

## SMITHFIELD ROLL OF HONOUR

### BLAKE Joseph William

Joseph William (Bill) Blake was born in 1891, the son of Joseph and Martha Coker. Bill's grandfather was also Joseph, who was born on 27<sup>th</sup> May 1823 at Hawick, Roxburghshire, Scotland. Joseph senior arrived in 1851 aboard "Albatross" and then travelled from Melbourne on the "Rattler". His occupation was wheelwright and machinist. He married on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1849 at Hawick to Margaret Oliver, born on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1826 in Hawick. Their children were Walter 1850, John 1852, Margaret 1855, Isabella 1860, **Joseph 1863**, Isabella 1866 and James Turnbull 1868. They established a business in Smithfield.



Joseph junior was educated at private schools at Smithfield and Angaston. He was then apprenticed to his father as a wheelwright. He became a machinist and a wagon manufacturer. On the death of his father in 1886 Joseph junior carried on in the business. He exhibited wagons, trollies etc. at shows in Adelaide and country South Australia and won many prizes. He was also an undertaker and blacksmith and lived and worked next to the Smithfield Hotel. He was also Auditor for the District Council of Munno Para and Registrar of Birth Marriages and Deaths for Port Gawler.

He was organist at the Presbyterian Church for 20 years. He married Margaret Coker on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1890 in Salisbury. Her parents were William and Hannah nee Martin and Hannah was born in 1867 in Gawler Plains. Joseph junior and Margaret had six children;

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|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Joseph William (Bill) | b. 18 March 1891 at Smithfield    |
| 2. Gertrude Evelyn       | b. 9 February 1893 at Smithfield  |
| 3. Margaret Vera         | b. 16 February 1895 at Smithfield |
| 4. Kenneth Colin         | b. 17 February 1897 at Smithfield |
| 5. Linda May             | b. 24 December 1899 at Smithfield |
| 6. Milton Audley         | b. 5 May 1903 at Smithfield       |

They lived at Smithfield and at Hyde Park. Mother Margaret died in 1952 at Hyde Park and Joseph junior on 27<sup>th</sup> May 1955 and is buried at Centennial Park.

Joseph William (Bill) completed his education at Prince Alfred College and then began his apprenticeship to the wheelwright trade. In 1908 he passed examinations in Fitting & Turning at the School of Mines. However for some reason by the time he enlisted in the army, 29<sup>th</sup> February 1916, he was working in a bank. Five months later his engagement was announced to **Ivy Moss** of Smithfield.

Bill joined the 3<sup>rd</sup> Light Horse and Army Postal Corps. He was then aged 24 and was 5ft.9in. tall. He weighed 132lbs. He had a fresh complexion, hazel eyes and brown hair and was a Presbyterian. He was sent to Egypt and was sick with tonsillitis on 26 August 1916 at Moascar and was taken back on the strength on 31 August 1916. On 27 October 1916 he was detached to the Australian Base Post Office, Moascar. Then he was moved to Aust. Base P.O. in Kantara.

He saw service in Palestine, and was promoted to Corporal on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1918. He returned to Australia on the "Delta" embarking on 28 August 1919. He was discharged two months later and was soon back working at the National bank.

Bill went to work at Penola National Bank as the accountant and on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1921 he was married to **Myrtle Mary Hill**, at the Church of England, Wentworth, N.S.W., the second daughter of Mr. & Mrs. R.W. Hill of Netherby Station, Wentworth. Myrtle was born in 1897 at Wentworth. A son, Alan Melville, was born on 25<sup>th</sup> August 1922 at Penola.

On 8<sup>th</sup> August 1923 the following article appeared in The Register in the Country News section –

*Penola, August 3 – A farewell social was tendered on Wednesday evening to Mr.J.W.Blake in the institute. For more than two years Mr.Blake has been the accountant in the National Bank here. He has now been transferred to Natimuk in Victoria. Mr.S.Rickard (the President of the Institute), who occupied the chair, said the guest, by his even and gentlemanly demeanour, had gained the esteem of everyone in the district. The Rev. J.M.Taylor, on behalf of the Presbyterian (church and lawn tennis club), and Messrs. A.Trezise (institute), Leo R. DeGaris (Returned Soldiers Association and Club), Dr.Smith (cricket club), the Rev. R.Woodger (National Bank clients), and F.Darwent (Coonawarra Cricket Club), joined in expressions of appreciation of Mr.Blake's fine personal qualities and activities in the interest of the district. The chairman then presented the guest with an inscribed wallet and contents from his friends. Dr. Smith, on behalf of the playing members of the cricket club, handed Mr.Blake a bat. The reception of the gifts appropriately acknowledged the remarks of the speakers, and returned thanks for the presentations. Musical items were contributed by Miss Ridgway, Miss Blight and Mr.C. Sleet, and the singing of "Auld lang syne" and dancing under the direction of Mr. R.Black, concluded the proceedings.*

Bill and family moved to Natimuk in Victoria and then to Casterton. On a visit to Smithfield their one year old son **Colin Joseph** was taken to the Hutchinson Hospital, Gawler where he died on the 27<sup>th</sup> February 1925. They had two more children **Robert** and **John**.

Bill became National Bank manager at Cobden Victoria and was still in that position in 1954. Bill died on 19<sup>th</sup> September 1955 at Cobden.

The service was at St. Andrews Church, Cobden, then interment at Centennial Park, Adelaide. Myrtle was still living at Cobden in 1977. The eldest son Alan was living at Birregurra, Corangamite, Victoria in 1968. He then moved to Heathcote, Bendigo in 1972 and was at Strathfidsaye, Bendigo in 1980.

Bill was survived by his three sons, two daughters–in-law Maida and Glenys, and grandchildren Roslyn and Stuart.

Alan joined the Australian Army in 1942, and served as a Corporal with the 30<sup>th</sup> Australian Hvy AA Regiment.

#### **References**

Some information taken from "Cyclopedia of South Australia vol 2 p.353-4 and from family file of BLAKE family held at Playford Library Local History Section.

Drawing/plan of homestead also available.