

A SOLDIER'S STORY



Service No.: 1882
Name: Frederick Lewis BAWDEN
Nickname: Fred



Medals and Decorations

British War Medal

Victory Medal

Commendation (MID)

Rank: Private
Service: Army
Enlisted: 11 Mar 1916
Discharged: 21 Oct 1918

Frederick Lewis Bawden (Fred) was born at Port Broughton on 9 Dec 1896 to Sydney Milton Bawden and Dorothy Bawden (nee Bails). He was the eldest boy in a family of seven children; 4 boys and 3 girls. His father was a farmer at Wokurna (near Port Broughton), who first came to Tumby Bay as one of a deputation of four to report on the locality as a wheat growing district: as a result of their favourable verdict many farmers from the Port Broughton and other areas in the State moved to Tumby Bay.

In 1902 the Bawden family moved to Tumby and Fred's father was elected to the inaugural Tumby Bay Council. Fred went to school at the Wadella School on Mine Hill Road; leaving at an early age to commence work delivering telegrams from the Warrata Vale post Office to the mines; he then returned to Port Broughton, working as a linesman.

Fred enlisted in the Army on 11 Mar 1916 and was posted to 10th Battalion : this battalion had been reformed in the Middle East from the remnants of 16th Battalion after Gallipoli. After a period of training he embarked at Outer Harbour on 13 Jul 16, arriving in South Plymouth (UK) on 9 Sep 1916. Fred had saved the princely sum of 12 pounds (\$24) before embarkation with the concept of having a good time on the way to UK, but his mother made him give her all but 2 pounds (\$4) of his fortune. No doubt his plans were somewhat curtailed.

The Battalion was then sent to France, seeing action at Pozieres, Bullecourt, Mouquet Farm, Dernancourt, Amiens, Monument Wood, Paaschendale and the third battle of Ypres. On 6 Jul 1917, whilst in action at Ploegsteert Wood he received a commendation – mention in dispatches (MID) - for his “plucky conduct under fire”. After seeing much action throughout the western front, including several gas attacks, he was wounded in action (WIA) on 28 Mar 18, receiving a gun shot to the head. He was returned to 13

Field Ambulance and eventually to England (3 SC Hospital), where his condition was listed as serious. After several months hospitalisation, he returned to Australia on 4 Oct 1918 aboard the SS “*Carpentaria*”. However, his ordeal was not yet over as this ship was torpedoed on its voyage; whilst the ship was damaged, it did not sink and managed to limp home.

On 21 Oct 1918 he was medically discharged and returned to Tumby Bay. Although he was eligible for a full Totally and Permanently Incapacitated (TPI) pension due to his injuries, Fred refused to apply for it. Instead he went to work for Sid Bates (his brother-in-law) on a farm at Port Neill. After this he then worked on a farm at “*The Bluff*”, near Butler Tanks.

During this time he met Marion McClatchie. A lengthy romance ensued before the couple were married on 14 Mar 1934 at the Tumby Bay Methodist Church. They had a family of 3 girls – Dorothy (Mrs Bob White), Mary (Mrs David Wishart) and Judy (Mrs Rex Milton). Judy still tells the story of how the girls got a packet of “Lifesavers” each for a very special occasion; unfortunately she lost hers whilst helping in the paddock and even after a full days search they were not found – could you imagine a child of today searching for a day for a packet of “Lifesavers”!

At the onset of World War 2, Fred received his call up papers. These were torn up by Dr Wibberley (senior) when Fred presented for his medical. Needless to say his previous injuries prevented his further service.

In 1951 the family moved from the farm to Tumby Bay and settled in a house in Tresize St. (now Julie Baldock’s house). Fred was employed on the wharf and at the Tumby Bay Council.

Unfortunately, because of his war wounds, he did not enjoy good health and often suffered from severe head aches: he also suffered from poor circulation as a result of his feet having been frozen in the trenches in France.

Fred had been a keen sportsman in his early years, but after the war he became a spectator. He was a very strong (one eyed) Port Adelaide supporter. He was also a founding member of the Tumby Bay RSL

Fred passed away on 22 Sep 1975 and is buried in the Tumby Bay cemetery. His wife is laid to rest beside him.



British War Medal Victory Medal

Right:
Digging
Trenches

