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**SEPTIMUS BOYD WILSON KIRK**

(1914 - 2001)

Septimus Kirk, always known as Tom, was born at Mount Wilson in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney in the snowstorm of 1914 which was so severe that his mother could not get to hospital.

He was the youngest and seventh child (hence the name Septimus) of a family who were descendants from pioneer settlers at the mountain.

He was educated in the one-teacher Mount Wilson school and he grew up watching his father and older brothers operate the Kirk family timber mill.

As a young man, Tom worked for his three older brothers, each of whom had returned safely from the First World War.

Prior to the Second World War, Tom was working as a leading benchman responsible for milling logs in a timber mill in Lithgow.

In 1942, even though he was working in a protected industry, Tom joined the Royal Australian Air Force as a fitter and he later served in many parts of Australia as a Leading Aircraftman.

He had always had an interest in machinery and how things worked and it was said that he could strip down and repair anything from a hose to a helicopter.

After the war, he returned home to open his own timber mill to supply the Lithgow coal mines.

Tom Kirk was a large man with the combination of a magnificent physique and agility. He was 183 cm (6 feet) tall, weighed in at 102 kg (16 stone) and had a 135 cm (53 inch) chest.

This, together with his knowledge of timber, led him into woodchopping contests.

The ring of the axe had been heard on the Australian continent from the time of the arrival of the first Europeans and, quite possibly, from Asians before that.

One of the first tasks of the First Fleeters after dropping anchor in Sydney Cove, was the felling of trees to clear the land for settlement and provide timber for firewood and construction purposes.

