Sergeant Sidney O’Neill (XC 1903-'05)

AWM ~ Roll of Honour
Sydney John O’Neill

Also known as: Sidney O’Neill
Service Number: 432
Rank: Sergeant
Unit: 8th Australian Light Horse Regiment
Date of death: 7 August 1915
Place of death: Gallipoli
Cause of death: Killed in action
Place of burial: No known grave
Age at death: 27
Place of association: Armadale, Australia
Memorial details: Lone Pine Memorial (Panel 7), Gallipoli Peninsula, Turkey

From “The Xaverian” 1915 p. 43

Sergeant Sidney O’Neill, who was killed in action on 7th August at Gallipoli, was eldest son of Dr. and Mrs. O’Neil, Kooyong Road, Armadale. He was 27 years of age, and belonged to the 8th Light Horse. He was at the college three years (1903 to 1905), and was afterwards engaged in Pastoral pursuits in New South Wales and Queensland. Shortly after the declaration of war he left Brisbane for Melbourne, where he enlisted. He was promoted to corporal at Broadmeadows, and to sergeant at Gallipoli. Sergeant O’Neill was a great-grandson of Captain James Cunliffe, who fought at Waterloo, and a kinsman of Sir Harry Cunliffe and General Pritchard.

From “The Xaverian” 1916 p. 61

Sergeant-Major Sidney O’Neill — Two further details have come to hand since the account of poor Sidney’s death, published in the last number. The first, that the authorities showed still further proof of their trust in him by advancing him from Sergeant to Sergeant-Major. The second that his death came as a result of a real bit of volunteer work. On his being appointed Sergeant-Major, he was transferred to another squadron. In August his old squadron had to make an attack on Pope’s Hill. They wished for their old leader, and a deputation waited on the authorities to make the request. Hearing of this Sid immediately volunteered for the post of danger, and was granted leave for the perilous command. He led the men over the parapet, but had gone only a few yards when the fatal bullet struck him down. He died on the battlefield as he played on the football field — a good and unselfish man, who “followed right for right in scorn of consequences.” May he rest in peace.

From “The Xaverian” 1917 p. 71

Sergeant-Major Sidney O’Neill — The memory of this brave Old Boy has been perpetuated by the erection, in St Joseph’s Church, Malvern, of a holy water font. May he rest in peace.