



Private Eliol (*Elias* in a second source) Hobbs (Regimental Number 5413) is interred in the Church of England Cemetery in Red Cliff (also found as *Redcliffe*), Bonavista Bay.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a *fisherman*, Eliol Hobbs travelled to St. John's, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland, from Princeton by train – in First Class, no less - on May 21 of 1918*. The fare, paid for by the Department of Militia, was one dollar sixty-five cents. He then presented himself for medical examination at the *Church Lads Brigade Armoury** on May 24, 1918 – a procedure which revealed his swollen tonsils and a history of pneumonia yet, one must presume, found him otherwise...*Fit for Foreign Service*.

And thus the proceedings were to continue.

**The building was to serve as the Regimental Headquarters in Newfoundland for the duration of the conflict.*

It was on the day of that medical assessment, May 24, and at the same venue, that Eliol Hobbs was now to be enlisted. He was engaged...*for the duration of the war**...at the daily private soldier's rate of a single dollar to which was to be appended a ten-cent per diem Field Allowance.

**At the outset of the War, perhaps because it was felt by the authorities that it would be a conflict of short duration, the recruits enlisted for only a single year. As the War progressed, however, this was obviously going to cause problems and the men were encouraged to re-enlist. Later recruits – as of or about May of 1916 - signed on for the 'Duration' at the time of their original enlistment.*

A further several hours were then to go by before there came to pass, again at the *CLB Armoury* on Harvey Road, the final formality of his enlistment: attestation. On that same twenty-fourth day of May* he pledged his allegiance to the reigning monarch, George V, whereupon, at that moment, Eliol Hobbs became...*a soldier of the King.*

**This was the month during which the Newfoundland Military Service Act (conscription) came into effect. From May 11 through to the end of the War, the Department of Militia called a total of 1,470 men into active service. However, nothing amongst his papers appears to suggest under which circumstances – as a volunteer or a conscripted man – Eliol Hobbs was to be taken into service.*

It seems not to be documented as to whether he was granted a period of leave at home – as many were - before being required to report...*to duty*...back in St. John's when ordered to do so at a later date. However, given that he was to be hospitalized eighteen days after his attestation, it may well be that he spent that period in St. John's.

During that eighteen-day interim it is likely that Private Hobbs reported...*to duty*...to be quartered in the temporary barracks apparently established since 1915 in the St. John's curling rink and the Prince's Skating Rink in the eastern end of the city.

(Right: This photograph of the Prince's Rink in St. John's with military personnel, apparently attired in uniforms of Great War vintage, on parade is from the Ice Hockey Wiki web-site. There appears to be no further information a propos.)



(continued)

On June 11, Private Hobbs was admitted into the Military Hospital for Infectious Diseases where he was diagnosed as suffering from measles, and where, on the following day, was to be reported by Doctor Burden as being...*seriously ill*.

On June 21, that evaluation would be amended to that of...*dangerously ill*.

The son of Thomas Hobbs, fisherman, and of Caroline Hobbs of Redcliffe, Bonavista Bay, he was reported as having...*died of sickness...in hospital St. John's – of...pneumonia following measles...- on the morning of June 22, 1918.*

The remains of Private Hobbs were embalmed and placed in a coffin by Mr. Oke, the undertaker, and on the following day, Sunday, June 23, they travelled by the daily express train from St. John's to Shoal Harbour, thence to Princeton. His beloved watch and chain were returned to his father.



Eliot Hobbs had enlisted at a *declared* nineteen years of age. Thus far the exact date of his birth has proved to be elusive.

Private Hobbs' Commonwealth War Graves headstone was shipped via Port Union on August 8, 1923, four years after having been arranged for, on the SS Malakoff.

(Right: *The sacrifice of Private Hobbs is honoured on the Summerville War Memorial. – photograph from 2011*)

The above dossier has been researched, compiled and produced by Alistair Rice. Please email any suggested amendments or content revisions if desired to criceadam@yahoo.ca. Last updated – January 31, 2023.