



Personal info

Full name

O'NEILL, Christ D

Date of birth

21 September 1919

Age

24

Place of birth

Clarion, Clarion County, Pennsylvania

Hometown

Clarion County, Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania

Military service

Service number

15011476

Rank

Staff Sergeant

Unit

**579th Bombardment Squadron,
392nd Bombardment Group, Heavy**

Awards

**Purple Heart,
Air Medal**

Death & Grave

Status

Died of Wounds

Date of death

6 November 1943

Cemetery

American War Cemetery Ardennes

Plot	Row	Grave
B	17	19

Immediate family

Members

Owen J. O'Neill (father)
Nellie L. O'Neill (mother)
Charles O'Neill (brother)
James O'Neill (brother)
Harold O'Neill (brother)
Sara O'Neill (sister)
Frances R. O'Neill (sister)
Ruth O'Neill (sister)

Plane data

Serial number

42-7477

Data

Type: B-24H
Nickname: The Drip
Destination: Münster, Germany
Mission: Bombing of the marshalling yards
MACR: 1165

More information

S/Sgt Christ D. O'Neill was a clerk. He joined the Air Corps of the Regular Army at Fort Hayes, Columbus, Ohio on 14 August 1940.

The Group eyewitness accounts noted this airplane peeled off to the left just after the bomb run and gradually lost altitude though all engines appeared to be operating. Seven crewmen were seen to bail out around 22,000 feet and two parachutes of these were seen to open at about 20,000 feet. This account placed the downing of the airplane immediately south but in the target area as verified by the mission route map annotations (which later was clarified somewhat from testimonies given by two surviving crew members after the war).

On 12 January 1949, the Office of the Quartermaster General of the Army was able to contact survivors, Sergeants Anderson and Sutton to learn facts about this mission and losses. Sgt Sutton's account in summation noted that: He was wounded (shot) in the elbow and leg and losing a great deal of blood. He was ordered to bail out after the airplane was hit by enemy fighters and flak and caught on fire. The airplane lost altitude very fast, and as best known crashed finally on the edge of a waterway channel near a town named Bergen op Zoom, the Netherlands. He also noted that Pilot D'Aoust and others in the front had been shot up pretty badly and did not know whether these men bailed out or not. The Liberator had been damaged badly right over the target by flak, and then finished off by fighters.

Sgt Anderson's reply was very similar, noting that it was doubted that the Pilot and Bombardier Etheridge ever successfully exited the crippled plane. He had seen the airplane crash right on the edge of the water at the North Sea. He noted further that the surviving men who parachuted and were taken prisoner had landed near Goes, the Netherlands. Anderson later told his wife that one of the crew was killed when the plane was hit. Another was injured but they could not get to him because of his location in the plane and lack of time. S/Sgt Jereb was severely injured. They put the rip cord in his hand and rolled him out of the plane, hoping he could pull the cord. Anderson thought he was one of the last men to bail out. His parachute caught in a tree and he could not get free before being captured.

S/Sgt O'Neill was badly wounded and taken to a German hospital in Middelburg but died of his injuries the following day, 6 November.

Four crew members were taken prisoner. Six men were killed.

In 2009 it was established with certainty that the plane crashed off the coast of Domburg. A diving ban has since been imposed at the spot where the plane rests under a layer of sand in the sea. In 2024, DPAA decided that there is sufficient reason to believe that the remains of Lt D'Aoust and Lt Etheridge may be in the wreckage. The search for the missing will continue until 3 May 2024. If the action is positive, DPAA will report on this in due time.

Photos



Source of information: Raf Dyckmans, Peter Schouteten, Terry Hirsch, www.B24.net, www.wwiimemorial.com, www.archives.gov, Pennsylvania Veteran Compensation Application File

Photo source: www.findagrave.com, 392nd Bomb Group