

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE0432

Long, Thelma Dorothy

(1918 - 2015)

Born	19181014, Sydney New South Wales Australia
Died	20150413, Sydney New South Wales Australia
Occupation	Servicewoman, Tennis player

Summary

The career of Australian tennis player Thelma Coyne Long spanned more than 20 years. The winner of the Australian Women's Singles title in 1952 and 1954 (aged 35 years) she was also runner-up in 1951, 1955 and 1956. From 1936 until 1940, Thelma Coyne and Nancy Wynne (later Bolton) were Australian Women's Doubles Champions. During the war years of 1941 to 1945, no competition was held for major Australian tournaments and Long enlisted in the Australian Women's Army Service (AWAS). Following her discharge from the AWAS Long and Nancy Wynne Bolton continued their tennis careers. They won the Australian Doubles 1947-1949 and 1951-1952. Long then joined with Mary Hawton to win the doubles championship in 1956 and 1958 – 20 years after she won the National Junior Singles Championship aged 16. The pair were also runners-up for the Wimbledon Women's Doubles title in 1957. Long was winner of the Australian Mixed Doubles 1951, 1952, 1954, 1955 and the French Mixed Doubles in 1956.

On 30 August 2000 Long was awarded the Australian Sports Medal and inducted into the Australian Tennis Hall of Fame in 2002.

A life member of the Australian Women's Army Association (New South Wales) Long was actively involved in the archiving of the association records. In October 2002 she became a participant of the Australian Women in War Project working group.

Details

Thelma Long was inducted to the Australian Tennis Hall of Fame at Melbourne Park during the Australian Open on Australia Day 2002. Long's tennis career was remarkable not only for the span of time it covered (1935-1958) but more so for what was accomplished due to the limited opportunities available to Australian women players at that time. The records show Long won 19 Grand Slam titles – 2 Australian Singles, 12 National Doubles, 4 National Mixed and 1 French Mixed.

Long's overseas record was just as brilliant with singles, doubles and mixed championship wins in 16 countries. This was achieved after an absence from international competition for the decade 1939-1949 due to World War II and four years in the Australian Women's Army Service (AWAS). For her service during World War II Long was awarded the War Medal 1939/45 and Australian Service Medal 1939/45.

On 30 January 1941 Thelma Coyne married Maurice Newton Long of Melbourne. The marriage did not continue after the war. Following her discharge from the AWAS Long resumed amateur competition tennis both in Australia and overseas – Open tennis was not established until 1968.

An Australian representative over the years 1938-1958 Long became a teaching professional in 1960 and devoted years of service to coaching promising NSW juniors. In 1985 her achievements were recognized by Tennis NSW when she was awarded Life Membership of the State Association.

In 1993 Thelma (Coyne) Long was inducted to the inaugural Randwick Sporting Hall of Fame and then in 1999 as an Honouree of the Hall of Champions at the State Sports Centre, Homebush Olympic area. Long also was a volunteer at the State Library of NSW and she received the Volunteer Service Award in 1999, The Year of the Volunteer.

In 2000, Australia's Olympic year, Thelma Long was awarded the Australian Sports Medal in recognition of her services to tennis.

Events

1943 - 1943

Adjutant to 4 Australian Training Battalion Army Womens Services, Darley, Victoria.

1945 - 1945

Appointment terminated – demobilization of married personnel.

1942 - 1942

Attended first NCO School for AWAS in Victoria, then posted AWAS HQ at LHQ, Victoria Barracks, Melbourne, with the Controller AWAS, Lt. Col. (later Col.) Sybil Irving's Staff HQ.

1943 - 1943

Attended No. 5 Army Women's Services Officers Training School, Melbourne

1942 - 1942

Attended second AWAS Recruit Training School at "Glamorgan" Toorak, Victoria. Trade grouped and trained as transport driver at Land Headquarters (LHQ) Car Company

1942 - 1942

Commissioned and from this point Colonel Irving directed her varied and numerous postings.

1943 - 1943

Detached as Staff Officer to Her Excellency The Lady Gowrie for a three week tour of Allied Defence Forces & Women's Services throughout Northern NSW and Queensland.

1943 - 1943

Detachment to attend War Course VII, First Australian Army Junior Staff School, Ashgrove, Brisbane. Two female officers, one AWAS, one AAMWS included in the ten week course for the first time.

1942 - 1942

Enlisted Australian Women's Army Service

1941 - 1941

Joined the Australian Red Cross, Victorian Division and became a fully trained transport driver

1943 - 1943

Posted as Administration Officer, 2 Australian Signals Training Battalion AWAS, Ivanhoe, Melbourne.

1944 - 1944

Posted as Instructor (Directing Staff) LHQ Army Women's Services Officers School (AWSOS) Toorak, Melbourne.

1942 - 1942

Posted north as OC AWAS Advanced LHQ, Brisbane. General Sir Thomas Blamey's HQ Commander Allied Land Forces SW Pacific Area.

1942 - 1942

Promoted Corporal, then Sergeant and posted in charge of a group of AWAS & WAAAF drivers detached to USA Forces in Australia (USAFIA) – General Douglas MacArthur's HQ, Melbourne

1944 - 1944

Promoted to Captain

1944 - 1944

Transferred to HQ Vic. L of C Area, Melbourne as Deputy to Assistant Controller, AWAS

Published resources

Resource Section

LONG, THELMA DOROTHY, Department of Veterans' Affairs, 2002,
<http://www.ww2roll.gov.au/script/veteran.asp?ServiceID=A&VeteranID=605431>

Book

Encyclopedia of Australia Sport, Shepherd, Jim, 1980

Edited Book

Who's Who in Australia, 1947, Chisholm, Alec H, 1947

Site Exhibition

She's Game: Women Making Australian Sporting History, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2007,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/sg/sport-home.html>

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Newspaper Article

Great service - in army, tennis

Archival resources

Australian War Memorial, Research Centre

[Interview with Thelma Long \(When the war came to Australia\)](#)

[Long, Thelma D \(Captain, AWAS AIF b: 1918\)](#)

[Long, Thelma Dorothy \(Captain, AWAS AIF b: 1918\)](#)

[Long, Thelma \(Captain, AWAS, AIF\)](#)

Author Details

Anne Heywood

Created 20 January 2003

Last modified 27 January 2025

Digital resources



Title: Ready for Tennis
Type: Image
Date: 3 May, 2023



Title: Servicewoman Thelma Long
Type: Image
Date: 3 May, 2023



Title: AWE0432gc.jpg
Type: Image
Date: 3 May, 2023



Title: AWE0432gd.jpg
Type: Image
Date: 3 May, 2023