

## Digby Hoskins Willan

Boer War veteran, Trooper (Tpr) 3443 Digby Hoskins Willan enlisted in the 8<sup>th</sup> Light Horse (LH) Regiment in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Light Horse Brigade in Melbourne on 12 February 1917. He embarked overseas on 7 September and disembarked in Egypt on 19 October, where he later joined the 3<sup>rd</sup> Light Horse (Brigade) Training Regiment at Moascar on 10 December.

He left Egypt in late December and was taken on strength of the 8<sup>th</sup> LH Regiment, in the field at Deir el Belah, Gaza, on 8 January 1918.

On 30 April the 8<sup>th</sup> Light Horse crossed the River Jordan and assaulted the town of Es Salt, capturing 200 prisoners and 28 machine guns. They also repulsed several counter attacks over the next few days and captured another 319 prisoners on 3 May. The situation on the flanks, however, was far less certain, and a large Turkish relief force had been observed on the road from Amman. The regiment was eventually ordered to withdraw to the Jordan Valley on 4 May, having sustained 26 casualties.



*Exhausted Australian Light Horsemen returning from Es Salt, May 1918*

The very next day, Tpr Willan was evacuated sick with diarrhoea. He passed through the various casualty clearing stations along the Sinai coast until he arrived back in Egypt, where he was treated at the 14<sup>th</sup> Australian General Hospital at Port Said from 11 May – 16 August.

He was subsequently diagnosed with myalgia on 9 September and spent the remainder of the war at various Light Horse Details camps and rest camps, including Moascar, where he was fined seven days' pay for insolence and disobeying an order on 12 April 1919. He eventually embarked for return to Australia on 3 July.

Trooper 3443 Digby Hoskins Willan disembarked in Melbourne on 7 August, where he was medically discharged from the AIF on 15 September 1919.

Name: Willan, Digby Hoskins	
Service Number	3443
Date enlisted	12 February 1917
Place enlisted	Melbourne, Victoria
Rank on enlistment	Trooper
Initial Unit	8 <sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment
Previous military service	Boer War – 5 <sup>th</sup> Victorian Mounted Rifles 1901 – 1902
Date and ship embarked for overseas	7 September 1917 HMAT A55 <i>Kyarra</i>
Stated age/DOB (if known)	35 years 9 months
Place of birth	Hawksburn, Victoria
Marital status	Single
Occupation	Manager
Religion	Church of England
Next of kin and address	Willan, Mr Charles, father, Elgin Avenue, Armadale, Victoria
Permanent address	Armadale, Victoria
Appearance	Fresh complexion, grey hair, blue eyes, height – 5 feet 7 inches, weight – 9 stone, 5 lbs, chest measurement – 36/38 inches
Final Rank	Trooper
Final Unit	8 <sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment
Theatres of war served in	Egypt, Palestine
Fate	Returned to Australia
Date and ship embarked for Australia	3 July 1919 HT <i>Malta</i>
Date discharged	15 September 1919
Nature of discharge	Medically Unfit (myalgia)
Honours/medals	British War Medal, Victory Medal
Notes	Family owned (or leased) a holiday house in the St Leonards district. Brother of Geoffrey Willan. Home Service WW2 (SN N102100). Died 30 June 1962. Remembered on the St Paul's Anglican Church Honor Roll and St Martin's Anglican Church Honor Roll (Hawksburn).