

**Brookwood Military Cemetery,
Brookwood, Surrey
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



445 PRIVATE

G. A. McNEILL

42ND BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

21ST JUNE, 1917 Age 23

He Died For Us

George Andrew McNEILL

George Andrew McNeill was born on 15th June, 1893 at Ipswich, Queensland to parents Neil & Agnes Ann McNeill (nee Smith).

George Andrew McNeill attended School at Esk, Queensland.

George Andrew McNeill was a 22 year old, single, Saw Miller from Esk, Queensland when he enlisted in Brisbane, Queensland on 8th November, 1915 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 445 & his religion was Methodist. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Agnes Ann McNeill, Esk, Queensland. George McNeill's younger brother – Richard McNeill enlisted the same day & both brothers embarked together.

George Andrew McNeill was posted to "B" Company, 42nd Battalion on 16th February, 1916.

Private George Andrew McNeill was reported Absent without Leave from 11 pm on 10th May, 1916 till 11 pm on 13th May, 1916 while posted at Thompson's Paddock. He was awarded 48 hours detention & forfeited 3 days' Pay. His brother Private Richard McNeill was also reported AWL.

Private George Andrew McNeill embarked from Sydney, New South Wales on HMAT *Borda* (A30) on 5th June, 1916 with the 42nd Infantry Battalion "B" Company & disembarked at Southampton, England on 23rd July, 1916.

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 George Andrew McNeill proceeded overseas to France from England on 25th November, 1916.

Private George Andrew McNeill was wounded in action on 30th May, 1917. He was admitted to 9th Australian Field Ambulance on 30th May, 1917 with G.S.W. (gunshot wound/s) to left side of Neck. Private McNeill was transferred on 30th May, 1917 & admitted to 2nd Australian Casualty Clearing Station on 31st May, 1917 with Shrapnel wounds to Neck (Spinal). (From the Casualty Clearing Station he would have been transferred & admitted to Hospital but there is no record of which Hospital he was transferred to.) Private McNeill was transferred from Wimereux to Boulogne on 9th June, 1917 & embarked the same day for England on Hospital Ship *St. David*. (Statement of Service form recorded he embarked on Hospital Ship *St. Patrick*.)

42nd Battalion

The 42nd Battalion was raised at Enoggera, on the outskirts of Brisbane, in December 1915 and became part of the 11th Brigade of the 3rd Australian Division. Due to sharing its numeric title with the famous Scottish regiment the Black Watch, the battalion became known as the "Australian Black Watch". This association was recognised with a bagpipe band.

After training in Australia and Britain, the 42nd deployed to France on 26 November 1916 and entered the frontline for the first time on 23 December. The winter of 1916-17 was horrendous, and the 42nd spent much of it in the front line, the remainder being spent alternating between training and labouring in the rear areas.

In 1917, the operations of the 3rd Division were focussed on the Ypres sector of Belgium. The 42nd participated in major battles at Messines on 7 June, Warneton on 31 July, Broodseinde on 4 October, and Passchendaele on 12 October.....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

War Diary – 42nd Battalion

Ploegsteert – 30th May, 1917

Strength – Officers 35; 996 O.R.; 4 off to Hospitals

Casualties - Two wounded

Weather - Wind SW 5 mls per hour; clear day; good observation. Increased artillery activity both sides. Heavy enemy retaliation in our sector.

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Private George Andrew McNeill was admitted to The King George Military Hospital, London, England on 9th June, 1917 with G.S.W. Neck – dangerously ill. The Hospital Admissions form recorded “*Wounded May 30/17, legs paralysed at once. On admission – small clean wound at antr. margin of left traperyuis in neck. Retention of urine....*”

Mrs A. A. McNeill, Esk, Queensland, mother of Private George Andrew McNeill, was advised by Base Records on 11th June, 1917 that Private George McNeill had been wounded. Mrs McNeill was advised again on 15th June, 1917 that Private George McNeill had been admitted to Hospital on 10th June with gunshot wound to neck – dangerous.

Private George Andrew McNeill died at 6.40 pm on 21st June, 1917 at The King George Hospital, Stamford Street, London, England from wounds received in action – G.S.W. (gunshot wound/s) to Neck & Paraplegia.

A death for George A. McNeill, aged 23, was registered in the June quarter, 1917 in the district of Lambeth, Greater London, England.

Neill McNeill, father of Private George Andrew McNeill, died on 22nd June, 1917 at Esk, Queensland from Chronic Bright's disease & Uraemic Coma.

Private George Andrew McNeill was buried at 1.30 pm on 25th June, 1917 in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England – Australian Military Burial Ground - Plot number 179444.

From the burial report of Private George Andrew McNeill - Coffin was good - polished Elm. The deceased soldier was buried with Military Honours. Firing Party comprising members attached to the Administrative Headquarters Staff A.I.F. London, were in attendance. Two buglers of the Royal Engineers, London, sound the “Last Post” at the graveside. The coffin was shrouded with the Australian flag, and surmounted with a lovely floral tribute. The service at the graveside was borne to the graveside by members of Administrative Headquarters Staff A.I.F. London. No relatives were present at the funeral. Temporary oak cross to be erected by the Commonwealth Military Authorities.

Special Notification in United Kingdom (as listed on back of Burial Report) – Uncle 4209 Private H. F. Jones, Anzac Prov. Corps, Tidworth.

Base Records wrote to Mrs A. A. McNeill, Down Street, Esk, Queensland on 3rd April, 1923 advising that the site of her son's grave in Brookwood Military Cemetery had been officially registered as Plot 11 Row C Grave 17.

This is now recorded by CWGC as Memorial reference – XI. C. 17. Private George Andrew McNeill now has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Private George Andrew McNeill contains a letter from The Matron, The King George Hospital, Stamford St., London, England which reads: “*Pte McNeill died suddenly on June 21st of an embolism. He was buried at Brookwood Cemetery on June 25th. He was admitted to the Hospital with a gunshot wound of spine, causing complete paralysis, and also with fractured ribs. Full details of his death and illness have already been sent to his mother by the Ward Sister.*”

A War Pension was granted to Agnes Ann McNeill, Esk, widowed mother of the late Private George Andrew McNeill, in the sum of £2 per fortnight from 25th August, 1917. Pensions were also granted to Private McNeill's sisters – Ada McNeill – granted 10/- per fortnight from 30th August, 1917 & Agnes May McNeill – granted 10/- per fortnight from 25th August, 1917.

Private George Andrew McNeill was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private McNeill's widowed mother – Mrs A. A. McNeill, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent March, 1922 & Plaque sent August, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private George Andrew McNeill – service number 445, aged 23, of 42nd Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of Neil and Agnes Ann McNeill, of Down St., Esk, Queensland.

Private G. A. McNeill is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 135.

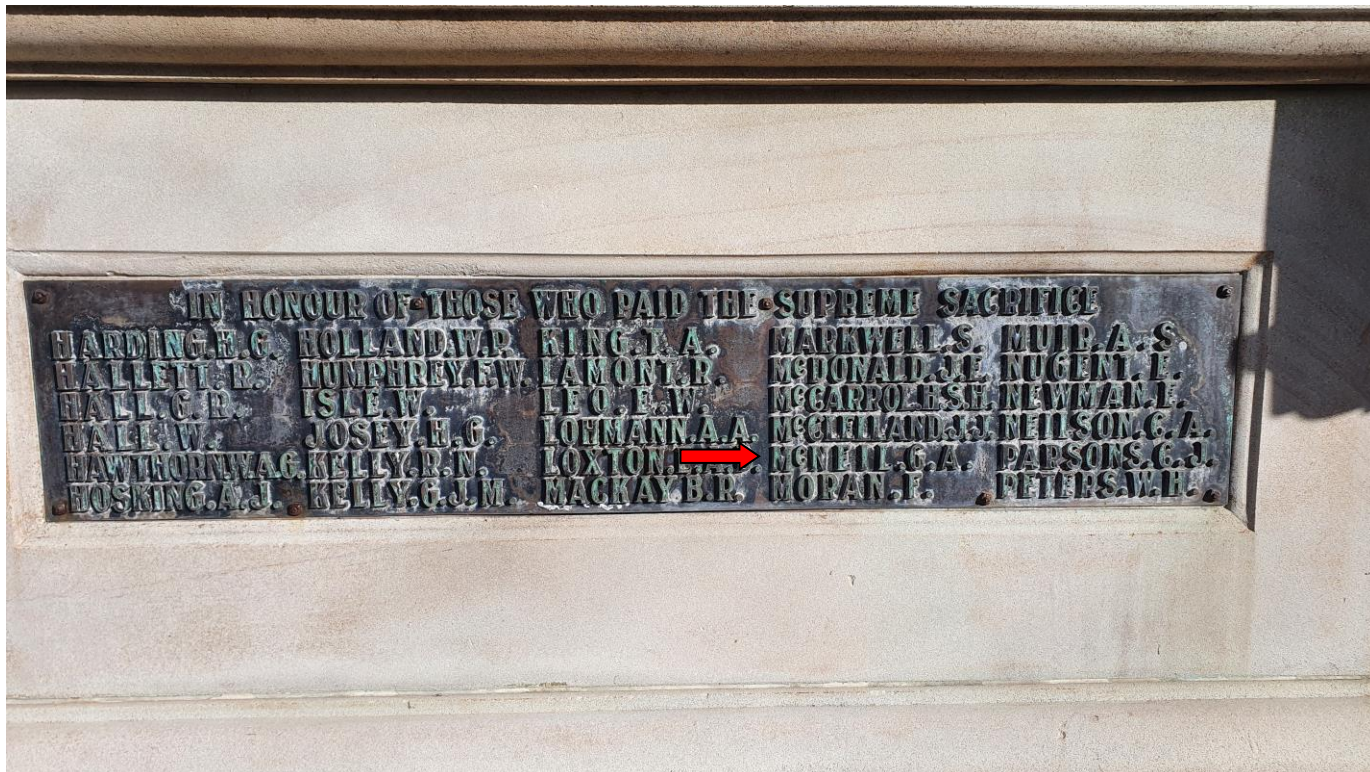


Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

G. A. McNeill is remembered on the Esk War Memorial, located in Esk Memorial Park, Ipswich Street (Brisbane Valley Highway) & Highland Street, Esk, Queensland.



Esk War Memorial (Photo from AWM – Places of Pride – Kevin McSweeney)



Esk War Memorial Panel – Those Who Paid The Supreme Sacrifice

(Photo courtesy of Stephen Bird, Sub Branch Secretary, Esk RSL)



(52 pages of Private George Andrew McNeill'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



Connected to Private George Andrew McNeill:

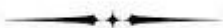
Younger brother – Richard McNeill – Enlisted 8th November, 1915 with a service number of 446. Embarked from Sydney, NSW HMAT *Borda* (A30) on 5th June, 1916 with 42nd Battalion "B" Company.

Reported Missing in Action on 9th June, 1917. Later reported Not Missing but Wounded in action – GSW Chest & thigh – severe.

Returned to Australia per H.T. Port Lyttleton for Change on 19th October, 1917.

Medically discharged from Australian Imperial Force on 22nd January, 1918.

Entitled to British War Medal & Victory Medal.



Newspaper Notices

IPSWICH AND DISTRICT

Mrs A. McNeill, Esk, received a cable on Friday last from her son, Pte G. A. McNeill, stating that he had arrived in England, and was well.

(*Queensland Times*, Brisbane, Queensland – 19 August, 1916)

Roll of Honour

Queensland Casualties

The 314th Australian casualty list was released by the censor.....

WOUNDED

Pte G. A. McNeill, Esk

(*The Week*, Brisbane, Queensland – 29 June, 1917)

PERSONAL NOTES

Mrs Neil McNeill, of Esk, received a message from the military authorities on Tuesday evening advising that her son, Private George Andrew McNeill, who was wounded on 9th inst., had died of wounds in King George's Hospital on 21st inst. The father of the deceased died last Friday, and the only brother, Private Richard McNeill, has been reported missing since 9th inst. Much sympathy has been expressed throughout the Esk district for the bereaved mother and family.

(*The Queenslander*, Brisbane, Queensland – 7 July, 1917)

ROLL OF HONOUR

McNEILL – On 21st June, 1917, died of wounds at King George Hospital, London, Private George Andrew McNeill, 42nd Battalion, eldest and beloved son of Mrs McNeill, aged 23years and 11 months.

Greater love hath no man than he
That laid down his life for his friend.

(Inserted by his loving mother and sisters).

(*Queensland Times*, Brisbane, Queensland – 14 July, 1917)

The 324th Australian casualty List was released by the censor on Monday.....

DIED OF WOUNDS

George Andrew McNeill, Esk, 21/6/17, p.r.w.

(*The Week*, Brisbane, Queensland – 20 July, 1917)

ROLL OF HONOUR

McNEILL – In proud and loving memory of Private George Andrew McNeill, 42nd Battalion, died of wounds in King George Hospital, London, June 21st, 1917, received at Messines. Age 23 years.

His duty nobly done.

(Inserted by his loving mother, brother, sisters, brothers-in-law)

(*Queensland Times*, Brisbane, Queensland – 21 June, 1918)

ROLL OF HONOUR

McNEILL – In loving memory of our dear son and brother, Pte George Andrew McNeill, 42nd Batt., died of wounds on 21st June, 1917, at King George's Hospital, London. Wounded at Messines.

(Inserted by his loving mother, sisters, brother and brothers-in-law)

McNEILL – In loving memory of my dear husband and our dear father, Neil McNeill, who died at Esk on 22nd June, 1917.

(Inserted by his loving wife, daughters, son, and sons-in-law.)

(*Queensland Times*, Ipswich, Queensland – 21 June, 1921)

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)

A letter from Base Records, dated 26th July, 1921, to Mrs A. A. McNeill, Esk, Queensland, advised that a letter from the Defence Dept. concerning an inscription on the headstone of her son, the late No. 445 Private G. A. McNeill, 42nd Battalion, had not been answered & non-receipt of a reply within 21 days would have to be accepted as indicating that no further action was to be taken.

Private G. A. McNeill does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

He Died For Us

Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England

Located 30 miles from London in Surrey, Brookwood Military Cemetery is the largest CWGC cemetery in the United Kingdom. The cemetery contains the graves of more than 1,600 servicemen of the British Empire in the First World War and over 3,470 from the Second World War.

Brookwood Military Cemetery lies adjacent to Brookwood Cemetery (The London Necropolis), a vast space which covers 500 acres. In 1917, an area to the north of the cemetery was set aside as Brookwood Military Cemetery for men and women of Commonwealth forces who died, many of battle wounds, in the London district. This site was further extended to accommodate Commonwealth casualties of the Second World War. *(Information from CWGC)*

There are 446 Australian War Graves in Brookwood Military Cemetery – 351 from World War 1 & 95 from World War 2.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00185

A large crowd attends an A.I.F. military funeral at Brookwood Cemetery. In the foreground wooden crosses mark rows of graves. (Photo c1919)

Identified: Front row, left to right: Second Lieutenant Douglas Abbott Ferguson, Australian Flying Corps, died of accidental injuries 18 August 1918; Lieutenant (Lt) Francis John Smedley MC, 7th Battalion, died of wounds 20 August 1918.

Second row: 6860 Private (Pte) James Alexander McKeown, 21st Battalion, died of wounds 20 June 1918; 3622 Pte S T Wilson, 2nd Australian Pioneers, died of wounds 4 July 1918; 2390 Sergeant Frederick Charles Stronell, 21st Battalion, died of wounds 9 July 1918; Lt Arthur Melville Lilburne MC, 6th Brigade Australian Field Artillery, died of disease 11 July 1918.



Brookwood Military Cemetery (Photo from CWGC)



Brookwood Military Cemetery (Photos by Magicfingers)



Australian Graves in Brookwood Military Cemetery (Photos by Magicfingers)





(Photo courtesy of Ian Fletcher)



Australian War Graves *(Photo courtesy of Neil Bright 2020)*

Photo of Private G. A. McNeill's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England.





(Photo courtesy of Ian Fletcher – Jan 2021)

