

A SOLDIER'S STORY



Service No.: SX17868
Name: Ceph Kirvan NORTON
Nickname: Ceph



Medals and Decorations

1939 - 45 Star

Pacific Star

Defence Medal

War Medal 1939 - 45

Australian Service Medal 1939 - 45

Rank: Gunner
Service: Army
Enlisted: 2 Mar 1942
Discharged: 1946

Ceph was born on 27 Sep 1914 at Tumby Bay to Arthur Ernest Norton and Olive Norton (nee Bratten). There were 8 children in the family, 4 boys and 4 girls, of which he was the 3rd eldest. His father was a lumper/teamster/carrier at Port Neill.

Ceph went to school at Port Neill, leaving at Grade 7 and took employ at his uncle Arnold Carr's farm at Lipson, working for keep. He then worked on Robinson's farm at Yeelanna. It was here that he met his wife to be, Patricia May Le Brun. After a lengthy courtship they were married on 28 Feb 1938.

After their marriage the couple moved to Tooligie Hill where Ceph was employed as a general farm hand; their first child was born at this time. A few years later the family moved to Port Neill, where Ceph returned to his shearing trade; however, his restlessness returned after a short time so he undertook the "barking" of wattle trees for tannin on Sinclair's "*Mamanda*" farm. At the beginning of 1942 the family was on the move again, this time to Cummins; it was from here that he enlisted in the Army.

After enlistment he was sent to Wayville for processing and basic training before being allocated to 12th Anti Aircraft Battery (AA Bty) for corps training at Largs Bay. On 10 Apr 1943 he entrained for Victoria and then onto Canungra (Qld) for further training before being allocated to 16th AA Bty at Townsville. On 24 Oct 1943 he embarked aboard the HMAT "*Thadeus*" bound for Milne Bay (PNG), arriving 4 days later, he was transferred to 9th Bty, 2/3rd LAA Regt – now known as the 2/3rd Composite AA Regt.

The 2/3rd LAA Regt was raised in Jul 1940 and saw service in the Middle East before Ceph joined it. The Regt initially consisted of 3 Btys, the 7th, 8th and 9th; it was

equipped with Bofors Guns which fired a 2lb (1Kg) shell at the rate of 120 rounds per minute. On return to Australia in 1942 it was decided to disband 2/3rd LAA Regt.

9th Bty of the Regt was sent to Milne Bay (PNG) and was joined with 2/6th Heavy AA Bty to form the 2/3rd Composite AA Regt. This Regiment also had a Searchlight Battery attached.

On 29 May 1944 he embarked aboard the HMAT "*Gorgon*" at Lae (PNG) bound for Townsville, arriving 2 days later. The unit regrouped and retrained at Townsville for several months; during this time he was admitted to 102 Army General Hospital until returning to his unit on 24 Oct 1944. After a further period of training, the unit embarked on 11 May 1945 aboard HMAT "*Sea Ray*" from Brisbane bound for Moratai (PNG), arriving 3 days later. Two months later Ceph embarked aboard Landing Ship Tank 584 at Moratai bound for British North Borneo.

On 16 Aug 1945 he was admitted to 2/12th Field Ambulance with a recurrence of the infection that had resulted in him being hospitalised in Australia. He rejoined his unit at Labuan (Borneo).

After discharge from the Army he returned to Cummins and started the Norton Transport Company. During this time the family increased by a further 2 children. In early 1950 the company doubled in size when Ceph went into partnership with brother Jim – now they had 2 trucks! In 1951 he sold out to his brother and went share farming on Linc Robinson's farm at Yeelana. He would stay out all week at Yeelana and return to Cummins on some weekends: this was fairly rough living and was difficult for the family.

In 1955 Ceph bought Skipworth's farm at Yeelanna and the family moved from Cummins to the farm. The eldest child would now board in Cummins all week to go to school and return home of a weekend.

In 1962 the family moved onto another farm, this time at Big Swamp. The aim being to irrigate lucerne to provide hay for his stable of horses. Ceph had always been an accomplished horseman, but now he became a trainer and breeder of race horses; two of the best known horses in his stable were "*Beau Grande*" and "*Nicopal*", both stallions. Ceph stayed on the farm until his death on 5 Aug 1993.

He is buried in the Cemetery at Port Lincoln; his wife rests beside him.

