

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



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**785 PRIVATE**

**W. L. GAY**

**3RD AUSTRALIAN PIONEERS**

**9TH JULY, 1916**

## William Leslie GAY

William Leslie Morrison Gay was born at Lismore, New South Wales in 1898 to parents Joseph Dill Gay & Eliza Ann Gay (nee Priest). (William Gay stated on his Attestation Papers that he was born at Bangalow, NSW). His birth was registered in the district of Murwillumbah, NSW.

William Leslie Morrison Gay attended school at Maleny, Queensland.

William Leslie Morrison Gay was an 18 ½ year old, single, Farmer from Cedar Park, Maleny, via Landsborough, Queensland when he enlisted at Lismore, NSW on 3rd January, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 785 & his religion was Presbyterian. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr Joseph Dill Gay, Cedar Park, Maleny, via Landsborough, Queensland.

Private William Leslie Morrison Gay was posted to 11th Depot Battalion on 12th January, 1916 for recruit training. He was transferred to 3rd Pioneers on 13th February, 1916.

Private William Leslie Morrison Gay was admitted to Base Hospital on 4th February, 1916 with Pneumonia. He was discharged to duty on 28th February, 1916.

Private William Leslie Morrison Gay was admitted to Clearing Hospital, Broadmeadows, Victoria on 8th May, 1916 with Influenza. He was discharged on 12th May, 1916.

Private William Leslie Morrison Gay embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Wandilla* (A62) on 6th June, 1916 with the 3rd Pioneer Battalion "C" Company.

### 3rd Pioneer Battalion

The 3rd Pioneer Battalion was an Australian infantry and light engineer unit raised for service during the First World War as part of the all volunteer Australian Imperial Force (AIF). Formed in Victoria in March 1916, the battalion subsequently undertook further training in the United Kingdom before arriving in France in late 1916. It later served on the Western Front in France and Belgium until the end of the war.

The 3rd Pioneers were raised in Victoria, in March 1916, from volunteers drawn from Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, and Western Australia and was subsequently assigned to the 3rd Division.

Trained as infantrymen, the pioneers were tasked with light combat engineer functions in the field, with a large number of personnel possessing trades from civilian life. The concept had existed within the British Indian Army before the war, but was adopted by the Australian Army in early 1916 to meet a need for troops with construction and engineering skills to assist with digging trenches, labouring, constructing strong points and undertaking battlefield clearance. As such, they were designated as pioneer units. At the same time, they could be pressed into the line to fight alongside regular infantry where required.

A total of five pioneer battalions were raised by the AIF during the war, with one being assigned to each of the five infantry divisions that the Australians deployed to the battlefield in France and Belgium. The battalions consisted of four companies, under a headquarters company. To identify the 3rd Pioneer Battalion's personnel, they were issued with a purple and white Unit Colour Patch. The colours were in common with other Australian pioneer battalions, while the horizontal oval shape denoted that the unit was part of the 3rd Division.

The battalion's first commanding officer was Lieutenant Colonel Robert Law, and upon establishment it was decided that the unit would be an "all States" unit, meaning that personnel would not just be drawn exclusively from one particular state, but would instead draw recruits from all around Australia. The headquarters and 'A' Company were recruited from Victoria, and was established at Ascot Vale, before moving to Campbellfield in March, while 'B' Company was composed of New South Welshmen, 'C' Company came from Queensland and 'D' Company was a composite sub-unit drawn from South Australia and Western Australia. After the sub-units had formed in their home locations – Liverpool, Bathurst, Brisbane, Blackboy Hill, and Adelaide – the battalion began concentrating at Campbellfield in April 1916.

Detailed training began at Campbellfield shortly after concentration and in May the battalion marched through the streets of Melbourne, before being presented with its unit colour. They were subsequently laid up at St Paul's Cathedral in Melbourne prior to embarkation. They departed Australia on the transport *Wandilla* on 6 June 1916, and

endured a seven-week voyage to the United Kingdom, sailing via Cape Town. After arriving in the United Kingdom, the battalion subsequently concentrated with the rest of the 3rd Division around Larkhill on Salisbury Plain, in Wiltshire. Between July and November 1916, the 3rd Pioneers carried out intensive training to prepare them for their arrival on the Western Front. Finally, on 25 November the battalion entrained at Amesbury bound for Southampton from where they were ferried across the English Channel to Le Havre.

*(Extract of Pioneer Battalion information from Wikipedia)*



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

H18777

**Australian troops embarking on troop transport Wandilla (A62) on their way to duty overseas.**



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

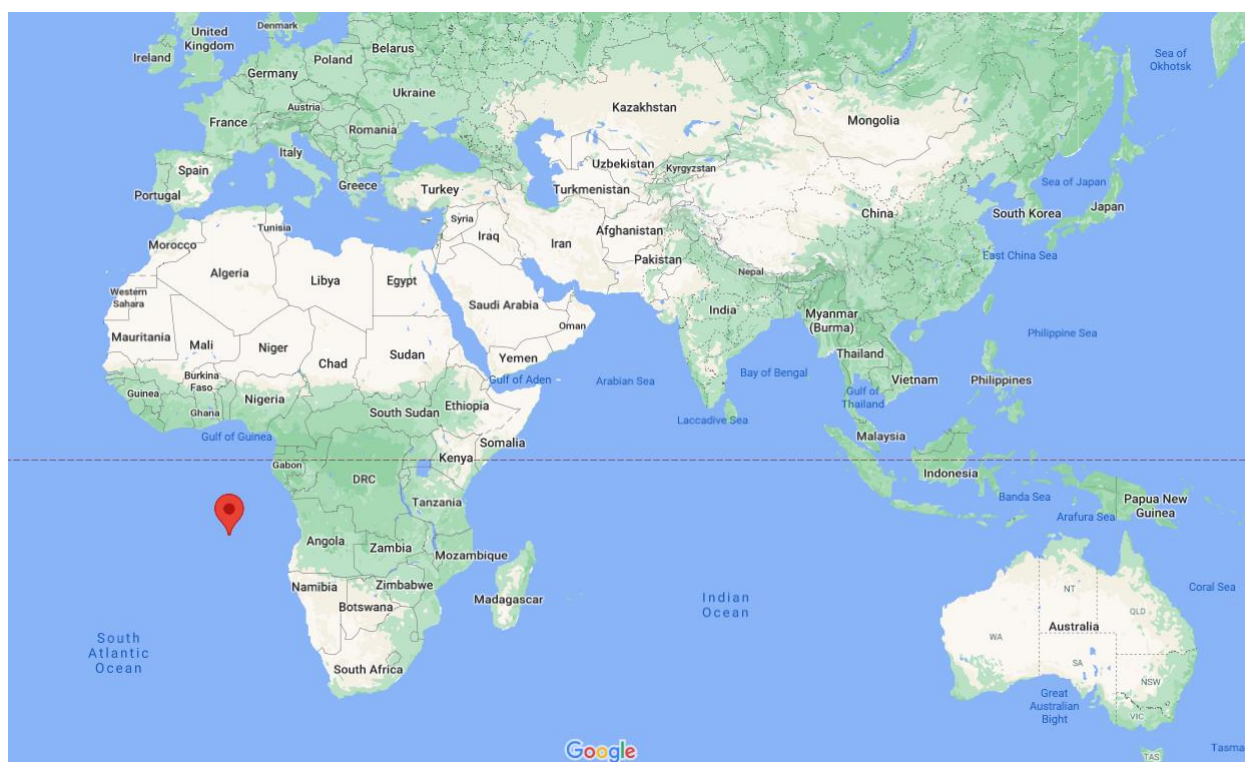
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Private William Leslie Morrison Gay was admitted to Ship's Hospital on 5th July, 1916 suffering from Cerebro Spinal Meningitis. The Hospital Admissions form recorded: *"Developed suddenly without any catarrhal condition. Great restlessness, pain in head & back, delirium & retraction of head. Lumbar puncture disclosed fluid under pressure & \_\_\_\_ . ... Lumbar puncture each day from 6th/7/16. On 8/7/16 nearly 120 ccs fluid escaped. Serum given daily in 30 cc doses into spine & another 30 ccs subcutaneously. Semiconsciousness, present at start, developed into unconsciousness , later into \_\_\_\_ , with temp over 105 F & unaccountable pulse & death at 6.20 pm 9/7/16."*

The S.M.O. (Senior Medical Officer) of H.M.A.T. A 62 wrote to the O.C. (Officer Commanding) H.M.A.T. A 62 on 8th July, 1916 *"to report that Private GAY Wm. Leslie Morrison, No. 785, "C" Company, 3rd Aust. Pioneer Battln., is at present in Isolation Hospital with C.S.M. and is very dangerously ill."*

Private William Leslie Morrison Gay died at 6.20 pm on 9th July, 1916 at Sea on board HMAT *Wandilla (A62)* from Cerebral Spinal Meningitis.

Private William Leslie Gay was buried at Sea from HMAT *Wandilla (A62)* on 9th July, 1916 – Latitude 11.20 S; Longitude 2.59. 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 S.M.O. (Senior Medical Officer), of H.M.A.T. A 62 wrote to the O.C. (Officer Commanding) H.M.A.T. A 62 on 11th July, 1916 *"to report that Private GAY Wm. Leslie Morrison, No. 785, "C" Company, 3rd Aust. Pioneer Battln., died at 6.20 pm on 9th instant. The cause of death was Cerebro Spinal Meningitis. The duration of his illness was 5 days."*

A. Gay, of Ekibin Road, Annerley, Brisbane, mother of the late Private William Leslie Morrison Gay, wrote to Base Records on 28th August returning a receipt for that parcel of the personal effects of her late son & to also advise her change of address. Base Records acknowledged the change of address on 8th September, 1920.

Private William Leslie Morrison Gay 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 Gay's father – Mr J. D. Gay, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent April, 1922 & Plaque sent August, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private William Leslie Gay – service number 785, of 3rd Australian Pioneers. No family details are listed.

Private W. L. Gay is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 173.



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

W. T. Gay is remembered on the Bangalow Presbyterian Church World War 1 Honour Roll, located at corner Byron and Market Streets, Bangalow, NSW.



*(Photo from War Memorials Register NSW – Col Draper – Bangalow RSL Sub Branch)*

W. L. M. Gay is remembered on the Bangalow-Clunes District Honour Roll, located at Bangalow RSL Memorial Hall, 13-15 Station Street, Bangalow, NSW.



### Bangalow-Clunes District Honour Roll

(Photo above – The Daily Telegraph; below -War Memorials Register NSW – Colin Draper)



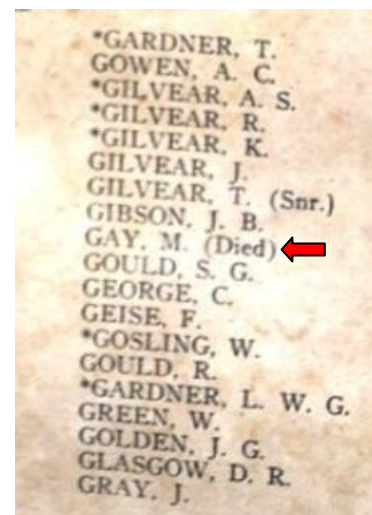
W. T. Gay is remembered on the Bangalow M.U.I.O.O.F. No. 212 Honour Roll, located in Heritage House Museum & Café, Deacon Street, Bangalow, NSW.



Bangalow M.U.I.O.O.F. No. 212 Honour Roll (Photo from Monument Australia – John Huth)

“M. Gay” is remembered on the Landsborough Shire Roll of Honour, located in Landsborough Shire Museum, 4 Maleny Street, Landsborough, Queensland.

(Note: There is no record of a “M. Gay” who died on the Australian War Memorial’s Roll of Honour. Assuming this is “Morrison Gay”. The Australian War Memorial records William Leslie Gay on the Roll of Honour with a notation “also known as Morrison.”)



Landsborough Shire Roll of Honour (Photo from Monument Australia – Heather Stevens)

"M. Gay" is remembered on the Maleny RSL War Memorial, located in the Grounds of RSL Memorial Hall, 1 Bunya Street, Maleny, Queensland.



**Maleny RSL War Memorial** (Photos from Monument Australia – Russell Byers)

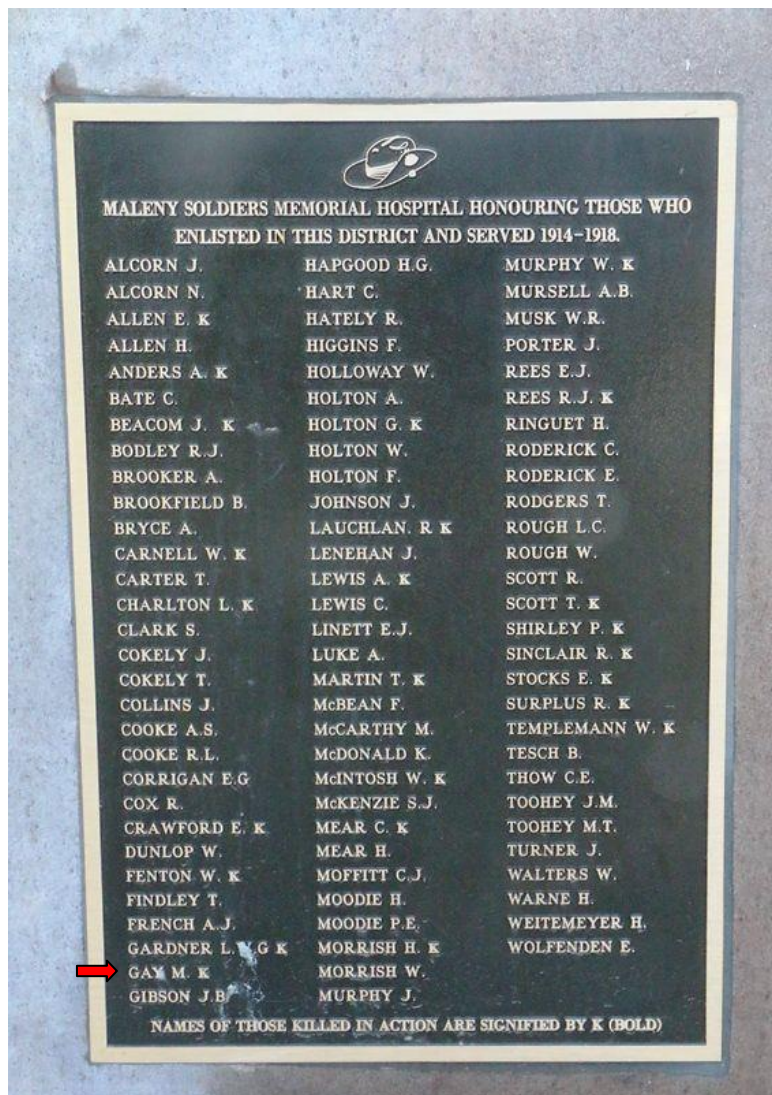




"M. K. Gay" is remembered on the Maleny Soldiers Memorial Hospital Walk of Remembrance, located at Maleny Soldiers Memorial Hospital, 17 Bean Street, Maleny, Queensland.



Maleny Soldiers Memorial Hospital Walk of Remembrance (Photos from Monument Australia)



"M. Gay" is remembered on the Witta and District Roll of Honour, located in Maleny RSL Memorial Hall, 1 Bunya Street, Maleny, Sunshine Coast, Queensland.



**Witta and District Roll of Honour** (Photo from Queensland War Memorials)

(48 pages of Private William Leslie Morrison Gay'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, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives



**Private William Leslie Morrison Gay**



## **Newspaper Notices**

### **ENLISTMENTS AT LISMORE**

#### **THE BOOM CONTINUES**

Last week there was a spurt in enlistments at Lismore and the increased numbers have continued this week, the totals being: Monday, 21 accepted; Tuesday, 13; Wednesday, 21.

The following are the names and addresses of the men.....W. L. M. Gay, Binna Burra;.....

*(Northern Star, Lismore, NSW – 6 January, 1916)*

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### **THE ROLL OF HONOR**

#### **188th CASUALTY LIST**

##### **QUEENSLAND**

Died of Illness: Private W. L. M. Gay, Maleny

*(The Northern Miner, Charters Towers, Queensland – 31 July, 1916)*

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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**

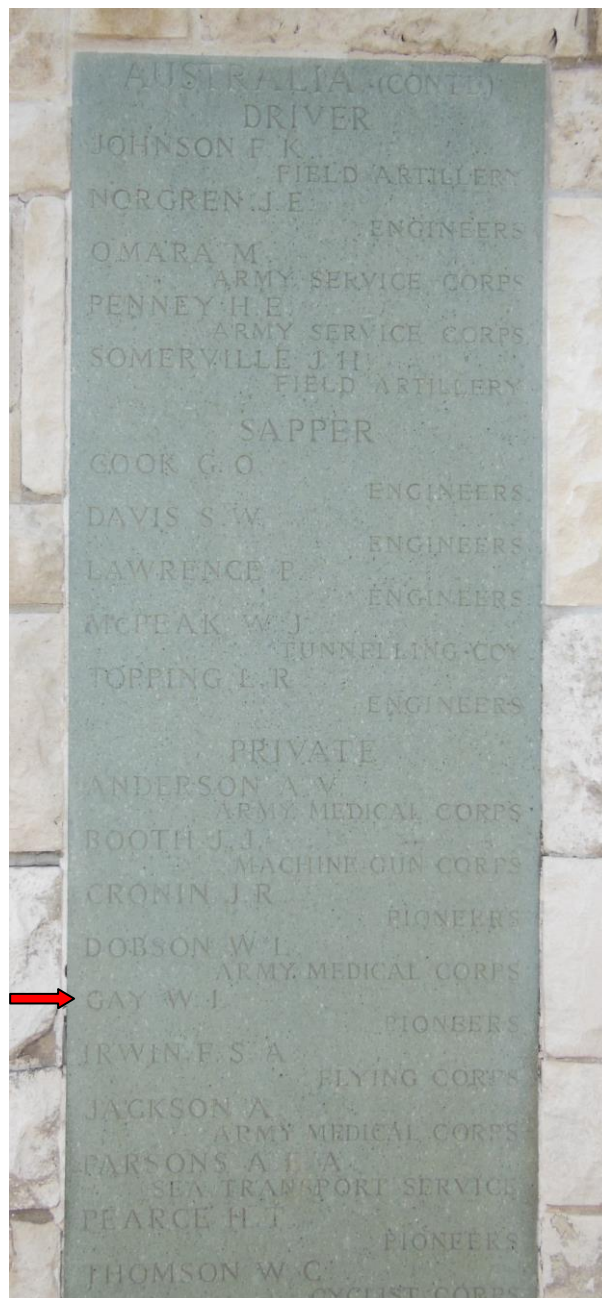


**Name Panels behind Cross of Sacrifice**

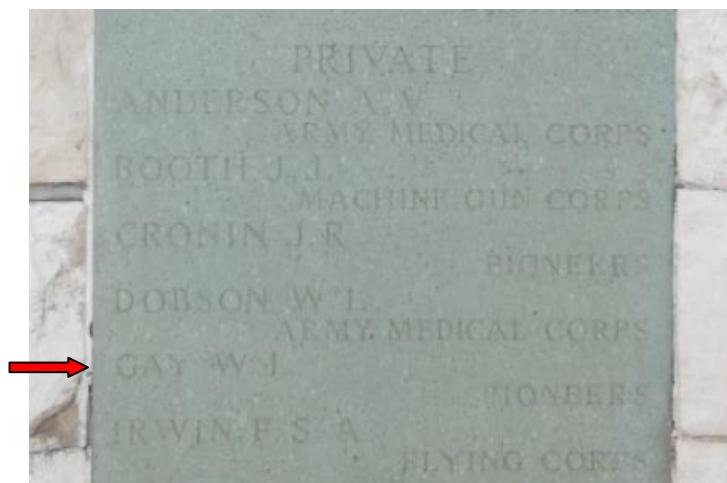


**CWGC Graves in Hollybrook Cemetery with Cross of Sacrifice & Hollybrook Memorial**

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



(Photo by julia&keld – Find a Grave)





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

*(Photo from CWGC)*