

**Sutton Veny,
Wiltshire, England**

War Graves

World War 1



Lest We Forget



2417 PRIVATE

H. G. NIXON

56TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

27TH MAY, 1918 AGE 36

Greater Love

Hath No Man Than This –

His Life For His Friends

Herbert Garonne NIXON

Herbert Garonne Nixon was born at sea on Orient S.S. *Garonne* in Indian Ocean on 20th December, 1881 to parents Samuel and Agnes Rothery Nixon. He was aged 3 weeks when he arrived in Australia.

Herbert Nixon attended Superior Public School at Lithgow, NSW. Herbert Nixon's mother had apparently died when Herbert was 5 years old & his father died a few years later. Herbert Nixon was not formally adopted legally & had no blood relations. (Information provided in a letter by daughter of Foster mother).

Herbert Garonne Nixon had previously served in the following Military before enlisting in A.I.F. - 3rd Contingent for South Africa; Australian Rifles (6th Regt. Infantry Vol.); NSW Permanent Infantry; NSW Marine Light Infantry.

Herbert Garonne Nixon had served throughout the Boxer Rebellion with the NSW Marine Light Infantry embarking from Sydney on 7th August, 1900. After the Rebellion he remained in China, employed on British Imperial Railways. He remained in China & endeavoured to enlist for service abroad early in 1915 but was rejected. He came to Sydney specially to enlist in A.I.F. (Military information from Roll of Honour supplied by Louisa M. Jones, foster mother, 121 Cook Rd, Paddington, NSW).

Herbert Garonne Nixon was a 34 year old, single, Salesman (Traveller for British American Tobacco Company) from Centennial Park, Sydney when he enlisted at Liverpool, NSW on 22nd July, 1915 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 2417 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his friend – W. Jones of Rosscroft, 121 Cook Rd, Centennial Park, Sydney, NSW.

Private Herbert Garonne Nixon embarked from Sydney on HMAT *Ballarat (A70)* on 6th September, 1915 with the 20th Infantry Battalion, 5th Reinforcements. (*No details of Pte Nixon's movements were recorded between 6th September, 1915 & the first entry at Zeitoun, Egypt on 16th February, 1916.*)

Private Herbert Garonne Nixon was allotted from 5th Reinforcements, 20th Battalion & proceeded to join 54th Battalion from Zeitoun on 16th February, 1916. He was taken on strength with 56th Battalion at Tel-el-Kebir on 16th February, 1916 & his rank reverted to Private. (Note: There is no record of when or what rank "Private" Nixon previously held in his Service Record file.)

Private Herbert Garonne Nixon embarked on H.T. *Huntsend* from Alexandria on 19th June, 1916 to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force). He disembarked at Marseille, France on 29th June, 1916.

Private Herbert Garonne Nixon was appointed to Lance Corporal on 2nd September, 1916 but reverted back to the rank of Private, at his own request, on 24th September, 1916.

Private Herbert Garonne Nixon was on leave of absence from 13th December, 1916 & rejoined from leave on 29th December, 1916.

Private Herbert Garonne Nixon was sent to Summer Rest Camp in France from 28th June, 1917 & rejoined his Unit in France on 9th July, 1917.

Private Herbert Garonne Nixon was wounded in action in France on 23rd September, 1917. He was sent to 6th Field Ambulance with a gunshot wound to right foot then transferred to 10th Casualty Clearing Station. Private Nixon was admitted to 2nd Australian General Hospital at Wimereux, France on 24th September, 1917, via Ambulance Train.

Private Herbert Garonne Nixon was evacuated to England on Hospital Ship *Jan Breydel* on 29th September, 1917.

Private Herbert Garonne Nixon was admitted to Queen's Hospital at Birmingham (Southern General Hospital) on 29th September, 1917 & transferred to Dartford on 27th November, 1917.

Private Herbert Garonne Nixon was on furlo from 1st January, 1918 to 15th January, 1918, when he was to report to No. 1 Command Depot at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire.

Private Herbert Garonne Nixon was medically classified as B1 A2 – fit for Overseas Training Camp in three to four weeks.

Private Herbert Garonne Nixon was sent to 1st Southern General Hospital at Birmingham from Sutton Veny on 24th March, 1918 & admitted with Rheumatism. He was marched in from Hospital to No. 1 Command Depot at Sutton Veny on 2nd April, 1918 & medically classified as C1 – fit for Home Service only.

Private Herbert Garonne Nixon was admitted to the Group Clearing Hospital at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire on 27th May, 1918.

Private Herbert Garonne Nixon died at 4.30 p.m. on 27th May, 1918 at the Sutton Veny Group Clearing Hospital of Epilepsy & Syncope.

A death for Herbert Nixon, aged 36, was registered in the June quarter, 1918 in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire.

Private Herbert Garonne Nixon was buried on 29th May, 1918 in St. John the Evangelist Churchyard at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire, England - Grave no. 351. From the burial report of Private Nixon - *Coffin was good polished Elm with Brass Mounts – The deceased was buried with full Military Honours. The body was conveyed to the graveside on a Gun Carriage and was preceded by Firing Party, Band and Pallbearers. A Company of N.C.O.'s and men and a number of convalescent Australians from the Group Hospital also attended. Deceased's Fiancée, Miss Doris Dunn, 2 Hatfield Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, was chief mourner. Wreaths from The Officers, N.C.O.'s and men of the Command Depot and Australians in the Group Hospital were placed on the grave. Deceased was most popular with both Officers and men and his loss is very keenly felt.*



Photo postcard of Private Herbert Garonne Nixon's funeral (photo courtesy of Kaye – Aussie mobs – Flickr)

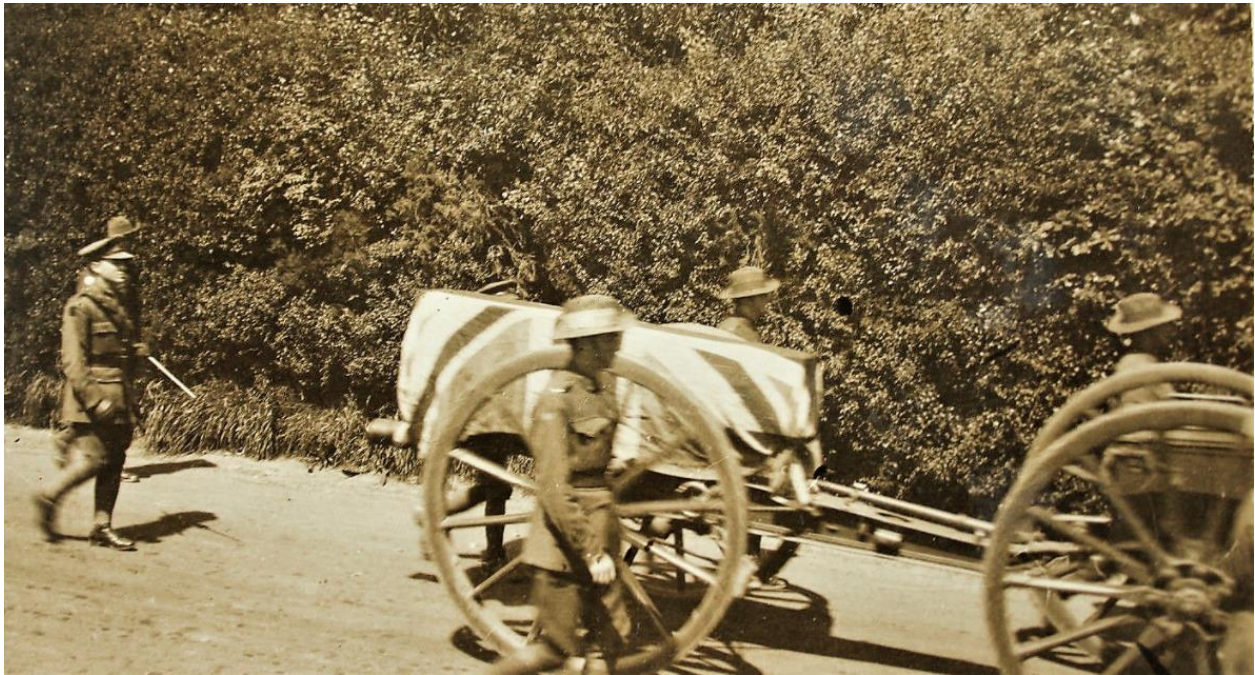
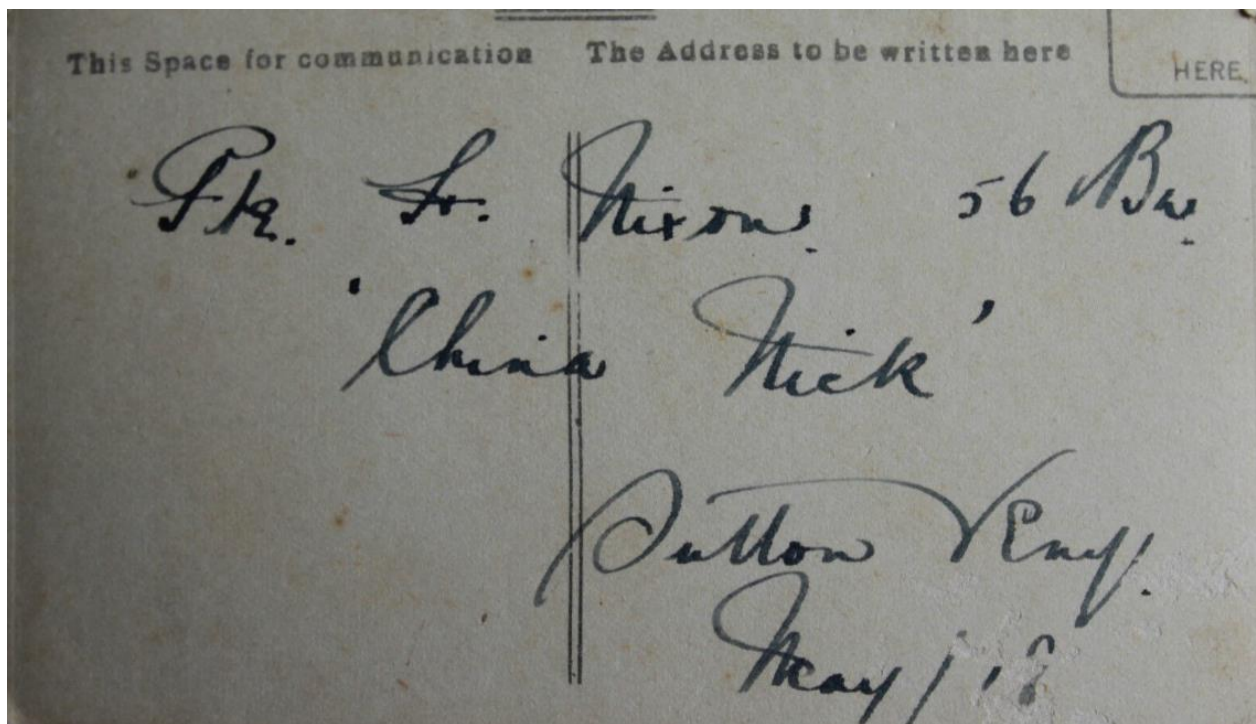


Photo postcard of Private Herbert Garonne Nixon's funeral

(photo courtesy of Kaye – Aussie mobs – Flickr)



The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Private Herbert Garonne Nixon contains a letter from O.C. No. 1 Command Depot, Cyclists' Camp, Sutton Veny which reads:

"Re 2417 Pte Nixon H.G., 56th Battn, A.I.F. This man had been marked permanently unfit for General Service but fit for Home Service. He was carrying on as a clerk when he was taken suddenly ill and died almost immediately. He had never previously complained nor paraded sick while in the Depot. The cause of his death was Chronic Meningitis of some years standing. He is buried in Sutton Veny Church Yard Cemetery and was given a Military Funeral."

Private Herbert Garonne Nixon, formerly of China, but now Sydney, requested in his Will dated 12th September, 1915 that William Ernest Jones be appointed as the Executor of his Will. W. E. Jones (son of Private Nixon's foster mother – "foster" brother.) was on active service in France so his power of attorney was with his wife – Esther Jones

who took over the responsibility of Pte Nixon's affairs & correspondence with Base Records. Private Nixon bequeathed to his friend Frederick William Ambrose in Shanghai, China all the money in his account in Shanghai, China. The rest of his Estate he bequeathed to Louisa Matilda Jones, wife of William James Jones of Sydney, Inspector of Police, and to William Ernest Jones in equal shares (foster mother & foster brother). In the event that both Louisa Matilda Jones & William Ernest Jones predecease Private Nixon, he directed that his, her or their shares be paid to Roscoe Samuel Webster Jones. Private Nixon's Will was lodged with Police Inspector W. J. Jones of Centennial Park, Sydney (his foster father).

Mrs Esther Jones (wife of Executor of Private Nixon's Will who had been responsible for organising Private Nixon's Estate & affairs as Power of Attorney for her husband who was on active service) wrote a letter to Base Records on 11th January, 1919 stating in part – *"....Shortly before his death Private Nixon became engaged to an English girl and a day or two after his death she wrote his foster Mother a letter, from which I quote one of two extracts.*

- *"I have all papers, letters etc, everything except his ring, which up to present is missing".*
- *"They know I was being married to him & say I am nearest of kin".*
- *"In his pay book Ross's name appears & as far as I know, unless you have it, he leaves no will."*

From this it appears that this girl has been given his belongings, including his pay book and shall be glad if you can advise me whether this is so and on what authority was it done. My husband's parents, who were Pte Nixon's foster parents, were named by him when enlisting as his next-of-kin, and as he has left a Will here, all his effects of course belong to his Estate & should have been forwarded here....."

Base Records replied stating that the matter regarding the papers etc held by Miss Dunne had been referred to A.I.F. Headquarters, London. (A disc & ring were returned to William Nixon on Centennial Park, Sydney, NSW in early January, 1919.)

Private Herbert Garonne Nixon was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to the next of kin. In Private Nixon's case the items were sent to Louisa M. Jones, foster Mother, but she was required to sign a Statutory Declaration, dated 15th November, 1920, stating that she would *"preserve with due care any war medals or other items given into custody on account of the services rendered by the late No. 2417 Private H. G. Nixon, 56th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force, and to return them to the Department of Defence upon demand in writing, should they be required for the purpose of being handed to someone having a prior claim to myself."* (Scroll sent October, 1921 & Plaque sent November, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Herbert Garonne Nixon, 2417, of 56th Battalion, Australian Infantry, A.I.F., as the son of the late Samuel and Agnes Nixon.

Private H. G. Nixon is commemorated 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

(88 pages of Private Herbert Garonne Nixon's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

Information obtained from the Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll, Red Cross Wounded & Missing file) & National Archives.



Newspaper Reports

ROLL OF HONOUR

NIXON – May 27, 1918, died suddenly at Sutton Veny Camp (Previously reported severely wounded), after 2 years 10 months' active service, Herbert Garonne Nixon, 56th (late 20th) Battalion, A.I.F., dearly loved adopted son of Mr and Mrs W. J. Hones and brother of Eva, Gertye, Ern and Ross (both on active service), Rosscroft, Cook Road, Centennial Park.

Greater love hath no man than this.

NIXON – May 27, 1918 (died suddenly), previously reported severely wounded, after nearly three years' service, Private Herbert G. Nixon, 56th Battalion (late 20th), A.I.F., dearly loved adopted brother of Eva and Arthur Harrison, Sturdee, Bundarra Road, Bellevue Hill.

NIXON – May 27, 1918, died suddenly, Sutton Veny Camp, England, Private Herbert G. Nixon, 56th Battalion (late 20th), A.I.F., dearly loved adopted brother of Ern (on active service) and Essie Jones, Centennial Park.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – Saturday 22 June, 1918)

THE 409th CASUALTY LIST

DEAD, OTHER CAUSES

NEW SOUTH WALES

Pte H. G. Nixon (Centennial Park), cause of death not stated, p.r.w.

(The Farmer and Settler, Sydney, NSW – Tuesday 16 July, 1918)

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 at St. John the Evangelist Churchyard at Sutton Veny. 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 Herbert Garonne Nixon does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Greater Love Hath No Man Than This – His Life For His Friends

St. John the Evangelist Churchyard, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire, England

During the two world wars, the United Kingdom became an island fortress used for training troops and launching land, sea and air operations around the globe. There are more than 170,000 Commonwealth war graves in the United Kingdom, many being those of servicemen and women killed on active service, or who later succumbed to wounds. Others died in training accidents, or because of sickness or disease. The graves, many of them privately owned and marked by private memorials, will be found in more than 12,000 cemeteries and churchyards. The 26th Division was concentrated at Sutton Veny in April 1915 and No 1 Australian Command was there from the end of 1916 to October 1919. There was also a hutted military hospital of more than 1200 beds at Sutton Veny for much of the war and No 1 Australian General Hospital was stationed there after the Armistice. Sutton Veny (St John) Churchyard contains 168 First World War burials, 167 of them in a plot at the north west corner of the church. Of these, 143 are Australian. There is only one Second World War burial in the churchyard.

(Information & colour photos from CWGC)





AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00376



Photo of Private H. G. Nixon's Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone in St. John the Evangelist's Churchyard, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire, England.



(Photo courtesy of David Milborrow)