



In Memory of

Captain

CLAUDE ROBERT HENRY THORN

QX1210, 2nd/31st Australian Infantry Battalion. A.I.F.

who died age 29

on 19 November 1942

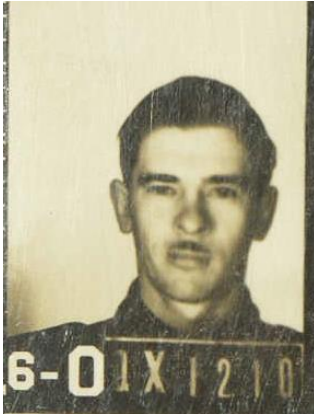
Son of Robert Waverley Thorn and Ethel Matilda Thorn;
husband of Elinor Louise Thorn,
of Yeerongpilly, Queensland, Australia

Remembered with honour

PORT MORESBY MEMORIAL, PAPUA NEW GUINEA



CAPTAIN
CLAUDE ROBERT HENRY THORN
2ND/31ST INFANTRY BATTALION
REGIMENTAL NUMBER : QX1210



Captain Claude Robert Henry Thorn, the son of Robert Waverley (Wylie) Thorn and Ethel Matilda Thorn (nee Crane), was born at Brisbane in Queensland on 2nd May 1913. He was educated at the Toowoomba Grammar School. At the age of 26 years and 5 months he voluntarily enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force at Toowoomba on 3rd November 1939 after swearing the statutory oath that he would serve for the duration of the war and an additional twelve months. At the time of his enlistment he unmarried, employed as an Insurance Agent and residing at Woolloowin in Brisbane. He had no previous military service. His physical description at the time of enlistment was that he had brown hair and brown eyes. He stated that he was of the Church of England religion. He gave his next of kin as his father, Mr Robert Wylie Thorn, residing at Nenenaye Street, Woolloowin, Brisbane.

Captain Claude Thorn was allotted the regimental number of QX1210 and he joined the Reception Depot at Redbank on 3rd November 1939. He was allocated to the 2nd/12th Infantry Battalion on 13th November 1939. He left Redbank by rail transport and proceeded to Ingleburn in Eastern Command, New South Wales, on 18th December 1939. He was promoted to the rank of Corporal whilst serving at Rutherford in New South Wales on 19th December 1939. He was detached for training at the Officers Training College in Eastern Command during the period 3rd January until 1st March 1940 when he rejoined the 2nd/12th Infantry Battalion at Ingleburn Camp. He was promoted to the rank of Sergeant on 22nd February 1940.

Captain Claude Thorn was appointed to the commissioned rank of Provisional Lieutenant on 1st March 1940. He embarked for overseas service with the Australian Imperial Force on 4th May 1940 and he disembarked from the ship at Gourock in Scotland on 17th June 1940. His battalion then proceeded to Lopcombe Corner at Salisbury Plain where it continued its military preparation. He was transferred to the 70th Battalion on 11th July 1940. He attended a course at the Army Gas School at Winterbourne during the period 23rd September until 4th October 1940. He embarked for service in the Middle East as a member of the 2nd/31st Infantry Battalion on 3rd January 1941 and disembarked in the Middle East on 9th March 1941. He attended the Australian Mobile School of Mechanization during the period 26th March until 31st March 1941. He was promoted to the rank of Captain on 30th September 1941. He attended a course of instruction at the Middle East Tactical School during the period 2nd November until 10th November 1941.

Captain Claude Thorn embarked on the United States Ship "Mount Vernon" with his battalion for return to Australia to meet the Japanese threat on 8th February 1942. He disembarked from the

ship at Adelaide in South Australia on 10th March 1942. His battalion then moved to the Woodside Camp for a short period before proceeding to Casino in New South Wales.

Captain Claude Thorn was evacuated to the 11th Australian Casualty Clearing Station suffering from an almola abscess on 30th August 1942 and he remained a patient there until 4th September 1942 when he was sent to the General Details Depot. He rejoined his battalion on 6th September 1942. He embarked for service in Papua/New Guinea on the ship “Tarooma” from Townsville on 15th October 1942 and he disembarked from the ship at Port Moresby on 22nd October 1942. He was serving with his battalion in New Guinea when he was killed during the attack on Gona on 19th November 1942. He was buried in the field on the western side of the main track to Buna. At the time of his death Claude Thorn was 29 years of age. After the war his remains could not be located/identified. Claude Robert Thorn has no known grave and therefore his name appears on the Memorial to the Missing in the Bomana War Cemetery in Port Moresby. Captain Claude Thorn’s name is commemorated on Panel No. 60 at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra and locally on the Toowoomba Grammar School World War 2 Honour Board.



Australian War Memorial photograph 013737

Padre Lynch conducting a church service at Gona before going into battle.

Note:

A comprehensive history of the 2nd/31st Battalion during World War 2 can be found in Bob Burla’s book, “Crossed Boomerangs – a history of all the 31 Battalions”. Australian Military History Publications, Loftus, Australia. 2005. ISBN 1 876439 67 X. The book contains a Roll of Honour.

Toowoomba Grammar School archive records show that he enrolled as a day student on 31st January 1928 and he left the School on 6th December 1929. His parent was shown as Mr Robert Wylie Thorn of Toowoomba.

External Links:

[CWGC](#)

[Australian War Memorial Honour Roll](#)

[Military Record](#)