



Major Eric Maxwell CATHERWOOD

[1895 – 1944]



Name: Eric Maxwell **CATHERWOOD**

Rank: Major

Service Number: QX35565 (Q55011)

Unit: HQ Milne Bay Base Sub Area

Service: Australian Army

We thank the History Interest Group and other volunteers who have researched and prepared these Notes. The series will be progressively expanded and developed. They are intended as casual reading for the benefit of Members, who are encouraged to advise of any inaccuracies in the material.

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Born: 17 October 1895; Toorak, Vic

Enlisted: 5 February 1941; Townsville, Qld

Date of Death: 2 February 1944 (aged 48 years)

Place of Death: New Guinea

Cause of Death: Missing - Presumed dead

Buried / Commemorated: Australian War Memorial [panel 10]
 Port Moresby Memorial, Papua New Guinea [panel 1]
 Roll of Honour - Brisbane

Next of Kin: Son of Alfred Maxwell and Laura Annie Catherwood
 Husband of Nellie Maie Catherwood of Brisbane, Qld

In Civilian Life:

On enlistment, lived at Day Dream Island, Proserpine, Qld with his wife.
 Worked as a Business Manager at Day Dream Island, Proserpine, Qld

Military Service:

August 1914 Enlisted 5th Bn AIF - Regimental Number 12; served in Gallipoli and France

September 1916 Lieutenant 6 Bn AIF

June 1919 Return to Australia

1931 – 33 CMF service; Lieutenant 9/15th Bn

1933 – 41 Reserve of Officers

February 1941 15 Garrison Battalion as Lieutenant (6 ft tall, 178 lbs. weight)

July 1941 Temporary Captain; seconded to HQ 5 Aust Div

August 1942 Temporary Major

October 1943 DAQMG Milne Bay Area

Circumstances of Death:

After the Battle of Milne Bay in September 1942, Milne Bay remained an important Allied staging area until victories in New Guinea made other more suitable areas available from September 1943 onwards.

On 2 February 1944 Major Catherwood was a passenger on a C47 aircraft of 33 Squadron, 374 Troop Carrier Group, 5th US Air Force flying from Townsville to Milne Bay. The aircraft was lost in bad weather with all on board - 4 crew and 15 passengers; Catherwood being the only Australian. He was officially presumed dead on 21 April 1945.

Sources included:

- Australian War Memorial
- National Archives of Australia
- Sundry web pages
- *United Service Club, Queensland: The First Century, 1892-1992* by Flight Lieutenant Murray Adams and Lieutenant Colonel Peter Charlton
- Club Meeting Minutes, Annual Reports and sundry documents