

FAMILY TRIBUTE TO TED MATTHEWS

It is both an honour and a privilege to speak about my father's eldest brother, Albert Edward Matthews.

He was Uncle Ted to a number of us, grandfather to others, and Dad to Irene.

We have pleasant recollections of the family get-togethers at Grandma and Grandpa Matthews' place at Lincoln St. Campsie, when we were children

There were many uncles and aunts and lots of cousins

The second of six children, Ted was brought up in a strict Methodist home. These principles stayed throughout his life.

He was an exceptional man. He was an ordinary man.

He was a very unassuming, straightforward and honest person who was never afraid to speak his mind, even to the Prime Minister

If he had a fault it was the inherent Matthews' stubbornness, which could be part of the reason for his survival.

Ted was a good talker.

He and one of his brothers used to talk endlessly on how best to solve the world's problems.

He never could understand man's inhumanity to man.

Ted rarely mentioned his war experiences until the 75th anniversary trip to Gallipoli.

The second world war was also a traumatic time for him, as at this time his first wife, Stella, died tragically from pneumonia.

His two daughters, Jean and Irene, married American servicemen and migrated to the United States.

Ted then married Freda Corlette, Stella's best friend.
Ted was a wonderful husband to Freda.
They were always together and lived in the Matthews' family home at Campsie
They also had a holiday house at Hazelbrook.

Ted and Freda made frequent trips to the U.S. to visit his family there,
and on these occasions he left his car with us,
for which we were always grateful.

In the early years of my marriage, Ted and Freda were regular visitors to our home and took great interest in our young family.
When our son Stephen was three years old, he asked Ted.
'How old are you?' and then the big question.
'When are you going to die?'
Ted was very amused by this.
Thirty years later, on the occasion of his 100th birthday, Ted reminded Stephen of his question

In the 1970's, Ted and Freda moved to a retirement unit at the Salvation Army complex in Arncliffe.

He cared for Freda during her final illness.

After her death he decided to join his family in the States.

Ted was a very caring person.
In 1990, when visiting his younger brother, Fred, he was upset to see him walking with two sticks.

'I am worried about him,' he told me, *'just look at him and he's only 89.'*

As he recognized the approach of his own increasing frailty, it seems he was concerned that he might become a burden to his daughter.

Against her wishes, she brought him back to Australia,
to the War Veteran's Home at Collaroy,
and she has become one of the world's most distant commuters ever since.

Australia was his native land, the country that he fought for.
Why shouldn't he die here?

They that are left do grow old.
And 101 is a good innings in anyone's score book.

I last saw Ted with Irene a week before he died.
Although tired and frail he was still interested in our family affairs

The illustrious war service, the long life and comparatively good health,
made him a living legend of what the Anzac spirit was all about.

This made him the focus of media attention on Anzac Day and Armistice
Day.

It seemed to be refreshing to the interviewers, to find someone in the centre
of our national history who spoke his mind,
and couldn't care less about political correctness.

He used those occasions with the media, to convey a simple message to
Australians:

War is a horrible thing.

Cherish the freedoms that men and women gave their lives to secure.

He was fiercely Australian and deplored the actions of those that erode those
freedoms.

We are honoured to be related to Ted Matthews.

We are indebted to him and thousands of others like him.

We mourn his passing.

Ted has passed down a great heritage, not only to his grandchildren,
but also to his grand nieces and nephews,
many of whom are here today.

I am sure they will pass on the story of their relationship to the last original
Anzac down through generations to come.