SHOUT. Captain Alfred John, VC. MC (GVR)
F Company, 1st Infantry Battalion.
1st Infantry Brigade, 1st Division AIF

“This was my first experience of individual courage—that stuff we call ‘guts’ and I’ve never forgotten Shout.”
Captain K. C. Millar, MC. (Reveille. The official journal of the NSWRL. 1 April 1936)

V.C. CITATION.

9th August 1915, at Lone Pine Trenches, Gallipoli Peninsula
(Posthumous Award)

For most conspicuous bravery at Lone Pine Trenches, in the Gallipoli Peninsula. On the morning of 9th August, 1915, with a small party, Captain Shout charged down trenches strongly occupied by the enemy and personally threw four bombs among them, killing eight and routing the remainder. In the afternoon of the same day, from the position gained in the morning, he captured a further length of trench under similar conditions and continued personally to bomb the enemy at close range, under very heavy fire, until he was severely wounded, losing his right hand and left eye. This most gallant officer has since succumbed to his injuries.
(London Gazette: 15th October 1915.)

M C. CITATION.

On 27th April 1915, during operations near Gaba Tepe, for showing conspicuous courage and ability in organising and leading his men in thick, bushy country under very heavy fire. He frequently had to expose himself to locate the enemy and led a bayonet charge at a critical moment.
London Gazette: 3 June 1915.

Captain Alfred John Shout, VC, MC.

Captain Alfred John Shout, who served with the Australian Imperial Forces on Gallipoli, was a New Zealander’ born on 7th August 1881. The eldest of the nine children born to John Richard Shout, a cook, (born 29 May 1856, in London) and his wife Agnes Mary (born 9 May 1857, Dublin) the fourth daughter of Charles Kelly, a Royal Artilleryman and his wife Ann who settled in Wanganui in 1859).

Agnes and John had married in the St Mary’s of the Angels Church in Wellington three and a half years after Agnes’s first husband, Bernard McGovern a soldier, had died. Bernard, twenty years older than Agnes, had married her when she was 16 years of age. Bernard and Agnes had one son, William (Bill) John McGovern who was born at Campbell Street Wanganui on 1 December 1875.

Agnes and John Shout had five daughters and four sons; their first born was Alfred John, born at Bolton Street Wellington. His siblings were Agnes b 1883. Charles Thomas b 1885 who died aged 12 years, Thomas Ben b 7.7.1887, Arthur James b 1889, twins Catherine Annie (Kitty) and Charlotte Ann (Lottie) b 1891, Winifred Mary (Jean) b 1897 and Marguerita Josephine (Jo) b 1900.

Alfred, Agnes, Charles and Tom were educated privately until the end of 1891 when they were enrolled at the tiny bush school being constructed at Newman, 5kl north of Eketahuna, Masterton. They were foundation students of the school when classes commenced in 1892.
His younger siblings Arthur and Catherine were attending Newman school at the time Alfred left New Zealand for South Africa, with his half brother Bill McGovern, to enlist in the Colonial Contingents that were fighting in the Anglo-Boer War.

Alfred joined the Border Horse as a Trooper while Bill served as # 1835 Trooper W.J.Shout with Bethune’s Mounted Infantry and saw action in the Orange Free State and Cape Colony. Bill returned to Wanganui when his term expired and reverting to his birth name of McGovern, married and settled into life as a farmer.

The Border Horse served at Mafikeng under the command of Colonel Baden-Powell. Alfred Shout was wounded on two occasions, once in the chest. He was mentioned in despatches (Army Orders 23 February 1901) for his courage at Tabaksberg on 29 January 1901. He had kept his men together and under heavy fire rescued a wounded man of the 17th Battery, RFA, carrying him to a place of safety. He was made Queen’s Sergeant. His service medals for the campaign were The Queen’s South Africa Medal and the King’s South Africa Medal.

When his term expired, Alfred remained in South Africa serving as a Sergeant with the Cape Field Artillery from 1903 till 1907. He married Rose Alice Howe, the daughter of Sydney couple Arthur and Hannah Howe. Their only child, a daughter Florence Agnes Maud Shout, was born at Capetown, 11 June, 1905.

**Emigration to Australia**

Alfred Shout and his family moved to Australia in 1907 and he was employed as a carpenter and joiner at Resch’s Brewery, in Dowling Street Redfern. He lived with Rose and Florence at 131 Darlington Road, Darlington and trained part-time with the 29th Infantry Regiment (Australian Rifles) while regularly competing in rifle club events. He was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant with the 29th on 16 June 1914.

Assigned to “F” Company of the 1st Battalion, 1st Division of the AIF on 18 August 1914 three days after the Battalion had been formed at Randwick Racecourse, 33 year old Alfred John Shout, was medically examined by Captain Wentworth Thompson who found him fit for overseas service and recorded that he was 5’ 11” tall (180cm) and weighed 12 st (76kg).

On 18 October the 1st Battalion with 2nd Lieutenant Alfred Shout and 23 year old Lieutenant Cecil Duncan Sasse in charge of ‘F’ Company marched through very heavy rain to Woolloomooloo to embark on A19, His Majesty’s Australian Transport Afric.

**Convoy to Egypt**

Sailing without escort to Princess Royal Harbour Albany in Western Australia they arrived on 25 October to find 15 other ships already waiting in the Harbour. A fire broke out on 31 October onboard Afric, it was brought under control before they sailed the next day. They were part of a convoy of 36 transports taking 20,758 Australian troops, two New Zealand brigades and 7,479 horses to England. The convoy’s Flagship, the 12,130 ton, A3 H.M.A.T Orvieto had Major General William Throsby Bridges and his staff of the 1st Division onboard. It also carried 91 officers and 1,347 men of the 5th Infantry Battalion and 2nd Field Company.

The escorts for the convoy were the Australian light cruisers H.M.A.S. Sydney and HMAS. Melbourne, and the Japanese battle cruiser Ibuki. They were led by the British cruiser HMS. Minotaur. On the first day out from Albany they were joined by two vessels from Fremantle and learned that England had declared war on Turkey.

Four days later they passed the mail steamer Osterley, which reported that it had had a narrow escape from the German raider, the light cruiser SMS Emden. On 9 November the members of the Contingent watched excitedly as H.M.A.S Sydney, commanded by Captain John C. T. Glossop, left the convoy at full steam to intercept the German cruiser as it attacked the wireless station on the Cocos Islands. The Sydney out-maneuved and out-gunned the Emden in a 90 minute battle, leaving her disabled and grounded on North Keeling Island.
Their first port of call after crossing the equator was Colombo, docking at 8am on 13 November. Alfred was granted leave on 15th and returned to the ship on the 19th November. The convoy sailed at 7.30pm that evening with escort duty now taken over by H.M.S. Hampshire.

On 21 November the Afric bumped into another ship during rough weather causing the death of two soldiers who were lost overboard from the Afric. During this first three weeks of the voyage 329 men were treated by the ship’s hospitals, 62 with measles and 55 Influenza, both very infectious diseases in the crowded conditions.

On 24 November, HMS Hampshire left the convoy, which continued unescorted until it reached Aden at 5pm the next evening. Alfred, given leave overnight, arrived back at 6am to rejoin the ship before it sailed up the Arabian Coast. Two days later orders were received that, due to the combination of the shortage of accommodation and training facilities in England and the feared effects of the harsh English winter on the Anzac troops, they were to disembark in Egypt and establish training camps there.

They called at Port Suez and Port Said before the men disembarked at Alexandria on 5 December. Four days later they boarded a train for the 20 km journey to Mena, a small village in the shadows of the Sphinx and three Pyramids, where they were to set up a training camp.

Gallipoli

Alfred was appointed Lieutenant on 1 February 1915. On 25 April the 1st Australian Division, commanded by Major General Bridges, made an amphibious landing at Ari Burnu Point (Anzac Cove) on the Gallipoli Peninsula. The 1st Brigade was led by thirty five year old Colonel Henry Norman MacLaurin, the son of the Chancellor of Sydney University.

During his first two days on Gallipoli, Alf is reported to have carried at least 12 wounded back to the beach. He again showed conspicuous courage and ability at Walkers Ridge when, during a strong Turkish counter attack, he re-organised and led to safety the survivors of a section that had suffered 50% casualties.

He continually exposed himself to the enemy in order to establish their whereabouts then, although wounded he led a bayonet charge against them. When their newly acquired position was secured, Alfred and a corporal advanced into no-man’s land under heavy fire. They dug in and commenced sniping at the Turks. #789 Pte Charles Huntley Thompson from Maitland NSW serving with the 13th Battalion said, “That was the bravest thing I ever saw”. For his action on 27 April 1915 Lieutenant Alfred Shout was awarded the Military Cross.

The troops had landed with rifle, bayonet and knapsack with 250 rounds of ammunition. By the 27th they were short of ammunition and water and exhausted through lack of sleep. A withdrawal from the peninsular was discussed with General Sir Ian Hamilton before he made the decision that the ANZAC Corps must hold their position and dig in.

The 1st Division suffered 366 casualties during their first four days on Gallipoli. Alfred was hit by a bullet that passed through his arm and entered his chest on the 27th. This was treated on the Hospital Ship Gascon and Alfred returned to duty. He was wounded more seriously on 11 May, again treated onboard the Gascon, he rejoined his unit on 26 May.

On 29th July Alfred Shout was promoted to the rank of Captain and his dedication to duty and bravery saw him receive a special mention in General Hamilton’s despatches, (London Gazette: 5 August 1915, page 7668, position15).

After months of trench fighting on Gallipoli a major offensive was planned for August. The New Zealanders would attack Chunuk Bair while the British staged a landing at Suvla Bay. Simultaneous attacks by the Australians would be made at The Nek by the untried 3rd Light Horse Brigade and at Dead Man’s Ridge, by the 1st Light Horse Regiment, while the 1st Infantry Brigade would charge the Lone Pine trenches.

Lone Pine, a strong point of the Turks line, had briefly been in the hands of the Australian’s on 25th April. On the night preceding their charge at Lone Pine Alfred Shout, in an effort to relieve the anxiety among the members of his platoon, spoke to them at length about the
coming event. He concluded his talk by telling # 721 Lance Corporal Alexander Ross McQueen from Gloucester, NSW “We will make a name for Australia and ourselves tomorrow Mac”.

At midday on 6 August Captain Shout, MC instructed his men to discard their tunic and issuing them with pieces of white calico, told them to sew a strip on the arms of their grey flannel shirts and a square on the back. This would indicate their whereabouts to the artillery and their comrades during the battle. While they were doing this the Battalion armourer sharpened their bayonets.

At 5.40pm the men of the 1st Brigade lined up ready to go over the top with unloaded rifles. The British Commander believed the sight of the Australian’s bayonets would be all that was needed to make the Turks flee before them. Following the exploding of three mines the Australian’s had placed in tunnels dug under no-man’s-land the Turks were bombarded from both land based artillery and naval ships.

Those leading the charge reached the first trench quickly but found it difficult to attack as it was covered with pine logs. Some stayed to infiltrate the first trench, while others were ordered on to the second trench. Lone Pine was taken within the hour but the Turks, reformed and reinforced, counter-attacked and the battle for Lone Pine continued for three days. Casualties were high on both sides. During what was the only allied victory of the August offensive, Australians casualties were 80 officers and 2,197 other ranks while the Turkish 16th Division was believed to have suffered almost 7,000 casualties.

The 1st Battalion were relieved by the 7th Battalion and re-entering the line on the morning of 9 August, at a point known as Sasse’s Sap. This position was where Captain Cecil Duncan Sasse, later Lieutenant Colonel DSO & Bar, had captured a section of the enemy’s trench three days earlier.

Discovering that the enemy had reoccupied a section of the trench he had previously held Sasse, with the assistance of three volunteers, re-entered the trench and killed the Turks who re-occupied it. Sasse then suggested Shout join him in a further assault on the Turks that afternoon.

With the aid of some volunteers Sasse and Shout, following the previously successful plan of attack, charged down the Turkish occupied trench. With Shout throwing bombs (Jam tins filled with explosives and jagged pieces of shrapnel) and Sasse making every shot from his revolver count, they killed eight of the Turks and captured a length of trench. Shout and Sasse then held the attacking Turks at bay while the volunteers built a sand bag barricade to secure the captured section.

The process was successfully repeated a second time before they set off down the trench a third time for what they planned would be their final dash for the day. Shout revelling in the fight, lit the fuses of his three remaining bombs. Throwing two, he was in the process of throwing the third when it exploded prematurely blowing off his right hand and severely wounded the right side of his face and body.

Although mortally wounded, Shout continued to direct the men building the barricade then, murmuring “Good old First Brigade, well done!,” he lost consciousness. Carried to the rear he regained consciousness and had a cup of tea as he awaited the stretcher bearers who took him to the beach. Captain Alfred Shout MC died from his wounds onboard the hospital ship _Neuralia_ 11 August, 1915 and was buried at sea.

Seven Australian soldiers were awarded the Victoria Cross for their actions at Lone Pine. Captain Shout’s award, a posthumous award, appeared in the London Gazette 15 October 1915. The others were; English born Lance Corporal Leonard Keysor of the 1st Battalion, Private John Hamilton a butcher from Penshurst, NSW of the 3rd Battalion, and four Victorians from the 7th Battalion; Captain Frederick Tubb, Lieutenant William Symonds and Corporals Alexander Burton and William Dunstan.

Alfred Shout’s service medals were the QSAM., with bars for Wittebergen, Transvaal and Cape Colony, the KSAM., with bars for South Africa 1902 and South Africa 1901, 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal with Bronze Oakleaf.
Home in Australia.

Rose Shout, living at 20 Forbes Street Darlington was notified by cable on each occasion Alfred was wounded. She replied seeking news of her husband’s wellbeing and his whereabouts.

Army Records relating to Shout’s death were altered on receipt of a cable from Alexandria on 20 August which read “Not dead! Onboard ‘Themistocles’, returning to Australia.”. The Australian press advised it’s readers that Captain Shout would arrive in Sydney mid-September. At a later inquiry the official explanation for this mistake was that 2nd Lieutenant Arthur John Shirt, returning to Australia on ‘Themistocles’, had been mistaken for Lieutenant A. J. Shout.

English born 2nd Lieutenant Shirt enlisted 24 August 1914 and was promoted to Sergeant on 18 October 1914. On the 2 May 1915 he was promoted to 2nd Lieutenant while serving with the 1st Battalion. On 11 June he became ill with Influenza on Gallipoli and was transferred to HS Grantully Castle for treatment. 6th July he reported sick with Rheumatism and was transferred to Hospital in Heliopolis. On the 15 August 1915 he embarked on “Themistocles” in Cairo to be returned to Australia. Discharged unfit for further service Shirt re-enlisted in 1917 and served in the 55th Battalion. He was again hospitalised with Influenza at Harefield, England in August 1918 and returned to Australia where he was discharged 12 November 1918.

Rose Shout was officially informed of her husband’s death. However his father, living in New Zealand, had to write to the Army on 4 September seeking conformation of his son’s death after reading a newspaper report.

Rose was awarded a pension of ninety one pound ($182) per year and Florence thirteen pound ($26) per year, as the widow and child of Lieutenant A. J. Shout. On 28 October 1915, Rose drew the Army’s attention to the fact that her husband had been promoted to the rank of Captain on the day he was mortally wounded and had been awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross.

While conceding that Shout had been promoted to Captain just days before he was mortally wounded, on 19 November 1915, the Officer in Charge of Base records denied knowledge of Captain Alfred Shout being awarded a Victoria Cross. This was despite the award being gazetted more than a month earlier. Confirmation of his rank and award resulted in Rose’s pension increasing ten pound ($20) per year while Florence’s pension doubled.

Rose received Alfred’s identity disc on 4 February 1919. The Certificate acknowledging his being Mentioned in Despatches was received by Rose on 24 July 1921 with Alfred’s Memorial Scroll containing the King’s Message.

The citizens of Darlington commemorated the name of Captain Alfred Shout VC, MC. on a memorial plaque unveiled on 20 November 1915 by Australia’s Scottish born Governor General Sir Ronald Craufurd Ferguson PC GCMC. The plaque is now housed in the Victoria Barracks Museum along with other memorabilia donated in 1980 by Florence Thomas, the daughter of Alfred and Rose.

The RSL, with the assistance of the New South Wales Government, launched a successful appeal in August 1916 to buy a home for Rose and Florence Shout.

In 2001 the Redfern R.S.L. Sub-Branch in Sydney placed a framed montage, which included Replica Medals and photographs of Captain Alfred Shout VC., MC. at Gallipoli, in the foyer of their Club.

The name of Captain Alfred Shout VC, MC, 1st Battalion, A. I. F. is inscribed on Panel 12 of the low wall in front of the Lone Pine Memorial. The names of the Australian’s who died at Gallipoli who lay in unknown graves or were buried at sea are inscribed on this wall.

Shout’s name is on Memorial panel 30 at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra; The Australian Victoria Cross Memorial in Campbell, Canberra and the Darlington Memorial Gate which stood at the entrance of the Darlington School. This memorial still stands in its original position within the grounds of the University of Sydney.
He is remembered on the New Zealand Victoria Cross Memorial in Queens Gardens, Dunedin, Otago and on the Honor Roll at Newman School.


The Redfern RSL sub-branch is seeking Government assistance to erect a Memorial in Redfern to two Victoria Cross Recipients who had connections with the district. Captain Alfred Shout VC. MC. and Warrant Officer Rayene Simpson VC. DCM.

The 18th Battalion Rifle Club holds an annual 303 shoot at Kariong, New South Wales for the Captain Alfred Shout VC., MC. Trophy.

Alfred Shout’s brother, Corporal Arthur James Shout had served with the Australian 38th Battalion, wounded at Passchendaele he was returned to Australia, for his years of dedication as Club Secretary he was granted life membership of the Frankston Returned Servicemen’s Club (Victoria).

A frame housing the Medals of Captain Shout VC., MC., minus his Mentioned in Dispatches bronze oakleaf, and containing other memorability; a cap badge, an officer’s pip, a photograph of Shout, two non-military awards presented to Rose Shout and a typed copy of a tribute by Lance Corporal McQueen, were listed for auction by Captain Shout’s grandson Graham Thomas. The auction was held in the Double Bay rooms of Bonham’s & Goodman on 24th July 2006. Purchased at the auction by one of Australia’s wealthiest men, Kerry Stokes, for the record sum of AU $1,200,000, the Medals were presented to the Australian War Memorial on Friday 25 August 2006. Included in the sale was a QSA with clasps for Cape Colony, Orange Free State and Transvaal that had been issued to 36449 Trooper A. E. Howe of the South African Light Horse.

A number of the Shout/McGovern family from New Zealand attended the auction. One, a granddaughter of William John McGovern/Shout, Mrs Lyn Shackleton, wore her grandfather’s Medals.
Some people find it hard to comprehend why Captain Cecil Duncan Sasse who was equally involved in the action with Captain Alfred Shout during their assault against the enemy at Lone Pine during which he was wounded on three times occasions only received a DSO for his part “in gaining substantial additions to the Australian position at Lone Pine”.

Possible explanations for this discrepancy include a letter from Lieutenant-Colonel Alfred Joshua Bennett, Commander of the Australian 1st Division.

Writing to Rose Shout following her husband’s death he revealed that he had recommended Captain Shout for “the most glorious distinction of the Victoria Cross” for his actions at Lone Pine prior to his joining Sasse in the action that cost him his life.

Apart from the Victoria Cross (VC), the MID is the only form of recognition that can be made posthumously for gallantry or distinguished service in action.

Lance Corporal Alex McQueen wrote the following tribute to Captain Shout VC. MC. on behalf of the 1st Battalion:

Halt! Attention First Battalion. Turn your rifles to the earth, And bow your heads in sorrow. For this man of priceless worth, We have lost a gallant leader, so you’ll all join in with me and pay a last long tribute to Captain Shout, V.C. M.C.

We all know how our hero died in that blood-stained, khaki line, With the true and famous First Brigade at the charge of the Lonesome Pine He nobly fought with his men that day till we had the trenches won, And said when he was wounded, “Good old First Brigade, well done!”

We know his men all loved him and counted him their friend; We’re thankful; though we grieve for him He’d a painless, peaceful end.

The waters closed about him in the blue Aegean Sea, A fitting grave for a soldier brave like Captain Shout, V.C., M.C.

We see his loved ones mourning in far Australia fair, But if soldiers go to heaven then Captain Shout is there. So farewell for a season till we join the heavenly host When life’s long dream is over and the trumpets sound “Last Post”

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I would like to thank Mr Graham Thomas only grandson of Captain Alfred John Shout VC. MC, Mr Greg Ward grandson of Cpl Arthur Shout, Mr Jo Bunce grandson of Benjamin Thomas Shout, Mr Hamish McMullin grandson of Catherine Annie Shout and Mrs Lyn Shackleton granddaughter of William John McGovern (Shout).
Also Mr Murray Ginnane whose grandfather and three great uncles attended Newman school with the Shout siblings, Mr Ian Hall of Canada, Mr Chris Hunter of Canberra and Mr John Shipp University of Sydney Librarian.

The Redfern R.S.L. Sub-Branch in Sydney, Members with a framed montage with replica medals and a photograph of Captain Alfred Shout VC., MC. at Gallipoli, in the foyer of their Club.

Rear view of Captain Alfred Shouts Victoria Cross and Military CrossCourtesy Christopher J. White.