Thomas was born in Redfern in 1896, the son of John Clatworthy and Isabel Clatworthy, nee Dodd. When he enlisted into B Company, AN&MEF, he stated that he was 20 whereas he was only 18. He returned from Rabaul and was discharged, term expired, on 4th March 1915 having completed 206 days service.

On 23rd August 1915 he joined the 36th battalion and was promoted sergeant on 12th May 1916. He left with the battalion aboard the BELTANA on 13th May arriving in Devonport, England on 19th July 1916. The battalion moved to France on 22nd November and on 12th October 1917 in Belgium Thomas was wounded, rejoining his unit on 3rd November. On 14th Feb 1918 he was promoted WO11, CSM, and in Feb 1918 was Mentioned In Despatches (MID).

On 4th April 1918 he was wounded in the leg and repatriated to the Kitchener Military Hospital in the UK. On 16th October he was transferred to the 33rd Battalion, before returning to Australia aboard the KARMALA, arriving home on 15th Feb 1919 and being discharged on 11th April.

In 1919 Thomas married Irene Dorothy Agnes Ward in Sydney and he died at Bayview Private Hospital, Tempe, on 10th November 1935.