

**Netley Military Cemetery,
Hampshire, England
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



3375 PRIVATE

J. S. CROSS

56TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

20TH MARCH, 1918 Age 19

He Died

That Earth Might Know

A Fairer Day

John Skyring (Jack) CROSS

John Zachariah Skyring Cross was born on 7th April, 1898 at Gympie, Queensland to parents William Ernest and Mary Louise Eliza Ann Cross (nee Skyring).

John Zachariah Skyring Cross attended Gympie Central School, Queensland, Neutral Bay Public School, NSW & Sydney High School, NSW. John Skyring Cross attended The University of Sydney, NSW.

John Skyring Cross stated he was a 21 year old (actual age 18), single, Student from Mosman, NSW when he enlisted Victoria Barracks, Sydney, NSW on 12th December, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 3375 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mrs Ernest William Cross, Ourimbah Road, Mosman, NSW. John Skyring Cross stated on his Attestation Papers that he had served for 2 years in Junior Cadets & was Acting Lieutenant in Senior Cadets for 1 year. He was also in Sydney University Scouts.

Private John Skyring Cross was posted to Recruits at Sydney Showground Camp on 18th December, 1916 for recruit training. He was transferred to Liverpool, Sydney, NSW on 21st December, 1916. Pte Cross was posted to "C" Company of 2nd Depot Battalion on 20th January, 1917 then transferred to 9th Reinforcements of 56th Battalion.

Private John Skyring Cross embarked from Sydney, NSW on HMAT *Anchises (A68)* on 24th January, 1917 with the 9th Reinforcements of 56th Battalion. Private John Skyring Cross was to be Acting Corporal with extra duty pay for voyage only from 28th February, 1917. He disembarked at Devonport, England on 27th March, 1917 & reverted to the rank of Private from that date.

Reinforcements were only given basic training in Australia. Training was completed in training units in England. Some of these were located in the Salisbury Plain & surrounding areas in the county of Wiltshire.

Private John Skyring Cross was marched in to 14th Training Battalion, Hurdcott, Wiltshire on 27th March, 1917.

Private John Skyring Cross was written up for an Offence while posted at 14th Training Battalion, Hurdcott, Wiltshire on 26th May, 1917 - A.W.L. (absent without leave) from midnight on 26th May, 1917 at Wilton, Wiltshire until apprehended by Military Police at 9.45 am on 27th May, 1917. He was awarded 14 days F.P. No. 2 (Field Punishment) & forfeited 17 days' pay.

Private John Skyring Cross proceeded overseas to France via Southampton on 23rd July, 1917 from 14th Training Battalion. He was marched in to 5th D.B.D. (Divisional Base Depot) at Havre, France on 24th July, 1917. Pte Cross was marched out to his Unit on 9th August, 1917 & taken on strength with 56th Battalion in France on 11th August, 1917 from Reinforcements.

Private John Skyring Cross was sent to Hospital sick on 16th September, 1917. He was admitted to 10th Stationary Hospital at St. Omer on 16th September, 1917 – cause N.Y.D.M. (not yet determined). Pte Cross was transferred to 4th Stationary Hospital at Arques on 19th September, 1917 with Scabies. He was discharged to his Unit on 24th September, 1917 & rejoined his Unit on 25th September, 1917.

Private John Skyring Cross was sent to Hospital sick on 27th September, 1917. He was admitted to 67th Field Ambulance with I.C.T. leg (inflammation of connective tissues) then transferred to 2nd Canadian Casualty Clearing Station. Pte Cross was transferred to Ambulance Train on 28th September, 1917 & admitted to 2nd Canadian Stationary Hospital at Outreau on the same day with I.C.T. thigh. He was transferred to 25th General Hospital on 19th October, 1917 & reported with boils on 5th November, 1917. Pte Cross was invalided to England on Hospital Ship *Pieter de Conick* on 5th November, 1917.

56th Battalion

The 56th Battalion was raised in Egypt on 14 February 1916 as part of the "doubling" of the AIF. Half of its recruits were Gallipoli veterans from the 4th Battalion, and the other half, fresh reinforcements from Australia. Reflecting the composition of the 4th, the 56th was predominantly composed of men from New South Wales. The battalion became part of the 14th Brigade of the 5th Australian Division.

Later in the year (1917), the AIF's focus of operations switched to the Ypres sector in Belgium. The 56th's major battle here was at Polygon Wood on 26 September.

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private John Skyring Cross was admitted to Lord Derby War Hospital, Warrington, England on 5th November, 1917 with boils. He was transferred to 1st Auxiliary Hospital at Harefield on 5th December, 1917.

Private John Skyring Cross was discharged from Hospital to furlo from 12th December, 1917 to 26th December, 1917 & was then to report to No. 1 Command Depot at Sutton Veny.

Private John Skyring Cross was written up for an Offence while posted at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire - A.W.L. (absent without leave) from 3.30 pm on 26th December, 1917 till 4 pm on 8th January, 1918. He was awarded 28 days F.P. No. 2 (Field Punishment) & forfeited 42 days' pay.

Private John Skyring Cross was medically classified on 11th January, 1918 at No. 1 Command Depot, Sutton Veny as B1A3 (fit for Overseas Training Camp in two to three weeks). Pte Cross was passed as dentally fit on 5th February, 1918.

Private John Skyring Cross was marched out to Overseas Training Depot at Longbridge Deverill, Wiltshire on 6th February, 1918 from No. 1 Command Depot at Sutton Veny.

Private John Skyring Cross was sent sick to Rest Camp Hospital at Southampton on 4th March, 1918 then transferred to the Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley, Hampshire, England on 6th March, 1918 with Cerebro Spinal Meningitis. The Hospital Admissions form records *"Admitted from Rest Camp Southampton as suspicious case. On admission turbid fluid containing intracellular meningococci proved. Treated by Lumbar puncture and Lister serum."*



Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley

Private John Skyring Cross died at 9.45 pm on 20th March, 1918 at Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley, Hampshire, England from Cerebro Spinal Meningitis.

A death for John S. Cross, aged 22, was registered in the March quarter, 1918 in the district of South Stoneham, Hampshire, England.

Private John Skyring Cross was buried at 3 pm on 22nd March, 1918 in Netley Military Cemetery, Hampshire, England – Plot number C.E. 1942 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Pte John Skyring Cross - *Coffin was good polished Elm with brass fittings. The deceased soldier was accorded a Military Funeral. The coffin was draped with the Union Jack Flag. Gun Carriage, Bugler and Pallbearers were supplied by the R.A.M.C. Military Hospital, Netley. The grave will be turfed. An oak cross will be erected by the A.I.F. London. Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral.*

Private John Skyring Cross was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Cross's father – Mr E. W. Cross, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent November, 1922 & Plaque sent October, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private John Skyring Cross – service number 3375, aged 19, of 56th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of William Ernest and Mary Louise Eliza Ann Skyring Cross, of 92 Ourimbah Rd., Mosman, Sydney, New South Wales.

Private J. Z. S. Cross is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 162.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

An annual award has been named in honour of John Skyring Cross at Sydney Boys High School – The John Skyring Cross Memorial Cup for Outstanding Sportsmanship is awarded to the boy who has displayed the best sportsmanship throughout the year in connection with GPS activities.



J. S. Cross is remembered on the University of Sydney War Memorial Carillon, located at University of Sydney, University Place, The Quadrangle, Camperdown, Sydney, NSW. John Skyring Cross has the following entry in the University of Sydney Book of Remembrance: *“Exhibitioner, Medicine: Corporal, 56th Battn., A.I.F., France. Enlisting 12th December, 1916, went almost immediately to France and served at Bullecourt and Ypres till wounded at Passchendaele 17th October, 1917. After recovery at Rouen Hospital rejoined battn. and acted as runner till wounded again and evacuated to England. Returning to France in March, 1918, was taken back unconscious to hospital in England. Died, Southampton Hospital, 24th March, 1918, and was buried in Netley Military Cemetery. Early education at Gympie Central, The Valley (Brisbane), Neutral Bay Public and Sydney High Schools. . . . While uniformed in glory with the free He stands saluting in his Captain's tent.—Z.C.”*



University of Sydney War Memorial Carillon (Photos from Register of War Memorials in NSW – Vaughan Williamson)



J. S. Cross is remembered on the Mosman War Memorial, located in Alan Border Oval, Myahgah Road & The Crescent, Mosman, NSW.



Mosman War Memorial (Photos from Monument Australia – Heather Stevens)



(50 pages of Private John Skyring Cross' 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 John Skyring Cross](#)

Older brother - Sergeant Victor Cross, 3790, 49th Battalion. Enlisted 28th August, 1915. Embarked 31st January, 1916. Wounded in action in France on 5th April, 1917 – gunshot wounds to neck, face & leg. Returned to Australia 27th August, 1917. Awarded Military Medal for bravery in the Field. Entitled to British War Medal & Victory Medal.



Private John Skyring Cross



In Memoriam – John Cross

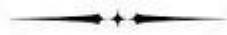
A sister's tribute – Zora Cross

Private John Cross was the youngest son of Mr E. W. Cross, of Mosman. He was born in Gympie, Queensland, on April 7th, 1898 and from his childhood he cherished the idea of being a soldier. His first school prize was a book which depicted glowingly the brighter side of military life.

His parents moving to Sydney, he was educated at Neutral Bay School where he won several prizes and a scholarship to the Sydney High School. Here he distinguished himself both in sport and scholastic attainments, winning a college Blue in Rugby in 1915. Popular amongst scholars and masters, he was elected prefect both in 1915 and 1916, winning friends and admiration all round him by his force of character. In 1916 he passed his Leaving Certificate examination, obtaining an exhibition to the University in the Faculty of Medicine. At the end of his school exams he enlisted. Form the very outbreak of the War he had itched to go, but love for his mother had kept him obedient to her wish. His brother, Sgt Victor Cross of 49th Battalion, who distinguished himself at Bullecourt by winning the Military Medal, had already enlisted, and his advice to Jack was "You carry on your work until I am knocked out for good." When his brother was wounded, Jack prepared to enlist, doing so as soon as his examinations were over and he obtained consent. He proceeded, after a couple of weeks' training to England with the 56th Battalion. Asked if he would not take a course of army-school training in England, he replied that he had come over to fight, and was sent almost immediately to France. There he served in the lines and was wounded on October 17th 1917. Recovering in the Rouen Hospital, he returned to duty, acting for some time as a "runner", when he was again wounded and returned to England. He seems never to have quite recovered from his wounds, as, after going back to France in March, he was returned unconscious to Southampton. Shortly after regaining consciousness, he died there of cerebro-meningitis, on March 24th, 1918.

If his fine influence were felt in the outside world of friends and acquaintances, it was even more so felt in his home. But England was to him the immortal mother, and to be gathered to her breast is the dream of his eternal soul realised. He showed marked ability to write, possessing both imagination and a felicity of phrasing. He won several essay prizes and had a short story called "An Heroic Boy" accepted by "The Lone Hand" at fifteen. The nobility of his life merited that which he has received – the dignity of a spendid death."

[Note – Pte Cross died on 20th March, 1918 & according to his Service Record file was never wounded in action]



Newspaper Notices

Latest Casualties

388th LIST

NEW SOUTH WALES

Died of illness

J. S. Cross, Mosman

(*The Land*, Sydney, NSW – 12 April, 1918)

IN MEMORIAM

CROSS – In loving memory of Private John Skyring Cross, 56th Batt., A.I.F., who died at Netley, England, on March 20th, 1918.

Inserted by his mother, brothers and sisters.

(*The Brisbane Courier*, Queensland – 20 March, 1920)

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)

Private J. S. Cross does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

He Died That Earth Might Know A Fairer Day

Netley Military Cemetery, Hampshire, England

Netley Military Cemetery is a permanent military cemetery, the property of the Ministry of Defence. The cemetery was at the back of the Royal Victoria Military Hospital and was used during both wars for burials from the hospital. The cemetery contains 637 First World War burials but only 35 from the Second World War. In addition to the Commonwealth graves, there are a number of war graves of other nationalities including 69 German graves dating from the First World War.

(Information & photos from CWGC)





NETLEY MILITARY CEMETERY

This cemetery was used for many years for military burials from the Royal Victoria Hospital. The graves include those of 721 casualties from the First World War and 36 of the Second World War, comprising servicemen and women from the following countries:

United Kingdom	558	Undivided India	5
Australia	49	Belgium	15
Canada	42	Poland	1
New Zealand	12	Austria	1
South Africa	6	Germany	68

The Cross of Sacrifice alongside this plot was erected after the First World War.

THE COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES COMMISSION
IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MAINTENANCE
OF THESE GRAVES

Netley Military Cemetery, Hampshire (Photo above - Andrea Charlesworth; below - darealjolo)



Photo of Private J. S. Cross's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Netley Military Cemetery, Hampshire, England



(Photo by Andrea Charlesworth)



Netley Military Cemetery, Hampshire



Original Cross markers – Netley Military Cemetery