

## WW I Enlisted Men & Women of Whitewater Region Project

### Private Willie Neil

**Pte. William Ernest Neil**, son of **Richard William Neil** and **Mary Cowie**, was born on 9 Oct 1896 in Cobden. Another name found for William was William Orr Neil and he signed his name Willie. Willie was the 3<sup>rd</sup> youngest of 10 children. Some would remember his sister, Miss Emma Neil, who lived in Cobden all her life.<sup>1</sup>

Willie enlisted into the Canadian Infantry on August 23, 1917 at Ottawa. He was 20 years, 10 months of age; 5' 10" tall and 156 lbs with brown eyes and red hair. He gave his occupation as 'Chauffeur'.<sup>2</sup> Pte. Neil served in the 1<sup>st</sup> Depot Bn, Eastern Ontario Regiment and later the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn, Canadian Infantry in France.<sup>3</sup> He served a full year and 1 week when Pte. Neil sustained gunshot wounds to the abdomen and thighs in action on 30 Aug 1918 and was taken to No. 45 Casualty Clearing Station where he died of wounds that same day near Arras, Pas de Calais, France, aged 21 years 10 months.<sup>3,4</sup> He was buried in the Bac-Du-Sud British Cemetery, Bailleulval, Pas de Calais, France.<sup>5,6,7</sup>

Pte. Neil was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal. A Plaque & Scroll was presented to his father and the Memorial Cross to his mother.<sup>3</sup> Pte. Neil's name is commemorated on the original Cobden Memorial Plaque and his parents' gravestone in Cobden Union Cemetery.<sup>1</sup>



Image 1: Pte. W Neil gravemarker<sup>7</sup>

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### Sources:

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2. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa. "Attestation Paper, Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force" Database. <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/personnel-records/Pages/image.aspx?Image=545641a&URLjpg=http%3a%2f%2fcentral.bac-lac.gc.ca%2f.item%2f%3fop%3dimg%26app%3dCEF%26id%3d545641a&>
3. "Personnel Records of the First World War." Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa. Digital images. Library and Archives Canada. <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/personnel-records/Pages/search.aspx>  
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4. "Circumstances of Death Registers, First World War." Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa. Digital images. [https://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/.item/?op=img&app=microform&id=31829\\_B016764-00280](https://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/.item/?op=img&app=microform&id=31829_B016764-00280)
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6. Commonwealth War Graves Commission. "Commonwealth War Graves Commission." Database. [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org) <https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/18954/w-neil/>
7. Find a Grave <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/56457080/william-orr-neil>