

## LESLIE HUGH KNIGHT

Leslie Hugh Knight was born on 11 September 1890 in Wolseley South Australia to William Knight and name Anna Knight (nee Evans). He received his early schooling in South Australia before the family relocated to Yass NSW where he was the Station Overseer at Derringullen Station.

On the 31st May 1915 and at the age of 24 years and 9 months, Leslie enlisted in the AIF in Liverpool NSW and was posted to the 7th Light Horse Regiment, 8th Reinforcements. After basic training the regiment embarked from Sydney on board the HMAT A23 Suffolk on 28 July 1915, bound for the Middle East.

There is no records of Leslie's movements from July 1915 through to early December 1915. It is however known that the 7th Light Horse was on the Gallipoli Peninsular during this time.

The first entry on Leslie's Active Service form is dated 4 December 1915 and he is Taken on Strength at Mudros (Lemnos) from Anzac Base. A week later on 10 December 1915 Leslie is diagnosed with mumps and is admitted to the 3rd Australian General Hospital on Lemnos. This was to be the first of several illnesses Leslie was stricken with during the early part of his service. Leslie was discharged from hospital on 10 January 1916 and embarked for Alexandria on the HMT Ausonia. Leslie rejoined his unit at Maadi (Egypt), which was the Australian Light Horse Camp. During the time in camp the regiment was kept busy with training and drills.

On 25th February 1916 the 7th Light horse rode out to Serapeum, by the Suez Canal. On 24 March 1916 Leslie was again taken ill and admitted to the camp hospital. He rejoined his unit on 28 March 1916. Again, time in camp was taken up training and drilling.

Much of April was spent in camp at Salvia where the regiment continued to train until 23rd April when orders were received to move out to Kantara. The ride to Kantara took just over 8 hours. After resting overnight the regiment moved out again the following day headed for Romani. The regiment arrived in Romani on 25th April 1916 to find the campo deserted. The regiment took up camp there and undertook reconnaissance patrols of the area.

On 1 May 1916 Leslie again took ill and was admitted to the base hospital in Romani. A week later her was diagnosed with Dysentery and transferred to the 31st General Hospital in Port Said. Two days later he was transferred to the 3rd Australian General Hospital in Cairo. By 31st May 1916 Leslie had recovered from his illness and was discharged to his unit, joining them at Hill 70 for rest camp until the 25th June when orders were received to ride to Bir Et Maler and establish camp.

The remainder of June, all July, August, September, October and November 1916 were spent in and around the Bir Et Maler/Romani area conducting reconnaissance patrols.

All of December 1916 and January/February 1917 was spent in Hassaniya training and conducting usual duties.

On 26th March information was received that the Desert Column (including the 7th Light Horse) would take part in an attack on Gaza. The attack was not a success although there were minimal casualties. The 7th Light Horse took 150 prisoners before withdrawing and it would not be until later in the year before the city was liberated from Turkish occupation.

April and May 1917 were spent at Sheikh Nuran outpost conducting reconnaissance patrols with sporadic contact with the enemy.

June 1917 was spent in camp at Tel El Marakeb and E Fukhari conducting reconnaissance patrols with sporadic contact with the enemy.

Moved camp to El Shallal on the 6th June to conduct reconnaissance in the vicinity of Beersheba and area patrols for the remainder of June and July. From the 24th July to the 4th August Leslie was at Divisional Headquarters in El Shellal. On the 18th August the regiment moved camp from El Shellal to Tel El Marakeb. The regiment remained in camp until 19th September when they moved again to Abusan.

On the 17th October 1917 Leslie was again stuck down with illness and was admitted to the hospital at El Fukhari with Influenza. He remained in hospital until the 1st November (thus missing the Beersheba charge) when he was discharged to Moascar, the site of the Australian Light Horse Camp and Remount Yard.

Through November and December 1917 the 7th Light Horse was involved in the pursuit of the Turkish forces as they retreated toward Palestine. During this time the the regiment was involved in the battles of El Mughar, Nebi Samwill and Jerusalem, which was liberated from Ottoman occupation for the first time in 400 years. On the 9th November 1917 Leslie was promoted to Lance Corporal.

January 1918 saw the regiment in camp at Esdud. On 12 January 1918 the regiment moved out to Wadi Hanein. They remained there until the 4th February when they moved out to Nalin. Through February and March 1918 the 7th Light Horse remained in Nalin to fortify the town in case of a Turkish counter attack. On the 8th March the regiment relocated to Wadi Hanein and continued preparations. On the 13th March the regiment again relocated to Latron. On the 18th March the regiment again relocated to Jerusalem. After a week in Jerusalem, the regiment travelled over night to Jordan and made camp there. On the 27th March the regiment moved into Amman in preparation for a Turkish attack. By the morning of the 27th March the town was being attacked and the railway north and south of the town was cut and blown up. However, the arrival of Turkish and German reinforcements proved decisive and on 30 March the force was ordered to withdraw to the Jordan Valley with only the Ghoraniye bridgehead retained. Leslie receive a gunshot wound to the left buttock (perhaps during withdrawal). He was initially treated by the 2nd Light Horse Field ambulance before being transferred to the 75th Casualty Clearing Station on the 2nd April. On the 5th April he was transferred to the 44th Stationary Hospital in Kantara. On the 6th April he was transferred to the 14th Australian General Hospital in Port Said. By the 15th April Leslie had recovered sufficiently to be transferred to the Desert Mounted Corp Rest Camp in Moascar. On the 26th April he marched in to his regiment at Wadi Augua. For the remainder of April and into early May the regiment continued to pursue the retreating Ottoman forces, engaging in battle at El Salt. On the 5th May the regiment camped just south of Jericho. On the 17th May the regiment moved to Wadi Nueiamah to fortify defensive lines and carry out patrols.

On the 5th June the regiment moved to Talaat Ed Dumm and set up camp. On the 23rd June to regiment moved to Wadi Aujah in the Jordan Valley and set up camp. On the 29th July after holding lines at Wadi Aujah, the regiment moved to Talaat Ed Dumm.

On the 10th August the regiment moved to Beit Um Mar and set up camp until 23rd August, when they returned to Talaat Ed Dumm. The stay at Talaat Ed Dumm was only a short one and the regiment was on the move the next day back to Wadi Nieuamah in the Jordan Valley. On the 1st September the regiment move to Yehud and camp at an abandoned monastery. On the 23rd September the regiment was again on the move and camped at Bardawil after travelling over night. The regiment set out again after a rest and participated in the attack on Amman, which was successful. The regiment remained in

Amman holding the line until the 1st October when they headed out to Jericho (escorting Turkish prisoners), which they arrived at on the 5th October.

After delivering prisoners to the POW camps in Jericho, the regiment moved out on the 5th October heading for the Mount of Olives via Hajla Monastery and Talaat De Dumm, arriving there on the 8th October to set up camp. The regiment was on the move again on the 11th October, heading for Wadi Hanein via Latron. The regiment remained in Wadi Hanain for the remainder of the month for a well earned rest. On the 17th October Leslie was advised that he was being promoted to Corporal.

On the 7th November word was received that all 1914 enlistees (2 Officers and 55 other ranks) would be departing for Mascara and embarking for Australia. On the 11th November word was received that Germany had signed the armistice and that the war was over. On the 13th November the remainder of the regiment moved out Kantara via Ludd in heavy rain. Arriving in Kantara the following day, the regiment remained until the 27th November when the regiment boarded the HMT Huntscastle bound for the Dardanelles. The crossing to Lemnos was choppy with very little deck space for the troops.

The HMT Huntscastle arrived in Mudros harbour on the 1st December. Within a short time the ship received orders to proceed to Chanak and await further orders. The ship proceeded overnight to Chanak and arrived late the following morning. Troops remained on board until the 5th December when orders were received for troops to disembark. Troops were billeted at an old Turkish Hospital between Maidos and Killid Bahr. Several visits to Anzac Cove and battlegrounds were conducted over the following weeks. The bulk of the time on the peninsular was spent checking old trenches and fortifications for munitions, arms and Turkish soldiers who had not yet received word of the cessation of hostilities.

The ship HMT Norman arrived early on the 18th January and embarkation proceeded over the next 24 hours. HMT Norman departed Maidos late on the 19th January bound for Port Said. Troops disembarked HMT Norman on the 22nd January and were entrained to Rafa via Kantara, arriving on the 24th January. The next several weeks in camp were taken up with regular parades, educational classes and sporting carnivals. On the 16th February Leslie was advised he had been promoted to Sergeant.

On the 5th May Leslie, along with 1 officer and 39 other ranks marched out to Moascar for embarkation to England on Furlough. Arriving in Moascar the following day, several weeks passed before Leslie boarded the HT Malwa on the 28th March at Port Said bound for England. The HT Malwa arrived in London on the 11th April 1919 and Leslie proceeded to take 5 weeks leave until the 12th May.

At the completion of his leave, Leslie marched into regimental Headquarters Haytesbury.

Leslie boarded the HT Port Darwin on the 12th June 1919 for his trip back to Australia, arriving in Sydney on the 10th July.

Leslie returned to farming life in Yass after he was discharged from the AIF on the 26th September 1919. He did not marry.

Leslie joined up again on the 29th March 1942 in Yass at the age of 51 years and 6 months and was made Lieutenant of the 18th Battalion, Volunteer Defence Corp. He was promoted to Captain on the 11th January 1943. He was taken on strength on the 23rd April 1943 and transferred to the 14th Battalion VDC on the 8th August 1944. He was placed on the Retire List on the 13th September 1945.

Leslie died aged 85 on the 26th February 1976 and is buried in Yass General Cemetery.