

William Raymond Wallace, was born on 18<sup>th</sup> January 1917, the 7<sup>th</sup> child of 8 who survived to adulthood (2 others died in infancy), to John Joseph Wallace and Mary Teresa Wallace, nee O'Keefe.

He was born at 'Kurni Kurni N.S.W', his first few years lived at Paterson N.S.W, where his father worked on the railways. The remainder of his life until he joined the Navy, was in the small coal mining township of Bellbird N.S.W. He attended Bellbird primary school & later Cessnock High school.

Being 2<sup>nd</sup> youngest of a big family, he had nephews & nieces, as close to his own age as some of his own siblings.

I am the 4<sup>th</sup> grandchild of John & Mary Wallace, the three older ones all deceased leaving me eldest of that generation. My uncle 'Bill' turned 8, 2 weeks after my birth in 1925. I was 16 when he died aged 24, so my memories of him are clear.

'Bill's' death was a blow to the whole family, & to lose him so suddenly, & all the mystery that surrounded the loss of ship & crew, beyond our comprehension. His parents never came to terms with the fact of his disappearing from their lives, & the remainder of their lives, grieved the loss of their 2<sup>nd</sup> youngest child. His younger brother had lost his best mate & elder 4 brothers & 2 sisters lost one of their 'baby' brothers. To my own generation it was not like losing an Uncle, but the loss of a brother.

Those of us who remembered him as a boy & then young man always thought & spoke of him with love & those too young to have known him were brought up on our stories & memories of 'Bill'.

I remember the fuss made of the ship & the men when they returned victorious from the Mediterranean. How when 'Bill' was on leave, he was invited to the local schools to speak to the children, also asked to the service clubs in our area. How proud we all were of our handsome sailor & he was handsome.

Surprised at how well he spoke when asked to do so. Then all the years of wondering what really happened to a proud ship & all those men. How could they all just disappear, without trace.

When I saw the Casley float riddled with holes at the National war museum I cried unashamedly, it just brought to mind all the pictures kept bottled up, of what could & might have happened.

When 'The Sydney' was found earlier this year, it seemed a relief somehow & a thought that now perhaps we will find out what really happened all those years ago.

I'm not sure if this is the kind of thing wanted for your virtual memorial - but I feel better for having written it.

Sincerely Olive M. Davies nee Wallace.

unit 11 Mt Carmel Village

9 Dwyer St

Maitland N.S.W.

2320