

Name	DOWNEY, ARNOLD KEITH
Service	Royal Australian Air Force
Service Number	65804
Date of Birth	16 Apr 1915
Place of Birth	CASINO, NSW
Date of Enlistment	08 Jun 1942
Locality on Enlistment	DARLINGHURST, NSW
Place of Enlistment	SYDNEY, NSW
Next of Kin	DOWNEY, THOMAS
Date of Discharge	18 Mar 1946
Rank	Leading Aircraftman
Posting at Discharge	6 STORES DEPOT
Prisoner of War	No



Brief Biography

Arnold, known as Keith, was born on 16 Apr 1915 at Casino, a son of Thomas and Ida Downey.

Thomas Joseph Downey was born in Molong in 1881. He was living at Fern Hill, Molong, in 1908 when he married Ida Durr at Cumnock. Ida was the eldest daughter of William and Bridget Durr of "Burnsdale", Cumnock. Thomas and Ida Downey had seven children, all born when they were living at Casino, NSW: Thomas George 1909-1955; Marjorie Clair 1911-2005; Eileen Alicia 1913-1956; Arnold Keith 1915-1979; Lawrence Arthur 1917-1949; Raymond Martin 1919-1993; and Kenneth Patrick 1921-1977.

In 1924 the family moved to Cumnock to live where Thomas worked as a fettler with NSW Railways. Thomas Downey retired from NSW Railways in May 1946. He died on 2 Dec 1965 at Molong, aged 84yrs. Ida Downey died on 6 Oct 1962 at Orange, aged 84yrs. They are buried at the Cumnock Cemetery.

Arnold was enrolled with the Cumnock Public School in 1924, but then attended the Cumnock Convent School from 1927-1931. Arnold first applied by letter to join the RAAF in August 1940 stating that he had been driving for a General Carrier in Cumnock for over 3 years but was then unemployed due to insufficient work. He moved to Sydney and was working as 'a top hand on pile frame' with the Maritime Services Board when he again applied to join the RAAF in December 1941 and was finally accepted on 8 Jun 1942.

He was 27 years old, 5ft 11inches tall, had 3 months military training, and was of the Roman Catholic religious denomination. LAC Arnold Downey served at RAAF bases around NSW during 1942-43; at Townsville, QLD in 1944; and at Morotai and Tarakan in 1945.

He was discharged on 18 Mar 1946. Cumnock held a welcome home function in the Picture Theatre on New Year's Eve 1946 at which 400 people attended and Arnold gave a speech on behalf of the servicemen and women.

Arnold married Margaret Hazel Wilkinson on 4 May 1946 at St. Joseph's Church, Graham, Melbourne. Margaret, known as Hazel, had previously served with the Royal Australian Navy as a Petty Officer from 1943-46, her last posting being on HMAS *Lonsdale*. The couple settled in Melbourne and had two children, a son and daughter.

In 1954 Arnold was working as a storekeeper at Ballarat, but by 1958 the family had moved to Southport, Queensland.

Arnold Downey died on 20 May 1979 at Southport, QLD, aged 63yrs. He was buried at the Southport General Cemetery. Margaret died, aged 87 years, at Coolangatta on 13 Aug 2000.

Thank you to the Downey family, Cumnock, for photos and information of the 4 Downey WW2 soldiers.