



Wiltshire WW1 survivor celebrates 106th birthday

John Lyons

One of the few surviving veterans of World War One has been celebrating his 106th birthday, at his home in Wiltshire on 18th July 2009.

Captain Kenneth Cummins, who lives at Great Bedwyn, near Marlborough, is in fact - at this time - the only serviceman alive to have served in BOTH World Wars.

Kenneth was in the Royal Navy in the First World War, and was a Midshipman on HMS Maria.

He then served in the Merchant Navy in the Second where he survived the torpedoing of his ship the Viceroy of India owned by P&O but used by the military.

He told us how he remembers going up on deck to do watch - and then the torpedo hit. Four men died in the incident.

Later he had to retrieve the bodies of nurses after a hospital ship sank in the Bristol Channel.

His wife Rosemary told us that it is a story that is still very clear in his mind. It was an event she says that left him overwhelmed by distress.

After the war, he went on to join P&O Ferries.

Kenneth's card from The Queen

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Kenneth has been opening many cards not only from the Queen, but also Prince Phillip. He also has a card from men from his training ship HMS Worcester - an iron clad one with masts - which he was on from 1915 to 1916.

He's been celebrating at his Great Bedwyn home with his wife Rosemary, 78 and his four children. Also, Graham Stark from the World War One Veterans Association - who helps Rosemary look after Kenneth, dropped in to see him.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/wiltshire/content/articles/2006/03/10/kenneth_cummins_feature.shtml