

**St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard,
Harefield, Middlesex, England**

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



4733 PRIVATE

RICHARD CHARLES BLAKE

AUST. CYCLIST CORPS

2ND NOVEMBER, 1918 Age 26

At Rest

Richard Charles (Dick) BLAKE

Richard Charles Blake was born at Camberwell, Victoria in 1892 to parents Richard Charles and Annie Sarah Blake (nee Hochkins). His birth was registered in the district of Hawthorn, Victoria. (according to information provided by his sister for the Roll of Honour she stated he was born at Hawthorn, Victoria)

Richard Charles Blake attended Camberwell State School, Victoria.

Richard Charles Blake was a 23 year old, single, Kitchenman (as per Embarkation Roll, however his sister listed him as Farmer for the Roll of Honour) from Mental Hospital, Kew, Victoria when he enlisted at Melbourne, Victoria on 25th October, 1915 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 4733 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his sister – Miss Kathleen Blake, Mental Hospital, Kew, Victoria.

Private Richard Charles Blake was posted to 23rd Depot Battalion at Royal Park on 27th October, 1915 for recruit training. He was transferred to 16th Depot Battalion at Bendigo, Victoria on 2nd December, 1915. Private Blake was transferred to 15th Reinforcements of 7th Battalion on 6th January, 1916.

Private Richard Charles Blake embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Wiltshire (A 18)* on 7th March, 1916 with the 7th Infantry Battalion, 15th Reinforcements.

Private Richard Charles Blake was transferred to 4th Division Cyclist Corps on 17th April, 1916 from Training Battalion. He was taken on strength of 4th Division Cyclists Corps on 19th April, 1916 at Tel-el-Kebir.

Australian Cycling Corps

The Australian Cycling Corps was formed in Egypt in 1916 as part of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF), and fought on the Western Front in France and Belgium during World War I. They were used mainly as despatch riders, while also conducting reconnaissance and patrolling. It was disbanded in 1919.

(Wikipedia)

Private Richard Charles Blake embarked from Alexandria on 2nd June, 1916 on *Kingstonian Castle* to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force) & disembarked at Marseilles, France on 8th June, 1916.

Private Richard Charles Blake was transferred to 1st Anzac Cyclist Battalion on 9th July, 1916 from 4th Australian Division Cyclists Company & was taken on strength of 1st Anzac Cyclist Battalion in France the same day.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P01802.001

Henencourt, France. 1917-05-12.

Two members of the 1st Anzac Cyclists Battalion standing, with their bicycles, in front of their barracks.

827 Private Jack Dair Bambury (left) and 830 Private Herbert (Terry) Davies.

Private Richard Charles Blake was attached for duty & rations to "1 Australian Cps Tps S. Col." from 1st November, 1916. He was returned to his Unit on 23rd November, 1916.

Private Richard Charles Blake was attached to 1st D. H.Q. (Headquarters) on 13th April, 1917 from 1st Anzac Cyclists Battalion for duty with A.P.M. He was detached from Headquarters on 8th August, 1917 & returned to 1st Anzac Cyclists Battalion.

Private Richard Charles Blake was detached for duty to 4th Australian Divisional Signal Company from 11th January, 1918 and was to be borne supernumerary to establishment of Australian Corps Cyclist Battalion.

Private Richard Charles Blake was on Leave to UK from France from 24th October, 1918.

Private Richard Charles Blake was sent sick to Hospital on 25th October, 1918 whilst on UK Leave. He was admitted the same day to 1st Auxiliary Hospital, Harefield, England with Influenza.

Private Richard Charles Blake was reported to be seriously ill with Influenza on 31st October, 1918. He was reported as dangerously ill on 2nd November, 1918.

Private Richard Charles Blake died at 2 pm on 2nd November, 1918 at 1st Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Harefield, Middlesex, England from Influenza & Pneumonia.

A death for Richard C. Blake, aged 26, was registered in the December quarter, 1918 in the district of Uxbridge, Middlesex, England.

A Letter was sent from Headquarters, 3rd Military District to Base Records on 9th November, 1918 in regards to No. 4733 Private R. C. Blake, Cyclist Battalion stating "*will you kindly withhold publication of casualty from the Press as the next-of-kin is at present seriously ill.*" Base Records replied on 11th November, 1918 stating that Private R. C. Blake's "*name has been withheld from Press copies of Casualty List No. 449, and will appear in official copies only.*"

Private Richard Charles Blake was buried on 11th November, 1918 in St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield, Middlesex, England – Plot number 80. From the burial report of Private Blake – Military Funeral. Wreath supplied by Mr C. Billyard-Leake of Harefield. Headquarters firing party & Bugler in attendance. Warrant Officer Hudson (No. 3 A.A.M.C.) in charge of Funeral. Small number of Hospital Staff & patients attended the Funeral.

[Note: The Commonwealth War Graves Commission now records the burial place for Private Richard Charles Blake as Aust. 78.]

Richard Charles Blake, 4733, 1st Anzac Cyclist Battalion requested in his Will dated 1st August, 1917 that he bequeathed his personal estate to his sisters Miss Kathleen Louise Blake, Mental Hospital, Kew, Victoria & Miss Dorothy Blake, c/o Mrs Danson, 31 Jervis St, E. St. Kilda, Victoria

The following hand written note, dated 19th September, 1922, was located in the Service Record file for Private Richard Charles Blake – regarding 4733 R. C. Blake, 7th Battalion & 6958 S. Blake, 7th Battalion. "*NOK called at counter & left re address as follows – Mrs Robson Alfred St, East Kew. Miss K. L. Blake as NOK now married name as above*"

Base Records wrote to Miss K. Blake, Mental Hospital, Kew, Victoria on 9th November, 1921 stating that she was registered on the records of the late No. 4733 Private R. C. Blake & were enquiring if there were any nearer blood relatives than herself due to the "Deceased Soldiers Estates Act 1918" which stated that the War Medals & Mementoes of a deceased soldier were to be handed in the following order of relationship – Widow, eldest surviving son, eldest surviving daughter, father, mother, eldest surviving brother, eldest surviving sister etc. Base Records asked specifically if Private Blake had any brother or sisters older than Miss Blake.

Miss Kathleen Blake, 10 Mountain Grove, East Kew, Victoria, signed a Statutory Declaration on 25th November, 1921 stating that she was the eldest sister & next-of-kin of the late Private R. C. Blake & Private S. Blake. "*Our father, Richard Blake, died about 20 years ago, and our mother, Annie Blake, died about 14 years ago. There are no*

other sons in the family with the exception of the deceased soldiers above mentioned. I should be glad that Medals etc may be handed over to me.”

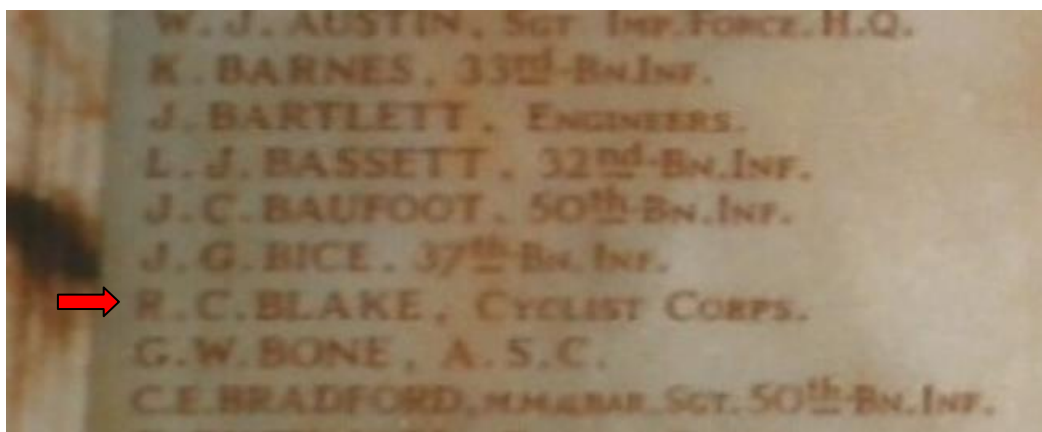
Private Richard Charles Blake was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Blake's sister - Miss K. Blake (later Mrs K. Robson), as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent December, 1921 & Plaque sent October, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Richard Charles Blake – service number 4733, aged 26, of Australian Cyclist Corps. He was the son of Richard Charles and Annie Blake.

R. C. Blake is remembered in the Australian Soldiers' Memorial in St. Mary the Virgin Church, Church Hill, Harefield, Middlesex, England.



Australian Soldiers' Memorial, Harefield (Photo from War Memorials Online – B. Wood)



Private R. C. Blake is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 185.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(60 pages of Private Richard Charles Blake's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

Information obtained from the CWGC, Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll) & National Archives



[Connected to Private Richard Charles Blake:](#)

Younger Brother – Sydney Blake – Enlisted on 20th October, 1916 as a 21 year old Farm Hand. Embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT Hororata (A 20) on 23rd November, 1916 with 7th Infantry Battalion, 23rd Reinforcements & a Service number of 6958. Died of wounds in Belgium on 4th October, 1917. Buried in Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Lijssenthoek, Flanders, Belgium.





AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

E02505

**Group portrait of the Divisional Artillery Headquarters Detachment of the
4th Australian Divisional Signal Company, in the rest area at Epagne. (14 June 1918)**

Identified from left to right in the back row: 1436 Driver (Dvr) Harold Goldsmith Townsend from St Kilda, Victoria; 3721 Sapper (Spr) Arthur Henry Lancaster from Collingwood, Victoria; 3366 Spr John Joseph Moss from Lismore, NSW; 3621 Corporal (Cpl) Frederick George Arthur, Croix de Guerre (Belgium) from Northcote, Victoria; 16408 Spr George Francis Richards from Perth, Western Australia; 5246 Spr Arthur John Picken from Brunswick, Victoria; Bombardier (Bdr) Moritz; 7548 Spr Arthur Brailey from Malvern, Victoria; 6928 Spr Edwin Collett from Oakleigh, Victoria; and 3113 Spr James Purcell from Newcastle, NSW.

Third row: **4733 Spr Richard Charles Blake from Kew, Victoria (died of disease in UK on 2 November 1918);** 1505 Spr Bertie Carl Frederick Miller MM from Leura, NSW; 15958 Dvr Frederick Colin Craig from Fremantle, Western Australia; 1140 Dvr Robin Grey from Rosewater, South Australia; 28706 Spr Jack St Kilda Mackenzie Clarke from Claremont, Western Australia; 16757 Spr Charles Frederick Mains Munday from Wickopin, Western Australia; 7479 Spr Wallace Gordon Cook from Newcastle, NSW; 30268 Gunner (Gnr) Eric Norman Hewitt from Kogarah, NSW; 3741 Spr Zeglar Hugh Fergus from Brisbane, Queensland; 15134 Spr Stanley Robinson Reubon Plummer from Orbost, Victoria.

Second row: 2165 Lance Corporal (L Cpl) Philip Jefferies Squire from Ravenswood, Queensland; 11033 Spr Harold Ivor Lynch from Ascot Vale, Victoria; 1559 Bdr Alexander Maxwell Cameron from Blackhall, Queensland; 5778 Spr Hubert James Phillips from Gloucester, NSW; 3865 Gnr William Charles Sorensen from Mungallah, Queensland; 3547 Spr Frederick Thomas Heath from Norwood, South Australia; 29142 Spr Guy Townley Pinhey from Milton, NSW; 1967 Spr Frederick Stanislaw Duffus from Koroit, Victoria; 3361 Spr Clarence Beacroft from Comet, Queensland; 1318 Dvr Charles Oliver Hope from Neutral Bay, NSW; and 5783 L Cpl Henry Harold West from Gloucester, NSW.

Front row (sitting): 3806 Sergeant (Sgt) Henry Richard Kneebone, Croix de Guerre (Belgium) from Brisbane; 4926 Cpl Herbert Allan Henson MSM from Katoomba, NSW; 1700 Cpl Thomas George Wanless from Laverton, Victoria; 991 Sgt Percy Clarence Bottrell MM from Botany, NSW; Lieutenant James McKinley MM from West Guildford, Western Australia; 2695 Spr Oliver Ralph Tester from Clarendon, South Australia (killed in action in France on 13 August 1918); 2627 Cpl Harry Spencer Orkney MM from Perth; and 30/1703 Cpl Athol Roy Clyde MM from Cockle Creek, NSW.

Newspaper Notices

DIED ON SERVICE

BLAKE – Officially reported died of pneumonia on the 2nd November, at First Australian Auxiliary Hospital, England, Private Richard Charles (Dick) Blake, 1st Australian Cycle Batt., eldest son of late Richard and late Annie Blake, dearly loved brother of Kathleen (Sydney, died of wounds in France) and Dorothy, nephew of C. Hoshkins, East Kew, after 2 years and 8 months' active service, aged 26 years.

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 30 November, 1918)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

BLAKE – In loving memory of our two dearly loved brothers, Private Sydney Blake, 7th Battalion, died of wounds received Passchendaele, Belgium, 4th October, 1917; Private Richard Charles Blake, First Anzac Cycle Battalion, died of pneumonia at Harefield, England, 2nd November, 1918.

Two of the best.

They laid their richest gifts – their lives – on the altar of sacrifice.

-Sadly missed by their loving sisters, Kathleen and Dorothy.

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 3 October, 1919) & (*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 4 October, 1919) &

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 4 October, 1919)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

BLAKE – In loving memory of our dear brothers, Private S. Blake (Syd.), died of wounds received at Passchendaele on October 4, 1917; also Private R. C. Blake (Dick), died at Harefield, England November 2, 1918. (Inserted by their sisters, Kathleen and Dorothy)

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 4 October, 1920)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

BLAKE – In loving memory of our dear brothers, Private S. Blake, died October 4, 1917, and Private R. Blake, died November 2, 1918. (Inserted by their sisters Kathleen and Dorothy)

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 4 October, 1921)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones

The Defence Department, in 1920/21, contacted the next of kin of the deceased World War 1 soldiers to see if they wanted to include a personal inscription on the permanent headstone. Space was reserved for 66 letters only (with the space between any two words to be counted as an additional letter) & the rate per letter was around 3 ½ d (subject to fluctuation).

The expense in connection for the erection of permanent headstones over the graves of fallen soldiers was borne by the Australian Government.

(Information obtained from letters sent to next of kin in 1921)

A letter from Base Records, dated 4th July, 1921, to Miss D. Blake, c/o Mrs Danson, 31 Jervis Street, East St. Kilda, Victoria, advised that a letter from the Defence Dept. concerning an inscription on the headstone of her brother - the late No. 4733 Private R. C. Blake had not been answered & non-receipt of a reply within 21 days would have to be accepted as indicating that no further action was to be taken.

Private Richard Charles Blake does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

At Rest

St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield, Middlesex, England

St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield contains 126 Commonwealth War Graves.

During the two world wars, the United Kingdom became an island fortress used for training troops and launching land, sea and air operations around the globe. There are more than 170,000 Commonwealth war graves in the United Kingdom, many being those of servicemen and women killed on active service, or who later succumbed to wounds. Others died in training accidents, or because of sickness or disease. The graves, many of them privately owned and marked by private memorials, will be found in more than 12,000 cemeteries and churchyards.

Harefield (St. Mary) Churchyard contains war graves from both world wars. There are 120 First World War graves, mostly those of Australians who died in No. 1 Australian Auxiliary Hospital at Harefield Park. Uniquely, their graves are marked by scroll shaped headstones, chosen by the staff and patients at the hospital. In the centre of the Australian plot stands a memorial obelisk which was erected by Sir Francis Newdegate, late Governor of Tasmania and of Western Australia, and Mr. C.A.M. Billyard-Leake, of Harefield Park. The churchyard also contains six graves of the Second World War.

(Information & photos from CWGC)







THE ANZAC CEMETERY, HAREFIELD, LAWRENCE, PHOTO

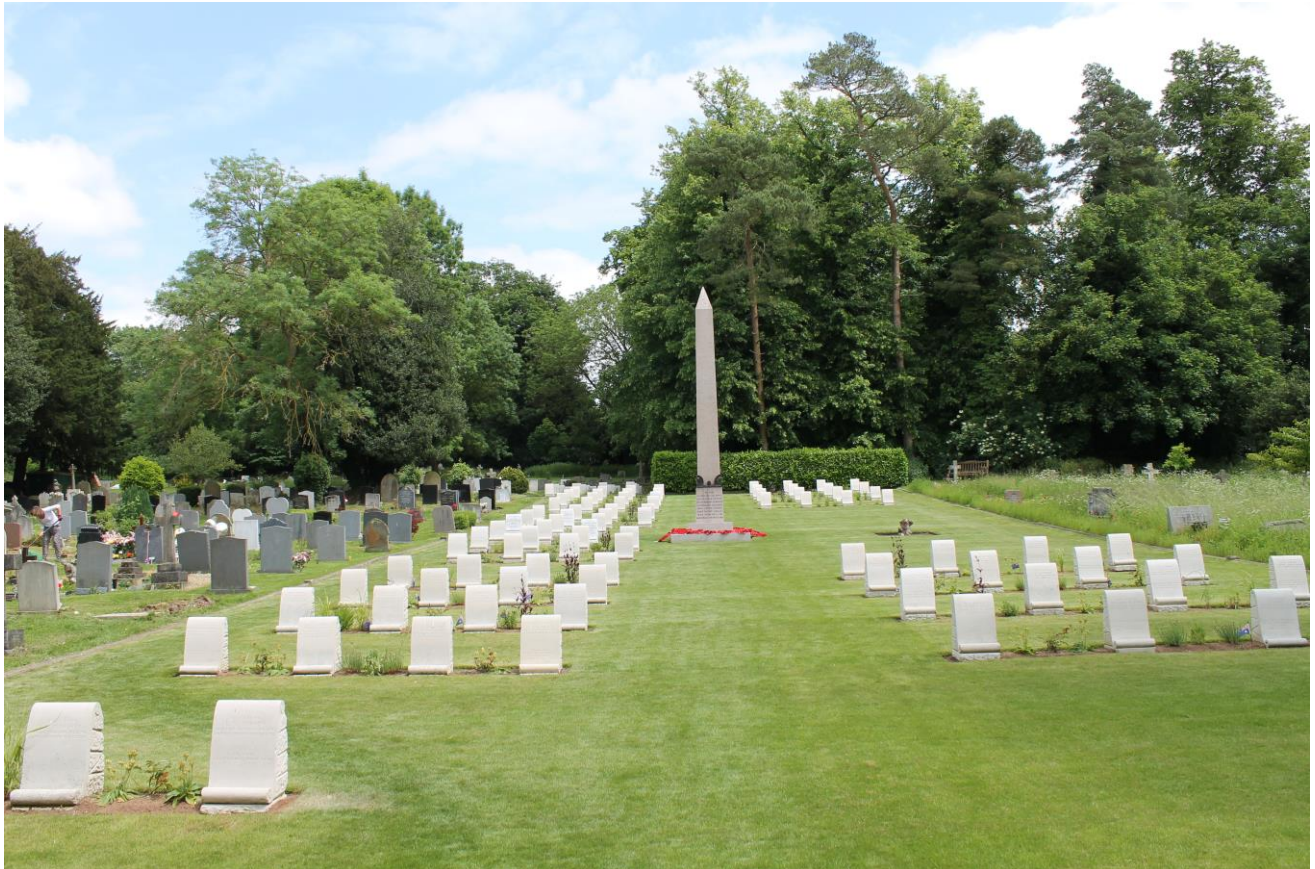
Photo of Private Richard Charles Blake's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield, Middlesex, England.



(Photo courtesy of Peter Bennett)



St Mary the Virgin Church, Harefield (Photo courtesy of Peter Bennett)



St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield (Photo courtesy of Peter Bennett)



St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield (Photos courtesy of Peter Bennett)

