

Thomas was born in Sydney, in 1894, the son of James Aloysius Burke and Maria Burke, nee Harman. On his enlistment into B Company AN&MEF on 11th August 1914, Thomas stated that he was a Traveller by trade, single, and gave his father at "Hailshot", Harrietta St, Neutral Bay, as his next of kin.

He returned from Rabaul and was discharged, term expired, on 4th March 1915 having completed 206 days service.

Thomas' younger brother, George Harmen Burke, enlisted in 18th Battalion on 3rd June 1915 (regimental number 1393), just one day after his 18th birthday, and was killed at Gallipoli just three months later, on 22nd August 1915.

On 7th April 1921 Thomas married Edna Camfield Wilson at St Clements' Mosman but by 1928 a warrant had been issued for his arrest for desertion. Edna finally divorced Thomas on the grounds of desertion in 1930. On 31st December 1938 he married Ruth D'Arrietta and died in Cremorne on 13th November 1964.