

## WWI - William John and Michael Carrucan

By Mary Conheady and Helen Collins

Patrick Carrucan, the fourth child of Patrick and Mary Carrucan, was born circa 1864. On 5<sup>th</sup> April 1885, he married Ellen Carroll at Hawthorn. They had 13 children: John, Christopher, Mary, Patrick, Charles, Frances, William John, Myles, Ann-Marie, Leo, Michael, Joseph and Ellen (Nell) between 1885 and 1907.

Of these 13 children, 3 were to serve in the Australian armed forces in wartime – William John (Bill) and Michael in WWI and Myles in WWII.

**William John (Bill) Carrucan**, the fifth child of Patrick and Ellen Carrucan and a grandson of Patrick Carrucan, was born at Kew in 1894. At some stage after leaving home, he found work as a farm labourer at Woodlands Station, Holbrook, NSW.

He joined the Australian Imperial Force on 20<sup>th</sup> February, 1916 at Cootamundra, NSW. He gave his age as 22 years and two months. The records state that he was *5ft. 8ins tall, had blue eyes, fair hair and complexion and weighed 168 lbs.*

The documents also record that William's mother Ellen lived at 21 Johnson Street Collingwood and his father Pat, a Warder at the Kew Asylum, lived at 189 Vere Street, Abbotsford.

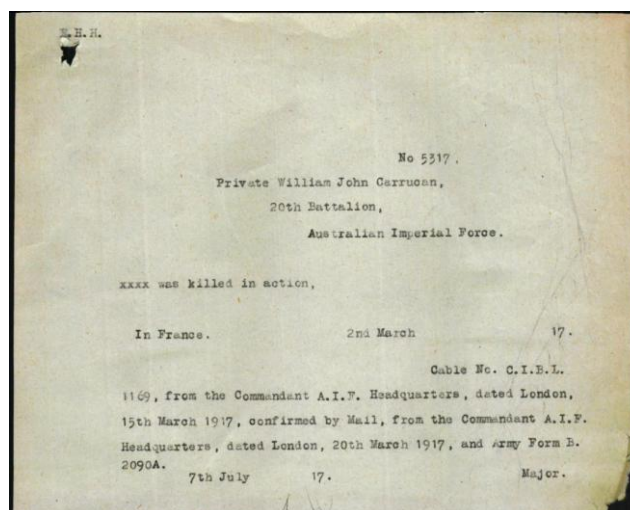
William trained with C Coy (C Company) from 20<sup>th</sup> February 1916 to 19<sup>th</sup> April 1916 as a Private at the Cootamundra Camp in NSW. He was then transferred to A Coy (A Company) of the 20<sup>th</sup> Battalion. As a member of A Coy of the 20<sup>th</sup> Battalion 14<sup>th</sup> Regiment no 5317, William sailed from Sydney on the "Wiltshire" on 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 1916 and arrived in Plymouth, Britain, disembarking on 13<sup>th</sup> October, 1916.

William was hospitalized from 18<sup>th</sup> November, 1916 to 6<sup>th</sup> December, 1916 for 'innoculation' at Folkestone. He was examined on 12<sup>th</sup> December, 1916 and declared medically fit.

He was in the 5<sup>th</sup> Training Battalion on 13<sup>th</sup> December, 1916. On 14<sup>th</sup> December, 1916, he was with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Aust. Div.Base and marched in from England. On 17<sup>th</sup> December, 1916, he was with the C.O. 20<sup>th</sup> and sailed to France on the "Princess Henrietta."

On 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 1917 he had to forfeit 3 day's pay for appearing on Parade unshaven.

Sadly he was killed in action on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 1917. He was buried in an isolated grave ½ mile east of Le Sars and 3 ½ miles S.W. of Bapaume, France. Later his body was exhumed and re-interred at Warlencourt British Cemetery, at Plot 8 Row C Grave 49. This is 2 ½ miles S.W. of Bapaume, France.



Notice of William Carrucan's death, (extract of WWI records, National Archives).

William was awarded the “Star Medal,” the “British War Medal” and the “Victory Medal” posthumously. Ellen, his mother, was granted a pension of £1 per fortnight from 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 1917.

William’s effects were returned to his father in November 1917 and were listed in the records as, “Devotional book, Photos, Knife, Whistle, 2 Rosaries, Letter.”

Mary Dempsey was only an infant at the time, but recalled that the family used to say that her father, Jack, was seen crying as he walked home from work along the railway line that ran behind their house the day he heard of William’s death.

**Michael Joseph Carrucan** was Patrick and Ellen’s tenth child, born in 1901. He was a boot maker by trade.

He was still single when he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force on 24<sup>th</sup> January 1918. He was 18 years old, 5ft 4in tall, had blue eyes, fair hair and complexion and weighed 130 lbs. He was living at 21 Johnson St, Collingwood, possibly with his mother.

He went to the Recruit Battalion at Broadmeadows on 1<sup>st</sup> February, 1918 and was posted overseas with the 10/58 Battalion as ‘Private 3603’, embarking on the Ormonde at Melbourne on 6<sup>th</sup> March 1918 and disembarking at the Australian Camp at Suez on 4<sup>th</sup> April.

He saw action when they proceeded to France via Kalkestone and Haire and marched out to the Unit on the 12<sup>th</sup> August 1918. He fought in France until WWI ended. He embarked on the Argyllshire on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1919 and returned to Australia, arriving on 22<sup>nd</sup> September. He was discharged on 15<sup>th</sup> October after debriefing.

In June 1933 Michael was awarded the British War Medal 1914/19 and the Victory Medal. He was living at 14 Emerald St. Collingwood at the time.

He married Agnes Elliott soon after his return from the war and they had three children, Michael Joseph, and Joseph William, both of whom died as babies, and John who died of tuberculosis in 1966 at the age of 38.

Michael also died of tuberculosis (possibly contracted from sleeping in wet clothes in the war) at Collingwood at the age of 34 in 1935. He held the crucifix when he was dying and said, “*You died at 33, give me another day or two to do things better*”. The family story says that his mother asked what he wanted and his reply was ‘apple pie and custard’.