

"EVERY DAY I SHALL GET BETTER"



Eric Maitland Wallis
Born: 4 October 1902

At 101 years of age, Eric is determined to get better after his recent hospitalisation. This positive attitude and outlook on life has been the driving force to him becoming a centurion. Eric is justly proud of his letter from the Queen.

Born in Devonshire, England, he smiles cheekily and says, "I must insist you don't call me an Englishman - I'm an Australian." When Eric and his family left England, they went to Western Australia to live. His father wanted Eric to stay on the land, but when he was 18, he saw an advertisement in the newspaper asking for young men aged between 18-22, to be trained as medics for the Royal Australian Navy. He applied and had to sit a series of entrance exams. He recalls that one of his naval history essays became famous (or infamous). He was writing about the death of Nelson and he stated, "Nelson kissed him and Hardy died." One could call Eric one of the first revisionist historians in Australia, after that remark!

Eric was a career naval officer when WWII broke out. He served on HMAS Sydney, voyaging to the Dutch East Indies amongst other places and then on HMAS Albatross to the Solomon Islands. Eventually Eric came to Sydney where he met the love of his life, a young lady from Coogee, Miss Dorothy Jean North. They were married at St Jude's Church, Coogee and had four children, two boys and two girls. Now Eric has two grandchildren (twins) and one great-grandchild. It was a wonderful occasion for all the family to be present at his 100 year birthday celebrations.

Eric told this short story.

**"A Life On The Ocean Waves."
By Eric Wallis**

I remember in my early days of naval training, every Thursday we had to go on battalion drill. We would be in formation and were drilled by a loud, stern, naval officer. After the three battalions had marched around the parade ground to the band playing 'A life on the ocean waves, there isn't a girl in sight....' He would shout:

No 1 was bad!
No 2 was worse!
No 3 was awful!

He would then turn to the band master and shout, "We will do this parade all over again, until they get it right! Start the music." So the band played a 'A life on the ocean waves, there isn't a girl in sight....' And off we would march, again and again... until at last we got it right, and we could be dismissed.