

### Bill Tunzi

# Served in Middle East, Borneo

■ **William James Tunzi** was born on November 23, 1916, to **George Richard Tunzi** (born 1883) and **Winifred Ann Gleeson** (died 1965).

**Bill Tunzi** was born in **Bendigo (Vic.)**. His siblings were:

■ **Phillip Lorenzo Tunzi** (1905-1905);

■ **George Richard Tunzi** (1906-1959), who married **Ivy Mavis Bourke** (1913-1989);

■ **Agnes Mary Tunzi** (born 1908), who married **George Alexander McIlwain**;

■ **Joseph Martin Tunzi** (1910-1960), who married **Betty Herman** (died 1952); and

■ **Winifred Grace Tunzi** (born 1913), who married **Harry Evans**.

**Bill Tunzi's** early addresses included **Tullamarine**, from where he rode a bicycle as a teenager to **McPhersons**, where he became a fitter and turner.

**Bill** enlisted in the **Australian Imperial Force** at **Royal Park** on June 10, 1940, at age 23. His enlistment records incorrectly show his date of birth as November 23, 1917. His occupation was listed as Bolt Maker.

As **VX31148**, he held the rank of **Sapper**. He was sent to the **2nd Anti-Aircraft Regiment** at **Puckapunyal**.

His father **George Richard Tunzi's** address at the time was listed as 366 Johnston Rd, **Abbotsford**. **Bill's** religion is listed as **Roman Catholic**.

**Bill Tunzi** was assigned to the **2/14th Infantry Battalion** on September 24, 1940.

He embarked **Sydney** for the **Middle East** per the transport **Auitania** on October 19, 1940. They disembarked at the **Suez** on November 25, 1940, and to camp in **Palestine**.

**Bill** was assigned to the **2/2nd Ordnance Workshop Company** on January 29, 1941 as 'Driver Motor Transport III'.

This was followed by postings:

■ To **2/3rd Ordnance Workshop Company**. April 9, 1941.

■ Mechanic, Motor Transport II. August 25, 1941.

■ Fitter, Motor Transport. May 11, 1942.

■ To **2/1st Army Field Workshops**, June 17, 1942.

He was sent to **North Africa** and



● Sapper William James Tunzi VX31148

operations against the **Germans** and **Italians** including the **El Alamein** attacks.

**Bill** went to camp in **Palestine** in December, and embarked at **Suez** on January 29, 1943; disembarking in **Sydney** on February 28, 1943.

He was assigned to the **265th Light Aid Detachment, 5th Machine Gun Battalion** on August 11, 1943; and embarked **Cairns** for **Thursday Island** per the transport **Islander** on September 24, 1943.

He was returned to the mainland, to **Townsville**, per transport **Taroona**, on July 6, 1944.

From there he went to the **Royal Australian Engineers Depot** at **Wagga** on October 5, 1944; and to the **2nd Port Construction Company, Kapooka**, on November 21.

Hostilities continued against the **Japanese** into 1945.

### Fact File

**BILL TUNZI'S** military records include some colour:

■ Failed to appear at a Place of Parade. November 6, 1940.

■ Failed to appear at a Place of Parade. July 30, 1942. Fined £3.

■ Sick. October 4-9, 1942.

■ Sick with burns. **2/3rd Field Ambulance**. October 15-19, 1942.

■ Absent without leave. August 24, 1943.

■ Absent without leave. December 15, 1944.

■ Sick with finger injury. **2/5th Australian General Hospital**. July 14-August 1, 1945.

## The Long Way

### Bill Tunzi: Served in Middle East, Borneo

Bill Tunzi embarked Brisbane for operations at **Morotai, Borneo**, against the **Japanese**, per the transport *Sea Ray* on June 15, 1945.

He returned to **Australia** on September 20, and was discharged on October 6.

Bill Tunzi was awarded:

- the **1939-45 Star**,
- the **Africa Star** with **8th Army** clasp,
- the **Pacific Star**,
- the **Defence Medal**,
- the **War Medal**, and
- the **Australian Service Medal**, 1939-45.

Upon his discharge, he returned to work at **McPhersons**, rising to the position of Supervisor.

He was married briefly to **Alma Doris Tunzi**, shown in the **Australian Electoral Rolls** as living at 21 Ascot St, **Ascot Vale**.

She is believed to have been born in 1916, the daughter of **Andrew Quinan** and **Dora Neyland**. Records show her death at age 57 in 1973.

They had a daughter, **Heather** (now **Mrs Chris Young**).

**Bill** and **Alma** were divorced on September 16, 1950.

**Bill Tunzi** met **Isobell Johnson** when she was working as a nurse for the **T & G Insurance** company in **Melbourne**.

They met in the **City**, and **Bill** accompanied **Isobell** on a tram ride home from work to **Coburg**, where she was living with her grandmother.

**Bill** was living with his parents at Plenty Rd, **Bundoora**, but would travel to **Coburg** on Sundays to **Isobell** on walks around **Coburg Lake**.

They married at the **Methodist Church, Alphington**, on September 23, 1950, with the **Rev. John Parker** officiating.



● Bill Tunzi

### Tunzi ancestry at a glance

**BILL TUNZI'S** antecedents included:

- **FILLIPO TUNZI** and **CATERINA BONETTI**,
- their son **GIUSEPPE TUNZI** (1813-1888) married **ANNA-MARIA POZZI** (1813-1885);
- their son **FILLIPO LORENZO TUNZI** (1837-1917) married **MARY ANN CURRY** (died 1934);
- their son **GEORGE RICHARD TUNZI** (born 1883) married **WINIFRED ANN GLEESON** (died 1965).

**BILL'S** siblings had a number of children:

- **GEORGE** had a son **GRAEME** (born 1944);
- **AGNES** had a son **RICHARD**;
- **JOE** had sons **JOE**, **JEFFREY** and **BILLY**;
- **WIN** had 11 children: **WINIFRED**, **JOHN**, **PATSY**, **JOSEPH**, **WILMA**, **ROSEMARY**, **MARTIN**, **CHARLES**, **LYNETTE**, **ANTHONY** and **PETER**.

Their first address was at 35 Waterdale Rd, **Ivanhoe**; later Flat 7, 16 Churchill Ave., **Ascot Vale**; and then at 412 Station St, **Lalor**.

The family home was part of the **Peter Lalor Home Building Co-Operative Society**.

Two daughters were welcomed: **Angela Maria Tunzi** (later **Bendall**); and **Fleur Marian Tunzi** (later **Long**).

**Bill** was prominent in local community life, including helping to establish the **Lalor Football Club**. He was a **Freemason**.

**Bill Tunzi** died on June 12, 1966, following an angina attack at **Whittlesea Golf Course, Humevale**, aged just 49.