Foundation Mare
Scrumlo Nita

By Joy Poole OAM

SCRUMLO NITA - 65

		Cecil
	Serene	
		The Blanche
Tranquil		
		Harvat
	Brown Legs	
		Brown Mare
		Lingle
	Gibbergunyah	
		Glass Bubbles
Swanie		
		Port Rush
	Branga Prudence	
		Gentle Annie

Jim Reid on SCRUMLO NITA (centre) with Ben (left) owned by Allan Ward and Lorna at Rouchel.

The history of SCRUMLO NITA is a story that books are written about and movies are made; the ugly duckling who was almost discarded at birth, that became a legend as a performance mare and bred on to leave a wonderful legacy to the Australian Stock Horse breed. Around 1,000 of her descendants are now registered.

SCRUMLO NITA, Foundation Mare, was very pigeon toed and was almost not continued with. When Danny Watts and Jimmy Reid broke her in, Allan Ward, the horse manager of Scrumlo, decided Jimmy Reid should have her because of his light weight.

Even today when Jimmy Reid talks about her, you can feel and hear the excitement in his voice, "She was one hell of a mare!"

Jimmy maintained she didn't need training as she had a natural stop and turn and was incredibly safe on her feet. He remembers clearly, one day, they were out mustering when Jack Wake, a good horsemen and a fellow Scrumlo stockman was tormenting him about Nita. "She'll snap off at the knees" he said. It was too much for the young Jimmy. "I'll race you down that steep rocky side" Jim shouted. Jack was riding another good Scrumlo horse, Don, but he was no match for the fleet footed, elusive Nita.

When the time came to start her in her first campdraft, Allan Ward insisted that Jimmy wear no spurs and only sheep dog the beast. Jimmy gave her another run in that fashion before Ian McCallum took over the reins.

Jimmy Reid and Allan Ward knew they

had something special and the next eight runs were to prove them correct.

As Ken McCallum recalls, Nita only ever had ten starts and won six open campdrafts. "At one stage she won four in a row", Jimmy recalls.

Prior to Allan Ward leaving Scrumlo in 1962 because of his wife's poor health, Nita was put into the broodmare band.

This probably proved a blessing in disguise as she went on to produce eight foals, seven of which are registered with The Australian Stock Horse Society.

Her first foal was born in 1960 by Bobbie Bruce and wasn't registered. The horse book comments, "Given to Allan Ward when he resigned in 1962." Ken McCallum declares this was a colt that should never have been gelded. Ken rode him at Moonan, then, at his second start

at Ellerston he won the Maiden Campdraft. He also won a couple of sprints at Ellerston. At his third outing at Muswellbrook he broke a bone in a hind leg, "He was a wonderful horse", Ken reflects.

Her second foal (1962) was a filly by Young Barney and registered by Mick Mather. Thereby also hangs a tale. NIENTE as she was called, was presented at a classification day at Maitland Showground. Harold Willard, Allan Ward and Joy Poole were the classifiers. Standing waiting his turn was a man who obviously wasn't over familiar with horses, but had a beautiful mare.

"Get that man to bring his mare over and when we classify her we can use her to show people what an Australian Stock Horse is" Harold and Allan said. Imagine Harold and Allan's surprise when I brought over the mare's papers and we discovered she was out of SCRUMLO NITA.

Mick Mather and Dan Lee-Warner, manager of Scrumlo at that time, had served in the war together, hence Mick having the mare.

In 1964 Nita produced a filly by Yellow Rock, registered RAYS GIFT. See article on page 28/29.

In 1966 she had SCRUMLO BONITA, a brown filly by SCRUMLO FIRELIGHT. This filly was given to Mack Lee-Warner as a child.

SCRUMLO BONITA, unfortunately was to prove a poor breeder only producing one foal, BYDAND WYNITA. Wynita, according to Mack is the ideal mare as Michael Andrews can campdraft her and then hand her over to his thirteen year old son James to go in his events.

In 1968 Nita produced another filly to SCRUMLO FIRELIGHT retained by Scrumlo and registered as SCRUMLO MYNITA. The Scrumlo horse book of the day comments, "Good sort".

In 1969 she produced a colt by SCRUMLO URANIUM that was registered as SCRUMLO CHROMIUM. The Scrumlo horse book comments "Good sort of foal and quiet". This colt was sold at an early Australian Stock Horse Sale at Scone for $1,025. This colt produced some good progeny including BULLENBONG WIRIKI who won the Working Stock Horse class at Melbourne Royal in 1977.

In 1970 she produced a filly foal by SCRUMLO FIRELIGHT named SCRUMLO ANITA, which was purchased by Allan Ward for $1,600. The Scrumlo horse book comments "An exceptionally good type."

Anita was a magnificent chestnut mare that Allan lent to Barbara Bishop for polocrosse. Always immaculately presented by Barb, the combination won the most improved player award in the Maitland Polocrosse Club in the late 70's.

However, disaster was just around the corner as after an army manoeuvre at the Singleton Army Camp one night, with the bombing so intense that Singleton itself felt under attack, SCRUMLO ANITA was found dead in her yard the following morning.
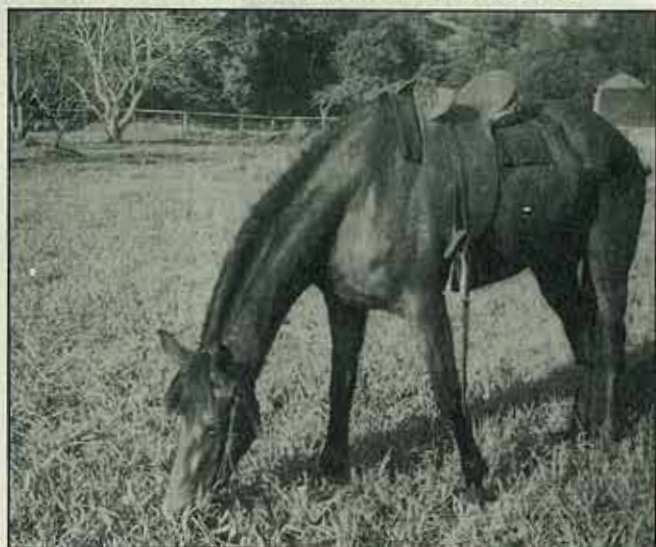
It's believed that frightened by the bombing Anita raced across her yard and struck the strainer post killing herself instantly.

Nita's last foal, another filly by SCRUMLO FIRELIGHT named SCRUMLO SWANITA was retained. After this foal Nita was pensioned off. In 1974 the great mare died at Scrumlo aged twenty-four years.

SCRUMLO NITA endeared herself to everyone who knew her by her excellent temperament and eagerness to perform.

Jim Reid on SCRUMLO NITA at Rouchel in 1955.

Above: SCRUMLO NITA at Mullee in 1954.
Left: SCRUMLO ANITA and Barb Bishop