

A SOLDIER'S STORY



Service No.: SX10573
Name: Cecil Mark KROEMER
Nickname: Doc



Medals and Decorations

1939 - 45 Star

Africa Star (with clasps)

Pacific Star

Defence Medal

War Medal 1939 - 45

Australian Service Medal 1939 - 45

Rank: Sergeant

Service: Army

Enlisted: 5 Dec 1940

Discharged: 11 Jan 1946

Cecil was born on 20 Mar 1911 at Quorn to Charles Herbert Kroemer and Isobel Kroemer (nee Gray). There were 7 children in the family, 4 boys and 3 girls, of which he was the eldest. His father was a farmer near Quorn before moving to the EP in 1933 and recommencing farming at Coomaba siding (near Karkoo).

Doc went to Minlidoggie School (near Quorn), leaving at age 9 to work on the Searle family farm, firstly at Quorn and later at Warrachie (near Lock). He took up a block near the Searle farm but "walked off" during the depression and took employ building the pipeline track between Lock and Karkoo and then dredging the harbour and building the breakwater at Whyalla until his enlistment in the Army on 5 Dec 1940.

He commenced training on 29 Jan 1941 at Woodside. On completion of training he was allocated to 2/43rd Battalion (Bn) on 30 Mar 1941; the following day he entrained for Sydney. A week later he embarked on HMAT "MM", disembarking in the Middle East on 14 May 1941, where he undertook further training before being taken on strength by his unit (2/43rd Bn) on 17 Jul 1941.

The 2/43rd Bn had been raised at Woodside (SA) on 17 Jul 1940 and consisted mainly of recruits from SA. The Bn was initially part of the 8th Division (Div), but was re-allocated to the 9th Div in late 1940 and saw action in the Middle East in 1941–1942, taking part in the fighting at Tobruk, in the first and second battles of El Alemein and garrison duties in Syria. Doc saw action in all these campaigns.

On 12 Jan 1943 he was promoted to Corporal and 2 weeks later he, and his unit, were on the move again. He embarked from the Middle East on 24 Jan 1943 aboard HMAT "LI" bound for Sydney, disembarking on 27 Feb 1943, then entraining for Cairns for

further training. The Bn was required to defend Australia.

The Bn embarked at Cairns on 8 Aug 1943, bound for Milne Bay (PNG). After several months of action that saw the retaking of Lae (PNG) and the Huon Peninsula, the unit was again withdrawn to Australia, embarking at Finchhaafen (PNG) on 31 Jan 1944 and arriving at Townsville a day later.

The unit was then given a period of leave. Doc did not waste his leave, as it was during this period that he married Florence Margaret Cook; unfortunately the honeymoon was cut short because he became ill and was later admitted to 105 Army General Hospital suffering from malaria where he remained for several weeks.

On discharge from hospital he rejoined his unit and embarked aboard the "*General Butner*" at Townsville on 8 Apr 1945, bound for Moratai (PNG). On 31 May 1945 the unit embarked for its final action; this time aboard Landing Ship Tank (LST) "*709*" from Moratai (PNG) to retake British North Borneo: Doc was promoted to Sergeant during this action.

After discharge in Jan 1946 he took a job with Perry Engineering in Adelaide. Later he moved to Snowtown to share-farm for the Michael's family. He and his family then moved back to Adelaide where Doc worked with his brother in the building trade whilst awaiting the allocation of a "Soldier Settler" block.

He was finally allocated Section 307, Hd of Hutchison in Feb 1952. The family left Adelaide in a 30 cwt Bedford truck on 6 Feb 1952 arriving at their farm near Tumby Bay 3 days later. Rabbits and Horehound abounded on the place, but the family, now consisting of 5 boys, were successful in developing the farm.

The Kroemer family loved the movies and were always in the same seats every Saturday night.

Doc died on 3 Dec 1974 and is buried in the Tumby Bay Cemetery; his wife "Florrie" died on 15 Aug 1997 and is buried beside him.

Two of his sons, Geoff and John, currently work the farm, which is now known as "*Dad's Selection*". Two of Doc's brothers, Cyril and Victor, also served during WW2. Cyril, a pilot, was awarded the DFC for landing his crippled aircraft (a Lancaster Bomber) safely when the remainder of his crew were wounded.

