

## **FRANK KENT.**

WX 4075, 2/16th Battalion

During the pre-war period Frank Kent was a member of the 16th Battalion Cameron Highlanders of W.A.

At the outbreak of War, the Highlanders were mobilised and sent to Rottneest Island for intensive training. During that time the 2nd Eleventh A.I.F. was formed. Frank endeavoured to enlist in that unit but was rejected on medical grounds. He was given the opportunity to join an Infantry Training Battalion to train recruits, at Northam. He remained there as a general instructor until able to join the A.I.F.

As a member of the 2/16th Battalion he sailed on the Acquitania for somewhere overseas during June 1941. Some time was spent training in India, eventually reaching Julius camp, Palestine in November 1940. On 30th December Frank was rushed to hospital with peritonitis. He was very ill for some time and did not re-join the Battalion until the Syrian campaign was nearly over. He served there until October 1941 when illness again placed him back in hospital and sent back to Australia on the Dutch Hospital ship 'Oranje'.

Whilst in hospital the troops listened in the evenings to Lord Haw, the German counterpart of Tokyo Rose. They did not know when they were leaving, so were quite startled when Haw told them that they would be going the next morning, and he also named the ship on which they would be sailing. Haw stated that the Germans did not recognise the ship as a hospital ship and that it would be sunk whilst still in the Red Sea. He was right in everything that he said, except the sinking.

Frank reached Fremantle on 5th December 1941, the day before Pearl Harbour. Frank was put into Hollywood hospital for a long while and was discharged as unfit during February 1942. (Pearl Harbour is generally recognised as being attacked on the 7th December 1941 if you are on one side of the International date line, and the 6th December if you have crossed the line. Ed).

But the Army was in Frank's blood. At the end of the year he had regained his health and reenlisted, serving in Australia until the end of the War.