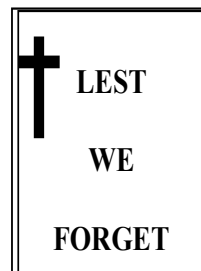


## A SOLDIER'S STORY



Service No.: 134  
Name: John Leslie HOPPING



### *Medals and Decorations*

1914 - 15 Star.  
British War Medal  
Victory Medal

Rank: Trooper  
Service: Army  
Enlisted: 16 Sep 1914  
KIA: 30 Jun 1915

John was born at Spalding (SA) on 3 Aug 1890 to Henry Hopping and Catherine Hopping (nee McInnes). There were 3 boys in the family, of which John was the youngest. His father had migrated from the UK in 1847, originally settling in Adelaide before moving to Spalding; this was a location name, the village of Spalding had not been established at this time. The family then moved to Caltowie; they had a farm in this latter location.

John went to school at Jamestown and later at Caltowie, before leaving to assist his father on the farm. He then took an apprenticeship with Booth & Co of Caltowie, the trade was apparently that of Miller and Engineer, because he moved to Broken Hill and was employed in these trades at completion of his apprenticeship. He also became a lay preacher, as well as serving 2½ years with the Jamestown Light Horse as a militia man.

John's mother died in 1902 and his father died in 1910.

At the out break of war John enlisted and went to Morphettville (SA) for processing and training. He was posted to A Squadron, 9<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Light Horse Brigade; in late 1914 the Regiment deployed to Melbourne (Vic) for training. On 12 Feb 1915 the Brigade embarked at Melbourne for Alexandria (Egypt) arriving on 14 Mar 1915. The light horse were considered unsuitable for the initial operations at Gallipoli, so were deployed to Gallipoli without their horses. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Light Horse Brigade landed at Gallipoli in late May 1915 to form part of the Australian and New Zealand Division.

On 30 Jun 1915 John was killed in action (KIA) at Gallipoli whilst digging a sap in preparation for the battle of the Nek; the actual battle not occurring until Aug 1915. The Nek was a narrow ridge on the Gallipoli Peninsula leading to Baby 700 Hill; the word derives from the Afrikaans, meaning "mountain pass". The attack was a feint and is

considered both tragic and futile; well over 90% of the attacking force became casualties.

The situation was so chaotic at the time that John's death was not confirmed, or his next of kin notified, until 4 months later and even then it only occurred because his brother, Arthur, had written to the Army asking for confirmation of advice that he had received from one of John's friends.

It seems incredible today to understand the difficulty that families experienced in getting information of their loved ones. John's brother had telegraphed the Army asking of John. The reply, by lettergram post, is quoted below:

A. H Hopping, Wirrabara (SA)

"No official report of death Private Leslie John Hopping Ninth Light Horse. In view (of your) representations cable message dispatched to Egypt asking verification. Upon receipt reply will be immediately transmitted."

Dated 20 Aug 1915.

Not a very compassionate response!

On 4 Nov 1915, Arthur received this missive, as quoted below, as confirmation:

"Private John Leslie Hopping, 9<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment, Australian Imperial Force was killed in action at Gallipoli on 30 Jun 1915."

John is buried at Ari Burnu Cemetery (Turkey), about ½ a mile (nearly 1 Km) North of Anzac Cove.

In his short life John achieved a substantial amount. He was an expert horseman, as one would expect of a Light Horse Trooper, a tradesman and a lay preacher.

John's brother, Albert, also served at Gallipoli about the time that John was killed; neither knowing that the other was at Gallipoli. John did not have a chance to become a local, but both his brothers moved to the Eyre Peninsula after the war and both became well respected business men in the Tumby/Port Lincoln area.



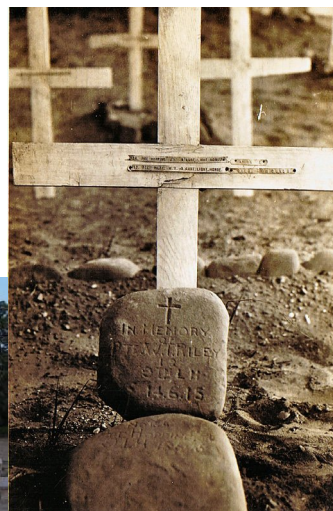
1914-15 Star

British War Medal

Victory Medal



Ari Burnu Cemetery, Turkey



Original gravesite



Author at Gallipoli