

## **Private Patrick Blake©**

**Regimental number: 811**

**25th Battalion, Australian Infantry, Australian Imperial Force**

**born: 1884 – died: 6 July 1916**

"Though lost to sight, to memory ever dear, from mother & family"

Those are the words inscribed on the headstone for Private Patrick Blake in the Bailleul Cemetery in France. Patrick was buried in Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension (Nord), section II, row E, grave 73. This cemetery contains 4,403 Commonwealth burials of the First World War, 17 Commonwealth burials of the Second World War and 154 German burials from both wars.<sup>1</sup>

Patrick was the son of Edward and Ellen Blake. His father had been born in 1858 in Cardiff, Glamorgan, Wales, and his mother (the former Ellen Seward) in about 1863 in Blaina, Monmouthshire, Wales.<sup>2</sup> They married in early 1881 in Neath, Glamorgan, Wales, and had eight children: Edward (born in 1881),<sup>3</sup> Patrick (born in 1884),<sup>4</sup> Ellen (Nelly) (born in 1885),<sup>5</sup> William John (born in 1888),<sup>6</sup> Thomas (born in 1889),<sup>7</sup> Abigail (born in 1892),<sup>8</sup> Mary Ann (born in 1894)<sup>9</sup> and Archibald (born in 1895).<sup>10</sup>

In 1891, the family was living at 226 Neath Road, Landore, Glamorgan, where Edward was a hammer smith.<sup>11</sup> By 1901, the Blake family had moved to 11 Landeg Street in Landore.<sup>12</sup>

Patrick's younger brother, William John, served with the British Army's Welsh Regiment from February 1908 until the end of May 1912, when William John was discharged as permanently medically unfit for service, although with very good character.<sup>13</sup> When war was declared in Europe, Patrick may have been motivated by his brother's service to enlist while in faraway Australia.

Patrick's father died in 1910<sup>14</sup> and in 1911, his widowed mother Ellen was still living at 11 Landeg St. with five of her children and a granddaughter. Also living with them was Elizabeth L. Blake, age 21, described as her daughter.<sup>15</sup> However, there was no evidence that she was the daughter of Edward and Ellen.<sup>16</sup> Ellen Blake remarried, marrying William Cranston later in 1911.<sup>17</sup>

It is not known when Patrick went to Australia, but he enlisted in the 25th Battalion of the Australian Imperial Force in March 1915.<sup>18</sup> When he enlisted, he was a labourer, 5' 7 ½" tall and had a brown complexion, grey eyes and black hair. He was soon on his way to Gallipoli, sailing from Brisbane on 29 June 1915. In December 1915, Private Blake was sick for a month with conjunctivitis, eventually ending up in the Australian General Hospital in Heliopolis, Cairo, Egypt. Private Blake's unit joined the British Expeditionary Force in France on 19 March 1916.

On 4 July 1916, Blake was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station in Bailleul, France, with wounds to his head, leg and thigh. He died from compound fractures to his leg at 4:15 p.m. on 6 July 1916. Elsewhere in his military record it suggests that he died of a shell wound in his left breast. In that month, the No. 1 CCCS received 2,810 admissions, of whom 70 died.<sup>19</sup>

Patrick was buried in the Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord (Grave Reference: Plot II, Row E, Grave 73). Bailleul is in France, but near the Belgian border, about 15 kilometres southwest of Ypres. It was occupied in October 1914 and became an important hospital centre for not just No. 1 CCCS but also for No. 1 Australian and five British Army casualty clearing stations.

In May 1915, Patrick had signed a will, giving £20 to his brother William, £10 to his sister Mary Ann and the remainder to his mother. His mother also received his personal effects: four coins, a pocketbook, letters, cards, photos, a belt, a watch, a rubber bag, a pouch, a pipe, 13 badges, a pipe cleaner, a knife, a prayer book, a notebook, eight cloth badges, a tobacco box, a cotton bag, three handkerchiefs, a pack of cards, a souvenir brooch and a book.<sup>20</sup>

Patrick was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918), the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre) and the 1914–15 Star (for service in the war against Germany between 5 August 1914 and 31 December 1915).

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<sup>1</sup> *Commonwealth War Graves Commission*, ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org): accessed 2 September 2016), entry for Blake, Patrick, Service No: 811

<sup>2</sup> “1891 Wales Census,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 2 September 2016), entry for Patrick Blake, Registration district: Swansea, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 11, Piece: 4474, Folio: 112, Page: 13

<sup>3</sup> “GRO online index–birth,” *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 6 February 2017) entry for Blake, Edward, Volume 11A, Page 650

<sup>4</sup> “GRO online index–birth,” *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 6 February 2017) entry for Blake, Patrick, Volume 11A, Page 736

<sup>5</sup> “GRO online index–birth,” *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 6 February 2017) entry for Blake, Ellen, Volume 11A, Page 726

<sup>6</sup> “GRO online index–birth,” *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 6 February 2017) entry for Blake, William John, Volume 11A, Page 766

<sup>7</sup> “GRO online index–birth,” *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 6 February 2017) entry for Blake, Thomas, Volume 11A, Page 753

<sup>8</sup> “GRO online index–birth,” *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 6 February 2017) entry for Blake, Abigail, Volume 11A, Page 892

<sup>9</sup> “GRO online index–birth,” *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 6 February 2017) entry for Blake, Mary Ann, Volume 11A, Page 854

<sup>10</sup> “GRO online index–birth,” *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 6 February 2017) entry for Blake, Archibald, Volume 11A, Page 967

<sup>11</sup> “1891 Wales Census,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 2 September 2016), entry for Patrick Blake, Registration district: Swansea, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 11, Piece: 4474, Folio: 112, Page: 13

<sup>12</sup> “1901 Wales Census,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 2 September 2016), entry for Patrick Blake, Registration district: Swansea, Sub-registration district: Llangafelach, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 15, Household schedule number: 12, Piece: 5072, Folio: 64, Page: 2; “Australia WWI Service Records, 1914–1920,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 2 September 2016), entry for Patrick Blake

<sup>13</sup> “British Army WWI Service Records, 1914–1920,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 2 September 2016), entry for William John Blake

<sup>14</sup> “England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 21 January 2017), entry for Edward Blake, Registration district: Swansea, Inferred county: Glamorganshire, Volume: 11a, Page: 498

<sup>15</sup> “1911 Wales Census,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 2 September 2016), entry for Ellen Blake, Registration district: Swansea, Registration district number: 594, Sub-registration district: Llangafelach, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 10, Household schedule number: 242, Piece: 32747

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<sup>16</sup> The General Register Office index for children of Blake and Seward does not include Elizabeth L. and she would have been about the same age as their son, Thomas, but there was no evidence that he had a twin sister.

<sup>17</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 2 September 2016), entry for Ellen Blake, Registration district: Swansea, Inferred county: Glamorgan, Volume: 11a, Page: 1948

<sup>18</sup> "Australia WWI Service Records, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 2 September 2016), entry for Patrick Blake. Unless otherwise stated, all information about Patrick's military career comes from this source.

<sup>19</sup> "War Diaries – 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *Library and Archives Canada* ([collectionscanada.gc.ca/pam\\_archives/index.php?fuseaction=genitem.displayItem&lang=eng&rec\\_nbr=2005082](http://collectionscanada.gc.ca/pam_archives/index.php?fuseaction=genitem.displayItem&lang=eng&rec_nbr=2005082): accessed 23 August 2016)

<sup>20</sup> "Australia WWI Service Records, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 2 September 2016), entry for Patrick Blake