



Hero of the Fleet: Two World Wars, One Extraordinary Life - The Memoirs of Centenarian William Stone

William Stone

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William Stone died on 10 January 2009 aged 108. He received a hero's funeral. Born in rural Devon, he joined the navy during the First World War, travelled the globe just before the British Empire's light began to fade and saw action in some of the most significant sea battles of the Second World War. Afterwards, he returned to Devon to run a barber's shop, an altogether more peaceable existence.

As time passed, he became one of a dwindling number of men still alive who had served in the Great War. This meant that for some of the most momentous anniversaries clocked up recently - including the 90th anniversary of the end of the First World War - William was a guest of honour.

This autobiography bridges two wars and encompasses the remarkable episodes and adventures. It was an ordinary life lived in extraordinary times. He died at a time when the navy is attempting to embrace new ships that bear scant resemblance to those that William knew and face the challenges of a world that shrinks with every bold technological advance. His was a different kind of boldness. This is his astonishing story.

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