

Richard COURTNEY

Richard Courtney was born on 8 September 1870, in Castlemaine. He attended Melbourne Grammar and then Melbourne University. Following completion of his Arts and Law degrees, he was admitted to practice on 3rd May 1897, and commenced working as a solicitor in Melbourne.

Courtney had been active in the volunteer forces before the War, and already held the rank of lieutenant colonel, when he enlisted in the first few weeks of September 1914. Placed in command of the 14th Battalion, he took part in the Gallipoli landings. Courtney's Post, a position on the Gallipoli battlefield, was named after him, as was the later cemetery on the site of these early encounters between the Australian and Turkish soldiers. Courtney, however, suffered from ill health, and was invalided to Malta by June 1915 and later onto England. He was mentioned in despatches and received his Companion of the Order of the Bath from King George V at Buckingham Palace in January 1916. Notably, Albert Jacka won his VC whilst under Courtney's command, in his early days at Gallipoli with the 14th Battalion.

Discharged from the Australian Army, Courtney returned to Australia in May 1916 and was made acting military commandant of Western Australia until the end of the War. He returned to Melbourne in 1919 and died in October 1919, his health seriously compromised by his war service.



Lt Col Courtney is on the right of the picture in front of his dug out at Gallipoli.