

# *Gunner of Renown*



Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company

## **Lieutenant General Sir Joseph John Talbot HOBBS, KCB, KCMG, VD**

**(1864-1938)**

Talbot Hobbs was an architect but soldiering became virtually a second career. Beginning with service in the 1st Cinque Ports Artillery Volunteers in 1883, he joined the Volunteer Field Artillery in Perth in 1887 and was commissioned in 1889. In 1903, he commanded 1st (Western Australian) Field Battery, Australian Field Artillery. In 1908, as a lieutenant colonel, he took command of the Western Australian Mixed Brigade, and, in 1913, the 22nd Infantry Brigade with the rank of colonel. He attended gunnery courses in England in 1902 and 1906 and the department of military science course, University of Sydney, in 1909.

He was attached to the British Army for training in 1897 and 1913. Most of this was at his expense. He was also staff officer for army engineering services in 1906-12 and aide-de-camp to the governor general in 1908-17.

On the outbreak of WWI, Hobbs was appointed CRA 1st Division, AIF. During the first few weeks on Gallipoli in 1915 he clashed with his commander, Major General W. T. Bridges, over the employment of his guns. Bridges insisted that they be dragged up the steep ridges and emplaced in the front line although their fire was ineffective. However, by June Hobbs and other artillery commanders had organized a workable deployment of all the batteries so that the Anzac front was covered. He commanded 1st Division temporarily in October but despite his protests was evacuated from Gallipoli on 9 November suffering from dysentery.

After the expansion of the AIF, in March 1916, Hobbs went to France with the expanded 1st Division Artillery which he commanded successfully throughout the heavy fighting for Pozieres and Mouquet Farm. He was acting GOCRA 1st Anzac Corps from October until December 1916 when he was given command of 5th Division on 1 January 1917. After the fighting ceased, he took command of the Australian Corps until it was disbanded in May 1919.

He had hardly resumed civilian life when, in February 1920, he was called to Melbourne as one of the committee of six generals advising the government on the future organization of the Australian Military Forces, an appointment he held until retirement from the army in 1927. From 1922 he was military representative of the faculty of engineering, University of Western Australia, which conferred on him the honorary degree of LL.D on his return from the war.

In April 1938, Hobbs left for France with his wife and daughter to attend the unveiling of the Australian War Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux, the competition for which he had adjudicated. He suffered a heart attack at sea and died on 21 April. His body was brought back from Colombo to Perth for burial with state and military honours on 14 May after a

service at St George's Cathedral. A memorial to Hobbs was unveiled in 1940 on the Esplanade in Perth. Memorial Portraits by James Quinn, Frederick Leist and Albert Fullwood are in the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, and by Ernest Buckmaster in the West Australian Army Museum.

Source: A. J. Hill, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, M.U.P., Vol. 10, p315-17

For more information follow the link below.

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/hobbs-sir-joseph-john-talbot-6690>