

A SOLDIER'S STORY



Service No.: SX18703
Name: Frederick Malachi McCALLUM
Nickname: Scally



Medals and Decorations

1939 - 45 Star

Pacific Star

Defence Medal

War Medal 1939 - 45

Australian Service Medal 1939 - 45

Rank: Private

Service: Army

Enlisted: 28 Jul 1942

Discharged: 28 Jun 1944

Frederick (Scally) was born at Whola (situated between Lipson and Koppio) on 7 Jul 1913 to John Duncan (Jack) McCallum and Catherine Matilda (Kit) McCallum (nee Beaty). He was the youngest of 4 children (2 boys and 2 girls). He earned the nickname “Scally”, when his sister Doreen stated that he was a little scallywag as a baby; it stuck! His father was a farmer and a “blade shearer” of some note.

Scally commenced his schooling at Wadella and remained there until the school closed in Dec 1924. He then transferred to Lipson School, completing his schooling in Dec 1927, at the age of 14. He then helped his father on the farm, as an unpaid labourer, of course. He remained in this employ until he enlisted in the Army.

His first application to join the Army was refused by the Manpower Officer at Port Lincoln, a Mr. Barnes, who immediately recognised the independence, which could be construed as insubordination, which Scally exuded. It was stated that his skills were needed in the protected industry of farming, so he was given a permanent exemption. However, as the news from the front became more serious, Scally felt that he should be supporting his friends who had already enlisted.

Because of his earlier rejection, he travelled to Adelaide and enlisted, stating that he was “unemployed”. He was posted to 2/10th Battalion (Bn) and sent to Sandy Creek for training. Training was a breeze for Scally, but his independence did get him into some scrapes.

The Bn was then moved to Watsonia (Vic) awaiting call forward to Papua New Guinea (PNG). The Bn embarked in early Dec 1942 and sailed to Port Moresby (PNG) for some further training and acclimatisation. They were then flown over the ranges to Buna, before marching to Soputa, where the Bn received reinforcements, one of whom

was Bob Coad, then on to Sananda.

At Sananda Scally was involved in an attack on a Japanese pillbox. During this action the entire attacking force was either killed or wounded; Scally was shot in the chest and because no retrieval action was possible to recover the wounded, he dragged himself back to his own lines. He was treated locally at an American Regimental Aid Post (RAP) then taken back to the hospital at Port Moresby. After a short time for medical treatment he was loaded onto the HS “Redbank” and repatriated to the General Hospital at Concord (NSW). He was then transferred to the General Hospital at Daw Park (SA) for further medical treatment and convalescence, before medical discharge.

At the beginning of this action his parents had been notified that their son was missing in action (MIA), thought to have been killed in action (KIA). This advice had not been altered during his hospitalisation, so imagine their surprise and joy when one day, during medical leave, Scally walked into their home at Prospect (SA). What a reunion!

Scally returned to Tumby, where rabbits had over-run the land. He trapped rabbits, continued his shearing and tried his hand at wool classing. After a time he was able to buy Whola, a property that his family had leased for almost 100 years, with a war service loan and began trading in sheep, buying at Tumby or Cummins, droving to Whola and fattening them and then droving back to the saleyards. He engaged Bob Coad and later Norm Flavel to share farm for him. In 1947, he bought a new W6 tractor; with this machine he was able to work over 60 acres a day!

Scally made the most of his bachelor days. He often caught the “Minnipa” to Adelaide to visit his mother and father; he would play poker all night for the 2 nights over and then for the 2 nights back. In fact, it is rumoured that in one morning he was able to win enough money playing poker at the Tumby Bay Hotel to purchase an Aerial motorbike.

All good things must come to an end and Scally’s bachelor days were numbered after meeting his future wife, Ruth Brooks, at the Grand Debutante Ball at Tumby in 1946. After a courtship lasting 4 years which was undertaken mainly by post, and during which he wrote “paper kisses are not so good”, they were married in May 1950 at the Methodist Church in Port Lincoln; they lived on the farm at Whola. They had 4 children, 3 girls

and a boy.

Scally retired from the farm in the early 80s, selling it to Mot Baillee, and moved to Adelaide. He died on 28 May 1992; both he and his wife are buried in the Lipson Cemetery.

