

**National Archives & Records Administration
War Department Files**

**1 LT Laverne D. Thames
Class 79-43**

ID: 01194958

**Branch of Service: U.S. Army
Hometown: Newton County, MS
Status: DNB June 26, 1944**



LT. LAVERNE D. THAMES

Loses Life - Lt. Laverne D. Thames

Mrs. Doris Wesson Thames, who resides at 1514 20th Avenue, Meridian, Miss., has been officially notified of the death of her husband, First Lt. LaVerne D. Thames, a native of Duffee, who died serving his country as a liaison pilot in the U. S. Army Air Corps. He was killed on June 26 in an airplane crash while on an orientation flight over Luzon Island, in the Philippines. Below follows excerpts from a letter, giving details of the tragedy:

“Lt. Thames and a friend left the camp for a visit to Manila and the airport. Plans were being made to drop supplies to some isolated troops up front and in order to observe the terrain and the air-drop procedure; the two went on the mission.” By next afternoon they had not returned, and it was then that Colonel Bedinger, Lt. Thames' commanding officer, learned from airport officials that the plane was known to have crashed and the men reported missing. In order to get all details, Colonel Bedinger contacted another AAF officer, an eyewitness to the crash. "It seems that in coming over the drop-area, all the planes were flying very low, one plane in particular. Supplies were dropped in a valley and it was necessary that altitude be regained as quickly as possible. However, this particular plane--a C-47--tried to regain altitude too rapidly. Pulled back on the stick, the plane's tail struck the ground and all the men aboard were killed instantly."

Lt. Thames entered the service in November of 1940 as a member of the Mississippi National Guard unit, the 114th Field Artillery from Decatur, where he was a student at East Central Junior College. He was stationed at Camp Blanding, Fla.; Camps Bowie and Barkley, Texas; and Camp Gruber Okla. before entering Officers Candidate School (Field Artillery) at Fort Sill, Okla., in May, 1943. Receiving his commission the following August, he was sent to Pittsburg, Kans., for flight training and after receiving his wings, reported to Fort Sill for advanced instruction. On completion of the course, he served varying periods at Camp Livingston, La.; Camp Gruber, Okla., and Camp Bowie, Texas, before sailing for the Pacific theater last May 29.



Buried in Mount Nebo Baptist Church Cemetery, Duffee, Mississippi