

WW1 and WW2 - Edwin Gerald (Ted) Martin

Edwin Gerald (Ted) Martin was born in Ballarat, Victoria on 2nd August 1897, the second child and elder son of Gerald David and Bertha (Bridget) Martin, nee Coleman. Ted was one of the grand children of Bridget Carrucan and John Coleman.

His primary education was in local state schools. In 1912 he began a six year apprenticeship with Cowley's foundry as a boilermaker. That same year he joined the senior cadets at Ballarat 70B, later enrolling in the 21st Rfn Unit. On the 17th August, 1916, he enlisted as a private in the Australian Imperial Forces in Melbourne, at the age of 18 years 11 months with the years of his apprenticeship still to complete. He was assigned to the Eighth Battalion, of the Second Brigade

Ted embarked for active service abroad on the *Nestor* in Melbourne on 2 October, 1916 disembarking in Plymouth on 16th November. After three months' training in England, interspersed with three weeks in Parkhouse Hospital, Ted proceeded to France on 13th March, 1917 and two weeks later joined the Eighth Battalion in France. After two months in the trenches and involvement in the Second Battle of Bullecourt, he contracted trench fever and was sent to England, where he was admitted to Bath War Hospital on 18th June, 1917. Five weeks later he was discharged and, after further training in England, embarked at Southampton for France on 20th September. There he rejoined the Eighth Battalion. Ted's second military involvement was in the Battle of Passchendaele, which had begun five days previously. As winter approached, his battalion was sent to the area of the Messines trenches. Their aim was to harass the enemy and to build up fortifications while things were quiet. Each battalion was to prepare and carry out one raid. Ted's comrades were at a post in "Green Wood", where they repulsed a German raid and captured two officers.

The end of January saw him taking three weeks' leave in England, things being quiet on the Western Front. He returned to active service from 16th February to 24th June 1918. During this time he took part in the Battle of the Lys, named after a river which crossed the German front line. On 3rd May the Germans, under Ludendorff, pushed forward and were repulsed by the Allies. Then he contracted influenza for a week and was hospitalised. He appears to have recovered more quickly than expected. On 9th July, 1918, he absconded from the camp hospital with some of the mates he had made there, went off to town for a wild time and was apprehended in a drunken state. He was charged for two offences: firstly breaking out of camp and secondly being drunk in town and deprived of 21 days' pay by an irate Lieutenant-Colonel C. Myles.

On 28th July Ted rejoined the Eighth Battalion. Nearly a month later, on 25th August 1918 he was wounded and gassed and sent to England to recuperate. He was admitted to Beaufort War Hospital in Bristol five days later and then transferred to the Third Auxiliary Hospital at Dartford. On 10th October he was released from hospital and sent to the Command Depot at Weymouth. Here the lively young soldier could not be constrained and was reported "absent without leave" for six days. For this offence he was docked 18 days' pay by Major A N Aitken. He sent to the Overseas Training Brigade at Longbridge Deverill while awaiting repatriation to Australia, embarking on the *Ceramic* on 25th January 1919 and arriving in Melbourne on 23rd March. He was met at the ship by some of his family and by a paternal uncle, who conned him into buying a large allotment of land in Broadmeadows as had been his younger brother, Jack. Both kept this land for over 25 years, unhappy that it was deemed useless and that they both had paid excessive money to the council for rates and for clearing blackberries. After the Second World War they both sold their land, just before the massive post-war immigration began and this land was subdivided for housing. Had they kept the land for a few more years, they would have died wealthy men! On 24 June Ted was discharged from the AIF at Melbourne as being medically unfit with the disability of having been gassed.

Ted returned to Ballarat as a local hero. Ted and another local returned serviceman were invited to tea by an elegant Ballarat lady, a sign of her gratitude for their fighting for their country. When they sat down to tea at the table groaning with cakes and other good things, she pointed to various items and told them not to eat them because she was keeping them for Sunday tea. If they would like to have some, they were welcome to come back then.

On 1st June 1920 Ted enlisted in the Royal Australian Navy, exactly one year after he had been discharged from the AIF. Not much has been recorded about Ted's immediate post-war life. But he must have recovered enough from his war injuries to be able to join the Royal Australian Navy. He started with a contract for seven years and was sent first

to the Port Melbourne land base HMAS *Cerberus*. In the initial period he served on the *Cerberus* HMAS *Brisbane*, HMAS *Penguin*, HMAS *Marguerite* and then HMAS *Brisbane* and the *Cerberus* again. Ted was stationed at the London Depot and was there for eighteen months before returning to Australia.

In 1927 Ted married Lillian (“Nig”) Edith Martin (no blood relation) at St Peter’s Church, Eastern Hill, Melbourne. Nig was ten years older than Ted, but he did not know this until after she died in 1975. Ted and Nig went to England for their honeymoon (?).

Since he was stationed in Sydney after his return, they made their home at Ford Street, Mona Vale where they grew glasshouse tomatoes as a sideline. On 3rd August 1927, Ted rejoined the *Australia* (overseas) for eight months and for the next twelve years served again on the *Australia* (twice), the *Adelaide*, the *Cerberus*, the *Penguin* (three times) the *Sydney*, the *Vendetta*, the *Waterben* and the *Sydney*.



Ted Martin

During this time Ted had an impeccable record, his character rating being “very good”. Between 1922 and 1925 he was granted the first, second and third good conduct badges. Moreover, he undertook various courses to improve his skills as an engineer. His naval records give him the highest rating for his ability, Chief Engine Room Artificer. In June 1931 he completed the Advanced Engineering Certificate, gaining a result of 80%.

Just before the outbreak of the Second World War, the effects of the gassing in the First World War were beginning to weaken him and he retired, only to be recalled when war was declared in September 1939. From 1st September 1939 to 27th December 1941 he was on the *Australia*, serving through the Battle of Britain. On 26th March 1941 he was mentioned in dispatches for his “skill, resource and devotion to duty”. This was followed in his award, on 2nd July 1941, of the British Empire Medal.

Citation: Martin, Edward Gerald. Chief Engine Room Artificer 12460

For outstanding zeal and devotion to duty in HMAS AUSTRALIA. He has consistently set the highest example to his subordinates. He was in charge of the engine room when it was penetrated by a shell on 25 September, 1940 and displayed great coolness and presence of mind. (LS&G~M 1937j)

This was awarded by Rear Admiral Muirhead-Gould in Sydney on 27th May 1942.

Thereafter Ted served on various vessels until the end of the war, being discharged on 16th November 1945. At the end of the war he was suffering badly from shell shock, and it was the nursing care by Nig that brought him through. It was considered highly suitable for him to take on some part-time work as part of his rehabilitation. For some time he served as a watchman at the Garden Island Dockyard. Later he worked at the Ford Pill factory where his engineering skills greatly improved their output. Indeed, the delighted managers were keen for him to stay there as

long as he wished.

However, Ted and Nig moved back to Victoria to be near Nig's ageing mother at Doncaster. Having lived in an idyllic setting at Mona Vale, they did not wish to live in an urban setting. Therefore, they bought a house in a rural setting in Burke Road, Upper Ferntree Gully, not far from the Dandenong Ranges. There they led a very happy existence for three decades. Ted bought one of the first Holdens on the market, which he kept in excellent condition. When he felt that he was getting too old to drive, he asked his brother Jack whether his son, John, might be interested in it as a present. "Thanks, but he already has a car!" was the reply. Again a fortune was lost!

Unfortunately, their only child died, but they were very popular with their nephews and nieces in Melbourne. Nig died on 29th October 1975 and Ted on 12th November 1978.

Ken Waller noting that Uncle Ted was a particular joy to his mother:

It is interesting that many years later I married Zeita who was from Sydney, moved there, and after a while followed the family occupation as a Civil Engineering Contractor. Once, when I was building subdivision roads at Mona Vale, I mentioned to some of the local residents that my Uncle used to live nearby in Park Street and when I said his name they either knew him or worked for him in his small garden and all spoke of him with the highest regard. He was known by his sometime nickname "Tim" or "Timmy" as Nig called him.

The major dates in his long and illustrious career encompassed both the First and Second World Wars.

- 22.08.1897 Edwin Gerald Martin was born in Ballarat, Victoria
- 1912 Joined the senior cadets at Ballarat 70B
- 1912 Entered on a six years' apprenticeship with Cowley's foundry as a boilermaker.
- 17.08.1916 At the age of 18 years 11 months with the years of his apprenticeship still left to complete, he enlisted as a private in the Australian Imperial Forces in Melbourne; at that time he was living with his parents at 45 Lal Lal Street in Ballarat East; he was enrolled in the 21st Rfn Unit in the Eighth Battalion
- 02.10.1916 Embarked for active service abroad on the "Nestor" in Melbourne
- 16.11.1916 Disembarked in Plymouth
- 21.11.1916 Marched out to Fovent
- 20.01.1917 Sick to Parkhouse Hospital
- 09.02.1917 Marched from hospital into the Second Training Battalion in No 5 & 6 Camps at Durrington
- 13.03.1917 Proceeded overseas from the port of Folkestone to France from the Second Training Battalion
- 15.03.1917 Marched into First Australian Divisional Base Depot, Estaples
- 01.04.1917 Joined the Eighth Battalion in France
- 31.5.1917 Contracted trench fever
- 01.06.1917 Admitted to the First ADR Station with trench fever
- 17.06.1917 Embarked for England
- 18.06.1917 Admitted to Bath War Hospital with trench fever (slight) and Pyrexia (fever)
- 28.08.1917 Discharged from hospital on furlough and to report to the Training Depot, Cedford on 11.09
- 11.09.1917 Reported to the Training Depot, Cedford on 11.09
- 22.09.1917 Marched out to the Overseas Training Bde, Longbridge Deverill
- 20.10.1917 Proceeded from Longbridge Deverill overseas to France via Southampton

- 21.10.1917 Marched into the First Australian Divisional Base Depot, at Le Havre
- 01.11.1917 Rejoined the Eighth Battalion
- 27.01.1918 Proceeded on leave
- 16.02.1918 Rejoined unit from leave
- 24.06.1918 Admitted to 2nd A.F.Ame with influenza
- 01.07.1918 Transferred to 10th Conv. Depot
- 09.07.1918 Discharged from hospital to base depot; offence caught (1) breaking out of camp (2) drunk in town
- 12.07.1918 Award deprived of 21 days' pay by Lieutenant-Colonel C. Myles
- 21.07.1918 Rejoined the Eighth Battalion
- 25.08.1918 Wounded (gassed)
- 25.08.1918 Admitted to the 2nd A.F.Ame, gassed
- 28.08.1918 Invalided to U.K. wounded and embarked for England
- 30.08.1918 Admitted to Beaufort War Hospital in Bristol, gassed
- 09.09.1918 Transferred to the third Auxiliary Hospital at Dartford
- 07.10.1918 Discharged from hospital to No. 2 Command Depot at Weymouth
- 26.10.1918 AWL from Sutton Veny for six days from 26.10 to 1.11
- 05.11.1918 Award 12 days' F.P. the total forfeit 18 days' pay by Major A.N. Aitken
- 22.11.1918 Marched out to the Overseas Training Brigade, Longbridge Deverill
- 25.01.1919 Embarked from England on the "Ceramic" to return to Australia
- 23.03.1919 Disembarked in Melbourne
- 24.06.1919 Discharged from the AIF at Melbourne as being medically unfit with the disability of having been gassed.
- There is a story that, when he returned to Ballarat after being demobbed, Ted Martin and another local returned serviceman were invited by an elegant Ballarat lady to tea as a sign of her gratitude to them for fighting for their country. When they sat down to tea at the table groaning with cakes and other good things, she pointed to various items and told them not to eat them because she was keeping them for Sunday tea. If they would like to have some, they were welcome to come back them.
- Not much has been recorded about Ted's immediate post-war life. But he must have recovered enough from his war injuries to be able to join the Royal Australian Navy.
- 01.06.1920 Entered the Royal Australian Navy, exactly one year after his discharge from the Army. He started with a contract for seven years and was sent first to the "Cerberus" In the initial period he was on the "Cerberus" the "Brisbane", the "Penguin", the "Marguerite" and then the "Brisbane" and the "Cerberus" again.
- 19.01.1926 Stationed at the London Depot and was there for eighteen months, returning to Australia.
- 1927(?) Married Lillian Edith Martin (Nig) at St Peter's Church, Eastern Hill, Melbourne
- 01.06.1927 Taking leave, he and Nig went to England for their honeymoon. Since he was stationed in Sydney, they made their home at Ford Street, Mona Vale.
- 03.08.1927 Rejoined the Australia for eight months and for the next twelve years served again on the "Australia" (twice), the "Adelaide", the "Cerberus", the "Penguin" (three times) , the "Sydney", the "Vendetta", the

"Waterhen" and the "Sydney".

During this time Ted had an impeccable record, his character rating being always "very good" and between 1922 and 1925 he was granted the first, second and third good conduct badges. Moreover, he undertook various courses to improve his skill as an engineer. His naval records give him the highest rating for his ability.

19.06.1931 Completed the Advanced Engineering Certificate, gaining a result of 80%.

Honours and Awards

	Martin, Edwin Gerald
Service Number:	12460
Service:	RANR
Award:	British Empire Medal
	Martin, Edwin Gerald
Service Number:	
Service:	RAN
Award:	Mention in Dispatches

Service record

Name	MARTIN, EDWIN GERALD
Service	Royal Australian Navy
Service Number	12460
Date of Birth	22 Aug 1897
Place of Birth	BALLARAT, VIC
Date of Enlistment	1 Jun 1920
Locality on Enlistment	Unknown
Place of Enlistment	SYDNEY, NSW
Next of Kin	MARTIN, LILIAN
Date of Discharge	31 Oct 1945
Rank	CH ERA
Posting at Discharge	HMAS Rushcutter
WW2 Honours and Gallantry	British Empire Medal
Prisoner of War	No