

AUSTRALIAN GUNNER OBITUARY RESOURCE

Frank Braithwaite Thornborough

(6 August 1914 – 4 July 2005)

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Frank died unexpectedly in July 2005 close to his 91st birthday, a very fit and active man with a great love of life and family and dedicated amateur historian and researcher.

Frank was born and raised in Waverley attaining his Leaving Certificate from Randwick Boys High School in 1930. He joined Woolworths in 1933 as a managerial trainee, a company with whom he remained all of his working life, except for military service.

Frank joined the CMF in 1938 as a Gunner with 3 Battery, 1 Medium Regiment and by January 1940 when the Battery was called up for full-time service he was a Gun Sergeant. He was commissioned in May 1940 with 1 Medium Brigade.

In December 1940, Frank enlisted in the AIF, joining 2/1 Field Regiment as a reinforcement officer. He served in Greece as part of the ill-fated allied attempt to defend Greece. When the Germans attacked in April 1941, Frank was part of 19 Australian Brigade which was driven back to the Brallos Pass and then to the beach at Megara. He escaped with others on a Royal Navy ship to Canea in Crete. Many of the Regimental Head Quarters and 1 Battery of 2/1 Field Regiment were captured at Kalamata after having destroyed their guns. When the Germans invaded Crete by air in May in vastly superior numbers, the remnants of the Brigade made their way over the mountains to Sfakia where Frank was amongst the last of the survivors to be picked up by the Royal Navy.

Frank went on to serve in Syria, Palestine, Egypt and the Western Desert and later in Ceylon, New Guinea and Rabaul.

From May 1940 Frank was a Regimental Intelligence Officer and was seconded as Intelligence Officer Royal Artillery to 6 Australian Division. From this date on he was largely in intelligence roles with 6, 5 and 11 Australian Divisions, ending his full-time service as Deputy Assistant Adjutant-General (DAAG) Head Quarters 11 Australian Division. He was demobilised in September 1946.

In the early 1950s, Frank rejoined the CMF serving as Battery Commander 32 Heavy Battery at Padstow.

After his war service, Frank held a number of administrative roles with Woolworths, becoming one of their first Electronic Data Processing (EDP) managers in 1965. He retired from Woolworths in 1974 and energetically undertook further "careers" in the nursery business, as a military historian and as a researcher of his family history, becoming a recognised authority on medieval family histories.

At his death he was still working on his family history and was actively involved with his family and in corresponding with a great number of people. Frank survived Dorothy who died in 1989. Frank is survived by two sons, Peter and John and four grandchildren, David, Kate, Rupert and Leo.