

AUSTRALIAN GUNNER OBITUARY RESOURCE

John Crichton Ballantine

(14 August 1917 – 23 May 2004)

**By Chris Ballantine
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Popular North Fort Museum volunteer, John Ballantine passed away on Sunday 23rd May 2004 at the RSL Veterans Nursing Home, Narrabeen at the age of 86 years. He was privately cremated on 26th May 2004.

John Crichton Ballantine was born on 14 August 1917 in Beckenham, Kent, England to the backdrop of WWI. His family migrated to New Zealand and then to Australia, arriving in the early 1930s and settling in Mosman. After a stint as a jackeroo at Cowra, he enlisted in the Militia on 26 August 1936 – 1st Anti-Aircraft Battery, Cross Street, Mosman. In June 1940 he enlisted in the 2nd AIF serving in Darwin, The Middle East, New Guinea and Borneo with 2/1st AA Regiment, 2/3rd LAA Regiment and 2/3rd Composite AA Regiment.

On 22nd November 1948 John enlisted in the CMF – 1st LAA Regiment, Mosman until 1954 when he transferred to the Royal Australian Corps of Signals due to his civilian technical background. He continued to serve in a number of Eastern Command Signals Units until his retirement in 1964 as a Captain at 402nd Signal Regiment, Dundas. Following his CMF service, John joined the Forestville Volunteer Bush Fire (Brigade) where he served for a further decade.

Due to his detailed war diaries, he contribute to a number of unit and military history publications, including the 50th Anniversary Edition of the publication *Milne Bay 1942 – The Story of "Milne force" and Japan's First Military Defeat on Land*.

He continued to maintain his military interest through membership of RAA unit associations, the RA Signals Association and as a volunteer at the Army Museum, Victoria Barracks, Paddington where he restored communications equipment for display over a number of years. In the late 1990s he commenced as a volunteers at North Fort Museum where he undertook electrical work on a number of the displays and participated as often as he could in Mess activities. John also had interest in restoring wooden ammunition and toolboxes, which were sold at the coffee shop.

Despite major surgery at the age of 84 years, John remained active at North Fort up until late 2003 and as a literacy tutor at Cromer High School until early 2004 when his health started to fail. John will be remembered for his 30 years service to the Australian Army, his willingness to contribute to the communities in a practical way and his dry humour.