

## Ronald Champ Blom



Private (Pte) 1542 Ronald Champ Blom enlisted in the 8<sup>th</sup> Light Horse (LH) Regiment in Melbourne on 31 August 1915.

He embarked overseas on 10 November and disembarked in Egypt in early December, where he was taken on strength at Heliopolis on 26 December.

He was hospitalised at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Auxiliary Hospital with chest pains between 17 – 24 February 1916 then transferred to the 3<sup>rd</sup> LH Brigade Reserve Regiment on 6 March.

A month later, on 2 April, Pte Blom was re-mustered as a Gunner (Gnr) and transferred to the 12<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Brigade of the 4<sup>th</sup> Australian Division, after which he spent a week in hospital at Ismailia with diarrhoea between 9 – 15 April.

The brigade departed Egypt on 2 June and disembarked in Marseilles on 10 June, where they travelled north to le Havre to collect their guns and equipment. They then moved to, and operated in, the Dickebusch area for the next five months. During the rail trip, Gnr Blom was awarded seven days Field Punishment No. 2 (extra work duties) for leaving the Acheres railway station platform without permission on 11 June.

Gnr Blom was evacuated sick and treated for colic at the local Field Ambulance between 15 – 30 November, then rejoined the brigade near Longueval.

In March 1917, the brigade moved to Frechencourt as the Germans withdrew to the Hindenburg Line, and they supported the capture of Lagnicourt on 25 March.

Artillery was not required for the first attack on Bullecourt on 11 April, which ended in disaster, but the 12<sup>th</sup> FAB provided fire support for the second attempt on 3 May, after which the British turned their attention to Belgium.

Gnr Blom reverted to Private (Pte) and was taken on strength of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Battalion in the 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Australian Division near St Omer on 7 September 1917.

On 12 September, the 22<sup>nd</sup> Battalion moved north to Belgium to take part in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Australian Division's assault at Menin Road, east of Ypres. The dawn attack on 20 September 1917 was successful and the Australians advanced 1,500 metres and captured their objectives, albeit at a cost of over 5,000 casualties. The 22<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, held mostly in reserve, nevertheless lost 33 killed and 63 wounded.

On the night of 3 October, the 22<sup>nd</sup> Battalion again moved into front line positions near Zonnebeke, Belgium in readiness for their involvement for the next phase of Third Ypres.

The Australians, including the 22<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, rose from their shell holes at 6:00 am on 4 October and ran headlong into a German attack that had also just commenced. The Battle of Broodseinde Ridge continued and was a great success. The Germans were routed, and the newly captured ground was consolidated, at a cost to the battalion of 239 casualties, including 82 killed, one of whom was Pte Blom who was killed in action on 4 October 1917.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

E00836

*The ruined church at Zonnebeke and the once charming lake alongside which it stood, 5 October 1917*

He was buried near where he fell, but this grave was later lost, and he has no known grave.

Private 1542 Ronald Champ Blom is remembered on Panel 23 of the Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Belgium.

Name: Blom, Ronald Champ	
Service Number	1542
Date enlisted	31 August 1915
Place enlisted	Melbourne, Victoria
Rank on enlistment	Private
Initial Unit	8 <sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment
Previous military service	School cadets – 3 years
Date and ship embarked for overseas	10 November 1915 HMAT A11 <i>Ascanius</i>
Stated age/DOB (if known)	18 years
Place of birth	Kew, Victoria
Marital status	Single
Occupation	Farm labourer
Religion	Church of England
Next of kin and address	Blom, Mr Peter, father, 21 Auburn Grove, Auburn, Victoria
Permanent address	Ravenswood, Victoria
Appearance	Fresh complexion, light brown hair, blue eyes, height – 5 feet 7 inches, weight – 10 stone, chest measurement – 32/34 inches
Final Rank	Private
Final Unit	22 <sup>nd</sup> Infantry Battalion
Theatres of war served in	Egypt, France, Belgium
Fate	Killed in action
Date and place died	4 October 1917 Broodseinde Ridge, Belgium
Cemetery details	No known grave. Commemorated on Panel 23 of the Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Belgium
Honours/medals	1914-15 Star, British War Medal, Victory Medal
Notes	Connection to St Leonards is unclear. Remembered on the St Paul's Anglican Church Honor Roll and Ravenswood State School Honor Roll.