

**Hollybrook Memorial,  
Southampton, Hampshire, England  
War Graves**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**2090 PRIVATE**

**J. R. CRONIN**

**2ND AUSTRALIAN PIONEERS**

**8TH JULY, 1916**

## John Richard CRONIN

John Richard Cronin was born at Nar Nar Goon, Victoria on 8th March, 1886 to parents Edward & Jane Isabella Cronin (nee Fortune).

The 1912, 1913, 1914 & 1915 Australian Electoral Rolls for the division of Gippsland, subdivision of Moe, Victoria, recorded John Richard Cronin, Farmer, from Fumina.

John Richard Cronin was a 30 year old, single, Farmer from Willow Grove, via Moe, Victoria when he enlisted on 1st April, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 2090 & his religion was Church of Christ. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Jane Isabella Cronin, Fumina, Gippsland, Victoria. John Cronin stated on his Attestation Papers that he had previously been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service due to a stiff Arm. The Medical Officer wrote the following: "*I previously rejected this man for a bent left arm at the elbow but late have accepted him because all thought the arm is \_\_\_ =, he has perfect use of it.*"

Private John Richard Cronin was posted to 3rd Reinforcements of 2nd Pioneer Battalion on 12th April, 1916. He was listed as A.W.L. (Absent without Leave) on 11th May, 1916 at Campbellfield.

Private John Richard Cronin embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Wandilla* (A62) on 6th June, 1916 with the 2nd Pioneer Battalion, 3rd Reinforcements.

### 2nd Pioneer Battalion

The 2nd Pioneers were established on 10 March 1916, at Tel-el-Kebir in Egypt, and were subsequently assigned to the 2nd Division. Trained as infantrymen, they were also tasked with some engineer functions, with a large number of personnel possessing trade qualifications from civilian life. As such, they were designated as pioneer units. In early 1916, the Australian Army was reorganised ahead of its transfer to the Western Front in Europe. A total of five pioneer battalions were raised by the AIF at this time, with one being assigned to each of the five infantry divisions that the Australians deployed to the battlefield in France and Belgium. Tasked with digging trenches, labouring, constructing strong points and light railways, and undertaking battlefield clearance, the troops assigned to the pioneers required construction and engineering experience in addition to basic soldiering skills.

*(Pioneer Battalion information from Wikipedia)*

Private John Richard Cronin was admitted to Ship's Hospital on 23rd June, 1916 with Measles. The Hospital Admissions form recorded "*Bronco pneumonia developed on 2nd July.*"

Private John Richard Cronin died at 12.15 pm on 8th July, 1916 at Sea on board HMAT *Wandilla* (A62) from "*Pneumonia consequent on an attack of Measles.*"

Private John Richard Cronin was buried at Sea from HMAT *Wandilla* (A62) at 3 pm on 8th July, 1916. Latitude 16.48S Longitude 6.32 E. He is commemorated on the Hollybrook Memorial, Southampton, Hampshire, England as he has no grave. His death is acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

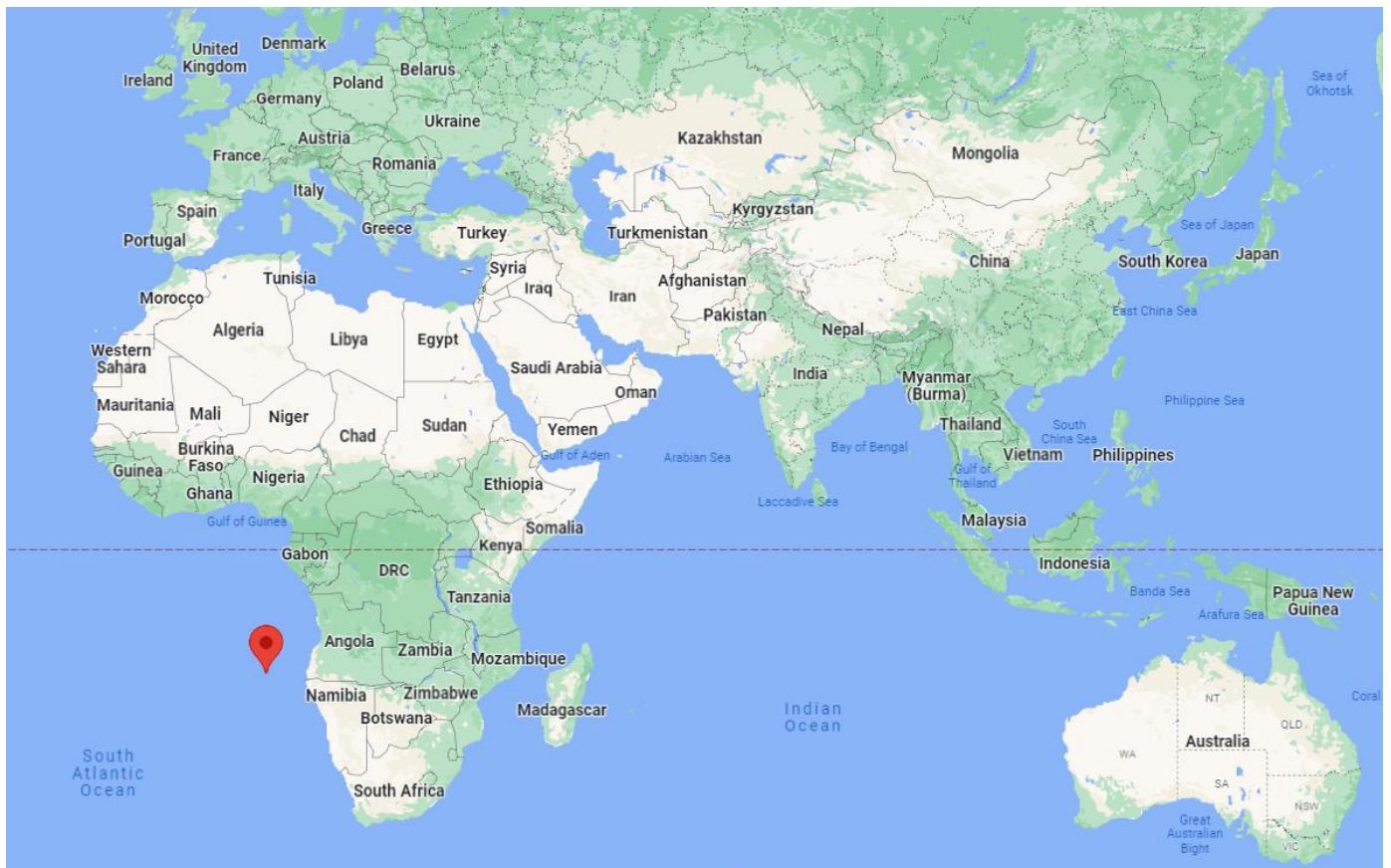
The Senior Medical Officer, H.M.A.T. 62 wrote to O.C. Troops, H.M.A.T. A62 on 9th July, 1916, at Sea: "*I have to report that No. 2090, Pte CRONIN John Richard, 3rd Reinforcements 2nd Pioneer Battalion, A.I.F., died at 12.15 pm yesterday. The cause of death was Broncho Pneumonia, supervening upon Measles. The duration of his illness was 15 days.*"

Lt Colonel Robert Law, O.C. Troops, H.M.A.T A62 "Wandilla" wrote the following in confirmation of his wireless message to the Secretary, Department of Defence, Melbourne, Australia advising of the death of No. 2090 Private John Richard Cronin. The letter continues with "*He was buried at Sea in Lat. 16.48 S Long. 6.32 E., at 3 pm. The Burial Ceremony took place at this time with Troops standing at Attention. Captain Chaplain J. F. G. Huthnance read the service, after which a volley was fired, and "Last Post" sounded...*"



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

PB1148



Using co-ordinates to show place of sea burial of Private J. R. Cronin

Private John Richard Cronin was entitled to British War Medal only as he had not entered a Theatre of War. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Cronin's father – Mr E. Cronin, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll & Plaque sent August, 1922).

The Public Trust Office, Sydney, wrote to Base Records on 12th December, 1945 regarding the estate of Laurence Angelo Cronin, deceased: *"The Public Trustee is administering the estate of the abovenamed deceased and in connection with the proofs of Kinship therein a certificate is required as to the death of John Richard Cronin. It is understood that the deceased, who was a member of the 1st A.I.F. died at sea on 8th July, 1916, and it would be appreciated if you would furnish a Certificate of his Death. You might also advise as to the person shown as the next-of-kin of the deceased."*

The Public Trust Office, Sydney, wrote to Base Records again on 23rd January, 1917 regarding the estate of Laurence Angelo Cronin, deceased; re No. 2090 John Richard Cronin: *"Reference is made to your previous letter dated 17th December, 1945 forwarding a certificate as to the death of the abovenamed deceased member and information as to his next of kin on enlistment. A distribution in the above estate is dependent on whether John Richard Cronin died unmarried and it would be appreciated of you would advise whether your records disclose whether the deceased was married as at date of death."*

Base Records replied to The Public Trustee, Sydney on 30th January, 1947: *"... I have to advise that on enlistment in the A.I.F. 1914-18 the abovenamed deceased member stated he was a single man, and no record is held of a subsequent marriage."*

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private John Richard Cronin – service number 2090, of 2nd Australian Pioneers. No family details are listed.

Private J. R. Cronin is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 172.



*Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia*

J. R. Cronin is remembered on the Willow Grove War Memorial, located in Community Centre, Moe-Willowgrove Road, Willow Grove, Victoria.



**Willow Grove War Memorial** (Photos from Monument Australia – Sandra Brown)



John Richard Cronin is remembered on the Noojee War Memorial, located on Bennett Street & Mount Baw Baw Tourist Road, Noojee, Victoria.



**Noojee War Memorial** (Photos from Monument Australia)



John R. Cronin is remembered on the Neerim War Memorial, located outside Cemetery, 2626 Main Neerim Road, Neerim, Victoria.



**Neerim War Memorial** (Photos from Monument Australia)



(49 pages of Private John Richard Cronin'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



Memorial Card for Private John Richard Cronin





Private John Richard Cronin



## **Newspaper Notices**

### **MEN WHO HAVE ANSWERED THE CALL**

Since the present recruiting campaign opened, the following have enlisted:-

....

Willowgrove - .... J. R. Cronin

(*The Narracan Shire Advocate*, Victoria – 17 May, 1916)

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### **AUSTRALIAN CASUALTIES**

#### **188TH LIST**

##### **DIED OF ILLNESS**

Pte J. R. Cronin, Fumina

(*The Evening Echo*, Ballarat, Victoria – 29 July, 1916)

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#### **Gippslanders Wounded**

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Pte J. R. Cronin, Fumina, has died of illness.....

(*Bairnsdale Advertiser and Tambo and Omeo Chronicle*, Victoria – 2 August, 1916)

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#### **Deaths**

CRONIN – Pte John R. Cronin (died of pneumonia 8th July, 1916), eldest beloved son of Mr and Mrs E. Cronin, Fumina (late of Pakenham), brother of Laurence (wounded and in hospital, London), Mrs G. Williams, N. E. Cronin, Mrs S. Williams, and Elsie, aged 30 years and 4 months.

Deeply regretted. At rest.

O, what a moral lesson our gallant heroes taught,  
He knew the danger in his path, enlisted, and would have fought,  
For honour he laid down his life – a noble thing to do;  
He died for King and country, a soldier brave and true.

(*The Narracan Shire Advocate*, Victoria – 9 August, 1916)

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## **DIED ON SERVICE**

CRONIN – On the 8th July, died at sea of pneumonia, John Richard, dearly beloved eldest son of Edward and Jane Isabella Cronin, loved brother of Mrs G. Williams, Nat, Laurence (on active service), Mrs S, Williams, and Elsie, of Fumina, aged 30 years.

Till the day dawns and the shadows pass away.

(*The Australasian*, Melbourne, Victoria – 12 August, 1916)

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## **IN MEMORIAM**

CRONIN – In loving memory of our dear nephew and cousin, John Richard Cronin, who died of pneumonia at sea, on 8th July, 1916.

From memory's pages we'll never blot

Those three little words, "forget me not."

-(Inserted by his loving uncle, aunt and cousins Peel street, Windsor).

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 7 July, 1917)

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## **IN MEMORIAM**

### **On Active Service**

CRONIN – In loving memory of Pte John Richard Cronin, who died at sea 8th July, 1916, dearly loved nephew of Angelo and Mary Ann Cronin, loved cousin of Jack, Daphne, and Nellie.

Though lost to sight,

To memory ever dear.

-(Inserted by his uncle, aunt, and cousins, 105 Peel street, Windsor)

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 8 July, 1918)

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### Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission cares for cemeteries and memorials in 23,000 locations, in 153 countries. In all 1.7 million men and women from the Commonwealth forces from WWI and WWII have been honoured and commemorated in perpetuity.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission, as part of its mandate, is responsible for commemorating all Commonwealth war dead individually and equally. To this end, the war dead are commemorated by name on a headstone, at an identified site of a burial, or on a memorial. War dead are commemorated uniformly and equally, irrespective of military or civil rank, race or creed.

Not all service personnel have a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. In some instances the relative chose to have their own memorial/headstone placed on the deceased's grave. These private headstones are not maintained by the CWGC as they have no jurisdiction to maintain them.

## Hollybrook Memorial, Southampton, Hampshire, England

The Hollybrook Memorial is situated in Southampton (Hollybrook) Cemetery behind the plot of First World War graves near the main entrance.

The Hollybrook Memorial commemorates by name almost 1,900 servicemen and women of the Commonwealth land and air forces\* whose graves are not known, many of whom were lost in transports or other vessels torpedoed or mined in home waters (\*Officers and men of the Commonwealth's navies who have no grave but the sea are commemorated on memorials elsewhere). The memorial also bears the names of those who were lost or buried at sea, or who died at home but whose bodies could not be recovered for burial. Almost one third of the names on the memorial are those of officers and men of the South African Native Labour Corps, who died when the troop transport Mendi sank in the Channel following a collision on 21 February 1917. Other vessels sunk with significant loss of life were: HS Anglia, a hospital ship sunk by mine off Dover on 17 November 1915. SS Citta Di Palermo, an Italian transport carrying Commonwealth troops, sunk by mine off Brindisi on 8 January 1916. In rescuing survivors, two Royal Naval Otranto drifters were themselves mined and blown up. HMTs Donegal and Warilda, ambulance transports torpedoed and sunk between Le Havre and Southampton on 17 April 1917 and 3 August 1918. HS Glenart Castle, a hospital ship torpedoed and sunk off Lundy on 26 February 1918. SS Galway Castle, torpedoed and sunk in the Atlantic on 12 September 1918. RMS Leinster, the Irish mail boat, torpedoed and sunk in the Irish Sea on 10 October 1918. Among those commemorated on the Hollybrook Memorial is Field Marshall Lord Kitchener, Secretary of State for War, who died when the battle cruiser HMS Hampshire was mined and sunk off Scapa Flow on 5 June 1916.

The memorial was designed by T. Newham and unveiled by Sir William Robertson on 10 December 1930.

There are approximately 162 Australian World War 1 Service Personnel commemorated on the Hollybrook Memorial, Southampton, Hampshire, England.

*(Information & photos from CWGC)*





**Cross of Sacrifice**



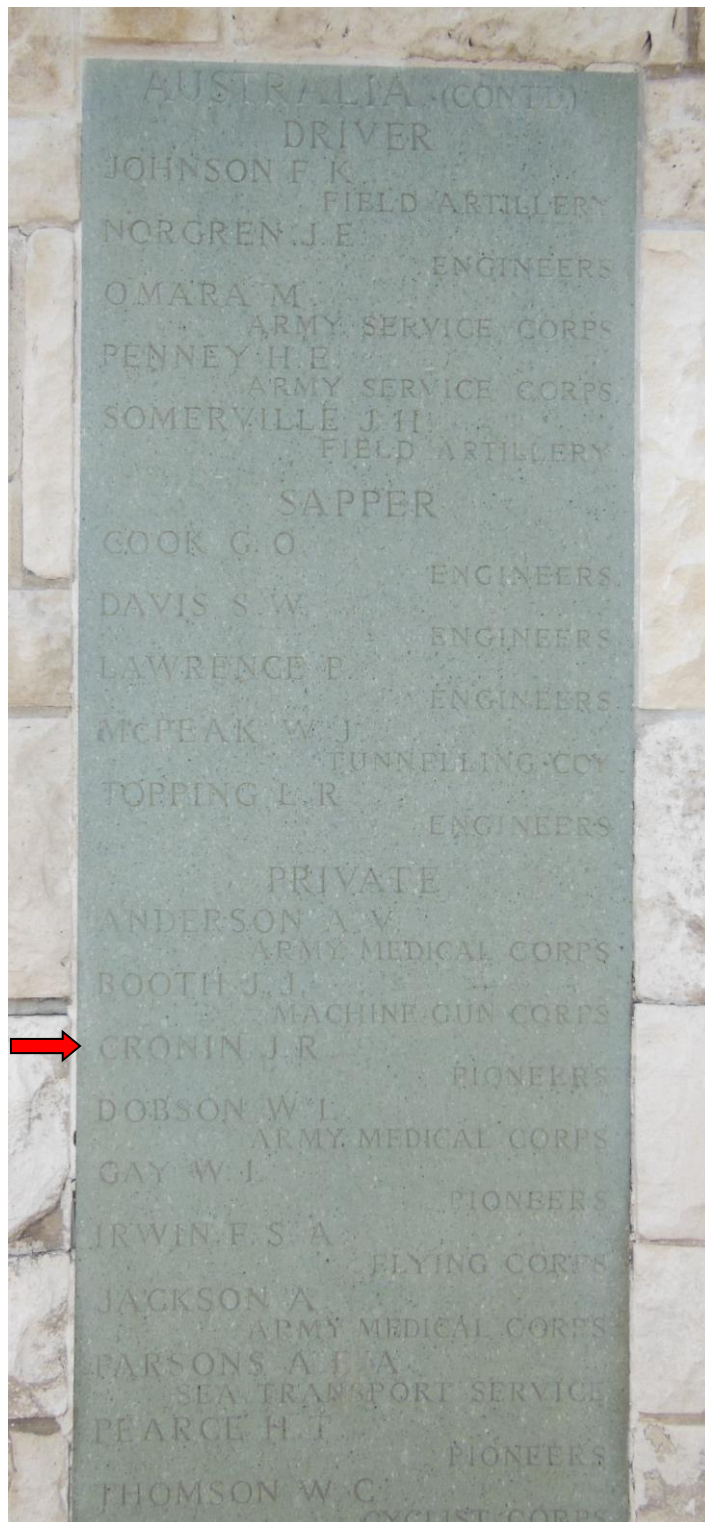
**Name Panels behind Cross of Sacrifice**



**CWGC Graves in Hollybrook Cemetery with Cross of Sacrifice & Hollybrook Memorial**

*(Photo from CWGC)*

Photo of Private J. R. Cronin's name on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Hollybrook Memorial, Southampton, Hampshire, England.



(Photo by julia&keld – Find a Grave)

