

Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Preston, Queensland. He was with the A. I.F. from 1937 up to the time he transferred to the Air Force some months ago.

For 23 months he fought in both the Libyan and Syrian campaigns and spent some time with the troops which defended the Tobruk fortress. It was here that he was wounded by an Italian hand grenade and he was sent to recuperate in a hospital in Palestine. Six months after he had been wounded, his unit was ordered to move on to Java.

En route, however, they found that Java had fallen to the Japanese and so they returned to Australia. After a short period of leave, Preston transferred to the Air Force.

C. G. O'Byrne, whose parents, Mr. and Mrs. P. A. O'Byrne, reside at Launceston, Tasmania, was a member of a Bofors anti-aircraft unit with the A.I.F. For 18 months he served as a Gun Sergeant in New Guinea and during that time his anti-aircraft troops shot down four Japanese planes.

O'Byrne's descriptions of the bombings of their gun positions by Japanese aircraft are vivid. He recalled a time when he had only been at a station two days and had very little experience with bombings.

"I heard the drone of the Jap planes one night about midnight," he said, "but paid little attention to them until suddenly the bombs began to explode in the hills not far off. An officer who was in a tent with me dashed out and into a slit trench.

"By the time I realized that I should have headed for the ditch too, the bombs were going off closer and closer. I ran outside and flung myself down in the grass and prayed. After what seemed an eternity the raid was over, and I had learned my lesson—never to hesitate during a raid again. It was the closest call I ever had while in action."

O'Byrne's transfer to the Air Force came through while he was still in New Guinea and he was shipped back home where he began air crew training after a brief period of leave. He has an older brother now a prisoner of war in Germany who served with the First Australian Spitfire squadron in the Battle of Britain.

The work of M. Rothberg, son of Mrs. S. Rothberg, Melbourne, while he served with the A.I.F., was highly secret. He toured the Australian coast and spent some time in the theatre of war on the north-west Australian coast.

FLEW 6,000 MILES

Later he was transferred to New Guinea, where for 16 months he was engaged in the same type of work, in co-ordination with the American Navy. His transfer to the R.A.A.F. also came while he was at New Guinea and he flew 6,000 miles back home to Australia.

For their service in Africa or New Guinea each of these boys is entitled to wear the Africa or New Guinea Stars.

With the exception of J. C. Preston, who was a staff sergeant, they all held the rank of sergeant while in the A. I. F. Rothberg's ambition, when he has finished his course here, is to go into the Burma campaign to fight, but all the other lads say they "have a bigger argument with the Germans," and are keen on going into the European campaign.

The story of these Australians has not ended with their service on other battle fronts. They are filled with a great, restless keenness to get on with their courses so that they may one day return to enemy territory and revenge themselves on the Germans or Japs against whom they once fought so desperately, for their country and for the cause of the Allied nations.