

WILKINSON

Leslie Arthur

Service No: 609



Basic Information

Name: Leslie Arthur Wilkinson

Service Number: 609

Date of Enlistment: 21/8/1914

Age at Enlistment: 19 years

Civil Occupation: Counter Hand

Medals, Honours, Awards: British War Medal, Victory Medal, 1914/15 Star

Height: 5Ft 11 inches

Weight: 11 stone

Chest Measurement: 35 inches

Complexion: Dark

Eye Colour: Grey

Hair Colour: Brown

Father: William Wilkinson

Mother: Emily Hunt

Married: No



Life Story

Leslie, born in 1896, was the son of William Arthur Wilkinson (born in South Australia) and Emily Mary Hunt (born in Beverley). They married in Beverley in 1888 and had three children. However, only Leslie survived past infancy, and he was sent to board at Scotch College in 1899, at the age of three, until he was sixteen.

William was a partner in Cobb and Co., a stagecoach transportation company. He sold his share in the company to buy an orchard in Woorooloo where he tried (unsuccessfully) to establish a vineyard. William filed for bankruptcy in 1897 and moved to a farm at Wagin. His wife, Emily, died in 1903 and William remarried in 1907, to Annie Ibbotson Francis. However, there were no children from the second marriage.

William died in 1912 after spending time abroad to try and improve his health. His Will left his entire estate to his second wife and made no direct financial provision for Leslie. A clearing sale was held on the farm at East Wagin in early April, and Charles James Wilkinson of Dardanup, Leslie's uncle, was appointed his legal guardian.

Leslie completed his Junior Certificate three years' earlier than his peers and, after leaving school, he moved in with his father's younger sister, Helen Simms, who lived in Subiaco. Leslie began work in a local store but, by the time of his enlistment, he was working as a counter hand at Edwards & Chippers' store at Greenhills.

Leslie enlisted at Helena Vale on the 21st August 1914, giving his age as nineteen. However, in reality, he had just turned eighteen. After his enlistment in the 11th Light Horse, 3rd Infantry Brigade, Leslie and his comrades spent time at Blackboy Hill, working to establish the camp and undergoing training before embarking on the HMT *Ascanius* for Egypt.

After another period of training, Leslie embarked on the Suffolk in early 1915, bound for the Gallipoli Peninsula. After seven weeks on the island of Lemnos, preparing for the landing, the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force landed at Gallipoli on the 25th April 1915.

Leslie, unlike many in his Battalion, survived the difficult, dangerous landing. Over the next two months, he endured horrendous conditions.

With his Battalion, Leslie:

...deepened trenches and dug newer, forward ones under constant bombardment from Turkish shells. It was hot. Food and water were scarce and the stench became overbearing as many bodies still lay in the open.
(Post Magazine, 12th July 2014).

On the 28th June 1915, Leslie took part in an attack on Snipers Ridge and the Knife Edge. To provide covering fire for the 9th Battalion, the 11th Battalion were to move on to Silt Spur and Turkey Ridge. They came under heavy shelling, shrapnel and machine gun fire. Private Wilkinson was hit in the head by shrapnel and died on Silt Spur.

Leslie Wilkinson was buried in Shell Green Cemetery at Gallipoli by Chaplain McPhee.

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