

A SOLDIER'S STORY



Service No.: SX17222
Name: Mostyn France BAILLIE
Nickname: Mot



Medals and Decorations

1939 - 45 Star.

Pacific Star

Defence Medal

War Medal 1939 - 45

Australian Service Medal 1939 - 45

Rank: Private

Service: Army

Enlisted: 9 Feb 1942

Discharged: 30 Apr 1946

Mostyn (Mot) was born on 2 Apr 1922 at Tumby Bay to George Baillie and Hilda Baillie (nee France). There were 7 children in the family, 5 boys and 2 girls, of which he was the second youngest. His father was a farmer in the area, on the block currently owned by Haydn Baillie.

Mot completed primary school at the Warratta School, before transferring to the Tumby Bay School to complete Years 8 & 9; he left school at the end of 1937 and helped on the family farm "*Glen Brae*" until he commenced share farming with his brother. He continued in this employ until he enlisted.

Mot enlisted in the Army at Lipson on 9 Feb 1942 and went to Wayville for processing. After training he was posted to 2/10th Battalion (Bn), a Bn that had just returned to Australia from the Middle East. The Bn was then sent to Papua New Guinea (PNG) where it was to fight some of its most costly and bitter battles. The Bn arrived at Milne Bay on 12 Aug 1942 and on the night of 27 Aug 1942 was overwhelmed by Japanese Marines; this was an extremely confused and difficult action. The Bn fared even worse in its next engagement in Buna. Between 23 Dec 1942 and 2 Jan 1943 the Bn lost 113 men killed in action (KIA) and 205 wounded in action (WIA) in often ill conceived attacks against Japanese bunkers around the old airstrip. Between 9 – 24 Jan 1943 the Bn fought in the area of Sanananda, before being withdrawn from PNG and returning to Australia on 12 Mar 1943.

After further training the Bn was redeployed to PNG in early Aug 1943. It continued training in the Port Moresby area until sent into action again at the Finisterre Mountains (PNG) on 31 Dec 1943, where it participated in operations to secure Shaggy Ridge

between 4 Jan and 1 Feb 1944, a task that took weeks of fighting to winkle the Japanese from their prepared defences. As an aside it may be of interest for some to know that Shaggy Ridge was named after Lieutenant Robert (Shaggy) Clampett of the 2/27th Bn, who made some harsh remarks of the area whilst he was fighting there!

The Bn was again withdrawn from the line and returned to Australia on 8 May 1944 before undertaking its final operation of the war. On 1 Jul 1945 the Bn landed at Balikpapan (Borneo) and stormed the heights of Parramatta Ridge. In the ensuing days it cleared the Japanese from in and around Balikpapan town and was withdrawn into reserve on 6 Jul 1945 and did not re-enter the line before the war ended on 15 Aug 1945. The Bn was disbanded at Balikpapan on 29 Dec 1945.

Mot returned to Australia in 1946 and took his discharge. He returned to Tumby and again commenced share farming with his brother. He applied for a soldier settlers block in 1947, an application that was successful, and moved onto section 410 at Lipson in 1950: the block was located near his father’s farm and was said to be “a stony, hilly block”. It is still farmed by the Baillie family today.

During the excitement of acquiring the block he also married Hilda Perrey, a school teacher from Mt Hill, whom he had met whilst playing football at Ungarra – it is said to have been love at first sight. The couple were married in Adelaide in Nov 1947. They had 3 children, a boy and 2 girls; all of whom still live in the Tumby area.

Mot died on 21 Apr 1987 whilst fighting a fire on his property; he is buried in the Lipson Cemetery.

His wife Hilda has moved from the farm and now resides in Lawrie Street in Tumby Bay.

