

SAPPER JOHN CRILLY
5079 – 1st Tunnelling Company

John Crilly gave his birthplace as Durganou, County Tyrone, Ireland in 1874. His parents were James and Margaret (nee Gillespie) Crilly. He came to Australia and said he had served three years with the Australian Light Horse.

In 1913 John Crilly married Mrs Esther Caroline Flamank, formerly Keogh, who had two dependent children, Eric George Flamank (born 1904) and Clara Eva Goldsmith Flamank (born 1906). They had a daughter Esther Crilly born about 1914. He was employed with the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company Ltd as a Miner in 1915.

At the Rockhampton Recruiting Office on January 7, 1916 the miner passed the medical examination. Attestation Forms were completed which give his age as 41 years, his height as 169cms (5ft 6 ¾ins) and weight 63.6kgs (140lbs) with a chest measurement of 90cms (35½ins). He had a dark complexion with brown eyes and dark hair. Church of England was nominated as his faith and his wife Mrs Esther Caroline Crilly of D'Arcy Street, Mount Morgan, Qld was his next-of-kin. He allotted three-fifths of his pay to support her and his family. He was sworn in on January 15, 1916.

In *The Capricornian* on January 22, 1916 a list of the latest volunteers was published but is abridged to Tunnellers only:

CENTRAL DISTRICT VOLUNTEERS
FORTY-FIVE LEAVE

Forty-nine more recruits accepted for service left Rockhampton for Brisbane on Saturday and Monday, the number who departed on Monday being forty-three, the largest on any day since the outbreak of the war. It is expected, however, that this record will be eclipsed to-day.

Included in the forty-five names – two were tunnellers:

J. Crilly, Mount Morgan; R.V. Ellis, Mount Morgan.

Basic training began soon after with the 11th Depot Battalion concluding on February 19, 1916 when he was sent to the Mining Corps, A.I.F. From there he was transferred to the Miners Reinforcements Camp at Seymour, Victoria for further training on May 10 until July 18, 1916. He was assigned the regimental number 5079 in the rank of Sapper with the 2nd Reinforcements to the Tunnelling Companies.

The following day Sapper Crilly was one of 79 Reinforcements departing on HMAT A26 *Armada* from Port Melbourne, Victoria. Durban, South Africa was reached on August 15, 1916 and leave was granted from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. and they departed the next day. Arrived at Cape Town a few days later on August 20, 1916 and a Route March lasting three hours kept them fit before enjoying leave until 11 p.m. The ship was scheduled to leave at 2 p.m. but cancelled and left the following day at 5 p.m. The quality of liquor in town was considered bad. A one day stopover to refuel at Port le Grand, St Vincent was the last harbour visited on September 8, 1916. After a 64 day voyage the ship arrived at Devonport, England on September 30, 1916. The men marched into No 3 camp at Parkhouse for further training.

While in camp Sapper Crilly was disciplined for the following Offence:

Offence: 30/9/16 In-attention on parade.

Award: 1 day's C.B. [confined to barracks] by Lt Kennedy

The troops proceeded overseas to France marching in to the Aust. General Base Depot on October 19, 1916. On November 2, 1916 he was to proceed to Segregation camp and on November 27, 1916 marched in for Segregation at Etaples. On December 11, 1916 Sapper Crilly was attached to the 1st Anzac Entrenching Battalion.

He was taken from the field to the 5th Field Ambulance suffering from diarrhoea on December 16, 1916 and sent to the Casualty Clearing Station. The following day he was conveyed on A.T.16 and admitted with Debility remaining until Christmas Eve.

On Christmas Day, 1916 he was admitted to the 12th General Hospital at Rouen with Debility and was evacuated to England on December 30, 1916 on the Hospital Ship *St Patrick* suffering Influenza and Bronchitis.

On New Year's Day he was admitted to the County of Middlesex War Hospital, Napsbury the diagnosis being downgraded to slight Bronchitis but remained there for 32 days until discharged to the 3rd Auxiliary Hospital, Dartford on February 1st, 1917. On February 20, 1917 a Medical Report was compiled:

Age:	46 last Birthday
Disability:	Epileptiform Convulsions Cerebral Thrombosis
Date:	About December 25, 1916
Place:	On the Somme
History of Debility:	Since his fits patient has lost his memory to a large extent and cannot give times or dates. Patient was sent over from France about the beginning of Jan, 1917 – was in County of Middlesex Hospital and was sent to No 3 A.A.H. 1/2/17. He was convalescent from Bronchitis when he arrived here. He has been well except for a slight cough since admission until 14/2/17 when without any previous symptoms except extreme sluggishness of the bowels, he had fifteen fits of true epileptiform character – bit his tongue and frothed at the mouth – fits were general and had not a focal onset. Patient insists that he has never had fits before & that he has enjoyed good health up to the time of contracting Bronchitis.
Causes of Disability:	Uraemia from chronic nephritis not caused by either of (b) but aggravated by exposure and change of climate.
Present Condition:	Patient has been quiet and had no fits since 14/2/17 on which date he was given Pot Brom. He has been very dull since and it has been impossible to extract information as to dates etc from him; since the fits he has had some difference in sizes of pupils – left is larger – both react to light & accommodation. There is no sign of motor paralysis – knee jerks are very sluggish but obtainable – no Babinski. Pulse in 46 regular tension low. Vessels moderately thick. Heart Apex beats 4 ^o space ½ inch inside nipple line. Urine deficient in quantity (passed 25ozs in 24 hours) contains small cloud of Albumen.

After seventy days he was discharged on furlough on March 12, 1917 and was to report to Administration Headquarters at Weymouth on March 27, 1917. He went before the Medical Board and their findings were:

5079 Crilly, J. No 1 Tun Coy

Epilepsy. Cardio vascular changes due to wear and tear. Fibrosis of lung. Emphysema and Bronchitis.

Permanently unfit for all Military Service. Service has aggravated a developing condition. No history of Epilepsy prior to 14/2/17.

Sapper Crilly returned to Australia from Plymouth, Eng on April 8, 1917 aboard the H.T. *Barambah* for discharge. His berth for the voyage was a Hammock. On April 27 he was admitted to the ship's hospital for five days treatment for Pleurisy. On May 20, 1917 his wife was advised of his impending return.

The ship docked in Melbourne, Vic (3rd Military District) on June 9, 1917 and he travelled overland to Brisbane, Qld (1st M.D.) There were no personal effects in his kit.

He was admitted to the 6th Aust. General Hospital at Kangaroo Point, Brisbane, Qld on June 11, 1917 remaining as a patient until June 27, 1917. His incapacity was given to last longer than six months and in view of the Medical Board Findings of Epilepsy and Cerebral Thrombosis he was recommended for discharge as medically unfit. The following day was sent to the S.O.I & R.S. Section.

Sapper Crilly was discharged on a pension as medically unfit due to Epileptiform Convulsions on July 13, 1917. He received \$6 (£3) per fortnight from July 14 and his wife Esther was granted \$3 (£1/10/-) per fortnight and their daughter Esther was granted \$1 (10/-) per fortnight. His dependant step-children Eric Flamank was granted \$2 (£1) per fortnight and received for Clara Flamank \$1.50 (15/-) per fortnight.

The following news was published in *The Rockhampton Morning Bulletin* on Tuesday July 31, 1917:

MOUNT MORGAN

(From our local correspondent)

UNVEILING AN HONOUR BOARD

At the services in the Methodist Church last night an honour board bearing the names of members who have enlisted in the Australian Imperial Forces was unveiled.

The Rev. J.H. Heaton said that for a final memorial it was, perhaps, best to wait, but they wanted something in the meantime. He expressed the hope that in the final memorial more particulars would be recorded.

Mr F.H. McCarthy, in an appropriate address, said that, as a member of the church, a Britisher, and an Australian, he felt it an honour to be asked to unveil the board. It was not permanent. They were taking part in the ceremony knowing in their own minds that the British Empire was waging a just and righteous war—a war that had been thrust upon them. They had had no alternative but to take up the sword for right against wrong. Had Britain not done her duty in this war she would not have been able to hold her head again among the nations. Many from that church had gone, including the minister, the Rev H.P. Hare—a soul amongst giants, a man amongst men. Wherever a kindly act could be performed Mr Hare was there to do it. Mr Hare's photograph was in the centre of the board.

As a tribute to the dead and the living, Mr McCarthy unveiled the honour board by removing the Union Jack. He then read the names which were on the board.

Mount Morgan 30th July, 1917.

Article abridged.

The name of J. Crilly was read out as he appeared on the board of seventy enlistees from the Church.

On December 5, 1917 the Roll of Honour Board for employees of the Mount Morgan Gold Mine Ltd who enlisted for active service was displayed publicly. As an employee of the mine, the name J. Crilly appears on the Roll of Honour.

John Crilly's health gradually deteriorated and he died after discharge on May 25, 1919 in Brisbane.

In *The Brisbane Courier* on Monday May 26, 1919 his notice appeared:

FUNERAL NOTICES

CRILLY—The Friends of SAPPER JOHN CRILLY, late of No. 1 Tunnelling Coy, are respectfully invited to attend his Funeral, to moved from the Funeral Parlour, Wickham-street, Valley, THIS (Monday) FORENOON, at 10.15 o'clock, to the Toowong Cemetery.

K.M. SMITH,
Undertaker.

For his service abroad Sapper 5079 John Crilly, 1st Tunnelling Company was awarded the British War

His grave can be found in Portion 10 of the Toowong Cemetery, Brisbane Qld in Section 41 grave number 20.



Medal (19525) and the Victory Medal (19037).

On April 8, 1925 Mrs Esther C. Crilly of 16 Billet Street, Spring Hill, Brisbane, Qld wrote to Base Records requesting her husband be issued with a Memorial Plaque as given to relatives of deceased soldiers. On April 15, 1925 Base Records requested from the Repatriation Department, Brisbane if the cause of death of Sapper Crilly had been accepted as attributable from his war service.

The Deputy Commissioner of the Repatriation replied on April 30, 1924 advising that his Department had accepted that the death of John Crilly had been attributed by his war service. Mrs E.C. Crilly was notified that a Memorial Plaque and Scroll would be issued in respect of her late husband and would be forwarded to her as soon as possible.

Mrs Crilly wrote to Base Records on June 17, 1924 stating that she had not received the Memorial Plaque and questioned would she or not be receiving one. Base Records replied on June 25, 1924 stating that her husband's Plaque would be sent to her in the next few weeks. The ensuing delay was due to arrangements for the engraving of the mementos. A notation on its records states that his Plaque was listed on Schedule 17.

Two receipts were signed by Mrs E. Crilly on July 23, 1924 as receiving her husband's Memorial Scroll and Plaque.

On September 9, 1933 his grave was reopened for the burial of William Flamank, aged 40 years.

Mrs Esther C. Crilly was still residing at 16 Billet Street, Spring Hill, Brisbane, Qld up to 1949.

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