

**Lieutenant**  
**Frank John Scott**

**10<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

**2/12/1894-8/10/1917**



**BY ADAM KEATLEY**

## FRANK JOHN SCOTT

Words: 1499



Source 1

*Frank on the left and Cleve on the right*

Frank John Scott and his brother Cleve Scott were born in Port Broughton, but moved to Gawler as children. Frank was born on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 1894, and Cleve was born on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October 1896 ( see source 1 ). They were the older brothers of my mother's grandfather, making them my great great uncles.

Before the war Frank had already served in the 79<sup>th</sup> Infantry (which was the local Infantry for Gawler). During that time he worked as a Porter, and lived at Church Hill with his family. Frank Scott was one of the first to enlist for World War 1; enlisting only a month after England signed its declaration of war against Germany. Frank's younger brother Cleve joined a couple of years later.

Men enlisted into the infantries to defend their own country. However they couldn't be sent to war unless they went and volunteered, and if this happened they wouldn't be guaranteed to be part of the same battalion as the rest of their infantry.

When he left for war on board the "Ascanius" Frank was described as having blue eyes, dark brown hair with a fresh complexion; he weighed only 137 pounds (62kg) and was 5 foot and 8 ½ inches tall with a chest measuring just over 34 inches (just meeting the minimum chest measurement of 34 inches).



Frank Scott practicing trench making

*Men on break during training in Egypt*

Source 2

When the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion left Outer Harbor, Adelaide on the 20<sup>th</sup> of October 1914, it was thought that the likely destination was Europe, where British forces had already started to engage the German's. Before Frank even got to Europe he already had the rank of Private. After a stop at Fremantle, Perth where the 11th Battalion joined them on the "Ascanius", they were told their destination was Egypt, where they would receive further training. They then joined a convoy of ships heading to Egypt.

The Egypt base was located 110 km north-north-east of Cairo and 75 km south of Port Said on the edge of the Egyptian desert. The camp normally housed around 40,000 people. A military train was eventually made to take troops from the camp to their vessels in Alexandria. See source 2. Conditions were tough and they took part in activities to hopefully prepare them for Turkey.

Frank was among the first to land at Gallipoli, and he stayed there with the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) until the 25 of November 1915, when he was evacuated to Mudros. During his time in Gallipoli he was promoted twice; the first time to Lance-Corporal on the 11<sup>th</sup> of August, 1915, the second time was to temporary Corporal on the 29<sup>th</sup> of October 1915; this promotion later became permanent on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December 1915, after the evacuation. While he was awaiting orders in Egypt he was promoted to sergeant on the 17<sup>th</sup> of December. Gallipoli was a challenging, unsuccessful campaign, for Frank to have seen the whole period though is a testament to his character.

From December 1915 to March 1916, Frank trained at Mena camp, which was near Cairo. During this time the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigades were split in half, one half from each going into the newly formed 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade, although Frank remained in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade. The men who were taken from the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion formed the new 50<sup>th</sup>, a sister Battalion to the 10<sup>th</sup>. New reinforcements arrived from Australia; bringing the four Battalions up to full strength.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of March, 1916 the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion travelled to France to join the BEF. A couple of weeks after arriving at Marseilles, Frank Scott was sent to St Omer (which was a hospital) with the mumps, he re-joined his unit some time between mid-May and late-June. A short time after he joined the training Battalion, he was promoted twice first to 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant and then to Lieutenant on the 27<sup>th</sup> of November 1916. He was also promoted to temporary Adjutant for four month during 1917. Later on he was sent to the 5<sup>th</sup> Army Infantry School in France during July and August. These promotions, both permanent and temporary, reflect the Anzac quality of dedication to duty.

Gallipoli

Cairo

### Source 3



German Pillbox with men resting outside



In July 1916 the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion was involved on the attack on Pozieres where there were many casualties. In August they went to Belgium, where they spent a month in the front line at Hill 60. During February 1916 the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion attacked and occupied Le Barque. After the winter they spent almost four months resting before getting sent back to the front. The men took part in sporting competitions and won the Brigade Drill Cup. In September they were moved to Chateau Segard to prepare for an attack on Passchendaele Ridge. These activities encouraged the ANZAC quality of mateship allowing Frank and his battalion to bond in a positive team building exercise.

Late on the night of 19 September 1917, the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion marched to Polygon Wood where, on the following morning, it came under heavy barrage fire. This marked the beginning of the horrific Third Battle of Ypres. The noise was deafening and the casualties heavy but with a quick response from the artillery and the troops, the enemy was beaten back.

Sadly Frank Scott died on the 9<sup>th</sup> of October, 1917 at Celtic Wood in Belgium. His story came to light in an insight article in "The Advertiser" on April the 24<sup>th</sup> this year. On the day of his death Frank Scott was ordered to lead 80 men, which included another 4 officers to the German front-line, to distract the German's and hopefully get them to send for reinforcements from further north. They were then meant to retreat before they started to take heavy losses. By doing this they were meant to weaken the north and hopefully make the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion attack further up north more successful. Unfortunately for the Australians, the Celtic Wood trenches were teeming with enemy soldiers, as a result of the attacks by the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Battalions. When Frank arrived, he found that the Germans heavily outnumbered them (more than two to one), they also had heavy machine guns mounted on pillboxes (heavily armoured bunkers, which came in a range of sizes, and were generally camouflaged-see source 3) which the Germans used to rake down the advancing 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion.

Despite this, Frank Scott quickly took charge of his men and ordered them to attack the sniper position which had begun to take a hefty toll on the raiders. Other men tried to outflank the German trenches, while others attempted to destroy the German dug-out, and weapon-pits. Because of Frank, the 10<sup>th</sup> battalion was able to take the trenches; unfortunately shortly after the raid a fierce enemy barrage curtained off the woods, blocking off their escape route. The German reinforcements quickly arrived, hitting the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion with everything they had. They were then hunted down and killed in fierce hand-to-hand combat. Lieutenant Scott was seen to fall, and although a Sergeant tried to carry his body back, he was forced to leave him behind because of heavy machine-gun-fire. Out of the 80 soldiers and 5 officers, only about 18 made it back, and something that had begun with high hopes had ended in disaster. The events of this attack, further shows Frank's dedication to duty.

Source 4



Shortly after the war an unofficial burial report was received at the Australian Imperial Forces' headquarters in London, which stated that he was buried in Spoilbank which is near the area he was fighting. However this was unconfirmed and his mother wrote to the Australian government and received permission for his name to appear on the memorial of his brother Cleve Scott. Cleve died on the 22 of July 1918, when his patrol was ordered to retreat from a secure position under heavy fire, during this retreat, Cleve and another soldier were killed. Cleve Scott (Frank Scott's brother) was buried at La Kreule Military Cemetery. (see source 5)



*Frank & Cleve's head stone*

**Source 5**

Frank Scott was mentioned twice in dispatches, first about how he showed great devotion to duty, and secondly about the assistance he gave during the attack that claimed his life on the 9<sup>th</sup> of October, 1917. Just one year later, the armistice was signed, some would say that Frank's death was for nothing but his actions at all times reflected the ANZAC spirit. In following orders to lead such an operation he demonstrated Loyalty and Patriotism, in thinking quickly and taking charge when he realised the odds were stacked against them he demonstrated many qualities, showing initiative, extreme courage and determination are just some of them. Today Celtic Wood is tree-less, a small patch in Belgium that at the time was so important to both sides, a small patch where so many lives were lost.

## Bibliography

[http://www.gawler.sa.gov.au/webdata/resources/files/Frank\\_and\\_Cleve\\_Scott.pdf](http://www.gawler.sa.gov.au/webdata/resources/files/Frank_and_Cleve_Scott.pdf)

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