



Nobbs With Medals On President's Cup Winner 2013

William Nobbs, Will as he was known, was born on 9th August 1887 in Colchester, son of Robert and Ellen and was one of seven children, Ellen, Florence, Herbert, Gertie, Edith and Beatrice. In 1891 Will's father was employed as an Inn Worker at the Flying Fox on Harwich Road, Colchester, the family living in the Public House with him. By 1901 they had moved to 43 Stanwell Street and Robert had become a Cab Driver, moving again later in life to Rowhedge Road, Old Heath.

Will married Annie Bosley during the first quarter of 1911 in Farnham, and they subsequently lived at 49 Winton Road, Southsea, Hampshire.

After his schooling, Will worked as a Motor Mechanic at Messrs Gray's Engineering Works at Hythe before attesting and joining the regular Army on 16th April 1909 aged 22. He enlisted into the Army Service Corps, number 46211 and was promoted to Corporal and Sergeant. Following the outbreak of World War 1 on 4th August 1914, Will entered France eight days later on 12th as part of the British Expeditionary Force, serving in the 59 Mechanical Transport Company, 1st Divisional Support Column as a Foreman and later promoted to Mechanist Staff Sergeant, with a new service number M/27507.

During the War he saw extensive service in France and in the London Gazette of 14th September 1916 was awarded the Military Medal, for bravery in the field, whilst serving in the 1st Divisional Train ASC. Although his citation is not available, a local newspaper reported that *Will was, with others responsible for capturing 15 German soldiers and a large quantity of ammunition, and had put up two miles of barbed wire entanglements whilst under heavy shell fire.* The story of the German capture is repeated later in this file in Will's own words in a letter written to his wife, although it is somewhat understated! Will may also have been mentioned in despatches during the war but this has yet to be confirmed.

Toward the end of his service in France he worked from the Bethune Station, and left here on the morning of 17th November 1917 travelling to Mantova in Italy arriving on 22nd. He remained here for a week and on 30th moved to Padua for one day and then on to Fanzola on 1st December. Two days later he travelled to St Florians for two days and thence to Trevignans on 5th where he remained for a month before moving finally to Albaredo on 5th January 1918 where he worked as a Workshops Foreman in the Anti Aircraft Battery 1145 Company RASC.

Following the signing of the Armistice Will was awarded, in addition to his MM, the 1914 Star with clasp 4 Aug-2 Nov 1914, 1914-18 British War and Victory Medals.

On 15th January 1919 he was discharged from the RASC, his service described as *'Foreman fitter. Good capable mechanic'*, immediately re-enlisting under Army Order 4 of 1919 and continued his service, being awarded the Army - Long Service & Good conduct Medal in about 1924. He was initially based at Aldershot but later posted to British

India and promoted to Staff Sergeant Major where he was awarded the India General Service Medal with clasp 'North West Frontier 1930-31'. On 14th October 1933 aged 46 he was Commissioned as a Lieutenant (Mechanist Officer) in the Royal Indian Army Service Corps (Mechanical Transport) where he became the Officer in charge of the Workshops No 5 Mechanical Transport Company Indian Army Service Corps, service number 128588, at the base in the Waziristan District.

He moved from Waziristan on 29th January 1934 having built up an excellent working relationship with his Indian subordinates and was presented with a coveted 'Farewell Address' Scroll. He moved to Chaklala, a major populated area of the city of Rawalpindi in the Punjab Province and a year later was awarded the Silver Jubilee Medal 1935 for his services followed in 1937 by the Coronation Medal 1937.

On 16th July 1939 aged 52 William retired from the RIASC, but on 25th May 1940 eight months after the outbreak of World War 2 he accepted an offer of re-employment with the RASC and reported for duty at the No 1 MT Depot, Feltham, Middlesex on 1st June. During the War he was promoted to War Substantive Captain and in May 1944 joined the Old Contemptibles' Association. He retired a second time on 15th August 1945 aged 59.

Will continued his association with the Old Contemptibles' Association serving in his local branch together with his rapidly diminishing band of 'Chums', as members were known.

He lived at 69 Hanworth Road, Feltham, Middlesex and died on 28th April 1983 aged 95 in Surrey, 65 years after the signing of the Armistice.

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