Australian Red Cross Society Wounded and Missing
Enquiry Bureau files, 1914-18 War
1DRL/0428

# 1261 Lance Corporal Richard Francis O'Neill

## 38th Battalion



2060105E

38th Battn.
A.I.F.

O'NEILL,
R.F. 1261

"Killed in Actdon."

Killed in Action 4.10.17.
Certy by Hqrs List 15.3.18.

London.
18.3.18.

M.

38th Battn.
A.I.F.

O'NEILL,
R.F. 1261

"Killed 4.10.17."

I was told by Pte. Bennett of 38th Battn, D.Coy, that O'Neill was sniped and killed outright at Passchendaele during the advance. He was buried the same day about 20 yards away from our third line trench and I remember seeing his grave. About 5ft 7ins, dark thick set.

Eye-witness:-
Description:-
Informant:- Pte. David Hegarty, 1191
38th Battn, D.Coy,
Home address: Tooting, Hospital.
35, Clarke Street,
Northcote,
Melbourne

W.Inglis Jones
1.4.18.
London.
11.4.18.

NOTE Written to Pte. Bennett 11.4.18.
M.

38th Batth.
A.I.F.

O'NEILL
R.F. 1261

"Killed 4-10-17"

I was told by my mates that he was killed outright by a bullet on Oct.4th at Broodseinde Ridge, while speaking to Capt. Orchard, O.C. D.Coy. 38th Battn. It was after we had dug in, and he is buried on the spot, which is on this side of the ridge. He came from Williamstown, Victoria. His name was Dick, and was the only O'Neill in the Coy. D.Coy. and was in 15th Pltn. Height about 5'7", rather fat face.

Informant. Fisher L/Cpl. J.E.C.
38th Battn. D.Coy. 15th Pltn.
3rd A.A.H.,
DARTFORD.

A.G.Campbell
London
25-4-18

M.

Note; Written Capt.Orchard. 23-4-18

38th A.I.F.

O'Neill. Pte. Richard F.
D Co., XV Pl., 1261.

(K. Oct. 4/17.)
Det. D/B.

"I saw O'Neill buried near the trench at Zonnebrooke near Passchendaele, on Oct. 4th. We put a cross over his grave. He was shot through the head."

Eye-witness: Yes.

Description: Short: fair.

Informant: Pte. Charles R. Innes. 2097.
38th A.I.F. D Co., XV Pl.,
1st London General Hos.,
Camberwell.

Home address: Bariongarook East.
Colac.
Victoria.
Australia.

30.4.18.
H.Caldwell.

A.I.F. 38th. Battn.

O'NEIL
R.F. 1261.

KILLED in ACTION 4/10/17.

Ref. your enquiry re No. 1261 L/Cpl. O'Neill R.F. (deceased) D. Company 38th Battn., A.I.F. The above was a L/Cpl, not Private. He was killed in action on October 4th 1917 when his Battalion was attacking on that date at Broodseinde which is about 1½ miles South West of Passchendaele. I cannot give the exact spot as we were only over the ground while the attack lasted. He was shot by rifle or machine gun bullet and did not speak after he was hit, and died in a few minutes He was buried by his comrades where he fell, and a rough cross was made by them and placed over his grave. He was not buried in a cemetery where the grave would be registered. In you memo you quote his initials as A.F. His initials were R.F. His first Christian name was Richard and his second Christian name was I think Francis. I am sure of the first but not quite sure of the second. He was about 5ft 8in. high, medium build brown eyes and hair, full, rather round face, clean shaved.

These are the fullest details I can give, I knew deceased well and can vouch for the above particulars.

Letter from:- E.A. Bennett,
France. 19.4.18

London
3.5.18.

M

A.I.F. 38th Battn.,

O'Neill,
R.F. 1261.

KILLED in ACTION 4/10/17.

Re 1261 Pte R.F.O'Neill. His rank was L/Cpl. He was killed about 11 o'clock on the morning of the 4th October last at Ypres. He was walking along with me, to have a look at the men consolidating after we had reached our objective. An unlucky bullet got him through the heart and he died at once. I feel sure the bullet was not fired at him, as another Battalion of our Brigade had an objective further afield and after we had started to consolidate, they passed through us, and were 500 yards ahead of us at thetime. He was buried where he fell by some of his mates later in the day. His grave is about 500 yards left of Springfield Farm, and about 1000 yards straight in front of Van Isaac's farm. We managed to put a wooden cross over it. As I have no map of that district, I cannot give you co-ordinates. His next of kin have been written to by more than one person to my knowledge. Apparently, they dont believe what is written to them or the letters go astray. He was about 5ft 8" in height, sharp features, medium build, freckles a few and a skin that was not clear, black hair, cleaned shaved.

Letter from:- O.C., W.H. Orchard. Capt.
France. 5/5/18.

London
9.5.18.

M

ENQUIRY.

Per Capt. O'Neill, 11th Batt. A.I.F. Information to be sent to Mrs. R. O'Neill.
Corinella.
Hannan Street.
Williamstown.
Victoria. Aust.

1261 Pte. R. O'Neill, 38th Batt. A.I.F., 10th Brigade. Killed in Action. Any particulars.

23-4-18

Captain Archard
O/C 2 Coy
38 C. Y. 4

1261. R.C.R. 4. O'Neill
2 Coy
38 Inf Bde
C. Y. 4

K. 4/10/17.

H.H.C.
23-4-18

Acknd by letter 8.5.16 (Yarra) 99

1261 (Ed)

1/6 R. J. O'Neill

38th Battalion

K in A 4-10-17 In the field.

3/5/16

Miss Vera Deakin.

Sec. A. Red Cross Society.

Dear Madam,

No 1261.

Yours of the 23rd ult. received re Pte R.J.O'Neill. His rank was Lance Corporal. He was killed about 11 o'clock on the morning of the 11th October last at Ypres. He was walking along with me, to have a look at the new consolidating after we had reached our objective an unlucky bullet got him through the heart and he died at once. I feel sure the bullet was not fired at him, as another Battalion of our Brigade had an objective further afield, and after we had started to consolidate, they passed through us, and were 500 yards ahead of us at the time. He was buried where he fell by some of his mates later in the day. His grave is about 500 yards left of Spunyfield Farm, and about 1000 yards straight in front of Van Isacq farm. We managed to put a wooden cross over it. As I have no maps of that district I cannot give you coordinates.

P.T.O.

2

This next often have been written to by more than one person to my knowledge. Apparently they don't believe what is written to them or the letters I go astray.

He was about 5ft 8" in height: sharp features: medium build: freckles a few and a skin that was not clear: black hair; clean shaved.

Yours faithfully

W.H.Orchard

Captain.

11-4-18.

To Pte Bennett.
S. Coy.
38th Lut. Battn.
A-4-7.
B.9-4.

Admt. Pte
1261. A-4-7. O'Neill
38th Lut. Battn.
A-4-7.

12. 4/10/17.

Lieut C
11-4-18.

17th November

The Matron,
1st Canadian General Hospital,
B.E.F.

Dear Madam,

We are making enquiries on behalf of the relatives of two Members of the A.I.F. who ~~were~~ are officially reported as having died in your Hospital, and been buried in Etaples Cemetery.

~~6459~~ 4549 Pte R.B.O'Neill and 4311 Pte Tuglis, 9th Battalion A.I.F. died of wounds 5-9-16, we should be most grateful if the Nurse or Sister in Charge of the ward in which they were treated could furnish us with any details of their last hours, if they suffered much pain, if they left any messages for relatives, and if it would be possible to obtain a photograph of their graves We find that these particulars are a great comfort to the relatives so far away in Australia, and help in a great measure to soften their loss, which is our excuse for troubling you in the matter.

Thanking you in anticipation,

Yours faithfully,

SECRETARY

Oct 4/18
26-4-18

In the Field.
19/4/18.

To Sec.
Aust Red Cross Society.

R. F. O'Neil
38th Batn
Kia 4-10-17

Ref your enquiry re No 1261 L/Cpl O'Neill R.F. (Deceased)
A Coy
38th Batln A.I.F.

The above named soldier was a L/Cpl not Private.
He was killed in action on Oct 4th 1917 when his Battalion was attacking on that date at Broodseinde which is about ½ miles Southwest of Passchendale. I cannot give the exact spot as we were only over the ground while the attack lasted.
He was shot by rifle or machine gun bullet and did not speak after he was hit, and died in a few minutes.
He was buried by his comrades where he fell, and a rough cross was made by them and placed over his grave.
He was not buried in a cemetery where the grave would be registered.
In your memo you quote his initials as A.F. His initials was R.F. his first christian name was Richard and his second christian name was Thirth Francis Same as the first but not quite as the second
He was about 5 ft 8 in high, medium build, brown eyes and hair, full rather round face, clean shaved.

These are the fullest details I can give, I knew deceased well and can vouch for the above particulars.

Yours faithfully
T. A. Bennett