

## AUSTRALIAN GUNNER OBITUARY RESOURCE

**Colonel Athol Joseph Hobbs, ED (RL)**

**(2n February 1899 – 28<sup>th</sup> October 1979)**

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The death of Colonel Athol Hobbs on October 28<sup>th</sup>, 1979 brought to a close a family tradition of military service covering a period of more than 70 years.

The second son of the late Lieutenant General Sir J. J. Talbot Hobbs, KCB, KCMG, VD, Hobbs was born in Perth Western Australia. His early education was at Scotch College, Claremont in the years 1908 – 1912 and then Bedford School in England from 1913 to 1916. He completed a short course at Sandhurst in 1916 and was commissioned in the Indian Army. He served with the Gurkhas on the sub-continent during the period 1917 – 1923 and attained the rank of Captain. While completing his professional training at the College of Architecture, London after the war, he served with the Royal Artillery, Territorial Army (TA). While in India, Hobbs married Isabel (Habette) Hearn, a trainee nurse, in October 1920. Habette died in unfortunate circumstance while the couple were visiting Perth after the birth of their first child John. Hobbs remarried in 1931 to Evelyn Croxon and the couple had a child Michael who later studied architecture before taking up medicine. After Evelyn's death in

1969, Athol Hobbs married for the third time to Aileen Hamilton in 1970.

Returning to Australia in 1929, Hobbs immediately joined the Citizens Military Force (CMF) and was posted as a Regimental Officer with 3<sup>rd</sup> Field Brigade, Australian Artillery. He was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and appointed to command his unit in January 1937. With the raising of the 2<sup>nd</sup> AIF in October 1939, Hobbs was appointed to raise and command the 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> Field Regiment. The 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> was formed with soldiers from South Australia, Western Australia, Darwin and New South Wales. The Regiment began basic training at Woodside Camp during November 1939 before moving to Ingleburn to undertake more involved training. It is interesting to note that at this stage the regiment did not have any guns.

In May 1940, the unit, as part of the 6<sup>th</sup> Division, was deployed to the United Kingdom to defend against a possible invasion following the fall of France. The unit was established at Tidworth in Wiltshire and later in Colchester. 'Granny' Hobbs left the unit in September 1940 and was seconded to special duty. His old Regiment was sent to North Africa in November 1940 where it briefly saw action prior to being sent to Greece and Crete in 1941.

After the Second World War, a Court of Contemplation designed by Athol Hobbs was constructed at Kings Park in Perth to the west of the State War Memorial (1929)