

NEW ZEALAND MILITARY FORCES.

* N.B.—The form being applicable to any Board of Officers, or Committee, or Court of Inquiry, this blank to be filled in accordingly.

The signature of each officer composing the Board, &c., should be attached at the end of the proceedings.

PROCEEDINGS of a Board of Inquiry

assembled at Trentham Camp

on the 3rd November 1917

by order of Camp Commandant

Trentham

for the purpose of enquiring into and reporting upon
an injury to No. 55184 Driver C.W. O'Brien, A.S.C.
which ended fatally, on the 1st November 1917.

PRESIDENT:

Major D.W. Talbot, H.Q. Staff.

MEMBERS:

2nd Lieut. R.E.B. Hopkirk, 35th Refts.

2nd Lieut. F.O. Bridgeman, 35th Refts.

IN ATTENDANCE.

The Board, having assembled pursuant to order, proceed to
take evidence.

1st Witness:-

Sergeant-Major P. Farley, Army Service Corps, Trentham Camp, states: At about 2.45 p.m. on the 1st November 1917 I was proceeding to Johnstones Farm, Whiteman's valley, accompanied by No. 55184 Driver C.W. O'Brien, to inspect a grazing run for the Horses during Xmas holidays. When nearing the Wallaceville Railway crossing the Mare that O'Brien was riding started to buck throwing Driver O'Brien off on to the road the back of his head striking the road. I obtained assistance and then telephoned to the Military Hospital at Trentham. A medical Officer arrived and Driver O'Brien was taken to Camp hospital. Immediately on my arrival at Trentham camp I reported the accident to Lieutenant Curtis, A.S.C. Driver O'Brien was a fair horseman. Driver O'Brien was in my opinion an all-round horseman both regarding handling horses riding and driving. I detailed O'Brien to accompany me on this particular duty the reason being that he knew where the farm for grazing was situated and he was the one that recommended this farm for the grazing at Xmas. We were on our way from Trentham Camp to see this farm and had trotted from Trentham station almost to Wallaceville station (about 1½ miles) when about 200 yards from the Wallaceville railway crossing the mare O'Brien was riding broke into a canter; it was a bit lively and I ordered O'Brien to straighten her up a bit immediately the mare started to buck and fly about the road. O'Brien stuck to her well for a while but the mare got the best of O'Brien and threw him off and he landed on the metal on the back of his head. I do not consider that O'Brien was to blame in any way and were he alive I should have no hesitation in detailing him for the same duty. This mare I have always considered a very quiet animal and easily managed; several of the men under me have ridden her even barebacked; this mare has never shown any vice and was ridden daily up to about a fortnight before this accident. She had been put out of work for treatment for the past fortnight on account of a sore tail. When saddling this mare up for this duty she was quiet and gave no indication that she would buck but when O'Brien mounted her she certainly played about a bit but did not buck. After starting on the road the mare was a bit erratic which could be expected from a horse that has not been under saddle for a fortnight. It was only after going the first 1½ miles and the mare started to canter that she started to buck. O'Brien was not using a curb just a plain snaffle. This man was performing his duty at the time the accident occurred.

(Sgd) P. FARLEY

3rd November 1917.

Sergt-Major, A.S.C. Trentham Camp.

2nd Witness:-

Lieutenant P.R. Chapman, Transport Officer, Trentham Camp, states:- I am in charge of the A.S.C. Transport, Trentham Camp. On the morning of the 1st November 1917 at the Transport Depot, Trentham, I gave Sergt-Major Farley instructions to proceed to Whiteman's valley and to detail Driver O'Brien to accompany him to inspect a farm there and ascertain whether this farm was suitable for the purpose of turning the A.S.C. horses from this camp out for grazing during the Xmas holidays. Driver O'Brien knew of a farm which he considered suitable for my purpose so I detailed him to accompany Sergt-Major Farley. I know the horse that O'Brien rode and have never known it to show any vice; it has always been a very quiet animal and easily managed. O'Brien I considered one of my best men and a good rider. This mare was put out of hard work for about a fortnight; prior to this accident she was handled daily and was easily managed and I was very surprised when I heard she had bucked O'Brien off. I consider the death of O'Brien was purely accidental and that no blame is attachable to anyone.

(Sgd) P.R. CHAPMAN

3rd November 1917.

Lieutenant, Transport Officer, Trentham.

3rd Witness:- Certificate of Medical Officer (Lt-Colonel J.W.D. Leahy) attached, dated 2/11/17.
Driver O'Brien Charles A.S.C. died in Trentham Military Hospital at 8.30 p.m. on November 1st 1917. Death was the result of head injury said to have been caused by an accident whilst riding a horse at Upper Rutt.

(Sgd) J.W.D. Leahy, Lieut-Colonel, N.Z.M.C.
P.M.O.

FINDING:-

On examination of the witnesses brought before it, the Board is of the opinion:-

- (1) That Driver (No. 55184) C.W. O'Brien, A.S.C. Trentham Camp, received the injuries, which caused his death, by being thrown from a horse on to the metalled road near Wallaceville station at about 2.45 p.m. on the 1st November 1917.
- (2) That Driver O'Brien was performing his military duty at the time the injury (that caused his death) was received.
- (3) That the fatal injury received by Driver O'Brien was accidentally received no blame being attachable to anyone.

RECOMMENDATION:-

The Board recommend that the Dependants of Driver O'Brien receive such compensation as the Financial Regulations allow.

(Sgd) D.W. TALBOT Major, H.Q. Staff, President.

" F.O. BRIDGEMAN, 2/Lt. 35th Refts., Member.

" R.E.B. HOPKIRK, 2/Lt. 35th Refts., Member.

TRENTHAM CAMP,

3rd November 1917.

I concur.

(Sgd) H.R. POTTER

Colonel.

5/11/17.

C.C.