John Selwyn Bean was born at Binda, NSW, in 1894. John was the second of four children born to James (a clergyman) and Sarah between 1893 and 1899. John attended Fort Street High School, Sydney, and entered HAC, aged just 16, in 1911. Bean attended HAC 1911-1912, specialising in plots.

Enlisting 27 April 1916 in the 3rd Battalion 21st Reinforcement, John embarked from Sydney on board HMAT A40 Ceramic on 7 October 1916.

John was 22 when he was Killed in Action, 5 May 1917, during the Second Battle of Bullecourt, and was one of 63 men of the 3rd Battalion buried in the vicinity of Maricourt Wood. With no known grave, he is commemorated at the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial, France.