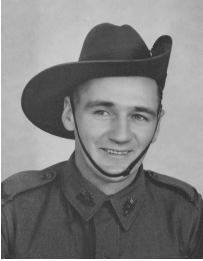


## A SOLDIER'S STORY



Service No.: SX10662  
Name: Frederick KSCHENKA  
Nickname: Fred



### *Medals and Decorations*

1939 - 45 Star

African Star

Pacific Star

Defence Medal

Australian War Medal 1939 - 45

Australian Service Medal 1939 - 45

Rank: Private  
Service: Army  
Enlisted: 10 Dec 1940  
KIA: 27 Aug 1942

Fred was born on 6 Jun 1909 at Riverton (SA) to Friedrich Kschenka and Bertha Christina Kschenka (nee Werner). There were 8 children in the family, 4 girls and 4 boys, of which he was the fourth youngest. His family lived at Riverton (SA), before moving to Tumby Bay in Feb 1923.

Fred started school at Riverton, then transferred to Tumby Bay on the relocation of his family. He completed his schooling at Grade 7 at the end of 1923 and then took employ as a labourer/mechanic in Kschenka Bros garage, which was located in the building currently housing Trenberth's joinery.

He remained in this employ until his enlistment in the Army at Port Lincoln on 10 Dec 1940. At the time of enlistment he gave his occupation as mechanic.

After enlistment he was sent to 3<sup>rd</sup> Training Battalion (Bn) at Wayville for basic training before being allocated to 2/10<sup>th</sup> Bn on 22 May 1941. On completion of training (27 Jun 1941) he entrained at Adelaide bound for Sydney and onward movement overseas. Two days later he embarked aboard a US Convoy bound for the Middle East, disembarking a month later and undertaking further training with 18<sup>th</sup> Training Bn before finally being taken on strength by his unit (2/10<sup>th</sup>) on 20 Sep 1941 in Palestine.

The 2/10<sup>th</sup> Bn (The Adelaide Rifles), formed in 1939, was the first unit of the 2<sup>nd</sup> AIF raised in South Australia; after garrison duties in the UK it finally arrived in the Middle East in late 1940. The Bn first entered combat at Giarabub, with an attack against the Italian garrison there, in Mar 1941. This was followed by defensive actions during the siege of Tobruk later the same year before the 2/10<sup>th</sup> joined the Allied garrison in Syria.

In early 1942 it was decided that the 2/10<sup>th</sup> would be withdrawn from the Middle

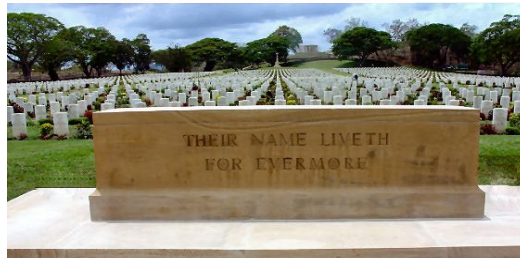
East and returned to Australia in a bid to thwart the Japanese advance in the Pacific. Thus on 11 Feb 1942 Fred, with the remainder of his Bn, embarked aboard the HMT *"New Amsterdam"* for return to Australia: however, they were transhipped at Bombay (India) to HMT *"Nevasa"* and then continued their journey, arriving at Outer Harbour on 29 Mar 1942, where they were allowed leave. Unfortunately Fred was a day late back from leave and was charged with being Absent Without Leave - a long way from Adelaide to Tumbly Bay with the transport available in those days!

After a period of reorganisation and training around Kilcoy in Queensland, the Bn was committed to its next campaign : New Guinea . Following the Japanese landings on the north coast of New Guinea in Jul 1942, Australian forces in the area had been fighting a desperate holding action, which had seen them being pushed inexorably towards Port Moresby. By early Aug 1942, the situation for the Australians was critical!

Thus on 5 Aug 1942, the 2/10<sup>th</sup> embarked on the Dutch transport *"Both"*. A week later on 12 Aug, the 2/10<sup>th</sup>, along with the other two Bns of the 18<sup>th</sup> Brigade, landed at Milne Bay (PNG) where they reinforced the 7<sup>th</sup> Brigade who were defending the area; a fortnight later the Japanese landed a large force at Milne Bay in an attempt to secure the airfield that the Australians had built there.

The Australians eventually won a significant victory in the ensuing Battle of Milne Bay, but the 2/10<sup>th</sup> suffered heavily, losing 43 killed and 26 wounded on their debut in the Pacific.

Unfortunately Fred was one of the casualties during this action. Less than two weeks after his unit entered the front lines, Fred was Killed in Action on 27 Aug 1942 at Milne Bay and buried in the K.B. Mission Cemetery at Milne Bay. His remains were reinterred on 14 Dec 1942 at Milne Bay War Cemetery.



Milne Bay War Cemetery, Papua New Guinea