

Name	DOWNEY, RAYMOND MARTIN
Service	Australian Army
Service Number	NX129855 (N199601, N89257)
Date of Birth	11 Nov 1919
Place of Birth	CASINO, NSW
Date of Enlistment	24 Jul 1942
Locality on Enlistment	CUMNOCK, NSW
Place of Enlistment	INGLEBURN, NSW
Next of Kin	DOWNEY, THOMAS
Date of Discharge	21 May 1946
Rank	Gunner
Posting at Discharge	2/1 ANTI AIRCRAFT REGIMENT
Prisoner of War	No



Brief Biography

Raymond, also known as “Bowler,” was born on 11 Nov 1919 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.

Raymond attended St. Ida’s Convent School, Cumnock, for his primary school education. He played football for Cumnock. He served with the Citizen Military Force (CMF – N199601) from 2 Mar 1942 to 23 Jul 1942 and joined the Australian Army on 24 Jul 1942. On enlistment at Molong, he was 22 years old, 5ft 10 inches tall, had blue eyes, dark hair and a medium complexion. His previous occupation is variably reported as a farmer, shearer and wheat grader.

After serving in Darwin, Raymond embarked on the *Tasman* at Townsville and disembarked at Port Moresby five days later, on 7 Aug 1942. During 1943 and 1944 he served with a number of mobile Anti-Aircraft Searchlight (AASL) companies in New Guinea. He contracted Malaria in March 1944 and returned to Australia for treatment. He visited his parents at Cumnock on leave in April and May 1944.

Gunner Downey re-joined his unit in October 1944 and on 27 May 1945 embarked at Cairns to disembark at Morotai 13 June 1945. He served at Morotai until 9 July 1945 when he was transferred for service at Balikpapan, Borneo, for one of the last battles against the Japanese to occur in WW2. Following the surrender of Japan on 2 Sep 1945, Raymond’s unit was kept on at Balikpapan for occupation duties until he was flown to Sydney on 19 Jan 1946. Raymond was discharged from the AIF on 21 May 1946.

Raymond married Maria Christina Hogan, a daughter of Edward and Frances Hogan, at St Dymphna’s Catholic Church Cumnock, on 6 Sep 1950. They had three children – Paul, Leonie and Michael. Raymond worked as a shearer and carpenter/builder in Cumnock until he retired in the late 1960s and he and Maria moved to Orange to live.

Raymond died on 22 May 1993, aged 73yrs. Maria died on 15 Sep 2015 at Orange, aged 85yrs.

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