

Bede Septimus Connell



Private Bede Connell
9th Battalion, AIF
Service Number: 3017

Born: 16 December 1887, St Marys, NSW

Died: 20 September 1917, Chateau Wood, Belgium

Bede Septimus Connell was born at St Marys on 16 December 1887, the son of Matthew and Charlotte (nee Mortimer) Connell. In the early 1890s, his family moved to Jamisontown. After Connell had completed his education at Regentville Public School, he worked as a labourer before enlisting in Brisbane on 25 June 1915. He was allocated to the 10th Reinforcements, 9th Battalion and left Brisbane for Egypt aboard *HMAT Warilda* on 5 October 1915. In March 1916, the 9th Battalion left Egypt bound for Marseilles. On 5 May 1916, while the battalion was at Sailly, Connell was charged with the crime of 'without urgent necessity, quitting the ranks' and was given 72 hours field punishment. In June and July he was again in trouble for disobedience.

The battalion's first major action in France was at Pozieres. During this action on 23 July 1916 Connell suffered a grenade wound to the left arm. He was admitted to No 1 Australian General Hospital at Rouen and then transferred to England for rehabilitation. Between September and November Connell was again in trouble, including insolence to an NCO, and was confined to camp. Again in May 1917 he was found guilty of damaging property and insolence. Connell returned to France on 23 July 1917. The 9th Battalion had been moved to the Belgian front opposite the Hindenburg Line. Connell was killed in action on 20 September 1917, possibly at Chateau Wood (near Menin Road) in the Ypres area when the 9th Battalion lost all of its company commanders and half its junior officers.

In a letter to his brother on 12th August, Connell wrote ‘I suppose you will be surprised to hear I am a full blown soldier now, and that I have been “digging” into the Germans; of course they “dug” into me. I got a couple of wounds from them, but nothing much to speak of. I am getting on well now, and hope to continue so. I had a German handbomb burst near me while I was bombing them out of their trench, and a small piece went right through the thumb and broke it. Another piece hit me in the elbow, and I had to go under an operation to have the pieces taken out... I am a pretty good fighter – a lot better than I thought I would be. They (the Germans) can’t bluff us – and that is the main point. Anyway, a man has only got to die once, and it is better to do that than let the Germans win...’ His last letter received by his parents was dated 15th August. In this Connell stated he was well and still going strong.

Memorial Details:

- Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Belgium
- Honour Roll, Memory Park, Penrith
- Honour Roll, Penrith Superior Public School

Sources:

- [National Archives of Australia](#) Search: B2455; CONNELL B S
- Australian War Memorial First World War Nominal Roll
- [Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour](#)
- Penrith City Library Biography files

TROVE:

- [Nepean Times 4 November 1916, p.6, Col. 5](#)
- [Nepean Times 27 October 1917, p.1 Col. 5](#)