

## **Private Bertrand Stanley Cobb®**

**Regimental number: 28539**

**8th Battalion, King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment)**

**born: 1896 - died: 11 May 1918**

Bertrand Stanley Cobb was born in 1896 in Nottingham,<sup>1</sup> the son of Joseph Green Cobb and Maria Wilkins Cobb.<sup>2</sup> His father Joseph was born on 21 July 1873<sup>3</sup> in East Retford, Nottinghamshire,<sup>4</sup> and his mother, the former Maria Wilkins Hall, the following year, on 29 August 1874,<sup>5</sup> in Nottingham.<sup>6</sup> Joseph and Maria married in Nottingham in 1895. Bertrand was their first son. A second son, Leslie George, was born in 1904.<sup>7</sup> In between the births of their two sons they had a daughter, Helen May, who was born in 1902 but sadly died a few months later.<sup>8</sup>

In 1901, the family was living at 18 Raleigh Street, Nottingham, where Joseph was a druggist's traveller. John Twigg, a chemist's assistant, was boarding with the family.<sup>9</sup> Ten years later, the family was living at 35 Exeter Road in Nottingham. Bertrand had joined his father in the pharmaceutical business and was working as a packer in a druggist's warehouse.<sup>10</sup>

Bertrand enlisted in the British Expeditionary Force in Nottingham on 30 January 1916, at the age of 19,<sup>11</sup> when he and the family were living at 38 Huntingdon Street, Nottingham. Bertrand was 5' 3¼" tall and a printer. He was mobilized in March 1916 but then reported to the Army Reserve because he was medically unfit to serve. He appears to have re-enlisted in the Labour Corps on 26 February 1917. He transferred to the 11th Battalion of the King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment) in September 1917 and on 13 September arrived in Etaples, France.

At the beginning of May 1918, his battalion was on the front line near Hinges, in northern France.<sup>12</sup> It was relieved by the 1st Battalion of the Northumberland Fusiliers and sent to Division Reserve for five days. On 9 May 1918, the battalion rejoined the front line in Locon. That day was a quiet one, although a lieutenant and several Other Ranks were injured by the battalion's own fire. The following day, two prisoners were captured in the early hours of the morning, but there were also five casualties from the battalion; Bertrand may have been one of these.

On 10 May he was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station with shrapnel wounds to both his legs—both of which had to be amputated. He died the following day and was buried on 12 May in Pernes British Military Cemetery (Plot 2, Row B, Grave 41)<sup>13</sup> with the Canadian chaplain J. K. Tibbits presiding.<sup>14</sup>



**Private Bertrand Stanley Cobb's gravestone**

Source: *Find a Grave*

<https://www.findagrave.com/>;

accessed 17 January 2018

His mother was his next of kin and was notified of his death. His father had the following inscription placed on his gravestone:

EVER IN OUR THOUGHTS  
DEAR SON<sup>15</sup>

Pernes British Military Cemetery was only set up in April 1918 when No. 1 and No. 4 CCCSs came to Pernes, driven back by the German advance.<sup>16</sup> Bertrand was one of 195 admissions to No. 1 CCCS on 10 May. In that month, a total of nearly 4,000 soldiers were admitted and 115 died.<sup>17</sup>

Bertrand's possessions in the field, which were returned to his family, included an identity disk and strap, letters, photos, a pipe, a diary, five religious books, a mirror and case, a comb in a case, a notebook, a wristlet watch and strap, a nine-karat gold ring, two photos, cases, postcards, a razor in a case and badges.

After the war, his parents moved from Nottingham to London. They were living at 194 Trundley's Road, in Deptford, London SE8, when the army contacted them about Bertrand's medals and memorial scroll. The police had assisted in finding his parents and, in 1921, a report from the Metropolitan Police to the Colonel in Charge of Infantry Records noted:

I beg to report having made inquiries at the above address and was informed that Mrs. Cobb had left that address over two years. I traced her to her present address 194, Trundleys Road., Deptford where I saw her and her husband but they both declined to fill in the form, and stated they had informed the Officer in Charge of Records that they did not wish to receive the plaque and scroll, and they did not wish to be worried anymore.

The family did not want more reminders of their loss. Written across the form requesting information about Bertrand's family was:

The boy's mother does not wish to have her heart completely broken by further reminders. Please do not trouble to send the scroll, etc.

In 1939, Bertrand's parents were living at 105 Westway in the Merton and Morden Urban District in Surrey. His father was a brush salesman.<sup>18</sup> Joseph died on 3 March 1957 in Surrey.<sup>19</sup> The date of Maria's death was not found.

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<sup>1</sup> "GRO online index-birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>; accessed 17 January 2018) entry for Cobb, Bertrand Stanley, Registration district: Nottingham, Volume 07B, Page 345

<sup>2</sup> *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org); accessed 17 January 2018), entry for Cobb, Bertrand Stanley, Service No: 28539

<sup>3</sup> "1939 Register," *Findmypast* ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk); accessed 18 January 2018), entry for Joseph G. Cobb, Ref: RG101/1362D/008/43, Letter code: —

<sup>4</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 17 January 2018), entry for Joseph Green Cobb, Registration district: East Retford, Inferred county: Nottinghamshire, Volume: 7b, Page: 1

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- <sup>5</sup> "1939 Register," *Findmypast* ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk): accessed 18 January 2018), entry for Joseph G. Cobb
- <sup>6</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 January 2018), entry for Maria Wilkins Hall, Registration district: Nottingham, Inferred county: Nottinghamshire, Volume: 7b, Page: 266
- <sup>7</sup> "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 17 January 2018) entry for Cobb, Leslie George, Registration district: Nottingham, Volume 07B, Page 430
- <sup>8</sup> "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 17 January 2018) entry for Cobb, Helen May, Registration district: Nottingham, Volume 07B, Page 420, "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 January 2018), entry for Helen May Cobb, Registration district: Nottingham, Inferred county: Nottinghamshire, Volume: 7b, Page: 202
- <sup>9</sup> "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 January 2018), entry for Bertrand S. Cobb, Registration district: Nottingham, Sub-registration district: Nottingham North West, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 40, Piece: 3185, Folio: 179, Page: 32, Household schedule number: 225
- <sup>10</sup> "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 January 2018), entry for Bertrand Stanley Cobb, Registration district: Bolton, Registration district number: 461, Sub-registration district: Nottingham, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 430, Sub-registration district: Nottingham North West Household schedule number: 7, Piece: 20599
- <sup>11</sup> "British Army WWI Service Records, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 January 2018), entry for Bertrand Stanley Cobb. Unless otherwise indicated, all information about Bertrand's military career comes from this source.
- <sup>12</sup> "UK, WWI War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany), 1914–1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 January 2018), Division: 3rd Division, Diary entry start date: 76th Brigade. 3rd Division. 1/8th Battalion King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment August 1918, Diary dates: 1915–1919, 1915–1918, Diary entry location: 76th Brigade. 3rd Division. 1/8th Battalion King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment August 1918, Regiments in diary: King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment, Royal Welsh Fusiliers, Piece description: Piece 1436: 76 Infantry Brigade (1915–1919), Piece number: 1436
- <sup>13</sup> *Find a Grave*, database and images (<https://www.findagrave.com> : accessed 06 March 2018), memorial page for Private Bertrand Stanley Cobb (unknown–11 May 1918), Find A Grave Memorial no. [123047119](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/123047119), citing Pernes British Cemetery, Pernes, Departement du Pas-de-Calais, Nord-Pas-de-Calais, France; Maintained by Military Historian (contributor [47181822](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/123047119)).
- <sup>14</sup> "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* ([www.bifhsgo.ca](http://www.bifhsgo.ca): accessed 17 January 2018), entry for Cobb, B
- <sup>15</sup> *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org): accessed 17 January 2018), entry for Cobb. Bertrand Stanley
- <sup>16</sup> "Pernes British Military Cemetery," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/11600/PERNES%20BRITISH%20CEMETERY>: accessed 13 January 2015)
- <sup>17</sup> "War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13–1919/03/31," *Library and Archives Canada* ([http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FINDD&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202\\_e.html&r=1&f=G](http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FINDD&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G): accessed 15 December 2014)
- <sup>18</sup> "1939 Register," *Findmypast* ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk): accessed 18 January 2018), entry for Joseph G. Cobb
- <sup>19</sup> "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1966," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 January 2018), entry for Joseph Green Cobb