

A Tale of Three Brothers

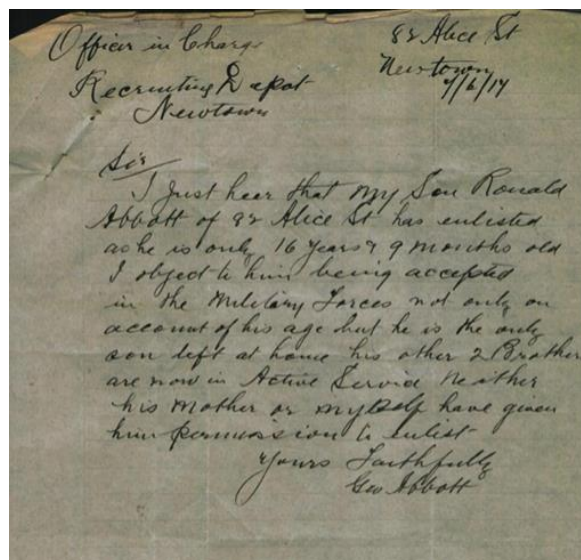
My paternal grandmother had three brothers volunteer for the Great War.

Hector Abbott and George Abbot both served in the AIF and returned safely to Australia. Their younger brother Ronald wanted to join them.

In June 1917 he was recorded as being 18 years 4 months old, just under 5'3" tall and weighing 101lbs.

But he was only 16 years old.

This letter from Ronald's father, also George Abbott, pleads for his release not just on account of his age, but also because his two brothers are already serving.



Ronald was subsequently discharged and in October 1918 he tried to enlist again. By now he was an engineer's apprentice, no longer a labourer, and his enlistment application was signed by both parents. What is interesting is that the handwriting for both signatures appears to be identical! Interestingly, these signatures look like the ones on his previous application which his parents knew nothing about.

In any event, the Great War finished the following month and, despite his best efforts, Ronald Abbott did not serve in the footsteps of his brothers.

Only a few years earlier, Ernest Henry Johnson, who married Ronald's younger sister (Isobel Jane Abbott) after the war, had also tried to join whilst underage and been yanked back by his mother. His reenlistment was successful and he served at Ypres where he was gassed.

I myself was more sensible than my grandfather and great uncle and waited until I was 24 to join the RAAF!