

# Gunner of Renown



Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company

## Lieutenant Colonel Tristram Bernard Wordsworth JAMES, DSO

(1883-1939)

Tristram James began his military career in the volunteer artillery in WA in 1899. He was commissioned second lieutenant in the Goldfields Infantry Regiment in 1904 and promoted lieutenant in 1906. In February 1906, he obtained a permanent appointment in the Royal Australian Garrison Artillery. After attending courses at the School of Gunnery in Sydney in 1908 he was transferred to Queensland in August 1909.

In February 1911, James was appointed the first adjutant of the Royal Military College at Duntroon – one of the few Australian officers on its staff – and was promoted captain in May 1911. James' term at RMC was extended for two years in 1915 owing to the departure of most officers from the staff for the war.

In April 1916, however, he was the last of the original staff released for active service. He transferred to the AIF as a battery commander in 7th Australian Field Artillery Brigade (FAB) with the rank of major, and after six months training in England arrived in France in December 1916 with 25th Battery. In 1917, he was awarded the DSO for extinguishing a fire in a gun-pit under heavy shell-fire. He was wounded on 22 July but remained on duty. In December, he was transferred to 2nd Division Artillery but in January 1918 was given command of 3rd Divisional Ammunition Column. On 1 April 1918, he was appointed to command of the 7th FAB with rank of lieutenant colonel; he was mentioned in dispatches on 7 April and gassed on 24 April. Next month James took over the Reserve Brigade, Australian Artillery.

Returning to Australia at the end of 1919, he was allotted for duty with the garrison artillery in NSW, but in August 1920 was transferred to command the garrison artillery in Fremantle, WA. In May 1921, he moved to Victoria to 2nd Battery, Australian Field Artillery, and in August 1922 was placed in command of 1st Coast Artillery Brigade and the garrison artillery of NSW. He went to England in 1923 for two years on exchange and on his return resumed his previous appointment in Sydney. He was promoted lieutenant colonel, Australian Military Forces, in August 1926. On 30 May 1931, he retired, reportedly because of war injuries, and went to live in Adelaide with his widowed mother.

James never married. After his mother's death in October 1936 he went on several trips abroad and died of chronic asthma at Battersea, England, on 15 September 1939.

*Source:* C. D. Coulthard-Clark, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol.9, p.466

For more information follow this link: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/james-tristram-bernard-6823>