

GREEK CAMPAIGN

Lance Bombardier Thomas Spalton, 122 Battery, LAA Regt, RA

Christopher Buckley states in his "Greece & Crete 1941": -

"To protect the isthmus of Corinth from the assault of airborne forces "Isthmus Force" was formed under Brigadier Lee. His troops consisted of a company of the 19th New Zealand Battalion, the 6th New Zealand Field Company and a section of the 122nd Light A.A Battery; his orders were to keep the Megara road open, but to make preparations for the destruction of the road and railway bridge over the Corinth canal as soon as the last of our troops had passed."

The battle for the Canal was largely one sided. Some of the defenders were killed, some escaped, some were taken prisoner. Thomas Spalton was one of the latter.

From the "nzetc.victoria" website:

"The Germans had not captured the bridge intact, but they had split the British from Navplion, Monemvasia and Kalamata. To the north artillery regiments were already assembling to embark from the Marathon beaches, but the rearguard — 4 Brigade and units from 1 Armoured Brigade — was still in position south of Thebes. Their successful evacuation now depended upon the receipt of wireless messages¹ from General Freyberg, upon the flexibility of the overall plan, and upon the efficiency of the Navy. Thus it was natural that in all German reports the action was described as yet another triumph. At the cost of only one or two aircraft, 63 killed, 158 wounded and 16 missing, they had captured the canal area; the Allied casualties were not stated but the Germans claimed to have 921 British and 1450 Greek prisoners of war. Later they argued that the attack had been excellent training for the airborne troops who were soon to make the landing on Crete."





The bridge destroyed



The defenders captured – Tom Spalton was one of these