

# Harding, Leslie Elliot (1004 AIF)



Image 1 ©Ted Harding 2009  
circa August 1918.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Harding, Leslie Elliot Lieutenant AIF</b>
<b>Service Number</b>	1004
<b>Date of Birth</b>	7th September 1893
<b>Died</b>	5th July 1969
<b>Place of Birth</b>	Port Elliot SA
<b>Resident</b>	Victor Harbor SA
<b>Cemetery</b>	Centennial Park SA

Leslie (Les) Harding was born on 7 September 1893, the third of seven children born at Port Elliot to Walter James Harding and Emily Harding (nee Parsons). After leaving school, Les became a postal assistant working for the Post-Master General's Department. He enlisted in the AIF on 3 September 1914 at Adelaide as a member of the 10th Battalion (Adelaide Rifles). After a short stint of training at Morphettville, the Battalion sailed in the SS Ascanius on 20 October as part of the first AIF convoy destined for Britain.

The Australians disembarked in Egypt and undertook further training, in preparation for landing at Anzac Cove, Gallipoli, on 25th April 1915. The 10th Battalion was in the first wave of the dawn landing. During the first five days of fighting, the Battalion's 950 men were reduced to 393. It remained at Gallipoli until the general withdrawal began in December 1915, from Anzac Cove. After a month at Mudros, the 10th returned to Egypt on 29 December for rebuilding. In 29 February 1916, the recently promoted Lance Corporal Harding, with 500 men from his original Battalion, became the nucleus of the newly created 50th Battalion as part of the doubling in size of the AIF. Les was promoted to full Corporal in March 1916. He sailed in June 1916 with his new Battalion for service in Belgium and France.

He served continuously throughout the 50th Battalion's time on the Western Front where his unit followed the typical infantry pattern of training, providing work parties, supporting and holding the front line. This cycle was broken when the Battalion took part in many of the Australian actions beginning on 12-15 August 1916 at Mouquet Farm, where it suffered heavily from shelling. Heavy casualties in early battles were often caused by inexperience at all levels, coupled with a shortage of munitions. The techniques and armaments, which later won battles in 1918, were still being developed. Although the 50th was the reserve battalion for another attack on Mouquet Farm in early September, it still suffered 78 casualties. Les was promoted to Sergeant on 28 October 1916. The European winter that followed was acknowledged as the harshest of the war.

Les was commissioned in the field on 24 April 1917 as a Second Lieutenant shortly after the Battalion launched an attack at Noreuil. He was promoted to full Lieutenant on 29 July after the June 1917 Battle of Messines. During 1918, the 50th Battalion fought at Dernancourt, then in the now legendary night attack to recapture Villers-Bretonneux on 25 April, with its final occasion in the front line concluding on 15 September.

Les continued dedication and valour was recognised with the award of the Military Cross in January 1919. His citation read:

*“During the period 26th March to 16th September 1918 this officer has carried out the duties of Battalion signalling officer and has participated in every operation in which the Battalion has been engaged. In action he has shown untiring energy and great gallantry, reconnoitring routes for and personally supervising the laying and maintenance of lines under heavy fire. Out of the line his careful training of his signal section has laid the foundation of their efficiency. Lieutenant Harding has at all times set an excellent example to his men and has rendered great service to his Battalion.”*

Returning to Australia on 5 March 1919, he married Ethel Honeyman at Inman Valley a year later.

Leslie Elliot Harding died on 5 July 1969 and was cremated at Centennial Park.

# References:

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*Compiled by the Victor Harbor RSL History Research Team, March 2009. Updated by T. Young*  
26/07/2025

# Appendix

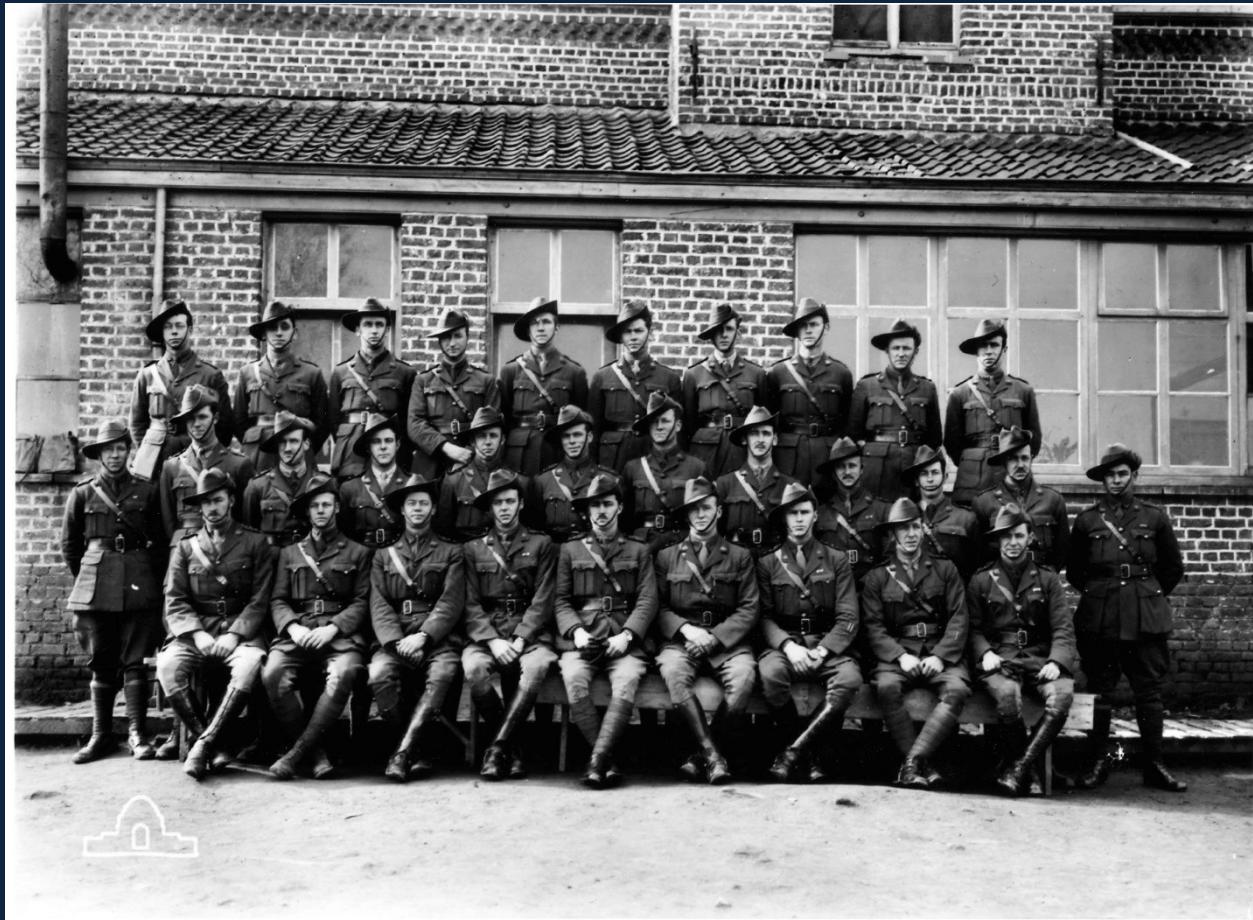


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Group portrait of the officers of the 50th Battalion taken on 7 March 1918 at Loivre, near Ypres, Belgium. Lt L.E. Harding MC is in the middle row, sixth from left.

Left to right, back row: Lieutenant (Lt) W. L. Scarborough; Lt A. Mills DCM; Lt F. B. McBryde; Lt M. M. McGregor; Lt F. W. Wakelin; Lt J. D. L. Craven; Lt W. V. West; Lt R. E. Claridge; Lt F. T. Goodes; Lt W. R. Wills. Middle row: Lt J. L. Waldron MM; Lt W. J. Hale; Lt G. S. I. Queale; Lt C. A. Willcox; Lt J. Hunt; Lt L. E. Harding MC; Lt C. G. Edwards; Lt J. N. Loudon MC; Lt J. Waine MC; Lt W. S. McKay; Lt J. H. Hill; Lt P. E. Nuttall.

Front row: Temporary Captain (Capt) R. G. Goodman; Capt W. R. De La Poer Beresford MC; Capt F. H. Hancock; Major W. M. Fowler MC; Lieutenant Colonel A. G. Salisbury DSO; Lt L. B. Smith; Capt R. L. Rhodes MC; Lt H. Kay; Lt H. W. Carlton MC. This photograph was purchased from the Australian War Memorial (collection number E01740).

15th AUSTRALIAN DIVISION				5th AUSTRALIAN DIVISION	5th AUSTRALIAN DIVISION	Date Recommendation Received	Passed forward.	Passed	Army Form W.4121.
15th AUSTRALIAN DIVISION				5th AUSTRALIAN DIVISION	5th AUSTRALIAN DIVISION	Brigade	Division		
15th AUSTRALIAN DIVISION				5th AUSTRALIAN DIVISION	5th AUSTRALIAN DIVISION	Corps	Corps		
15th AUSTRALIAN DIVISION				5th AUSTRALIAN DIVISION	5th AUSTRALIAN DIVISION	Army	Army		
Schedule No. (to be left blank)	Unit	Regt. No.	Rank and Name (Christian names must be stated)	Action for which commended (Date and place of action must be stated)			Recommended by	Honor or Reward	(To be left blank)
223881	50th BATT.	2/17	Lieutenant Leslie Elliot HARDING.	During the period 26th, March to 1st April, 1918, Lieutenant HARDING has shown himself to be the outstanding Battalion signaller throughout and has participated in every operation in which the Battalion has been engaged.			Lt.-Col. MC	me	
				In action he has shown非凡的勇敢 and gallantry, particularly during the recent operations, in maintaining the safety and personnel, supervising the laying and maintenance of lines under heavy fire, out of the line his careful training of his signalmen has laid the foundation of their efficiency.			Lt.-Col. MC		
				Lieut. HARDING has at all times set an excellent example to his men and rendered great service to his Battalion.			Lt.-Col. MC		
<p><i>General</i> G. G. Simla, Major-General Commanding 5th. AUSTRALIAN DIVISION</p> <p><i>SG Simla</i>, Major-General Commanding 5th. AUSTRALIAN DIVISION</p>									

Image 3 ©awm.gov.au  
Citation

## AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES.

BRITISH WAR

868

## 4th MILITARY DISTRICT.

BRITISH WAR

RECEIVED ONE MEDAL for No.

Rank Lient Name Harding L. E.  
 Unit 10th Bn (Signature) Elhel Harding  
 Place 6th Dec (Witness) Johnstone  
 Date MAY 26 1921

Please return, duly signed and witnessed, by first post to  
 Medal Distributing Officer,

Keswick Barracks, Adelaide.

NAA: B2455, HARDING L E

150bks200-2.21 302  
National Archives of Australia

Notification of award  
Notification of award

Lient Harding L. E.

Report	Date	From whom received	Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, etc., during active service, as reported on Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.	Place	Date	Remarks taken from Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or other official documents.
13.5.16	CO 50th Bn	Resc to permanent rank of Corporal	10.5.16 Serapeum	10.5.16	B213 AL 2066 D. 07/2225	
5.6.16	CO Tpt	Proc. to Join BEF	Alexandria 5.6.16.	LR5799		
10	Arcadian	Disembarked	Marseilles 12.6.16.			
5/11/16	B213 50th Bn.	Promoted Sergt vice 2nd Coaled 6/10	Guthiefield	28/10/16	A.0.9828 A0.40/5573	
4.5.17	AIF List	Appointed 172. 2d Lieutenant	do	24.4.17	AK 1319/19 2019/2143	
10.8.17	AIF. List 216	To be Lieutenant	do	29.7.17	AK 1556 20 3/3812	
26.8.17	CO 50th B213	To be Lieutenant	do	29.7.17	D2/34. P	
27/10/17	do	Granted leave Rejoined from Leave	do now to 11.11	24/10/17	02/44521.	
10.3.18	CO Bn	On Leave to U.K.	do	10.3.18	02/62.	
17.7.18	do	Rejoined from Leave	do	25.3.18	06/44521.	
29.9.18	C.O. 50th Bn.	On Leave to U. Kingdom	Field	18.9.18	B213 D2/191.	
6.10.18	do	Rejoined Unit ex Leave	-do-	4.10.18	B213 D2/192.	
8/10/18	60 50th Bn	It rejoined Unit ex leave to Paris	do	26/10/18.	B213 D2/193.	
11.10.18	AIF.	Decorations Awarded M.C.	do	11.10.18		
10.1.19	do	do. Distinguished Service Cross awarded to Johnstone from France repto No. 2 Com. Depot.	do	10.1.19	Rec 870	

National Archives of Australia

NAA: B2455, HARDING L E



Captain SEPTIMUS ARCHDALE ROBERTSON, 4th Australian Divisional Train, Army Service Corps.  
 Lieutenant FRANK ROGERSON, 3rd Field Company, Australian Engineers.  
 Captain FRANCIS PALMER STILLECK, 24th Battalion.  
 Captain GEORGE LESLIE SMITH, 2nd Tunnelling Company, Australian Engineers.  
 Captain NELSON FREDERICK WELLINGTON, 21st Battalion.  
 Lieutenant (T/Captain) ROLAND WILLIAM WILD, 4th Australian Pioneer Battalion.

**4th Military District.**  
 Captain EUSTACE JAMES COLLIVER, 43rd Battalion.  
 Captain ALFRED VICTOR GALLASH, 27th Battalion.  
 Lieutenant LESLIE ELLIOT HARDING, 50th Battalion.  
 Lieutenant GEOFFREY KOEPPEN HENDERSON, M.M., 48th Battalion.  
 Captain OWEN BERESFORD WILLIAMS, 11th Field Company, Australian Engineers.

**5th Military District.**  
 Quartermaster and Captain GEOFFREY EGG, 11th Battalion.  
 Captain MAX ULRICH HUBBE, 1st Australian Pioneer Battalion.  
 Captain DONALD MCLEOD, 12th Battalion.  
 Quartermaster and Captain COLLISON CLAPHAM PEARSON, 53rd Battalion.  
 Lieutenant GEORGE FOX PRIESTLEY, 11th Battalion.  
 Lieutenant EDWIN CHARLES ROGERS, 44th Battalion.  
 Lieutenant THEODORE GLYN WATKINS, 51st Battalion.

**6th Military District.**  
 Lieutenant LAURENCE WENDOVER BARNETT, 40th Battalion.

HIS MAJESTY THE KING has been graciously pleased to award the Royal Red Cross to the undermentioned ladies of the Nursing Services in recognition of their valuable services with the armies in France and Flanders:—

**AWARDED THE ROYAL RED CROSS.**  
 1st CLASS.  
**3rd Military District.**  
 Miss EDITH CORNWELL, A.R.R.C., Matron, Australian Army Nursing Service.  
**2nd CLASS.**  
**1st Military District.**  
 Miss GERTRUDE JESSIE ANDREWS, Temporary Head Sister, Australian Army Nursing Service.  
 Miss MARY ELLEN FISHER, Staff Nurse, Australian Army Nursing Service.

**2nd Military District.**  
 Miss ELSIE STEWART GREIG, Sister, Australian Army Nursing Service.  
 Miss ILMA GERTRUDE LOVELL, Sister, Australian Army Nursing Service.  
 Miss EVA ISOBEL MACDONALD, Staff Nurse, Australian Army Nursing Service.  
 Miss CONSTANCE ADELAIDE STONE, Sister, Australian Army Nursing Service.

**3rd Military District.**  
 Miss EILEEN LOVE CONNOLLY, Sister, Australian Army Nursing Service.  
 Miss EMMA ARGYLE CUTHBERT, Head Sister, Australian Army Nursing Service.  
 Miss HELEN MARIE MAUD HOMAN, Sister, Australian Army Nursing Service.  
 Miss JESSIE BUCHANAN MACDONALD, Sister, Australian Army Nursing Service.  
 Miss CATHERINE O'CONNOR, Sister, Australian Army Nursing Service.  
 Miss ETHEL SMITH, Sister, Australian Army Nursing Service.

**4th Military District.**  
 Miss ALMA ETHEL MAY FURNISS, Staff Nurse, Australian Army Nursing Service.

**5th Military District.**  
 Miss MARIE RUTH FIELDING, Sister, Australian Army Nursing Service.

HIS MAJESTY THE KING has been graciously pleased to approve of the undermentioned rewards for distinguished service in connexion with military operations with the armies in France:—

**AWARDED A BAR TO THE DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL.**  
**3rd Military District.**  
 No. 3058 Sergeant S. COLLIETT, D.C.M., 58th Battalion. The award of the Distinguished Conduct Medal appeared in *London Gazette*, No. 31052, republished in *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette*, 36/19.  
 No. 864 Company Sergeant-Major J. McD. McCASH, D.C.M., 59th Battalion, late 60th Battalion. The award of the Distinguished Conduct Medal appeared in *London Gazette*, No. 31052, republished in *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette*, 36/19.

**AWARDED THE DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL.**  
**1st Military District.**  
 No. 3036 Private W. H. BAKER, 1st Battalion, Machine Gun Corps.  
 No. 3080 Sergeant R. A. FULLER, 12th Australian Light Trench Mortar Battery.  
 No. 1838 Sergeant W. FURNISS, 13th Brigade, Australian Field Artillery.  
 No. 301 Sergeant A. L. GREENWOOD, 45th Battalion.  
 No. 2178 Sergeant J. M. McDONALD, 9th Battalion.  
 No. 301 Sergeant (now 2nd Lieutenant) A. S. THOMSON, 1st Tunnelling Company, Australian Engineers.  
 No. 747 Corporal A. W. H. SLATER, 3rd Divisional Salvage Company, Australian Army Service Corps.  
 No. 1740A Sergeant J. R. TROTMAN, 49th Battalion.  
 No. 9122 Sergeant C. C. WILLS, 6th Brigade, Australian Field Artillery.

**2nd Military District.**  
 No. 1701 Company Sergeant-Major H. ANSON, 55th Battalion.  
 No. 2561 Staff Sergeant G. R. ASKAY, 1st Australian Supply Details, Australian Army Service Corps.  
 No. 265 Company Sergeant-Major C. A. BOYD, 1st Divisional Train, Australian Army Service Corps.  
 No. 4459 Corporal R. W. DRURY, 3rd Battalion.  
 No. 3082 Private J. JENSEN, 33rd Battalion.  
 No. 2332 Company Sergeant-Major F. G. JURD, 5th Australian Pioneer Battalion.  
 No. 2090 Company Sergeant-Major F. S. JONES, 54th Battalion.  
 No. 3518 Sergeant A. LOCKE, 3rd Brigade, Australian Field Artillery.

No. 3373A Sergeant C. H. LOKING, 63rd Battalion.  
 No. 481 Sergeant E. H. MATHEWS, 30th Battalion.  
 No. 1153 Company Sergeant-Major (T/Regimental Sergeant-Major) T. H. McCOLI, M.M., 2nd Battalion.  
 No. 1592 Sergeant A. McDONALD, 17th Battalion.  
 No. 3412 Battery Sergeant-Major K. W. C. McENTYRE, 3rd Brigade Ammunition Column, Australian Field Artillery.  
 No. 1906 Gunner (T/Bombardier) T. MCLEAN, 14th Brigade, Australian Field Artillery.  
 No. 141 Company Sergeant-Major F. V. MCPHES, 34th Battalion.  
 No. 2434 Company Sergeant-Major (T/Regimental Sergeant-Major) P. ROBERTSON, 4th Battalion.  
 No. 18400 Sergeant A. L. TULLY, M.M., 3rd Divisional Signalling Company, Australian Engineers.  
 No. 250 Sergeant F. C. WICKS, 1st Australian Field Company Engineers.

**3rd Military District.**  
 No. 2785 Sergeant H. L. ANDREWS, 4th Battalion, Australian Machine Gun Corps.  
 No. 4139 Lance-Corporal J. BARRETT, 1st Australian Pioneer Battalion.  
 No. 7472 Corporal V. J. BEAN, 1st Divisional Train, A.A.S.C.  
 No. 6015 Sergeant W. A. BIRCHMORE, 4th Brigade, Australian Field Artillery.  
 No. 3118 Sergeant N. W. CAIRNS, 37th Battalion.  
 No. 1821 Sergeant W. S. CANNAN, 13th Brigade, Australian Field Artillery.  
 No. 5995 Regimental Sergeant-Major L. COLLINS, 14th Battalion.  
 No. 7988 Corporal (T/Sergeant) C. DAVIES, 6th Brigade, Australian Field Artillery.  
 No. 2627 Company Sergeant-Major G. L. W. DEACON, 7th Battalion.  
 No. 11761 Corporal (Acting Sergeant) F. W. T. HELMORE, 1st Australian Medium Trench Mortar Battery.  
 No. 3635 Regimental Sergeant-Major R. JENKYN, 2nd Brigade, attached Head-quarters, Australian Field Artillery.  
 No. 252 Corporal H. D. LONIE, 3rd Australian Pioneer Battalion.  
 No. 504 Sergeant O. J. LOONEY, 39th Battalion.  
 No. 6354 Sergeant C. O. MCLEAR, 24th Battalion.  
 No. 1039 Sergeant F. R. PHILPOT, 6th Battalion.  
 No. 2743 Sergeant (T/Company Sergeant-Major) J. C. Ross, 29th Battalion.  
 No. 643 Sergeant T. ROSS, 1st Light Railway Operating Company, Australian Engineers.  
 No. 286 Sergeant J. S. H. SEMPLE, 21st Battalion.  
 No. 631 Corporal L. T. WHITMORE, 5th Battalion, Australian Machine Gun Corps.

**4th Military District.**  
 No. 498 Company Sergeant-Major H. W. FURZE, 32nd Battalion.  
 No. 81 Company Sergeant-Major T. W. MARRIOTT, 50th Battalion.  
 No. 5062 Corporal (T/Sergeant) T. RYAN, 43rd Battalion.

**5th Military District.**  
 No. 25347 Sergeant W. H. D. BRADLE, 3rd Divisional Ammunition Column, Australian Field Artillery.  
 No. 2359 Company Quartermaster-Sergeant F. O. CAVANAGH, 11th Battalion.  
 No. 79 Corporal J. HALL, 7th Australian Light Trench Mortar Battery.