

# Sutton Veny

## Roll of Honour



*Lest we Forget*

### World War II



**62501 LIEUTENANT COLONEL**

**W. P. HOBBS**

**ROYAL ARTILLERY**

**12TH MAY, 1943 AGE 29**

*Be Strong*

*And Of A Good Courage*

## William Paul Hobbs

William Paul Hobbs was born in 1914 to parents Capt. Reginald Francis Arthur Hobbs and Frances Graham Hobbs (nee Stirling). His birth was registered in June quarter, 1914 in the district of Medway, Kent. His parents had married on 29<sup>th</sup> August, 1906 in the district of Sudbury, Essex/Suffolk borders.

Before William Paul Hobbs was born, the 1911 Census recorded his parents living at Sea Cot, Hillcrest Road, Hythe, Kent, in a 9 roomed dwelling. His parents were recorded as Reginald F. A. Hobbs (Capt. Royal Engineers, aged 33, born Manchester, Lancashire) & Frances Graham Hobbs (aged 29, born Woolwich, Kent). Reginald & Frances Hobbs had been married for 4 years with 2 children, none deceased, however, only one child was listed on the Census - Peter Graham Hobbs, aged under 1 month. Three servants were also listed – Mary Peddir (aged 46, married, monthly nurse), Alice Isabel Halsworth (aged 26, Housemaid) & Lois Jeffery (aged 30, Cook).

The 1939 Kelly's Directory listed Brig.-Gen. Reginald Francis Arthur Hobbs C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O. as a private resident living at Little Newnham, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire.

William Paul Hobbs enlisted with the Royal Artillery. He was given the service number of 62501. His birth was listed as Kent & his residence was listed as Wiltshire.

Captain William Paul Hobbs was awarded an M.B.E. – Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire –

*Captain (temporary Major) William Paul Hobbs (62501), Royal Regiment of Artillery (Warminster)*

*(Supplement to the London Gazette – 18 February, 1943)*



**M.B.E.**

Lieutenant Colonel William Paul Hobbs was killed in action on 12<sup>th</sup> May, 1943, near Enfidaville, Tunisia, aged 29 years.

Lieutenant Colonel William Paul Hobbs was buried in Enfidaville War Cemetery, Tunisia – Grave No. IV. C. 27. His death is acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Major William Paul Hobbs was Mentioned in Despatches & this was announced in the London Gazette dated 14 October, 1943. *(A soldier mentioned in dispatches (or despatches) is one whose name appears in an official report written by a superior officer and sent to the high command, in which is described the soldier's gallant or meritorious action in the face of the enemy.)*

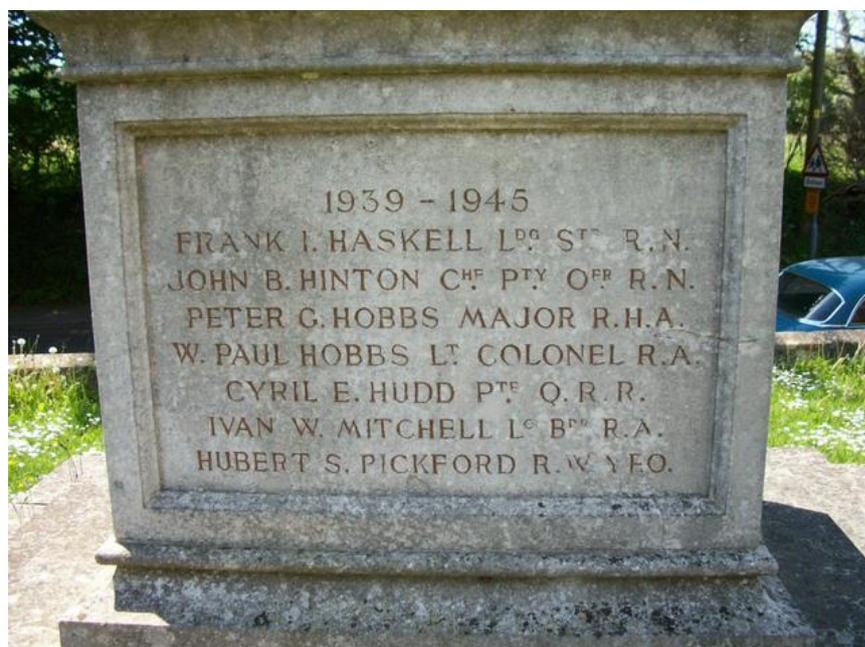
The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Lieutenant Colonel William Paul Hobbs, 62501 as being the son of Brigadier-General Reginald Francis Arthur Hobbs C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O and Frances Graham Hobbs (nee Stirling) of Sutton Veny, Wiltshire. His brother, Major Peter Graham Hobbs, also died on service. Lieutenant Colonel William Paul Hobbs was commanding 111 Field Regiment, Royal Artillery. Theatre of War – Middle East (Egypt & Libya).

Administration was granted at Birmingham on 9 November, 1943 – “Hobbs, William Paul of Little Newnham, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire died 12 May, 1943 on war service. Administration to Reginald Francis Arthur Hobbs, retired Brigadier-General. Effects £208 10s. 4d.”

Lieutenant Colonel William Paul Hobbs is remembered on the Sutton Veny War Memorial, located in the foreground of St. John the Evangelist Church at Sutton Veny.



**Sutton Veny War Memorial** (Photos by Andrea Charlesworth 2012)



William Paul Hobbs, along with his brother Peter Graham Hobbs, are both remembered on a Memorial Plaque located inside St. John the Evangelist Church at Sutton Veny.



Proud And

Loving Memory

Peter Graham Hobbs

Royal Horse Artillery Brigade Major  
7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division Eighth Army  
Killed in Action On 27<sup>th</sup> May 1942  
Near Bir Hacheim Libya Aged 31

And His Brother

William Paul Hobbs M.B.E.  
Lieut Colonel Commanding 111<sup>th</sup> Field  
Regt Royal Artillery Eighth Army  
Killed in Action On 12<sup>th</sup> May 1943  
Near Enfidaville Tunisia Aged 29

They were lovely and pleasant in their lives

## Newspaper Notices

- HOBBS – In May, 1943, killed in action in Tunisia, Lieut.-Colonel William Paul Hobbs, M.B.E., Royal Artillery, Eighth Army, very dearly loved youngest son of Brigadier-General and Mrs R.F.A. Hobbs, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire, aged 29. (*The Times* – Thursday 27 May, 1943)

- The King has been graciously pleased to approve that the following be Mentioned in recognition of gallant and distinguished services in the Middle East:-

Royal Regiment of Artillery

Capt. (temp Maj.) W. P. Hobbs, M.B.E. (62051) (Killed in action)

(*Supplement to London Gazette* – 14 October, 1943)

- HOBBS – In proud and loving memory of Peter and Paul, Eighth Army, killed instantly in action.

Libya, May 27, 1942

Tunisia, May 12, 1943

“Quo fas et gloria ducunt”

(27 May, 1944) (Source – *Andrews Newspaper Index Cards*)

## Wellington College, Crowthorne, Berkshire Roll of Honour 1939-1945

The youngest of three brothers in the Orange (1927 to 1932) and a Prefect, Lieutenant-Colonel William Paul Hobbs, M.B.E., Royal Artillery, had a startling athletic record at Wellington. He won the Talbot Medal, captaining the rugger XV and the shooting VIII, was Victor Ludorum and broke all school records in the high jump with a jump of 5 ft. 6ins. He was an Under Officer at Woolwich, where he won his rugger blue. Posted to the 1st Light Brigade, he fired the salute at Stirling Castle on the accession of King George VI. In 1938 he was given his jacket and posted to M. Battery, R.H.A. in Palestine. Promoted Captain in 1940 he took part in the dash to Beda Fumm in February, 1941 to cut off the Italians retreating from Benghazi. In November, 1942 he was acting G.I, 7th Armoured Division and was among the first officers to enter Tripoli. In January, 1943, he was given command of C. Battery, R.H.A. in which his grandfather had served in the Crimea. After being all through the advance from Mersa Matruh to Enfidaville, he was killed by a shell on the last day of fighting in Tunisia, May 12th, 1943. He was awarded the M.B.E. in 1942.

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## Enfidaville War Cemetery, Tunisia

The town of Enfidaville is approximately 100 kilometres south of Tunis, via the autoroute on the main coast road.

In May 1943, the war in North Africa came to an end in Tunisia with the defeat of the Axis powers by a combined Allied force.

The campaign began on 8 November 1942, when Commonwealth and American troops made a series of landings in Algeria and Morocco. The Germans responded immediately by sending a force from Sicily to

northern Tunisia, which checked the Allied advance east in early December. Meanwhile, in the south, the Axis forces defeated at El Alamein were withdrawing into Tunisia along the coast through Libya, pursued by the Allied Eighth Army. By mid April 1943, the combined Axis force was hemmed into a small corner of north-eastern Tunisia and the Allies were grouped for their final offensive.

The Eighth Army attack on the position at Enfidaville on 19 April captured the village, but strong resistance meant no further progress was possible. Attacks further north met with greater success and Tunis fell on 7 May, Bizerta on the 8th. By 11 May, the position at Enfidaville was surrounded at resistance ceased on the following day.

Most of those buried at Enfidaville War Cemetery died in the final battles from March to the beginning of May.

The cemetery contains 1,551 Commonwealth burials of the Second World War, 88 of them unidentified.



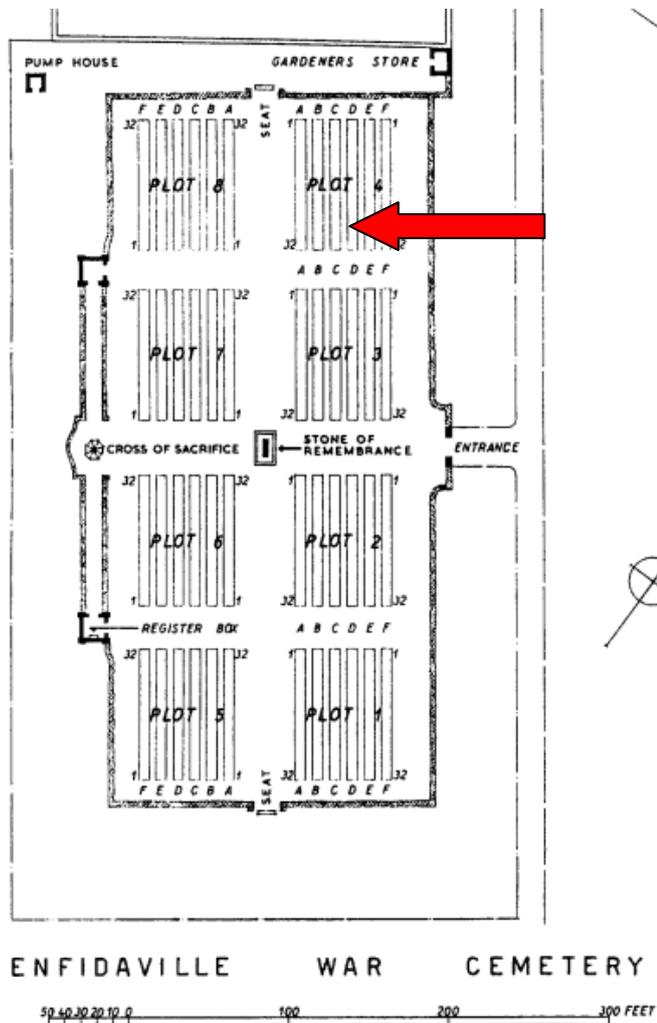
*(Photos & information – CWGC)*



Photo of Lieutenant Colonel William Paul Hobbs' headstone in Enfidaville War Cemetery, Tunisia.



*(Photo by Andrea Charlesworth)*



The Tunisia Campaign (also known as the Battle of Tunisia) was a series of battles that took place in Tunisia during the North African Campaign of the Second World War, between Axis and Allied forces. The Allies consisted of British Imperial Forces, including Polish and Greek contingents, with American and French corps. The battle opened with initial success by the German and Italian forces, but the massive supply and numerical superiority of the Allies led to the Axis's complete defeat. Over 230,000 German and Italian troops were taken as prisoners of war, including most of the Afrika Korps.

On 30 April, it had become clear to Montgomery and Alexander that Eighth Army's attack north from Enfidaville into strongly-held and difficult terrain would not succeed. Alexander therefore gave Montgomery a holding task and transferred British 7th Armoured Division, Indian 4th Infantry Division and 201st Guards Brigade from Eighth Army to First Army, (joining 1st Armoured Division which had transferred before the main offensive).<sup>[1]</sup>

The necessary movements were completed by the night of 5 May. Anderson had arranged for a dummy concentration of tanks near Bou Arada on the IX Corps front to deflect attention from the arrival of 7th Armoured in the Medjez sector. In the event, he achieved a considerable measure of surprise as to the size of his armoured force when the attack went in.

The final assault was launched at 0330 on 6 May by British IX Corps, now commanded by Lieutenant-General Brian Horrocks who had taken over from the wounded John Crocker, V Corps having made a

preliminary attack on 5 May to capture high ground and secure IX Corps' left flank. The British 4th and Indian 4th Infantry Divisions, concentrated on a narrow front and supported by heavy artillery concentrations, broke a hole in the defences for 6th and 7th Armoured Divisions to pass through. On 7 May, British armour entered Tunis, and American infantry from II Corps which had continued its advance in the north, entered Bizerte.

*(Wikipedia)*

Lieutenant Colonel William Paul Hobbs was killed in action on 12 May, 1943.

**On this day in history, May 12, 1943:**

World War II in North Africa ended in 1943, when Axis forces surrendered, and 275,000 German and Italian troops were captured after the final assaults on Tunis and Bizerte.

The German commander in chief of Axis forces in North Africa was seized, and 12 German generals, one of whom had said he would fight to his last bullet, also gave up.

French forces received the surrender of 25,000 Axis soldiers. The Americans took 38,000 prisoners. Thus, Adolf Hitler's adventure in North Africa proved to be a disaster. The American, British and French armies all played a major part in the final victory.