

# Lieutenant Albert Chowne



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

134484

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| <b>Service number</b>     | <b>NX24405</b>   |
| <b>Ranks Held</b>         | Lieutenant, Sergeant   |
| <b>Birth Date</b>         | 19 July 1920   |
| <b>Birth Place</b>        | Australia: New South Wales, Sydney   |
| <b>Death Date</b>         | 25 March 1945  |
| <b>Death Place</b>        | New Guinea: Dagua  |
| <b>Final Rank</b>         | Lieutenant   |
| <b>Service</b>            | Australian Army <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Australian Army</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Australian Army</a></li></ul>  |
| <b>Units</b>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">2/2nd Australian Infantry Battalion</a></li><li>• <a href="#">2/13th Australian Infantry Battalion</a></li></ul>                         |
| <b>Places</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Dagua</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Sydney</a></li></ul>   |
| <b>Conflict/Operation</b> | Second World War, 1939-1945  |
| <b>Gazettes</b>           | Published in London Gazette in 1944-03-02<br>Published in London Gazette in 1945-09-06<br>Published in Commonwealth Gazette in 1944-02-10<br>Published in Commonwealth Gazette in 1945-09-13 |

## Description

**Lieut Albert CHOWNE**, (1920-1945), Military Medal and Victoria Cross recipient, was born in Sydney on 19 July 1920. He went to Chatswood Boys Intermediate High School and later Naremburn Junior Technical School. In 1935 he began work as a shirt-cutter at David Jones. Outside work, Chowne enjoyed sports, mainly tennis and rugby union, and was also a member of the scouts.

He spent a brief period in the 36th Militia Battalion before enlisting in the AIF in late May 1940. Chowne was assigned to the 2nd/13th Battalion as platoon and later company runner. The unit arrived in the Middle East in November 1940 and served at Tobruk for eight months the following year. During his time at Tobruk, Chowne transferred to the carrier platoon and was promoted to Corporal. After Tobruk the 2nd/13th performed garrison duties in Syria where, in September, Chowne was promoted to Sergeant. He was wounded in the leg and hand at El Alamein the following month and spent three weeks in hospital. He returned to Australia with the battalion in January 1943 before moving to Papua in July.

Chowne, now the mortar platoon Sergeant, was awarded the Military Medal for twice crawling close to enemy positions to direct mortar fire. Regarded as exceptionally cool by his comrades, Chowne combined fearlessness with a self-effacing manner. He was commissioned as a Lieutenant in January 1944 and he married Daphne Barton in March that year. Having completed the jungle warfare training course at Canungra, Chowne was posted to a new unit, the 2nd/2nd Battalion, in October 1944. The 2nd/2nd was sent to New Guinea two months later.

Chowne brought a reputation for bravery and leadership to his new unit. In March 1945 he carried out a one-man patrol in daylight, at one stage entering an empty hut and rifling through the belongings of Japanese soldiers, one of whom he shot when he was discovered. Some who knew him believed that Chowne was destined to either win the Victoria Cross or be killed in action. Sadly both happened. On 25 March 1945, Chowne, seeing the leading platoon in his company's attack on Japanese positions run into trouble, left cover and charged the enemy. He managed to knock out two machine guns before being killed. Chowne's actions enabled the attack to continue and, according to his citation, paved the way for the 6th Division's advance on Wewak.

Chowne was awarded the Victoria Cross posthumously and was buried in the Lae War Cemetery in New Guinea, Grave QQ. A. 8. A Street in Canberra was named after him as was a community hall in Willoughby, Sydney.

