



HOBBS

Ernest Llewellyn

Service No: 2189

Basic Information

Name: Ernest Llewellyn Hobbs

Service Number: 2189

Date of Enlistment: 30/03/1916

Age at Enlistment: 21

Civil Occupation: Fireman

Medals, Honours, Awards: British War medal, Victory medal.

Height: 5 feet 10 inches (177.8 cm)

Weight: 100 Pounds (45.4 kg)

Chest measurement: 39 inches

Complexion: Dark

Eye colour: Grey

Hair colour: Brown

Father: Joseph William Hobbs

Mother: Eliza Ann

Wife: Louisa Hunt

Children: Ernest Llewellyn, Dorothy Isabelle, Gladys/Gladwys Jean, Muriel Louise, Lorna M. Clara Marjory, Hazel D.

Life Story

Ernest Llewellyn Hobbs, known as Ernie, was born to Joseph and Eliza Hobbs in Roath, Glamorgan Wales, in 1896.

In 1912, at the age of fifteen, Ernest embarked aboard the *Gothic* in London, bound for Fremantle, travelling 3rd class. His occupation was listed as labourer, and he travelled alone, but Ernest (Ernie) had an older brother, Daniel, who was already in Western Australia, living in the Northam area.

Daniel first appears in the records in late 1911, as the bandmaster of the Northam Town Band. He played the cornet, the euphonium and also sang. Ernest played the cornet, so it appears the family were musically talented.

In February 1913, Ernest passed the selection board for the Western Australian Government Railways (W.A.G.R.) and commenced work as a cleaner before being transferred to Northam in July 1913. In February 1914, he passed the examination for a fireman and, later that year, Ernest transferred to York, where he remained until he was granted leave to join the A.I.F. in 1916.

Ernest became a member of the York Brass Band some time before his enlistment, and there was a farewell social held at the Oddfellows' Hall in honour of his departure. Five members from the York Brass Band had joined the A.I.F. at that point.

Ernest enlisted on the 30th March 1916. He was under twenty-one when he enlisted, though he stated his age as twenty-one and ten months on his enlistment papers. Later that same year, presumably after turning twenty-one, Ernest married Louisa Hunt in York.

On the 9th August 1916, Ernest embarked aboard HMT A28 *Miltiades* at Fremantle and arrived at Plymouth, England, on the 25th September.

He proceeded overseas to France on the 4th December and, on the 23rd December, transferred from the 4th Remounts to the 51st Battalion.



Outdoor group portrait of the Band of the 51st Battalion.

The Western Mail 17th December 1917

Ernest Llewellyn Hobbs is standing in the back row 4th from the left.

Courtesy Australian War Memorial

Apart from two periods of leave and several stays in hospital, Ernest remained in the field for the duration of the War. It was not until the 8th April 1919 that he finally left France for England.

Ernest spent time with the No. 3 Training Battalion at Hurdcott, England, before being sent home. He was found to be Absent Without Leave between the 3rd May and 5th May and had to forfeit two days' pay.

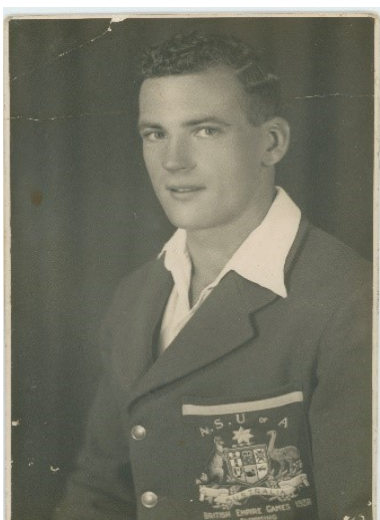
Ernest embarked the *Bremen* on the 14th June 1919 to return to Australia. He arrived at Fremantle on the 18th July 1919.

Ernest resumed his position as a fireman with the W.A.G.R. at York on the 25th August 1919, having passed the medical examination on the 23rd July. He was officially discharged from the armed forces on the 30th August 1919.

Ernest continued to live in York with his wife and his growing family until 1937. During those years, they resided first at Avon Terrace, then Pool Street. Ernest also re-joined the York Brass Band and performed many times with other bands, including the York Orchestral Society and “The Tatlers,” an entertainment company. In 1923, he became conductor of the York Orchestral Society.

Ernest played the cornet at ANZAC Day services in York and at the unveiling of the York War Memorial on ANZAC Day 1923. He also played at the 1920 funeral service of York resident, George Wansbrough, and, in 1924, at the funeral of his good friend (and George’s grandson) Harry Wansbrough.

In 1923, Ernest’s cornet was amongst musical instruments and money stolen from members of the York Brass Band by W. A. E. Ruse who had recently been appointed as bandmaster. The cornet was later found in a pawn shop in Perth.



Ernie’s son Ernest Hobbs

Courtesy Ernest Robert
Hobbs

Ernest was also heavily involved on the committee of the York Swimming Club, which formed in 1930. His children were known for their swimming prowess and competed in club competitions. Ernest’s son, also called Ernest, represented Australia at the Empire Games in Sydney in January 1938, where he won a bronze medal.

At some point in 1937, Ernest and Louisa moved to Narrogin, where Ernest worked as a locomotive driver. They later moved to Perth, and Ernest continued to drive trains into the 1960s.

During his time in Perth, Ernest remained heavily involved with bands and music. He was a member of the City of Perth Brass Band and the Air Force Association Band. A room in his house was used simply to house his extensive range of sheet music. Ernest also taught Charles Court, later Sir Charles Court, the Premier of Western Australia, to play the cornet.

Ernest died on the 18th August 1982.



Ernest Llewellyn Hobbs

Courtesy Ernest Robert
Hobbs

Acknowledgements

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