

John Robert Brame



Sapper 3301 John Robert Brame enlisted in the 6th Field Company Engineers in the 6th Infantry Brigade of the 2nd Australian Division in Melbourne on 20 July 1915. He embarked overseas on 24 November and disembarked in Egypt in late December, where he was re-mustered as a Driver (Dvr).

Each infantry brigade had its own field engineer unit which undertook a broad range of tasks, including preparation and construction of defensive positions and command posts, trench and dugout excavation, erection of barbed wire obstacles, road and bridge construction and maintenance and water supply.

The company embarked for France on 19 March and arrived in Marseilles on 27 March, then entrained north to the Hazebrouck region for training.

In late July 1916 the company was involved in digging and repairing communication trenches on the approach to Pozieres for several days and sustained 35 casualties (10 killed).

Dvr Brame contracted laryngitis and was hospitalised at the 6th Australian Field Ambulance between 21 – 27 December, when he rejoined his unit.

The engineers were very active in late March 1917 after the Germans had withdrawn to their new defences and spent several weeks clearing German trenches and dugouts for their new occupants. Between 3 – 7 May 1917, the company assisted the 6th Brigade during and after their assault at Bullecourt, reinforcing command posts and dugouts and constructing new defences, at a cost of 34 casualties (six killed).

Dvr Brame was granted leave in England from 1 – 12 August, following which the company was kept busy during September – October 1917 as the allied front line moved forward several kms during the middle stages of Third Ypres.



Members of the 6th Field Company Engineers waiting for the baths to open at Ypres, 1 November 1917

The field company moved south to the Somme in early April 1918 and assisted the infantry units to establish new barbed wire defences, dugouts and ammunition dumps in the wake of the German Spring Offensive in that area.

In the lead up to the 6th Brigade's successful attack on Ville sur Ancre on 19 May, the engineers also constructed several light infantry bridges across the river, at times under fire, at a cost of two men killed and five wounded.

In the aftermath of the Amiens offensive of 8 August 1918, one of the main tasks for the engineers was road and bridge repairs and the rehabilitation of shelled areas to enable the movement of artillery and supplies to the evolving front line. These activities continued for many weeks as the allies advanced eastwards.

Dvr Brame was granted further leave in England between 6 – 25 September and he rejoined the field company near Bellicourt on the St Quentin Canal, where they were attempting to secure fresh water supplies for the forward troops, before they left the line for the last time on 6 October 1918.

Dvr Brame was later selected for early repatriation, and he departed France on 27 January 1919. After a month at Hurdcott Camp, he embarked for return to Australia on 25 February.

Driver 3301 John Robert Brame disembarked in Melbourne on 13 April, where he was discharged from the AIF on 6 June 1919.

Name: Brame, John Robert	
Service Number	3301
Date enlisted	20 July 1915
Place enlisted	Melbourne, Victoria
Rank on enlistment	Sapper
Initial Unit	6 th Field Company Engineers
Date and ship embarked for overseas	24 November 1915 HMAT A40 <i>Ceramic</i>
Stated age/DOB (if known)	29 years
Place of birth	Geelong, Victoria
Marital status	Single
Occupation	Labourer
Religion	Methodist
Next of kin and address	Brame, Mr Henry, father, 206 Verner Street, East Geelong, Victoria
Permanent address	East Geelong, Victoria
Appearance	Fair complexion, fair hair, brown eyes, height – 5 feet 6 inches, weight – 8 stone, 12 lbs, chest measurement – 33/36 inches
Final Rank	Driver
Final Unit	6 th Field Company Engineers
Theatres of war served in	Egypt, France, Belgium
Fate	Returned to Australia
Date and ship embarked for Australia	25 February 1919 HT <i>Balmoral Castle</i>
Date discharged	6 June 1919
Nature of discharge	Termination of Period of Enlistment
Honours/medals	1914-15 Star, British War Medal, Victory Medal
Notes	Family lived at Leopold pre-war. Also remembered on the Leopold State School Honor Roll, Leopold War Memorial and the East Geelong Congregational Church & Sunday School Honor Roll.