

Captain Allan Gosper

Major John Gallagher
Manager, Australian Army Artillery Museum

Esteemed Gunner and Museum Volunteer Allan Gosper passed away at the grand age of 93. Until recently Allan did sterling service in our Museum library and, along with Arthur Kennedy, was one of our longest serving volunteers, having joined the Royal Australian Artillery Historical Society on the 1st July, 1986.

Born during the Gallipoli campaign on the 29th July 1915, Allan was one of the fast fading away, pre-war Coastal Gunners. He enlisted on the 1st April, 1935 at the age of 19, being allocated to 14 Heavy Battery, 1 Heavy Brigade, Australian Garrison Artillery at Georges Heights, Middle Head.

Allan transferred to the AIF early in World War Two and was posted to the Torres Strait Fixed Defences in October 1940. His stations included Horn and Goodes Island where he helped install 6 inch and 4.7 inch coastal defence guns. As recently as last year Allan returned to Horn Island to advise on the restoration of those guns.

Like Darwin, the Torres Strait Islands were subject to many Japanese air attacks during World War Two. Allan battled for many years to have Torres Strait recognized as an operational area. His persistence was finally paid off when he was awarded the 1939-1945 Star to add to his medals. Having come up through the ranks to Sergeant pre-war, Allan was commissioned in 1941 and promoted Captain in 1943. Later in the war Allan was posted to the Port Kembla Coastal Artillery as Adjutant, finally transferring to the Reserve of Officers List on the 27th of February 1946.

Allan worked with his friend Danny Toplis in the Museum library for many years. I am indebted to Danny for providing the information on Allan's military career. All Museum military staff and volunteers will miss Allan's good humour and good company.

A Memorial Service was held for Allan at St Mark's Church, Freshwater, on Friday, 25th September, to farewell a highly respected Gunner and stalwart of the Australian Army Artillery Museum.