Today I would like to pause and pay our respects to:

34398 Spr Thomas Fraser **Aitken**.

Thomas or Tom as he was some times called was working as a Blacksmith in the Taumarunui before he enlisted with [18th (N.Z.) Army Troops Company, N.Z. Engineers](https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/war-memorial/online-cenotaph/custom-search/?eun=18th+(N.Z.)+Army+Troops+Company%2c+N.Z.+Engineers), [2nd NZEF, Third Echelon](https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/war-memorial/online-cenotaph/custom-search/?ebd=Second+New+Zealand+Expeditionary+Force%2c+Third+Echelon).

18th Army Troops Company, New Zealand Engineers, was raised when 8th Field Company, which was raised in May 1940, was split to form 18th and 19th Army Troops Companies. The company was held back from the Middle East with the intention of sending it to Fiji. 18th Army Troops Company embarked for Fiji on 9 October 1940 and landed at Suva. It then returned to New Zealand in January 1941, and departed from New Zealand on 1 February 1941. It moved to Bombay, India and remained in Deolali Transit Camp, Bombay for six weeks. It left India on 11 March 1941. It arrived at Port Tewfik on 23 March and moved to Maadi Camp in Egypt.

The company was responsible for the operation and maintenance of the desert water supply across the Western Desert. During the advance after Alamein, the company took over the water pipeline through 4 January 1943, when Tripoli became the water source. It then returned to the Delta to train and ceased to exist at Maadi Camp on 24 July 1943.

Tom returned to New Zealand and resided in the Taumarunui area until his death on the 10th May 1984 at the aged of 68.

He has been laid to rest at Taumarunui New Cemetery RSA Block, Plot 197.

RIP Tom

Thank you for your service

E kore warewaretia

Will never forget

