

# A Boho Anzac: Thomas Reid

**A talk given at the Boho Heritage Organisation, Boho on 4 October 2014 by Prof Jeff Kildea, Keith Cameron Chair of Australian History at University College Dublin.)**

It is great to be back here in Boho some ten years after I visited here with Joe O'Loughlin when researching my book *Anzacs and Ireland*, which tells the story of the relationship between Australian soldiers and Ireland during the First World War.

The term "Anzac", for those unfamiliar with it, started out in early 1915 as an acronym for the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, the formation comprising the men



Thomas Reid

of the 1st Australian Division and the New Zealand and Australian Division, who had been sent to Egypt at the end of 1914 to complete their training before going on to the Western Front. As you may know, their transfer to the Western Front was postponed due to their being sent to Gallipoli in Turkey as part of the Dardanelles Campaign.

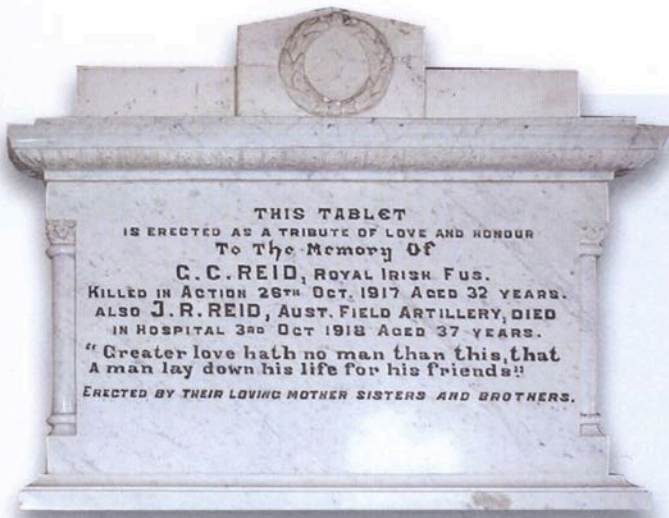


Prof. Jeff Kildea

For Australians, Gallipoli has significance because it was the first major military campaign in which Australians had fought together as Australians. Many Australians therefore regard Gallipoli as the crucible of the nation when the inhabitants of the six former British colonies that had federated in 1901 were forged into citizens of Australia.

So "Anzac" is full of meaning for Australians. Nowadays the acronym has become a word and is used to refer to Australian and New Zealand soldiers who fought in the war, among whom were about 6000 Irish-born, including the subject of my talk tonight, Sergeant Thomas Robert Reid. Reid is one of 25 Australian soldiers of the First World War buried in Ireland, five of them in Northern Ireland and twenty in the Republic.

At the outset I would like to acknowledge the assistance with my research that I have received over the years from Joe O'Loughlin, particularly when I was looking into the 39 Australian servicemen of the Second World War who are buried here in Northern Ireland. Most of them were airmen, flying



out of Loch Erne and Loch Foyle who were killed when their aircraft crashed in flying accidents. Joe, of course, is the guru in that area and he was able to take me to some of the crash sites and to the grave yards where many of them are buried.

In the case of Thomas Reid, I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Ivan Masterson who looked me up in Sydney in

2003 when he was visiting Australia and gave me the benefit of his knowledge on the subject of tonight's talk. How that came about is interesting. In the early 2000s I visited Ireland on a number of occasions looking for the graves of the total of 64 Australians buried here and as I found each one I would place an Australian flag on it with a note giving my contact details. Well, in the case of Thomas Reid, it paid off because that is how Ivan knew how to contact me.

And I should also acknowledge Yvonne Bell, Thomas Reid's granddaughter who provided further information on her grandfather.

Now I am conscious of the fact that I am an outsider and that, for all I know you, may well be familiar with Reid's story and can tell me a thing or two about him which I don't know. Well, I hope so, because I have grown fond of my Irish Anzacs and am always interested to learn more about them. As some of you may know I am building a database of all the Irish-born who served in the Australian forces during the First World War, some 6000 of them, which I have called the Irish Anzacs Project. I spoke about it today at Enniskillen and as some of you may have been there I won't repeat what I said. Rather, I will spend the time on Thomas Reid, who was certainly an interesting character.

Thomas Robert Reid was born on 18 May 1880 at Boho, Co. Fermanagh, the son of William Reid of the townland of Farnaconnell, Boho and Elizabeth Elliott, the daughter of William Elliott, farmer of Rusculton.

On 21 March 1901, shortly before his 21st birthday, while working as a shop assistant at Omagh, Co. Tyrone, Thomas applied to join the South African Constabulary. The SAC had been formed the previous October by Colonel Robert Baden-Powell, famous as the founder of the scouting movement. Baden-Powell set up the SAC at the request of the commander of the British forces in South Africa Lord Roberts, who wanted a force of ten thousand mounted men prepared by the middle of 1901 to take over the police duties of the country, which at the time was in the middle of the Boer War. Their task was to assist in the pacification of the Boer rebels.

Reid had had no prior military experience but Captain Williams, a recruiting officer acting on behalf of the governments of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, adjudged Reid to be a good rider and a fair shot. In accordance with the law at the time, which prohibited the enlistment of men

outside of the country where they were to serve, Reid signed Articles of Agreement on 26 March which provided him with free passage to South Africa on condition that on arrival he report to the headquarters of the South African Constabulary and be attested as a trooper third class. This he duly did and on 6 June 1901 he was sworn in at Heidelberg in the Cape Colony for a three year term, with his service to count from 21 May 1901.

At Modderfontein, situated between Johannesburg and Pretoria, recruits were taught riding, musketry, drill and tactics; also how to make blockhouses and trenches. During the war the force came to be used in two main ways, one as mobile columns working in co-operation with the regular troops, and the other in making and holding lines of blockhouses to prevent the Boers from moving across certain tracts of country. When the peace was signed with the Boers at Vereeniging on 7 June 1902 the SAC were released from their duties as soldiers, to take up those of civil police.

For more than six years, during and after the war, Reid served in the SAC, rising to the rank of sergeant second class, having responsibility for a number of outposts. He had served with "C" Mobile Column in the north-east of the country and later with "A" Mobile Column in the north-west. On 3 October 1907, he took his discharge and left South Africa for Canada and subsequently Australia, where he married a Victorian girl, Alice Lillian Robertson, in 1910. They had three children. In Australia, Reid worked as a horse breaker and trainer.

When the war broke out in August 1914 he was living in Victoria. Keen to join up he enlisted before the end of the month, leaving behind a wife and three children aged 4, 2 and a few months. He was assigned to the 2nd Field Artillery Brigade and later the 1st Divisional Ammunition Column.

Duplicate BR 864

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.

**BURIAL REPORT REGARDING FUNERAL OF LATE**

No. 1304 Rank Sergeant Full Name REID, Thomas Robert,  
 Unit 2nd Field Artillery Religion C of E Age at death 37 Years.  
 Date and Place of Death 3-10-19 2nd Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Harari  
 Date of Interment 9-10-19  
 Particulars of Cemetery Boho Private Cemetery, Co of Formentor, Ireland.  
 Separate Single Grave in Virgin Soil, No. Private, Section ---  
 If Consecrated Ground Consecrated  
 Military or Private Funeral Military  
 Name, Address and Denomination of Officiating Clergyman Rev J. J. Dunlop, Rector of Boho.  
 Undertaker's Name and Address ---  
 Condition and Class of Coffin Good, Polished Wn.  
 Names and Addresses of Relatives or Friends present at Funeral Wife, Brother & Sisters, Brother-in-law, Uncle & Cousin, also friends.


**Remarks of Interest to Next-of-Kin.**

The deceased soldier was accorded a Military funeral, firing party, band, and pallbearers being in attendance. The coffin was draped with the "Union Jack" and accompanied by many beautiful flowers sent from deceased's relatives and friends. A great number were present at the graveside, and the burial service was conducted by the Rev. J. J. Dunlop, Rector of Boho. The grave will be tufted, and an oak cross erected by the A.I.F., London. Administrative Headquarters A.I.F., London were represented at the funeral.

*Humming Gull*  
 Officer in Charge,  
 Admin. Hqs., London, S.W. 1.

15th October, 1919 (Date)

[See Back]

Australian Imperial Force.  A.I.F. KIT STORE, 110, GREYHOUND ROAD, HAMMERSMITH, LONDON, W.6.

KS. 322.

Inventory of Effects of - 1304 Reid T.R., 2nd Field Artillery Brigade, A.I.F.

Forwarded to - Secretary, Department of Defence, MELBOURNE. Next-on-kin - Wife - Mrs A.L. Reid, Wellington Point, Brisbane, QUEENSLAND.

Book Shows next-of-kin - Wife - Mrs A. Reid, C/o Mrs Mills, 146 Gregor Street, Koo-We-Rup.

Effects obtained from a kit bag held in store.

ONE PARCEL (sealed) containing:-  
 2 Handkerchiefs, Writing Pad, 3 pairs Socks.  
 Letters, 1 Notebook, Cards, Devotional Book,  
 Photo.

Beltana

D/S. 49913 No. of Package Checked by

Interestingly, my great uncle Frank Kildea served in the in the 2nd Field Artillery Brigade and might well have known Reid - not even six degrees of separation.

I wish to state Mrs. J. Reid who ~~was~~ <sup>is</sup> my sister  
 died in Melbourne on June 12<sup>th</sup>. 21  
 so I take the Liberty of signing this receipt  
 on behalf of the children  
 D. B. Robertson  
 Late of 1st  
 Spring Creek  
 Stanthorpe  
 Q. Land

**Boho Heritage Organisation**  
**'Fermanagh and the ANZAC Campaign and its connection to Boho'**  
 A talk by Jeff Kildea, Professor of Australian History at University College Dublin  
 in Boho Church of Ireland on Saturday 4th October 2014 at 7.30pm, followed by refreshments and entertainment in Boho Community Hall.  
 The talk will make reference to Thomas Robert Reid who is buried in Boho Church of Ireland. He served in the Australian Field Artillery and was killed on 3rd October 1918.  
 All are welcome.  
 Funded by Fermanagh District Council



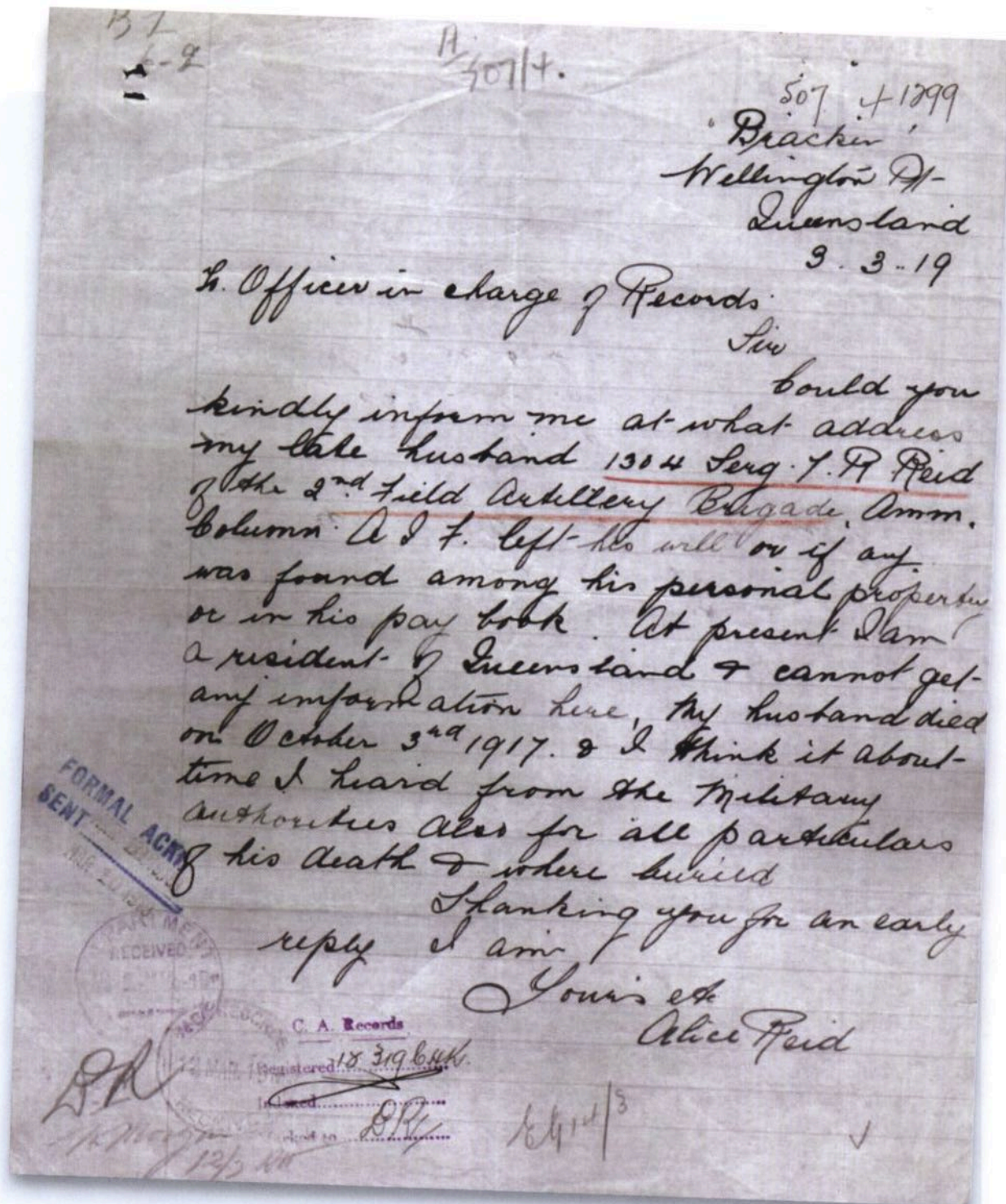
# BOHO

## History talk

A talk by Jeff Kildea, a professor of Australian History at University College Dublin, and author of 'Ireland and the ANZAC campaign', is taking place in Boho Church of Ireland this Saturday 4th October 2014 at 7.30pm. It will be followed by refreshments in Boho Community Hall.  
 The talk will also focus on Thomas Robert Reid who is buried in Boho Church of Ireland. He served in the Australian Field Artillery and was killed on 3rd October 1918.  
 All are welcome to the talk which is organised by Boho Heritage Organisation.

He sailed with the first contingent of the AIF in October 1914 and saw action at Gallipoli and on the Western Front, rising to the rank of sergeant, but he was only in France a few months before he fell ill and was admitted to hospital suffering from malaria. Evacuated to England in June 1916, Reid remained there until November 1917, before returning to his unit. On 30 July 1918, he again fell ill, when he noticed that his legs felt heavy "like lead" and that he had become weak. The initial diagnosis was influenza, which may well have been the case as this was during the first wave of the Spanish flu epidemic. However, in reality he was suffering from an even more deadly illness than pneumonic influenza. But he was unaware how seriously ill he was. He wrote to Alice from France on 12 August 1918 telling her "he was quite well and expecting to leave for home on furlough". When she questioned the military authorities about this they wrote, "[I]t would appear that your husband did not mention his illness, not wishing to cause you anxiety".

But in truth he probably did not know what was ailing him until 20 August he was diagnosed with diabetes mellitus, then an incurable and untreatable disease. (It would be another three years before Dr Frederick Grant Banting and Dr Charles Herbert Best at the University of Toronto discovered insulin.) Doctors could only watch their diabetic patients waste away before their eyes and that is what Sergeant Reid did, losing 15 kilograms in a month. He was evacuated to England on 25 August and admitted to Essex County Hospital in



Colchester, England and then transferred to the 1st Australian Auxiliary Hospital at Harefield, where it was reported in September that his condition was improving with treatment. However, he died there on 3 October 1918.

Reid's body was taken to Ireland by his brother Fred, who paid £21.2.0 to do so. He was buried next to his father in the Church of Ireland churchyard at Boho, his funeral being attended by his Irish relations, including his mother, his brother and his sisters, as well as friends

of the family. The funeral report in his service record states:

The deceased soldier was accorded a military funeral, Firing Party, Bugler, and Pallbearers being in attendance. The coffin was draped with the "Union Jack" and surmounted by many beautiful flowers sent from deceased's relatives and friends. A great number were present at the graveside, and the burial service was conducted by the Rev. J. W. Dunlop, Rector of Bohoe [sic]. The grave will be

KT.

14th March,

9.

Dear Madam,

With reference to the report of the regrettable loss of your husband, the late No. 1304, Sergeant T. R. Reid, 2nd Australian Field Artillery Brigade, I am now in receipt of advice which shows that he was admitted to 2nd Field Ambulance, France, on 4.8.18, and transferred to 18th Casualty Clearing Station suffering from influenza. On 21.8.18 he was transferred to Ambulance Train No. 32, and thence to 22nd General Hospital, Camiers. On 25th idem he embarked for England per Hospital Ship "Princess Elizabeth", and was admitted next day to Essex County Hospital, Colchester, suffering with diabetes (slight). On 5.9.18 he was transferred to 1st Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Marefield England, where he died on 3.10.18 from diabetes mellitus. He was buried on 9.10.18 in Boho Private Cemetery County of Ferns, Ireland, Private Grave, Consecrated Ground. The late soldier was accorded a full military funeral, Firing Party, Bugler, and Pallbearers being in attendance. The coffin - of good polished elm - was draped with the "Union Jack" and surmounted by many beautiful flowers sent from relatives and friends. A great number were present at the graveside, including mother, brother & sisters, brother-in-law, uncle & cousin, and friends, and the burial service was conducted by the Revd. J. W. Dunlop, Rector of Boho. Administrative Headquarters A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral. The grave will be turfed, and an oak cross erected by the A.I.F. London.

The utmost care and attention is being devoted, where possible, to the graves of our fallen soldiers. It is understood photographs are being taken as soon as practicable for transmission to next-of-kin.

These additional details are furnished by direction, it being the policy of the Department to forward all information received in connection with deaths of members of the Australian Imperial Force.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs. A. L. Reid,  
"Braoken",  
Wellington St.,  
Queensland.

Major,  
Officer i/c Base Records.

turfed, and an oak cross erected by the A.I.F. London. Administrative Headquarters A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral.

The oak cross has been replaced by a CWGC headstone.

An obituary appeared in a local paper on 10 October 1918. After reciting his life story it continued: His remains arrived in

Enniskillen, on Tuesday evening, and were met at the railway station by a number of military and conveyed to his mother's residence at Kilnamanadoo, Boho, in an Army motor. The funeral took place yesterday (Wednesday) in the family burying ground Boho and was accorded full military honours. Mrs Reid had another son, George, killed on the Western Front some twelve months ago.

Today, inside the church a marble tablet flanked by an Australian Red Ensign and the Union flag hangs on the wall, commemorating Sergeant Reid and his brother George, who was killed in action on 26 October 1917 fighting with the Royal Irish Fusiliers. Their names also appear on the Enniskillen war memorial.

And, of course, I know about the plaque and the flags because my good friend Joe O'Loughlin showed me them. And what a delight it was to see the Australian flag there that bright sunny day in April 2004.

And it's an even greater delight to be back here 10 years later to recount to you the story of Thomas Robert Reid, an Irish Anzac.

*Profile 84*  
*D 52582*  
**D25** Army Form B. 179. **M**

**Medical Report on an Invalid**

Station *M. P. D. Hospital, Harmond*  
Date *11/9/15*

1. Unit *1st BATTALION*  
2. Regimental No. *1304*  
3. Rank *Sgt*  
4. Name *REID Robert*  
5. Age last birthday *40*  
6. Enlisted on *27th Aug 1914* at *MELBOURNE*

7. Former Trade or Occupation *HORSE TRAINER*  
7a. If with previous service in Army, state:  
(a) Former Unit:  
(b) Regimental No. 1:  
(c) Date of Discharge:  
(d) Cause of Discharge:

8. Disability in respect of which invaliding is Proposed.  
(Other disabilities should be reported upon in answer to question No. 19.)  
*Diabetes Mellitus*

**Statement of Case.**  
The answers to the following questions are to be filled in by the Officer in medical charge of the case. It is necessary that he will carefully discriminate between the most important statements and evidence recorded in his military and medical documents. He will also carefully distinguish cases strictly due to service.

9. Date of origin of disability. *July 1915*  
10. Place of origin of disability. *France*

11. Give concisely the essential facts of the history of the disability, using entries on the Medical History Sheet bearing on the case. *First perfectly well until July 30th when suddenly noticed that leg was heavy like lead. Rapidly became worse rapidly conclusion of Diabetes Mellitus. After the day 2 1/2 shot in a month. Under treatment at Gibraltar Hospital, condition has improved patient now feels much improved.*

12. Give your opinion as to the probability of the disability, stating whether in your opinion it is—  
(a) attributable to or aggravated by service during the present war, or by any ordinary military service. (The specific conditions to which it is attributed should be stated, see Note on page 3). *As caused by Active Service*  
(b) constitutional or hereditary, and not aggravated by service during the present war.  
(c) attributable to or aggravated by want of proper care on the man's part, e.g. intemperance, neglect, &c.

13. What is his present condition?  
*Looks somewhat emaciated but condition improving under treatment. I think (Robert) lost 2 1/2 stone weight. As being somewhat the same.*

14. If the disability is an injury, was it caused—  
(a) In action?  
(b) On field service?  
(c) On duty?  
(d) Off duty?  
*How? After being 5" off his hip 6 times, 12 hours at 1st Army Hospital, 1st Army, Tynes, clean. Under, passing on average 150 g in 24 hours. Sugar content 147 g.*

15. Was a Court of Inquiry held on the injury?  
If so—(a) When?  
(b) Where?  
(c) Opinion?  
*Not applicable*

16. Was an operation performed? If so, what?  
*Not applicable*

17. If not, was an operation advised and declined?  
*Not applicable*

18. In case of loss or decay of teeth, is the loss of such the result of disease, injury or disease, directly attributable to active service?  
*Not applicable*

19. Give particulars of any other disabilities existing, but not in themselves sufficient to cause invaliding, and state whether they are attributable to or have been aggravated by service during the present war.  
*Not applicable*

20. Do you recommend—  
(a) Discharge as permanently unfit, or C3  
(b) Change to England?  
*C3*

I have satisfied myself of the general accuracy of this report, and concur therewith, except if

Station *Australian Imperial Force*  
Date *16 SEP 1915*

*W. S. L. M. M. M.*  
Officer in medical charge of case.

*C. J. M. M. M.*  
Officer in charge of Hospital.

\*Loss of teeth due to dental injury while in active service, should be attributed directly, unless there is evidence that it is due to some other cause.  
† Delete this word if no exceptions are to be made.

*Triplicate BR 864*

**AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.**

**BURIAL REPORT REGARDING FUNERAL OF LATE**

No. 1304 Rank *Sergeant* Full Name *REID, Thomas Robert*  
Unit *1st BATTALION* Religion *of St.* Age at death *40* Years.  
Date and Place of Death *26-10-15, 1st Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Harmond*  
Date of Interment *26-10-15*  
Particulars of Cemetery *Bohio Private Cemetery, Co of Pomeroy, Ireland.*  
Separate Single Grave in Virgin Soil, No. *Private*, Section *—*  
If Consecrated Ground *Consecrated*  
Military or Private Funeral *Military*  
Name, Address and Denomination of Officiating Clergyman *Rev. J. J. Dunlop, Rector of Bohio.*  
Undertaker's Name and Address *Good, Polished Elm.*  
Condition and Class of Coffin *Nothing, Brother & Sister.*  
Names and Addresses of Relatives or Friends present at Funeral *Brother-in-law, Uncle & Cousin, also friends.*

**Remarks of Interest to Next-of-Kin.**

The deceased soldier was accorded a Military funeral, firing party, band, and Pallbearers being in attendance. The coffin was draped with the Union Jack and surrounded by many beautiful flowers sent from relatives and friends. A great number were present at the graveside, and the burial service was conducted by the Rev. J. J. Dunlop, Rector of Bohio. The grave will be marked, and an oak cross erected by the A.I.F. London. Administrative Headquarters A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral.

*Humming Capt.*  
Officer in Charge of Records,  
Admin. Hqs., London, S.W. 1.  
(Date) *16th October, 1915*  
See Back.

*Looks somewhat emaciated but condition improving under treatment. I think (Robert) lost 2 1/2 stone weight. As being somewhat the same.*

13. What is his present condition?  
*How? After being 5" off his hip 6 times, 12 hours at 1st Army Hospital, 1st Army, Tynes, clean. Under, passing on average 150 g in 24 hours. Sugar content 147 g.*

14. If the disability is an injury, was it caused—  
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(b) On field service?  
(c) On duty?  
(d) Off duty?  
*Not applicable*

15. Was a Court of Inquiry held on the injury?  
If so—(a) When?  
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*Not applicable*

16. Was an operation performed? If so, what?  
*Not applicable*

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19. Give particulars of any other disabilities existing, but not in themselves sufficient to cause invaliding, and state whether they are attributable to or have been aggravated by service during the present war.  
*Not applicable*

20. Do you recommend—  
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