

**Priory Road Cemetery,  
Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire  
War Graves**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**10369 SAPPER**

**E. L. A. THOMAS**

**AUSTRALIAN ENGINEERS**

**5TH JUNE, 1917 Age 28**

## Ernest Lewis Albert THOMAS

Ernest Lewis Albert Thomas was born at Elsternwick, Victoria in 1889 to parents Lewis Roland Thomas and Ellen Thomas (nee Float). His birth was registered in the name of Louis Ernest Albert Thomas.

The 1912 & 1914 Australian Electoral Rolls for the division of Melbourne Ports, subdivision of Port Melbourne, Victoria recorded Ernest Lewis Albert Thomas, Printer, of 295 Esplanade East, Port Melbourne.

The 1916 & 1917 Australian Electoral Rolls for the division of Fawkner, subdivision of South Melbourne, Victoria recorded Ernest Lewis Albert Thomas, Printer, of 33 Cardigan Street, South Melbourne.

Ernest Lewis Albert Thomas was a 27 year old, single, Printer from 61 Moore Street, Moonee Ponds, Victoria when he enlisted on 3rd February, 1916 with the 10th Field Company Engineers of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 10369 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his sister-in-law – Mrs Emma Thomas of 61 Moore Street, Moonee Ponds, Victoria.

Sapper Ernest Lewis Albert Thomas was posted to Engineers Reinforcements on 3rd February, 1916. He was transferred to 10th Field Company Engineers on 16th March, 1916.

Sapper Ernest Lewis Albert Thomas embarked from Melbourne on HMAT *Runic* (A54) on 20th June, 1916 & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 10th August, 1916.



**Men from the 10th Field Company Engineers wait to board HMAT *RUNIC***

*(Photo from The Australian National Maritime Museum Photographer: J. E. Barnes)*

*Three of the men in the front row are identifiable from the information on their kit bags. Third from the right, front row is Driver Herbert Vincent Helliwell 10266. Fifth from the right is Driver Russell Peter Thomson 10361. **10th from right in the front row (excluding the two men in the foreground) is Ernest Lewis Albert Thomas 10369.***

Reinforcements were only given basic training in Australia. Training was completed in training units in England. Some of these were located in the Salisbury Plain & surrounding areas in the county of Wiltshire.

Sapper Ernest Lewis Albert Thomas was written up for an offence – he was A.W.L. (Absent without Leave) from midnight on 12th November, 1916 to 11 pm on 13th November, 1916. He was awarded 4 days Field Punishment No. 2 & forfeited 5 days' pay.

Sapper Ernest Lewis Albert Thomas proceeded overseas to France from Southampton on 23rd November, 1916.

Sapper Ernest Lewis Albert Thomas was wounded in action on 27th February, 1917. He was taken to 2nd Casualty Clearing Station with gunshot wounds to right knee then transferred to No. 26 Ambulance Train the same day. Sapper Thomas was admitted to 13th General Hospital at Boulogne, France on 28th February, 1917 with gunshot wounds to right leg. He was invalided to England on Hospital Ship *Cambria* from Boulogne, France on 6th March, 1917 with gunshot wounds to right leg.

Sapper Ernest Lewis Albert Thomas was admitted to 1st Eastern General Hospital, Cambridge, England on 6th March, 1917 with gunshot wounds to right knee – serious.

Sapper Ernest Lewis Albert Thomas died on morning of 5th June, 1917 at Huntingdon County Hospital attached to 1st Eastern General Hospital, Cambridge, England from wounds received in action in France - gunshot wounds to right knee. The Huntingdon County Hospital was a convalescent Hospital affiliated with 1st Eastern General Hospital, Cambridge, England.



### Huntingdon County Hospital

A death for Ernest L. A. Thomas, aged 29, was registered in the June quarter, 1917 in the district of Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire/Huntingdonshire, England.

Sapper Ernest Lewis Albert Thomas was buried at 3 pm on 8th June, 1917 in Priory Road Cemetery, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire – Plot number RRR. 36. (Soldiers' Plot) and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Sapper Thomas - *Coffin was good, polished Elm. The deceased soldier was*



*buried with Military Honours. Improvised Firing Party, patients of the Huntingdon County Hospital and buglers were in attendance. The "Last Post" was sounded at the graveside. The coffin was shrouded with the "Union Jack" and surmounted with several floral tributes. Prior to the interment a service was held in the chapel at the Cemetery by the Rev. Lotum Parry, Vicar of St. Mary's Church of England, Huntingdon. A party of mourners (Hospital patients) were present at the funeral. No relatives were present at the funeral. Temporary oak memorial to be erected by the Commonwealth Military Authorities.*

Sapper Ernest Lewis Albert Thomas requested in his Will, dated 5th June, 1916 that he bequeathed all his personal effects and reality to his mother – Ellen Thomas of 295 Esplanade East North Port Melbourne, Victoria. He appointed Alfred Poland Thomas as Executor.

The personal effects of the late Sapper Ernest Lewis Albert Thomas were sent to his listed next-of-kin- his sister-in-law Emma Thomas.

Sapper Ernest Lewis Albert Thomas was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Sapper Thomas's mother - Mrs E. Thomas, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent May, 1922 & Plaque sent August, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Sapper Ernest Lewis Albert Thomas – service number 10369, aged 28, of 10th Field Company, Australian Engineers. He was the son of Lewis Roland Thomas and Ellen Thomas, of 4 Huntley St., Glenhuntly, Victoria. Born at Elsterwick, Victoria.

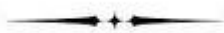
Sapper E. L. A. Thomas is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 25.



*Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia*

( pages of Sapper Ernest Lewis Albert Thomas' Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

*Information obtained from the CWGC, Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives*





**Sapper Ernest Lewis Albert Thomas**



### **Newspaper Notices**

#### **THE 282nd CASUALTY LIST**

#### **WOUNDED**

Sapper E. L. A. Thomas, Glen Huntly

*(The Mildura Cultivator, Victoria – 28 March, 1917)*

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#### **DIED ON SERVICE**

THOMAS – A tribute of love to my dear friend, Sapper Ern L. A. Thomas, died of wounds, May 7, aged 28 years.

To meet, to know, to love-

And then to part,

Is the sad, sad story

Of many a human heart.

- (His friend Dorrie McGowan).

*(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 11 June, 1917)*

## DEATHS

### On Active Service

THOMAS – A tribute to the memory of Sapper E. L. A. Thomas (late secretary Dormatz Camping Club), died of wounds received in France 5th June.

There will come the dawn of another morn,  
When he'll clasp our hands and say,  
From the shadows of earth's darkness  
To heaven's eternal day.

- Inserted on behalf of his club mates, Charles (President), Alf., Barney, Will, Herbert, Chris (all on active service), Victor, George and Eric, by acting secretary, J. J. Turner (returned), Port Melbourne.

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 12 June, 1917) & (*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 12 June, 1917)

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## THE 312th CASUALTY LIST

### DIED OF WOUNDS

Private E. L. Thomas, Glen Huntly

(*The Mildura Cultivator*, Victoria – 20 June, 1917)

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## IN MEMORIAM

### On Active Service

THOMAS – In living memory of my dear son, Sapper Ernest Louis Albert, who died of wounds received in action in the Huntingdon County Hospital, England, on 5th June, 1917, aged 28.

Face that I've kissed and caressed,  
Bone of my bone was he,  
Fondled and fed at my breast,  
Coming not back to me.

-Inserted by his loving mother.

THOMAS – In living memory of our dear nephew, Sapper Ernest Thomas, who died of wounds received in France on 5th June, 1917.

The shock was great, the blow severe,  
To part with one we loved so dear;  
It's sad, but true, we wonder why,  
The good are always the first to die.

-Inserted by his uncle and auntie, W. H. and M. Float and Jack and Maud Holford.

THOMAS – In living memory of our dear club mate, Sapper Ernie (Claude) Thomas, who died from wounds on 5th June, 1917, received in action at Bullecourt, France.

He has sailed his mast commission  
On a beautiful ship called Rest,  
And his head is safely pillowed  
On his great Commander's breast.

The winds of heaven blow softly  
O'er that quiet and hallowed spot,  
But in the changing scenes of life  
By us you are not forgot.

-Inserted by his Dormatz clubmates, C. Larkins, V. Cremer, G. Fisher, W. H. Hext and W. Mumford.

THOMAS – A tribute of love to the memory of my dear friend, Sapper Ern L. A. Thomas, died of wounds on the 5th June, 1917.

Sleep on, sleep on, no morrow's sun  
Shall light thee to the battle back;  
Thy fight hath closed, thy laurels won,  
And this they bivouac,  
Sleep on, sleep on, then dearest one,  
Light lie the turf upon thy breast;  
Thy toil is o'er, thy race is run,  
Sleep on, beloved, and take thy rest.

-Inserted by his friend, Dorrie M'Gowan.

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 5 June, 1918)

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## **IN MEMORIAM**

### **On Active Service**

THOMAS – A tribute of love to the memory of my dear friend, Sapper Ern L. A. Thomas, died of wounds, June 5, 1917.

Sleep on, sleep on! No morrow's sun  
Shall light thee to the battle back;  
Thy fight hath closed, thy laurels won,  
And this they bivouac,  
Sleep on, sleep on! Then dearest one,  
Light lie the turf upon thy breast;  
Thy toil is o'er, thy race is run,  
Sleep on, beloved, and take thy rest.

-Inserted by his friend, Dorrie M'Gowan.

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 5 June, 1918)

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## **IN MEMORIAM**

### **On Active Service**

THOMAS – In loving memory of my dear friend, Sapper Ern. L. A. Thomas, died of wounds, June 5, 1917.

Tho' death divides, fond memories cling.

- (Inserted by Dorrie McGowan.)

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 5 June, 1919)

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## **IN MEMORIAM**

### **On Active Service**

THOMAS – In loving memory of my dear friend, Sapper Ern. L. A. Thomas, died of wounds, June 5, 1917. Remembrance.

Though death divides, fond memories cling.

- (Inserted by Dorrie McGowan.)

THOMAS – In tribute to the memory of our dear club mate, Sapper Ernie Thomas, who died of wounds received somewhere in France on 5th June, 1917. Ever remembered.

-Inserted by his club mates, V. Cremer, G. Fisher, W. Hext and W. Munford, Dormatz Camping Club.

*(The Age, Melbourne, Victoria – 5 June, 1919)*

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## **IN MEMORIAM**

### **On Active Service**

THOMAS – WOOLFORD – In honoured memory of our two comrades, Sapper Ern Thomas, who died of wounds June 5, 1917 and Cpl. O. J. Woolford (Twisty), killed in action 8th June, 1917, both of 10th Field Coy. Engineers.

Two of the best.

-(Inserted by Sappers W. Fox and J. C. Norgate, 10th Field Coy. Engineers)

*(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 7 June, 1919)*

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## **IN MEMORIAM**

### **On Active Service**

THOMAS – In loving memory of my dear son, Sapper Ern Thomas, who died of wounds in Huntingdon County Hospital, England, on 5th June, 1917.

Though death divide, fond memories cling.

-Inserted by his loving mother, E. Thomas.

*(The Age, Melbourne, Victoria – 5 June, 1926)*

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### Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones

The Defence Department, in 1920/21, contacted the next of kin of the deceased World War 1 soldiers to see if they wanted to include a personal inscription on the permanent headstone. Space was reserved for 66 letters only (with the space between any two words to be counted as an additional letter) & the rate per letter was around 3 ½ d (subject to fluctuation).

The expense in connection for the erection of permanent headstones over the graves of fallen soldiers was borne by the Australian Government.

*(Information obtained from letters sent to next of kin in 1921)*

Sapper E. L. A. Thomas does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.



## Priory Road Cemetery, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire

Priory Road Cemetery, Huntingdon contains 28 Commonwealth War Graves – 20 relating to World War 1 & 8 from World War 2.



Priory Road Cemetery, Huntingdon (Photo above by *julia&keld*; below from CWGC)

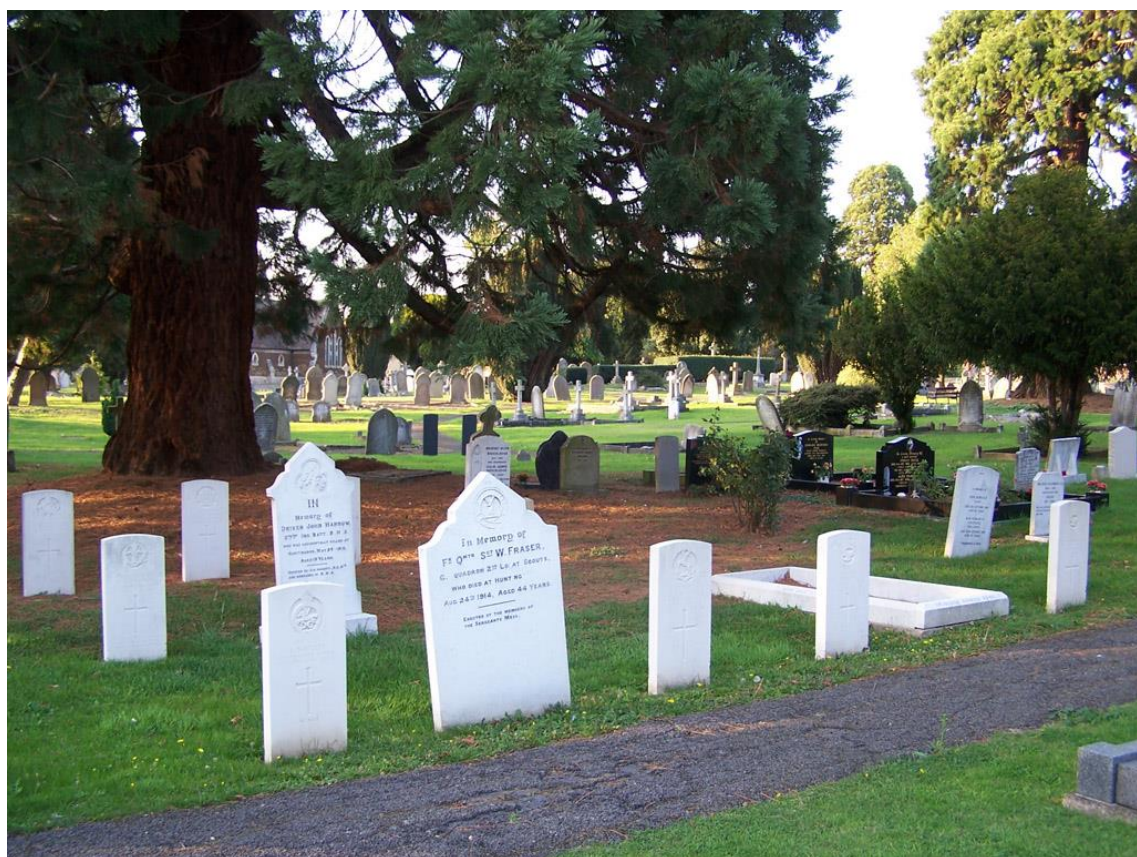




Photo of Sapper E. L. A. Thomas's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Priory Road Cemetery, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, England.



*(Photo by Dominic – Find a Grave)*