

By 4pm the enemy was attacking from Assyria Ridge with our troops falling back fighting a rearguard action down the Ypres-Roulers railway passing through Defy Crossing and on further south. Colonel Imlay personally took command at the front line and directed operations of the 47<sup>th</sup>. As the Battalion withdrew Colonel Imlay was severely wounded by shell-fire at Broodseinde, with Captain Brack dressing his wounds and carrying him from the field, and subsequently taking command of the Battalion. As night fell the 4<sup>th</sup> Division was back on its start line, at the end of a truly disastrous day.



*Ypres-Roulers railway cutting  
near Defy Crossing*



*now part of walk that follows  
the old track from Zonnebeke to  
Passchendaele via Defy Crossing*

The fighting continued for the next two days, with the Battalion relieved at 7.30pm on 14 October, relocating to canal dug-outs at Ypres. In the days following the battle, Brack prepared the award recommendations, which told of the tragic course of the battle and the bravery of the men who fought it. Captain Brack was himself recommended for the award of Military Cross.



The vicious fighting had taken place in the most appalling of waterlogged conditions, which helped render the name Passchendaele a synonym for slaughter.



*The Ypres-Roulers rail embankment the afternoon of the attack of 12 October 1917.*

Immediately after Passchendaele the 47<sup>th</sup> enjoyed a period of rest at camps in the Somme area of France for the rest of 1917, with Brack continuing in temporary command for the rest of October.

In early January 1918 the Battalion was back at Ridgewood camp in Belgium, before relieving on the front line adjacent to Ypres on 5 February.

From 8 till 26 January Captain Brack was detached to 12<sup>th</sup> Brigade HQ as Assistant Instruction Officer, and from 3 till 10 March to the Aust Corps Gas School.

On 26 March the 4<sup>th</sup> Division marched 34 kilometres from Beaumetz towards Amiens to help stem the tide of the German Spring offensive between Ancre and Somme, being the First Battle of Dernancourt. The subsequent fighting

around the railway line and the town was intense, with the 47<sup>th</sup> suffering heavy casualties since arriving, and being relieved on the night of 29 March, reorganising in reserve. They returned to the front line on 2 April.

By 4 April the outpost line on the railway adjacent to Dernancourt was the main line of defence. The fighting over this week fell hardest on the 47<sup>th</sup>, the numerically weakest battalion in the line, and the one to bear the full force of the heaviest attack ever made against Australian troops during WWI. On 5 April the Germans break through at the railway underpass, and the front line of the 47<sup>th</sup> is shattered and their support lines overrun. However, they had fought a titanic struggle over eight days and, with the other units of the 4<sup>th</sup> Division, decisively halted the German drive on Amiens in what must be regarded as one of the most important Australian victories ever. The city of Amiens had not fallen.

On 1 May the 47<sup>th</sup> was ordered to relieve the 46<sup>th</sup> Battalion in the front line at Villers-Bretonneux, the village having been recaptured on the night of 24-25 April. The Battalion had now reduced to only 16 officers and 306 men, and on 5 May the difficult and long avoided decision was made to disband the 47<sup>th</sup> Battalion. In the two years the Battalion had fought (820 days from 3 March 1916 till 31 May 1918), 661 men were killed and 1,564 wounded (one of the highest casualty rates in the AIF). In total 2591 men served in the 47<sup>th</sup>. (At that time a battalion normally consisted of 1023 men.) The 47<sup>th</sup> had begun as the first AIF battalion regrouped and reformed in Egypt following the failure of the Dardanelles campaign (Gallipoli).

On 26 May 1918 Captain Brack was transferred from the disbanded 47<sup>th</sup> Battalion to the 46<sup>th</sup> Battalion, and on 28 May was appointed Adjutant of that Battalion.

After their success at Amiens and Villers-Bretonneux, in June the Allies began to prepare for their own offensive, conducting a series of small scale advances which became known as "peace penetrations".

On 4 July the 4<sup>th</sup> Division provided the bulk of the assaulting force for the victory at the Battle of Hamel. It has been stated that the offensive commencing 18 July 1918 is regarded as the turning point of the Great War.

During this final Allied offensive, on 8 August, the 46<sup>th</sup> Battalion played an active role, including fighting in the Battle of Amiens. Its final attack of the war commenced on 18 September against the outposts of the Hindenburg Line. By the end of the day the Australians broke through the German defences and secured the Hindenburg *outpost line*, overlooking the main Hindenburg Line.

The Battalion then remained out of the line until the armistice came into effect on 11 November 1918. The Battalion was disbanded in April 1919.

Captain Brack transferred to United Kingdom on leave on 24 December 1918, to serve at No 4 Command Depot, Hurdcott from 13 March 1919, and then from 16 May as Captain of the Sports Section Administration at AIF Headquarters in London.

He represented Australia in the AIF Rifle Team competing at Bisley in July 1919. Australia came second to Britain in each of the Kolapore Cup, MacKinnon Cup and the Empire Match. Jim Brack had the highest individual score of all competitors from all countries in the Kolapore Cup. Australia also won the Colonial Prize against other Dominions, with Jim achieving the highest score for Australia. In the individual events Jim competed in the Challenge Cup (coming 5th with the highest score for an Australian), Armourers Company, Daily Telegraph, City of London, Stock Exchange, Graphic, Alexandra and the King's Prize.

Following his time at Bisley, he was granted leave from 31 July 1919, till the time of his departure from the United Kingdom.



*General Birdwood congratulating Captain Brack  
for the highest individual score in the Kolapore Cup at Bisley.  
(note cigarette hidden behind his back)  
Looking on are the Captain of the Australian Team,  
Lieutenant Colonel Beardsmore and the  
Adjutant, Captain Findlay.*

On 9 August 1919 Captain Brack was struck off strength and embarked on His Majesty's Transport *Ceramic* in Liverpool bound for Australia, berthing at Port Melbourne on 27 September. (His AIF appointment was terminated on 26 November 1919.)

A mere 10 days after returning to Australian soil after an absence of 4 years 11 months and 7 days, James Brack married Frances Lillian Downey at Lil's hometown (and place of birth) of Warburton, Victoria on 7 October 1919. She had waited for her fiancé all those years.



Mr and Mrs James Brack lived in Warburton, where Jim resumed work with the Post Master General's Department and Lil was a teacher. They had three children; Robert William (born 15 November 1921), Thomas James (born 16 September 1924) and Joan Estelle (born 27 February 1926). Jim was a member of the *Post and Telegraph Rifle Club* and shot at Williamstown, in 1927 winning the VRA (Victorian Rifle Association) District Union Teams Event.

The Brack family moved to Canberra in September 1927. They lived at Higgins Crescent, Ainslie where the children grew up and went to school, and Jim worked in the Australian Public Service.

Upon arrival in Canberra, James Brack joined the *Canberra Rifle Club* (CRC) and became Captain on 21 December 1927, an Office he held continuously until July 1934 when he retired from the Club. During this time he was also a Handicapper and Team selector. His prowess with the rifle was indicated by the fact that he was Club Champion from 1927/28 to 1933/34 inclusive.



Jim also took part in a number of Kings Prize meetings in both Sydney and Melbourne. The King's Prize eluded him, but he had a number of top thirty finishes, notably winning NSW King's badges for 10th in 1930 and 24th in 1932. In retiring from active shooting at the *Canberra Rifle Club*, Jim said that he was doing so “as he had achieved what he had wanted to achieve”.

Jim was elected the first Life Member of CRC in July 1953 and right up till his death in 1979 maintained an interest in the Club, being at various times Patron, President and a Vice-President.

[Steven Hurren followed in his grandfather's footsteps and was a member of the Canberra Rifle Club from 2001 to 2012. During this period, Steven's achievements in open class included winning the ACT championship (2002), the Riverina championship (twice), and the Tumut 1,000 yards championship (twice). He was also a member of the Committee, and is a Vice-President – (in honour of Jim Brack)].

Jim was a founding member, and on the Foundation Committee of the *Canberra Returned Soldiers' Club* in 1931. The Club became the *Canberra Club* in 1948. He became the first Life Member in 1943, and was Club President in 1932, 1934 and 1935, then from 1945 to 1951.

He was also a founding member of *Canberra City Bowling Club* in 1930, President 1945 to 1947 and elected life member in 1957, and later became Patron.

During World War II, James Brack served as a Major (Service No N393899) with the 21st Battalion, Volunteer Defence Corps as the Commanding Officer, Canberra and surrounding area. His service was from 9 February 1943 till 29 September 1945.



*Major James Brack  
Commanding Officer  
Volunteer Defence Corps, Canberra*

Following WW II Jim worked in the Public Service; with the Prime Minister's Department, and subsequently with the Department of External Territories reaching the level of Assistant Secretary, from where he retired in 1951.

By 1950 all three of the Brack children were married adults and no longer living with their parents. Jim and Lil moved from Ainslie to a government house at 69 Ormond Street Turner. In that year Joan married Bert Hurren and they were allocated a government house at 46 Froggatt Street Turner, which was one house away, and just around the corner from Joan's parents. Both Jim and Lil, and Bert and Joan purchased these respective homes.



*Jim and Lil on Joan and Bert Hurren's wedding day  
21 January 1950*

In 1965 Joan and Bert, and Jim and Lil sold their respective houses in Turner and together purchased a house with a flat underneath at 8 Yarrow Place O'Connor where both families could live (separately, but effectively together).



*Ma and Pa at Yarrow Place - 1965*

Jim and Lil lived there happily for the remainder of their lives. Lil passing away on 10 June 1971 (aged 80) and Jim on 12 November 1979 (aged 91). Both died peacefully.

*Rest in Peace*



JAMES BRACK

1888 - 1979

AT REST

*Appendix*



*Pa at my wedding to Joy Gabel*

*9 September 1978*

Steve Hurren

# *Attachment*

Marriage Certificate

Death Certificate

Family Tree

To the State of Victoria.

To the Commonwealth of Australia.

FOURTH SCHEDULE, ACTS NO. 1 AND 2, 1915-16, AND 1917-18.

# CERTIFICATE OF MARRIAGE.

Year 1919, Part 1 or Church District "A" I

Declaration-P&

[B. C]

No. in Register. (1)	When and where Married. (2)	Name and Surname of each Party.	Copies of date of former Absolute (U.D.) or Order of Annulment.	Condition of each former Marriage. (if Widowed, or Divorced, or Annulled.)	Children by each former Marriage.		Birthplace. (7)
					Living. (5)	Dead. (6)	
	7 <sup>th</sup> Oct 1919 St Mary's Warburton						

Occupation. (8)	Age in years (last Birthday) (9)	Exact Residence of each Party.		Parents' Names.	
		Present. (10)	Usual. (11)	Father. Also Occupation. (12)	Mother. (Full Maiden Name.) (13)
Clerk	31	344, Station St. Warburton	Carlton	William Brack (Labourer)	Mary (McKinnon)
School-teacher	28	Warburton		Thomas Downey (Driver)	Agnes (Hyett)

We declare that the above is a true statement of the particulars relating to each of us respectively; and that Marriage by license was solemnized between us on the date and at the place mentioned, according to rites & ceremonies of the Ch of E

*Brack*  
*J. L. Downey*  
Signatures of Parties.

Signatures of Witnesses  
*Lo. Brack*  
*Lo. Heath*  
 I, *George Gelder*  
*Holy Orders*

Clerk in

celebrated Marriage between the above named parties, after notice (having been dispensed with by permission of the Minister of the Gospel, J.P.), and after declaration, duly made as by law required [with the written consent of the Minister of the Gospel, J.P.]

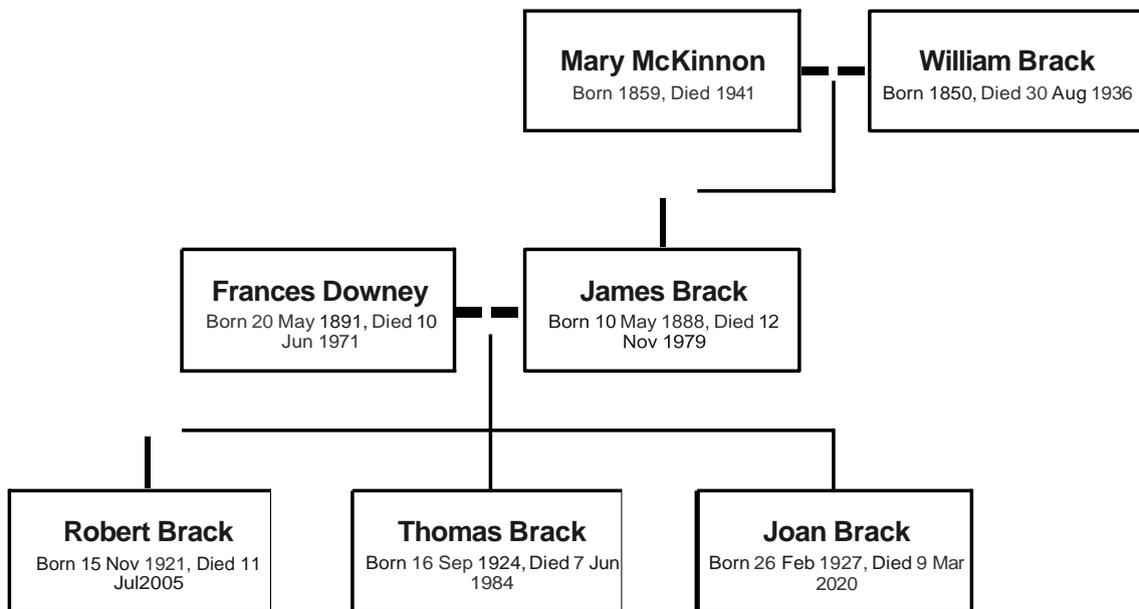
Dated this 7<sup>th</sup> day of October, 1919

Signature of Minister, Government Statist, or Registrar of Marriages

[Redacted]



# James Brack



# *Attachment*

Postcards to home

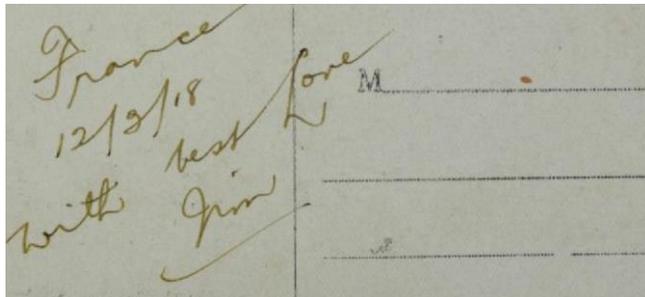


*With Best Love from Jim  
17/7/17  
France*



## CARTE POS ALE

CorresPOND n°



## *Attachment*

Recommendation for award of Military Cross

Recommendation for award of Military Cross

Notes on award of Military Cross

Letter of congratulations from General Birdwood

Anzac Medallion

Service and medals display

The (unawarded) Gallipoli Star

47<sup>th</sup> Battalion badge

Recommendation

16/10/17

12<sup>th</sup> Australian Infantry Brigade      4<sup>th</sup> Australian Division

47<sup>th</sup> Bn      Captain James BRACK

At PASSCHENDAELE RIDGE on 12 October 1917 Captain Brack took command of Battalion when his Commanding Officer became a casualty. He dressed his Colonel's wounds under very heavy shell fire and carried him to a dugout. He made personal reconnaissance of the sector under heavy fire of all calibres, and personally disposed troops to meet a threatened enemy attack.

During tour of duty Captain BRACK by his initiative and organising ability, cheery disposition and devotion to duty, carried out his duties in a most efficient manner.

M.C. recommended by Captain C A Symons.

(signed)

J C Robertson

Brigadier General

Commanding 12<sup>th</sup> Aust Brigade

Honour or Award – Card

Recommendation

1/3/18

12<sup>th</sup> Australian Infantry Brigade      4<sup>th</sup> Australian Division

47<sup>th</sup> Bn      Captain James BRACK

For conspicuous good service and ability in the field as Signalling Officer, and later in command of a Company. During the October fighting near Zonnebeke he did excellent work in the temporary command of his Battalion.

Throughout his service since 1914 he has served without a break and has displayed consistent energy and zeal. His work as a company commander has been specially marked by coolness in action and care for the men.

Period covered from 23 September 1917 to 25 February 1918.

M.C. recommended by Brigadier General Commanding 12<sup>th</sup> Aust Inf. Brigade.

(signed)  
S G Sinclair MacLagan  
Major General  
Commanding 4<sup>th</sup> Aust Division

Honour or Award – Military Cross

### Notes on award of Military Cross

Awarded for an act or acts of exemplary gallantry during active operations against the enemy on land, to captains or officers of lower rank.

Captain James Brack was twice recommended for the award of Military Cross in WWI. The first time was in October 1917 immediately following the infamous Passchendaele Ridge battle of 12 October 1917, and the second recommendation was in March 1918. He was granted a "card only" on the first occasion, and awarded a MC the second time.

Both recommendations greatly emphasised the events surrounding his temporary command of the 47<sup>th</sup> Battalion. It is therefore surmised that the quota system for the award of medals that was in place in WWI was the issue that affected the first recommendation not progressing to a formal award, and a second subsequent recommendation made that was granted.

Letter of congratulations from General Birdwood

Headquarter's  
Australian Corps Imperial  
B. E. F. France Force.  
10<sup>th</sup> June  
1918

Dear Brack

I am so pleased to have this opportunity of congratulating you most heartily on the award of the Military Cross in recognition of your good and gallant service during many a long month now. I take this opportunity of thanking you so much for it.

With kind regards & good wishes for the future

Yours sincerely  
W. R. Birdwood

Anzac Medallion



*Awarded to surviving members  
of the Australian Forces  
who served on the Gallipoli Peninsula*



*Jim Brack's medals, Anzac Medallion,  
and "dog tags"*

## The Gallipoli Star



### **The Gallipoli Star**

The Gallipoli Star had its origins in late-1917 when General William Birdwood, commander of the ANZAC Corps on Gallipoli, suggested an award to Australian and New Zealand servicemen who served in the Gallipoli campaign.

The award was approved in principle by King George V and the medal was designed as an eight-pointed bronze star (the points representing the Australian states and territories and New Zealand), surmounted by a superimposed silver disc on the face, with a crown at its centre surrounded by the words "Gallipoli 1914-1915".

The ribbon comprised the emblematic colours of gold to represent Australian wattle, silver-grey for the New Zealand fern leaf, crimson for the Australian flowering gum and New Zealand rata flower, and blue for the Aegean Sea.

The Gallipoli Star was, however, never awarded because it was felt that an exclusive award to ANZAC soldiers unfairly discriminated against British and other Empire soldiers who served in the campaign.

Jim's Battalion badge



*47<sup>th</sup> Battalion  
12<sup>th</sup> Brigade  
4<sup>th</sup> Division  
Australian Imperial Force*

# *Attachment*

## **Empire Match at Bisley**

Newspaper article  
"The Argus" 25 July 1919

The Argus, Friday, July 25, 1919

## EMPIRE MATCH AT BISLEY

\_\_\_\_\_ O \_\_\_\_\_  
Britain Wins from Australia

\_\_\_\_\_  
Captain Brack's Fine Form.  
(Australian Press Association)

LONDON, July 24

The final stage of the Empire Trophy was fired at Bisley ranges yesterday, 10 shots each at 800, 900 and 1,000 yards, teams of eight men.

As in the first stage, the British team led throughout, displaying remarkably consistent form and finishing with an aggregate of 2,112 points.

For the third time in a week Australia was again second, 72 points behind the winners, with a total of 2,040 points. Captain J. Brack, MC (Victoria), who was top scorer in the Kolapore Cup, again shot brilliantly. At 900 yards he dropped only one point, scoring 49 out of a possible 50 points.

The final scores were:-

Great Britain	.....	2,112
Australia	.....	2,040
New Zealand	.....	1,979
Canada	.....	1,937

#### NOTES BY MARKER

The winning score is 96 points less than Great Britain won with in 1913, which, if it were not for Captain Brack's splendid score, might have taken to indicate that the weather conditions have not been favourable to long-range shooting. To make 49 at 900 yards is a great performance for Captain Brack, following so closely on his 49 at 600 yards in the Kolapore Cup. Brack has always been considered the best shot in Victoria at disappearing targets under service conditions. In 1913 the highest score at 900 yards was 47. The last occasion on which the Empire trophy was competed for at Bisley in 1913, when Great Britain defeated Australia by 90 points, Canada and India being also represented.

# *Attachment*

**Canberra Rifle Club**

Membership badge

1926 Trophy

Canberra Rifle Club  
Jim's Membership badge



*Summary*

*Captain 21 December 1927 - July 1934*

*Club champion 1927/28 - 1933/34*

*Retired from target rifle shooting July 1934*

*Life member 1953*

*Patron, President, Vice President (various times)*

## Canberra Rifle Club

### Trophy - 1926



#### Preliminary winners

1926-27	A C R Fallick	L Rowland	H G McIntosh	L Rowland
Score	130	131	133	133
1927-28	W Allen	J Brack	A Hussey	A Hussey
Score	127	137	144	131
1928-29	L McLeod	J Brack	J Brack	J Brack
Score	139	129	129	134

(Note: Jim Brack did not compete in the first 5 rounds of the Trophy event)

### *Illustration credits*

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