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AHOY SHIPMATE

RNA Torbay Newsletter

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SENIORS 12

COMMANDMENTS

1. Talk to yourself.

There are times you will need expert advice.

2 "In Style" are the clothes that still fit.

3 You don't need anger management. You need people to stop pissing you off.

4 Your people skills are just fine. It's your tolerance for idiots that needs work.

5 The biggest lie you tell yourself is. "I don't need to write that down. I'll remember it."

6 "On time" is when you get there.

7 Even duct tape can't fix stupid, but it sure does muffle the sound.

8 It would be wonderful if we could put ourselves in the dryer for ten minutes, then come out wrinkle-free and three sizes smaller?

9 Lately, you've noticed people your age are so much older than you.

10 Growing old should have taken longer.

11 Aging has slowed you down, but it hasn't shut you up.

12 You still haven't learned to act your age and hope you never will.

And one more:

"One for the road" means peeing before you leave the house.

Editorial

By Shipmate Norrie Millen

Hi! Shipmates,

It's been quite some time since I managed to publish the last Ahoy Shipmate, but as many of you know from the last newsletter I have been in sickbay and light duties for quite a while.

I reported on my initial scan and was surprised only a few days later to be summoned back for another CT scan. This was followed by a Prostrate MRI, a Colonoscopy and all sorts of blood and other tests. Eventually I received an appointment to see a Colorectal Surgeon. He said do you know what you are here for? I had no idea and was shocked when he informed me that I had bowel cancer. It seems the first CT scan had revealed an anomaly, the 2nd confirmed it and the other tests to determine how big the tumour was. The colonoscopy had revealed not one but two tumours. I was told that because of my age, the position of the growths that it was high risk major surgery to sort the tumours and hernia out. I had a one in 10 chance of not surviving the operation. If I didn't agree to surgery I would almost certainly be back within few years when my chances of survival would be reduced to 50/50!

I thought the surgeon was laying it on a bit thick when he explained the surgery in detail and the at least six weeks after the hospital stay to recover. He wasn't! Originally it was planned for me to stay in hospital for 7 days and the operation was scheduled to last four hours. It turns out that the surgery took six hours as another suspicious mass was located and removed which on testing was another cancer in the making. I was in ICU for four days due to a kidney problem and my stay in hospital lasted 11 days.

The first few weeks at home, I had little appetite, no energy and was in severe pain most of the time which I guess is understandable give the amount of 'chopping' I had received. On morphine for the pain which if nothing else guaranteed plenty of sleep. As I pen these few words it has been seven weeks since my operation and they have not been the best of times, but I am slowly getting back to my normal self. Hernia gone so has my belly button, it was not doing anything anyway!

As I said in my last editorial the message is don't procrastinate, get it reported and sorted. I guess it's a man thing!

The way I see it anyway!

RNA Torbay Facebook is at:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2194581914061283/>

Chairman's Chat



Hi! Shipmates,

Well, here we are in July with the next newsletter on its way to you in some form.

Our editor has been poorly but I am sure it won't be long before he is back in the fold and attending meetings on behalf of all you shipmates I wish him a speedy recovery.

At the last meeting, I said I would be stepping down as Chairman, since that statement I gave I have rescinded that statement and I will be putting myself forward for re-election.

Moving forward we need ideas for raising funds which I will be discussing at the July meeting. So any ideas would be good because the raffle and play your cards right are not enough to balance our books. Anyway, that's all from me hope to see you soon.

Yours Aye – Terry

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## The Battle of May Island

This particular exercise codenamed EC1 involved a large number of battleships and cruisers, nine K- boats and numerous destroyers in two flotillas which strung out over 20 miles sailed from Rosyth after dark on the night of January 31 1918.

The K Class submarines were monsters in their day, being twice as long and three times as heavy as other submarines of that era. They had no fewer than seven power sources driving their twin propellers, a complement of 53 men, a maximum diving depth of 150 feet, 10 torpedo tubes, two of which were mounted

in the funnel superstructure for surface use at night, two four inch guns and one three inch anti-aircraft gun.

Because of their technical complexity, a time consuming procedure had to be carried out before diving. This included extinguishing the boiler furnaces for steam production, retracting the two funnels and covering their three feet diameter holes with water-tight plates closing four mushroom shaped air intake vents and about 30 other openings in the hull.

These submarines had to be trimmed with great care, the large, flat foredeck lacking buoyancy and producing a tendency to nose dive to the bottom. Occasionally, sea water entered through the air intakes and down the funnels, extinguishing the boiler fires and causing explosions. The water would short out electrical circuits and convert the boiler rooms into flooded saunas.

But it was none of these faults which were responsible for the loss of over 100 lives and two submarines, and damage to three others and three surface ships during the Battle of May Island.

The two flotillas had sailed in radio silence and without navigation lights because of the suspected presence of a U-boat in the area, straight towards a group of minesweepers. On seeing the small ships, K11 reduced speed and turned to port, as did K17.

Approaching May Island, the commander of K14 was suddenly aware that the K17 had turned and, at the same time, saw two of the mine sweepers emerge from the mist across his bow.

On taking avoiding action with full right rudder the helm jammed, causing the boat to continue in a circle clear of the K12 but broadside into the path of the K22, which was still running at 19 knots.

Unable to avoid her, the K22 rammed into the K14's port side, damaging her own bows and slicing off the K14's bows aft of the forward torpedo room.

By closing watertight doors, immediate disaster was averted but both submarines were now lying stopped in the water with flooded compartments in the path of the cruisers bearing down on them lights were switched on flares were fired and radio silence was broken as calls for assistance went out.

Three of the battle cruisers swept safely past, their wash rolling the submarines violently but the fourth the ironically named Inflexible smashed into the K22 bending 30 feet of the submarine's already damaged bows at right angles to the hull and shearing off a ballast tank as she rode over her, forcing her under the surface. As the cruiser continued on her way in the dark the K22 popped up again behind her and resumed calling for help.

Ships turned back to assist the vessels in distress and immediately created another problem, with the two flotillas now running headlong towards one another.

Indeed the K12 suddenly found the cruiser Australia come so close that the officers on the larger vessel were able to look down the submarine's funnels and see the glow of her furnaces!

The Fearless, leading the second wave of ships, passed clear to the east of the May Island at 7.34 pm and, according to the radio reports of the original collision, the danger area, a mile and a half north of the island should by now have been safely astern.

Her commander unaware of the first flotilla's about turn, increased speed to 21 knots and both groups of ships met head on in the darkness and mist 13 miles east of the May Island.

At 8.32 pm the Fearless rammed into the K17 just forward of her conning tower although

her entire crew managed to escape in the eight minutes before she went down.

The group swimming in the water stayed together imagining that with the number of ships in the area they would soon be picked up.

Immediately behind the Fearless, the K4 turned to port and stopped.

The K3 behind her did likewise but over shot the K1, closely scraping past to stop some distance away.

The K6 then met the K12 coming back up river on a collision course straight for her, having only just missed colliding with the Australia and, in taking avoiding action the K6 rammed the K4, almost slicing her in half.

Entangled with each other both submarines began to sink and it was only by going full astern that the K6 managed to break free and avoid being dragged to the bottom with the K4.

Seconds after the K1 turned over and sank the K7 passed overhead and stopped to look for survivors. Her deck party were stripped off and ready to enter the water to help their fellow submariners but there were no survivors from the K-4. Another of the shortcomings of the K-boats being that they were not equipped with any form of underwater escape apparatus.

By this time the battleships and destroyers following behind the Fearless and her submarines arrived on the scene at 21 knots, ploughing through the cluster of damaged and confused ships two of them missing the K3 by the thickness of her hull plating and washing the K7's deck party off the casing, so that they too had now to be rescued.

In a matter of seconds they passed over the spot where the K17 had gone down, chopping up or sucking under and drowning the men still swimming in the water.



**K-Class submarine**



**K-Class Memorial Service 2023**



By the time they passed by only nine remained alive, one of whom died shortly after being picked up by the K7.

News of this disastrous episode was suppressed at the time but the subject has been relatively well covered in an assortment of books including *The K Boats*, by Don Everitt, which was published by George G. Harrap in 1963.

Believe it or not, these submarines had portholes around the conning towers and I recently heard a report that divers to the area around May Island had found one of the wrecks with air still trapped within the conning tower.

This was clearly seen through the intact portholes and I now believe this likely to be the K-17.

## ABB Azipod Propulsion to Power Spanish Navy Flagship in a Breakthrough Retrofit Contract

ABB has secured its first Azipod® propulsion retrofit order for a naval vessel, replacing the existing system onboard the Spanish Navy flagship, *Juan Carlos I*

- The vessel will benefit from enhanced efficiency and manoeuvrability
- The contract follows a feasibility study that identified Azipod® technology as an optimal solution for the retrofit project

ABB has secured a breakthrough contract with the Spanish state-owned Navantia shipbuilding company to retrofit the Spanish Navy flagship, *Juan Carlos I* with an electrical propulsion system based on dual ABB Azipod® units. Due completion in 2025, the project is the first of its kind on a naval ship. Following the

commissioning, *Juan Carlos I* will benefit from enhanced efficiency and manoeuvrability to support its varied and demanding naval operations.

The contract follows a study undertaken by ABB in 2020 to determine the feasibility of installing new propulsions on the ship. The study identified ABB Azipod® as a solution to meet the vessel's requirements for reliability, efficiency, manoeuvrability and safety.

"Navantia is proud to make history with the first retrofit of this kind on a naval ship. ABB Azipod® propulsion system has proven to be highly effective in ensuring the optimal capacity of our flagship vessel and we look forward to seeing the benefits in operation," said a Navantia spokesperson.

"We are proud to see our Azipod® propulsion system chosen for this project," said Sindre Satre, Business Line Manager, Coast Guard and Navy, ABB Marine & Ports. "We already have a long track record with highly efficient solutions on the commercial market and now see that our technologies are becoming increasingly viable also for naval vessels."



**SNS Juan Carlos**

ABB's scope of supply for *Juan Carlos I* comprises two Azipod® propulsions and medium-voltage drives, with support and maintenance available locally from the ABB service centre in Spain and worldwide via ABB's global service network.

While the order represents the first retrofit of an ABB Azipod® propulsion system aboard a naval vessel, the solution has been maximizing ship performance in the naval patrol segment for several years. In 2019, the Norwegian Coast Guard icebreaker *KV Svalbard* became the first Azipod®-powered vessel to reach the North Pole, where the system's manoeuvrability and icebreaking capabilities proved critical.

Across its 30-plus years in operation, Azipod® propulsion has recorded an availability rate of 99.8 percent and has been shown to cut fuel consumption by up to 20 percent when compared with traditional shaftline propulsion systems. The solution's high manoeuvrability eliminates the need for tugs in harbour operations and maximizes safety, while its pioneering design minimizes vibrations, saves space on board and facilitates maintenance as well as future refits.



## All 8 Royal Navy Type 26 frigates named as HMS Edinburgh is announced

The names of all eight Type 26 frigates to be built for the Royal Navy have been revealed as the UK defence secretary announced HMS Edinburgh as the final name in the class.



### Artists Impression of Type 26 Frigate

HMS Edinburgh will be the seventh Type 26 frigate and the seventh Royal Navy ship to bear the name.

The last HMS Edinburgh was a Type 42 destroyer which entered service in 1985. She was also the last T42 to decommission, in 2013 after 28 years of service.

Edinburgh is joining the previously-named Glasgow, Cardiff, Belfast, Birmingham, Sheffield, Newcastle and London. The frigates are referred to as City-class, in confirmation of the historic bond between the Royal Navy's fighting ships and the major cities as centres of commerce and industry.

City-class ships will replace the equivalent number of submarine-hunting Type 23

frigates currently in service. They are 60ft longer and 2,000 tonnes heavier than their predecessors, equipped with bow and towed array sonar, Sea Ceptor air defence missiles and a 5in main gun.

The ships are also equipped with a mission bay for plug-in containers carrying equipment for specific tasks, such as disaster relief, and a flight deck big enough to take a Chinook – though the Fleet Air Arm's Merlin and Wildcat helicopters will be more common.



## Roudham Refurbished



Before & During Refurbishment



Refurbishment under way

Sadly the area around the stone memorial to Arthur Leyland Harrison VC Lt. Cdr. RN had



Shipshape & Bristol Fashion



The finished look

been in need of repair due to general wear and tear and weather impact. More recently, vandals had damaged or removed some of the tiles, so refurbishment became a priority. It reached the point where artificial grass needed to be laid to make the site presentable for the 105th Anniversary Memorial Service held on 16th April this year.

Step forward, S/M Jon Stoneman-Merret. He took on the task of seeking quotations from local tradesmen and co-ordinated the on-site work along with our Chairman S/M Terry Mernbery. The job went to Farthing General Building who completed the task by 20th June to everyone's satisfaction. BZ all involved.



# AUKUS subs drifting toward a sea of controversy

*By Donald R. Rothwell*

Australia's nuclear-powered subs will be free to patrol the Indo-Pacific under UNCLOS but barred under various regional treaties

The AUKUS nuclear submarine deal is making ripples across the Indo-Pacific. Image: US Embassy in China

Australia's AUKUS nuclear-powered submarines will enjoy the freedom of navigation beyond Australian waters and freely be able to undertake Indo-Pacific patrols throughout the Pacific, Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean and elsewhere.

This is clear from any analysis of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which has a total of 169 state parties.

UNCLOS has been labelled a "package deal" — an "all-or-nothing" treaty whereby states either accept or reject its terms and accompanying rights and entitlements. Expansive maritime zones give coastal states considerable new maritime entitlements and counter-balance against the guaranteed freedoms of navigation for ships of all states, which maritime powers value.

Little significant distinction is made in UNCLOS between the navigational rights of merchant ships and warships, including submarines. But despite UNCLOS there remain tensions with respect to the navigational rights and entitlements of nuclear vessels and warships, and Australia's AUKUS submarines may eventually sail into a sea of Indo-Pacific controversy.



There are already indicators of choppy waters ahead. Since 1987, New Zealand has prohibited port visits of all nuclear-powered and nuclear-armed vessels. While this law would bar AUKUS submarines from visiting a New Zealand port, it

would not impact their navigation in New Zealand waters while undertaking Tasman Sea patrols.

Likewise, while all of the South Pacific is a designated nuclear-free zone under the 1985 Treaty of Rarotonga, the freedom of navigation of nuclear-powered and nuclear-armed vessels remains under the treaty.

But this has not stopped some of Australia's Pacific neighbours from raising concerns over AUKUS and how comfortably Australia's acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines sits alongside the Treaty of Rarotonga.



Artist rendering of possible design for SSN-AUKUS submarines

Australia's Foreign Minister Penny Wong, and other Australian government officials have made it clear in their frequent visits to the South Pacific that Australia will uphold all of its commitments under the Treaty of Rarotonga and respect the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone.

There have also been concerns within Southeast Asia over vessels carrying hazardous cargo and associated nuclear issues. At various times, regional states such as Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia

have sought to bar the transit passage of vessels carrying mixed oxide fuel to Japan through the Straits of Malacca and Singapore.

These concerns also align with ASEAN as a nuclear-free zone under the 1995 Treaty of Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone. Still, like the Treaty of Rarotonga, the freedom of navigation is not impacted by this ASEAN treaty.

Constraints on port visits and nuclear-free zones are unlikely to hinder where AUKUS submarines can navigate. But unilateral actions on the part of some states could have consequences for Australia.

The potential for such actions has been highlighted by statements from regional government officials, such as Indonesia's suggestion that the passage of Australian submarines would be barred because "AUKUS was created for fighting."

The freedom of navigation of warships has historically been sensitive. A warship cannot enter a foreign port without first seeking permission, traditionally referred to as "diplomatic clearance."

While this constraint does not apply within the territorial sea, some coastal states insist that foreign warships can only enter their territorial sea following notification or authorization. Indo-Pacific states that advance this position include Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Vanuatu and Vietnam.

The emergence of AUKUS has given greater prominence to this debate, with Malaysia's Defence Minister stating in March that the AUKUS submarines would need to seek permission to navigate

through Malaysian waters and on the surface.

But this view is not widely shared. It is especially rejected by the major Western maritime and naval powers, including Australia, and is regularly challenged by United States Freedom of Navigation Operations in the Chinese-claimed waters of the South China Sea.

This raises the question of how some Southeast Asian states may respond to increased maritime tensions in the South China Sea, over the Taiwan Straits or in East Asia.

There are already concerns over Australian AUKUS submarines using Southeast Asian waters as an international maritime highway from Australia to the South China Sea and areas further north.

UNCLOS lays down the relevant international legal framework in peacetime. Debates on how UNCLOS should be interpreted take place on the margins, but its core provisions are generally respected.

But if a regional armed conflict was to break out, it must be anticipated that a diverse range of positions will be taken on the freedom of navigation of what may be seen as belligerent vessels passing through neutral waters.

Citing the 1936 Montreux Convention, Turkey's denial of access to Russian warships through the Black Sea highlights the sensitivity associated with warship navigation during an armed conflict.

In Southeast Asia, ASEAN members may be particularly protective of their legal neutrality if any future regional conflict were to arise. They may unilaterally close their waters to the warships of belligerent



Chinese nuclear- powered Type 094A Jin-Class ballistic submarines

powers, or of those supporting one party in a dispute.

Australia will need to undertake the diplomatic groundwork now and in the

future to ensure that AUKUS submarines enjoy accepted navigational rights at all times.

## This life-sized train set from the 1930's could be yours for £350,000

*By Daily Mail Reporter*

Train enthusiasts are renowned for being rather dedicated to their somewhat niche pastime.

But the ambitions of even most passionate might hit the buffers at the prospect of building a working steam railway in their garden.

Not the late Adrian Shooter CBE, however, who loved trains so much he constructed a mile-long, figure-of-eight track in the grounds of his north Oxfordshire home.

And now his locomotive – said to be the world's oldest working steam train – is being sold for £200,000 as part of the transport boss's amazing garden railway.

He acquired his one-of-a-kind engine, used on the famous Darjeeling Himalayan Railway in India in the late 19th century, to run on his narrow-gauge line.

Adrian Shooter CBE, who died at the age of 74 last December, installed a mile of track in his garden © Provided by Daily Mail



This life-sized train set could be yours but a very big garden is required

His widow Barbara is handling the sale, which was Mr Shooter's dying wish. The whole collection is expected to fetch £350,000 © Provided by Daily Mail

Built in 1889, the 19B Darjeeling B Class locomotive is the only one to have ever left India – and it is leading the sale of a 200-lot

collection of railway pieces amassed by Mr Shooter.

The whole collection, which also includes a 1930 electric London Post Office Railway Car, is expected to fetch £350,000.

Mr Shooter joined British Rail as a management trainee in

1970 and went on to become the head of the privatised Chiltern Railways.

Mr Shooter built a large loop and a station in his garden. The train enthusiast bought a 19B Darjeeling B Class locomotive for his mini-railway – the only one to have ever left India © Provided by Daily Mail

The whole collection, which also includes a 1930 electric London Post Office Railway Car, is expected to fetch £350,000 © Provided by Daily Mail

Mr Shooter joined British Rail as a management trainee in 1970 and went on to become the head of the privatised

Adrian Shooter CBE's dying wish was for his rolling stock to be sold at auction





Chiltern  
Railways© Provided by  
Daily Mail

A one-of-a kind locomotive that was used on the famous Darjeeling Himalayan (mountain) line in India in the late 19th century is the leading lot in the sale © Provided by Daily Mail

A statue of him is displayed at Marylebone station in London. He built the Beeches Light Railway at his home in Steeple Aston, near Bicester, in his spare time and ran it with volunteers.

Mr Shooter also acquired other



He was diagnosed with motor neurone disease in February 2022 and died at 74 in December.

Mr Shooter's widow Barbara is handling the sale, along with HJ Pugh Auctioneers of Ledbury, Herefordshire© Provided by Daily Mail

He built the Beeches Light Railway at his home in Steeple Aston, near Bicester, in his spare time and ran it with volunteers© Provided by Daily Mail

Also part of the sale is this Model T petrol car modified to run on 2ft gauge railway. It has been fitted with a turntable allowing



locomotives and had replica carriages made to carry passengers.



the car to be lifted from the rails turned and then lowered to face in the opposite direction© Provided by Daily Mail

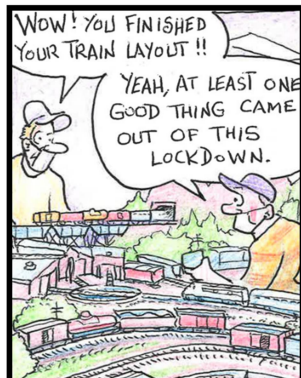




The inside of the carriage of the world's oldest working steam train. It was Mr Shooter's dying wish that the railway be ripped up and sold with the rolling stock© Provided by Daily Mail

Part of the sale is London Post Office Railway Car Number 760 (latterly renumbered 37) built in 1930 built for the 6.5-mile long 2ft gauge London Post Office Railway© Provided by Daily Mail It was his dying wish that the railway be ripped up and sold with the rolling stock.

Mr Shooter's Barbara is handling sale, with HJ



widow the along Pugh



Auctioneers of Ledbury, Herefordshire.

Speaking of Mr Shooter's passion for trains; Henry Biss, of HJ Pugh, said: 'It's all going under the hammer on June 21 and the star of the show is the 19B Darjeeling locomotive which is the oldest boiler steam train in the world.'

## Interesting Obits

### Commander Allan Tarver, naval aviator who won a George Medal for bravery— obituary .

*Submitted by Shipmate Kevin Maguire*

He remained in his crashing aircraft trying to save his comrade thereby jeopardising his own chances of survival

Tarver in the cockpit of his Sea Vixen on the deck of Ark Royal, 1966

Commander Allan Tarver, who has died aged 84, was awarded the George Medal for a selfless act of bravery in the air during an extraordinary



Lt. Tarver in the cockpit of his Sea Vixen on the deck of Ark Royal, 1966

feat of airmanship in May 1966 that stands out in the annals of naval aviation history.

In the spring of 1966 the fleet carrier Ark Royal was in the Indian Ocean, enforcing the Beira Patrol, the British blockade of oil imports to Ian Smith's administration in Rhodesia which had unilaterally declared independence, when on May 10 over the Mozambique

Channel, as the London Gazette subsequently reported, "Tarver was the pilot of a Sea Vixen aircraft returning from a routine patrol, when one of his two engines stopped through a mechanical failure and the aircraft, already low on fuel, began to lose more fuel from the damaged engine."

A Scimitar tanker aircraft from Ark Royal was despatched to refuel the disabled aircraft, but while the Sea Vixen was linking up in mid-air, its other engine cut out at around 12,000 feet, and the aircraft began to fall towards the sea.

Tarver coolly remained in his cockpit, retaining control as best he could, and calmly began a countdown for himself and his observer (naval parlance for the navigator), to eject at a height of 6,000 feet. When the countdown reached zero, Tarver's observer, Lieutenant John Stutchbury, tried to fire his ejector seat, but the mechanism failed and he began to attempt to bale out manually.

Although every moment of delay reduced Tarver's own chances of survival, he

remained in his cockpit to help Stutchbury. With the hatch cover jettisoned, he twice inverted the aircraft, even though the manoeuvre meant precious height and speed were lost.

But it was to no avail because Stutchbury, though he succeeded in getting himself half out of his access hatch, appeared to lose consciousness and it seems that his harness may have become caught in the airframe.

Still refusing to give up, Tarver leant back and put his arm through the hatch

between the cockpits to push on Stutchbury's foot (the only part of him that was visible) in the hope of jerking him clear before the aircraft hit the sea – but again, to no avail.

The Scimitar pilot watching from above reported that, as the stricken aircraft rolled over on its final plunge into the sea, Tarver was thrown from the pilot's cockpit and hit the sea before his parachute had time to deploy. There was no chance, the other pilot reported after landing on Ark Royal, of Tarver's having survived.

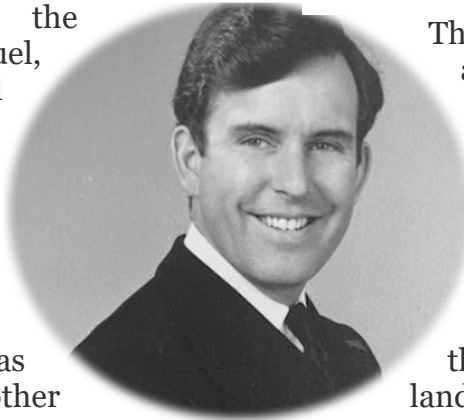
But he did survive, albeit with an injury to his knee, and a helicopter rescued him from the sea and brought him back on board the carrier.

"That he was unsuccessful in saving his observer in no way diminished the quality of his own bravery," the

London Gazette observed, "and by making his first concern the survival of his fellow aircrew, Tarver acted in the highest traditions of the Service; by remaining for several minutes in the crashing aircraft thereby forfeiting

his own chances of escape, beyond the point where he could reasonably expect to live, he exhibited most conspicuous courage in circumstances of extreme danger."

Allan Leigh Tarver was born on June 29 1938 at Canford Cliff, Dorset, into a family of Indian Army officers and was brought up in



Lt. Allan Tarver



A Sea Vixen showing the pilot's offset cockpit and the observer's 'coalhole'



Allan Tarver at a wedding



Baluchistan. Educated at Wellington, he joined Dartmouth in 1954, studied at the Royal Naval Engineering College, Manadon, and specialised in air engineering, before learning to fly at RAF Linton-on-Ouse in 1962, with advanced flying training at RNAS Brawdy in Wales.

Subsequently, Tarver qualified in the de Havilland Sea Vixen all-weather fighter, at RNAS Yeovilton, before joining 893 Naval Air Squadron.

The Sea Vixen, a twin-engine, twin boom-tailed jet, was flown to the limits of its performance by the Fleet Air Arm. The pilot's cockpit was off-centre and the observer sat below the pilot with no forward view other than the radar used for interceptions, in a position known as the "coal hole". It was a remarkable, versatile aircraft, and the first British two-seater to break the sound barrier. Nonetheless its accident rate was high and over 50 aircrew were lost in non-combat flying.

In the 1960's the Luftwaffe operated the F104 Starfighter which suffered so many accidents that it was named the "widow-maker", but in percentage terms of losses the Sea Vixen was more self-harming.

However, operating in all weathers during the Cold War off aircraft carriers and on operations which were intrinsically dangerous, Tarver and his fellow pilots always showed great care and skill. Apart from his one crash in 1966, Tarver's flying was accident-free. After rehabilitation for the injury to his knee, Tarver resumed flying.

From 1967 to 1972 he flew first with the US Navy Air Test Centre at Patuxent River, Maryland and then became a test pilot at Boscombe Down, where he flew Phantoms and helped to introduce the Harrier into service. He was awarded the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air.

After taking redundancy in 1976, he trained as an accountant and opened a practice in Petersfield, where for many years he was also a town councillor.

His first marriage, to Susan Wolstenholme, was dissolved in 1991. He is survived by his second wife, Jennifer, née Fletcher, and by three children from his first marriage and three stepchildren.

**Commander A L Tarver, born June 29 1938, died March 23 2023**

## Captain James Rawe naval officer - Obituary

*Daily Telegraph Obituaries - Submitted by Shipmate Kevin Maguire*

His role in Nigeria's civil war led to questions in Parliament, but he successfully sued an author who accused him of being a 'hired gun'

Captain James Rawe, who has died aged 97, was a landing craft officer on D-Day in 1944; he later employed his amphibious experience during the civil war in Nigeria.



James Rawe onboard HMS Dampier in the Sulu Sea in 1953

In 1955, while serving in the Far East, Rawe answered a call for volunteers to help to form the fledgling Royal Nigerian Navy, which was emerging from several Colonial marine

services. All other personnel were seconded from different departments, and Rawe was the first person to join the new service directly.

After independence, Rawe received a letter from the Governor General asking him to remain in the navy; for this to be possible he had to join Her Majesty's Overseas Civil Service, which put him in the unusual position of being both a serving naval officer and a civil servant.

He played an important part in the

**James Rawe naval officer who served on D-Day and later helped to develop the Nigerian navy**

formation and development of the Nigerian navy; having navigated a delicate path through the military coups of January and July 1966, he worked closely with Joseph Edet Akinwale "Joe" Wey, the chief of naval staff, and with Yakubu "Jack" Gowon, head of state and Commander-in-Chief. Rawe developed a high regard for the honesty and integrity of both men.

Shortly afterwards, Aguiyi-Ironsi was assassinated and replaced by Gowon

Rawe played an active role in the Biafran Civil War between 1967 and 1970, planning and executing the series of seaborne landings which were critical to the eventual Federal victory. In these landings he closely worked with Benjamin Adekunle, the commander of the 3rd Division, who was a highly effective soldier but also a controversial and feared figure.

Rawe was slightly wounded in one of these operations by a bomb lobbed from a helicopter manned by Frenchmen on to his ship. As the helicopter was directly overhead, Rawe's guns could not be brought to bear, but as they were on the same radio frequency he was able to express his views.

In 1969, with the war drawing to a close, he retired from the Nigerian Navy as a captain.

A book on the Nigerian Civil War described Rawe as "a swashbuckling, hired gun who planned and executed combined operations

[who] walked around in seaboots with a cavalry pistol slung low on [his] hip".

Rawe objected to being called a mercenary, and in 1974 his solicitor [Sir Hugh Rossi](#), with whom he had been at school, and his barrister, [Leon Brittan](#) (subsequently Home Secretary under [Margaret Thatcher](#)), obliged the author and the publishers, Hodder and Stoughton, to admit libel, to pay damages and costs, and make an apology.

Despite his appointments as MBE (Military) in 1964 and OBE (Military) in 1967, the Government was nonplussed by the involvement of a British naval officer in Nigeria during the coups of 1966 and the civil war, and questions were asked in Parliament. Rawe was equally nonplussed by the various UK agencies which paid his naval pension: while he could understand receiving a pension from the Crown Agents, he was amused that in later years he received it from the Department for International Development.

James Rawe was born on July 14 1925 in Constantinople, where his grandfather, a naval architect from a Cornish family, had moved in the late 19th century, becoming superintendent of the Sultan's arsenal. He had died in 1917 while interned by the Turkish authorities.

Rawe's father, a talented linguist, had worked for British naval intelligence in the eastern Mediterranean during and after the First World War: indiscreetly, his marriage certificate in June 1918 recorded his profession as Naval Intelligence Agent.

When the last sultan, Mehmed VI, departed his Ottoman capital in 1922, he did so through the Rawes' walled garden and their private steps on the banks of the Bosphorus. As a result of James's father's



James Rawe in July 1966 with Nigeria's military head of state Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi



James Rawe and comrades in Calabar, following its capture in 1968



James Rawe, second left, during a visit by Lord Louis Mountbatten



wartime activities, however, the family's assets in Turkey were expropriated. James was born when his father returned to the country to try to retrieve some of the family fortune.

Educated at home by his mother and then by the brothers of Our Lady of Mercy at St Aloysius' College in Highgate, north London, Rawe joined the Navy in 1943 as an officer cadet under the wartime Y scheme.

He volunteered for Combined Operations on the basis that the training was short and volunteers were given a week's leave. After completing a commando training course near Fort William in early 1944, Rawe was appointed first lieutenant of a tank landing craft, LCT 977.

His squadron worked up in the Sound of Jura, practising changing formation, testing guns, beaching, and, most importantly, judging when to let go the kedge anchor which was essential to pull themselves off the beach.

As an 18-year-old midshipman in LCT 977 he landed the US 12th Infantry on Utah beach in the early morning of June 6 1944. He recalled that after 48 hours milling about in the Channel, "we felt like knights of old going out to slay the dragon ... the sea had moderated and, on the order to go, our flotilla, keeping almost perfect formation, wheeled from line ahead to line abeam. Painted in white and pale grey camouflage with large battle ensigns standing out stiffly in the breeze, we made a brave sight."

Fortuitously, strong currents pushed the landing flotilla about 2,000 yards eastwards to a less heavily defended part of the beach.



James Rawe oversees the salvaging of a 40mm gun from a ship sunk during the Nigerian Civil War

Rawe was bringing various personal weapons on to the bridge when US Colonel James Lockett tapped him on the shoulder and asked: "Hey, mid, who's making this landing? You or me?" Some of the soldiers noticed that the cumulus clouds had formed a cross over the beaches and took this to be a positive sign.

In September, Rawe was appointed first lieutenant of LCT 1051, still under US command, which over the next few months landed troops and supplies on Omaha and Utah beaches and at Arromanches, Le Havre and Cherbourg.

Postwar, Rawe joined the Hydrographic Service, serving in the survey ships Cook in UK waters and Dampier in the South China Sea.



James Rawe at the ceremony to appoint him the Légion d'honneur in 2016

After leaving Nigeria, he served as a probation officer in Oxfordshire but opted for early retirement and moved to Dorset. He is believed to have been one of the longest serving fellows of the Royal Geographic Society, with a 71-year stint. He was appointed to the Légion d'honneur in 2016, and a memoir, *That Reminds Me!*, was published privately in 2021.

In 1952 he married Irene Craig, enjoying five days' honeymoon in Paris before he sailed for the Far East. She survives him with three sons; another son predeceased him.

**James Rawe, born July 14 1925, died April 15 2023**

**Calm Seas & Fair Winds to All on  
Eternal Patrols**