

TONY DYER (1943-)



Early Life:

Tony was born on 11th March 1943 in the Victoria Nursing Home in Plymouth, Devon in the South of England, and home for the first 16 years of his life was in the Mutley district of the city, where he lived with his mother and father. His birth date was over two years before the end of World War II and his home city was being heavily and randomly bombed by the German Luftwaffe at the time – miraculously, although several houses in his area of the city were destroyed, his home survived with only minor damage, and so did his family. His earliest memories are of walking and cycling around Plymouth city centre – flattened by Nazi bombing and a heap of rubble or bomb damaged buildings for as far as the eye could see! He had a half brother Trevor and a half sister Joyce who were his father's children from his first marriage, but both sadly died in 2012. His Father John Henry Dyer was a garage proprietor but worked in the Royal Navy Dockyard during the war years, and mother Margaret Sarah Dyer as an interpreter for the deaf and dumb. Tony was named after the handsome politician of the times, Anthony Eden!

Tony went to school from the age of 4 at the Busy Bee Nursery School at Mannamead in Plymouth. From the ages of 5 – 11 he attended the Hyde Park Junior School at Mutley, Plymouth, and on passing the 11+ examination attended the Plymouth Public Secondary School for Boys in Cobourg Street, until the age of 16. He is still friends with some of his fellow pupils from both Junior and Senior Schools.

He had a happy childhood although could not wait to leave home at 16 to start his naval career. He was not particularly academically successful at school, although his final exams set him in good stead for his chosen career. His parents paid little attention to his school work, which he always regretted in later life. After joining the navy he quickly rose through the ranks, attended Naval Engineering College and finally reached the rank for Commander Royal Navy before resigning in 1995.

Commander A Dyer Royal Navy - Naval Career:

Commander TONY DYER joined the Navy as an Engine Room Artificer Apprentice on 14th September 1959 and after training in HMS FISGARD (Cornwall) and CALEDONIA (Scotland) joined HMS WIZARD (Devonport based frigate) in 1963. Serving successively in HM Ships EAGLE (Aircraft Carrier) (during which time his ship saw service in the 'Malaysian Confrontation' and set up the 'Beira Patrol' when Ian Smith declared UDI in Rhodesia), PELLEW (Frigate), HECATE (Survey Ship) AND TAMAR, the shore base in Hong Kong and attaining the rank of Chief Petty Officer. He was promoted to Sub Lieutenant on the Special Duties List of officers in 1971. Following post promotion courses in the Royal Naval College at Greenwich and the Royal Naval Engineering College at Manadon, Plymouth, he joined HMS ARK ROYAL (Aircraft Carrier) and became a Flight Deck Engineering Officer in 1972.

Following promotion to Lieutenant in 1974 he was appointed to HMS MERMAID (Frigate), the Singapore Guard Ship, as the Marine Engineer Officer. After a year on the Far East station, during which time he served off Vietnam at the time of the fall of Saigon to North Vietnamese forces, he returned with his ship for a further 18 months service as

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part of the 2nd Frigate Squadron. Completing two 'Cod War' patrols off Iceland in winter, his ship returned on each occasion with severe structural damage requiring dockings to rectify. Also whilst in the MERMAID he witnessed the tragic collision which resulted in the sinking of HMS FITTLETON and the loss of 12 lives. The photograph above shows Tony Dyer as a Lieutenant serving in HMS Mermaid in 1975.

Leaving the MERMAID in 1977 he spent two years in Chatham on the staff of Flag Officer MEDWAY as the Officer in Charge of the Craft Support Unit responsible for the engineering standards in the Coastal Surveying Squadron. In 1979 he returned to sea in HMS RHYL (Frigate), a Chatham based frigate, as the Marine Engineer Officer serving in many parts of the world including patrols in the Gulf during the early stages of the 'Armillar Patrol', the Caribbean and the South Atlantic. On leaving the RHYL he was promoted to Lieutenant Commander, appointed to Portsmouth Naval Base and played a key part in the formation of the 'Fleet Maintenance and Repair Organisation'. It was during this time that he was detailed to the ex Sealink 10,000 Tonne Ro-Ro Ferry HMS KEREN as the Marine Engineer Officer. During this short period, he and a small crew of 35 took this unfamiliar ship to sea at short notice from Tyneside following a dispute between the civilian crew and the MOD over pay. He and the crew were accused by the media of 'hijacking' the vessel and received an extremely hostile reception from National Union of Seamen members on their triumphant return alongside. As a result of the decisive action taken by the MOD and of the success of the operation, the seamen dropped their demands for extra pay and allowances and the ship quickly resumed transporting British troops from the Ascension Islands to the Falklands and back.

Joining the destroyer HMS CARDIFF (Destroyer) as the Marine Engineer Officer in 1986, he again saw service in many parts of the world including the Western Atlantic, Caribbean, East Africa, Pakistan and the Gulf where CARDIFF was instrumental in setting up the convoy system of escorting British registered ships through the Straits of Hormuz during the Iran Iraq war. HMS CARDIFF was close to USS STARK when struck by Exocet missiles fired by Iraqi aircraft near the oil state of Qatar.

Following CARDIFF, Lieutenant Commander DYER joined HMS SULTAN, the shore Marine Engineering training establishment in Gosport for a year as the Senior Engineer (Electrical) before being promoted to Commander in October 1989. On promotion he was appointed to the destroyer HMS SOUTHAMPTON (Destroyer) as the Senior Naval Officer during the ship's refit and post collision repair period at Swan Hunters Yard on Tyneside. During his time in this ship he built up many friendships amongst the Royal Naval Association, the Sea Cadets who he gave great support to and also the people of the City of Southampton. He will be remembered too by the staff and pupils of the 'Rose Road Centre' in Southampton.

Returning the ship to Portsmouth in May 1991 he left the SOUTHAMPTON in November 1991 and became the Marine Engineering Department Drafting Commander at HMS CENTURION for a short period. Later he travelled to the United States and joined the MV CANTERBURY STAR for a voyage to the Pacific Ocean as part of the Merchant Navy/Royal Navy liaison programme.

In March 1992 Commander DYER joined the staff of The Commodore Naval Ship Acceptance based at Foxhill in Bath where he travelled extensively to the UK warship building yards to carry out inspections on new construction warships. His considerable sea experience was also called upon at Foxhill and elsewhere where he is a member of several policy committees and working groups mainly in Damage Control and Fire Fighting areas. His experience was also invaluable to members of the MOD involved in the design and acceptance of new ships for the Royal Navy and in developing new processes and materials for use at sea.

During 36 years serving in the Royal Navy he was promoted through the ranks to Commander Royal Navy. He values regular reunions with both former ratings and officers who joined, trained and served with him over the many years of dedicated service to the Crown. Notable achievements whilst in the navy were being appointed as the Commanding Officer and Captain of HMS Southampton, being a Rear Commodore in the Royal Naval Sailing Association, achieving the rank of Commander against considerable competition, something only 1% of those who joined at the same time attained. At that time Commander was the ceiling in the SD List of Royal Navy officers, so it was impossible to go further. He also took pride being the President of the Special Duties Commanders' Association for over 20 years.

On resignation from the Royal Navy in October 1995 he first worked for a London based company, Serco Ltd, a task management company, as a Business Development Manager. Later he resigned from Serco Ltd and took a job with a small Manchester based company, Cussons Technology Ltd, as the Marine Division Director. During the full period 1995 until 2004 he also worked as a self employed Marine Consultant and travelled the world in that capacity.

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After the Navy:

Tony always travelled widely in the world, both whilst in the Royal Navy and afterwards as a civilian businessman. During his naval career his ships took him to the western Atlantic for much of the time in the United States and occasionally to the Caribbean islands, to South America, to the Baltic, The Mediterranean, to East Africa, and the Middle and Far East including the Gulf States, Indonesia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand, Japan and the Philippines. As a businessman, he travelled to do business with his clients in China, Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore and India, and on several occasions, to Poland, Germany, Belgium and France in Europe and to Canada and the United States. As a tourist he also found himself in faraway places, spending his second honeymoon in Mauritius in the Indian Ocean, and vacationing in Greece, The United States, Australia and India.

Tony was married twice and had two children, lived in Emsworth, Hampshire with his second wife Sue until divorce in 2016. His hobbies included tennis, windsurfing, yachting, mountain biking, theatre going and playing bridge. He was the Chairman of the Special Duties List Commanders' Association, a Rear Commodore in the Royal Naval Sailing Association and past Chairman and founding member of the Portsmouth Command Naval Windsurfing Club. He was awarded 'Command Colours' for his services to Naval Windsurfing in the Portsmouth area. He was also an active member of the Emsworth Sailing Club.

He purchased Tradewinds of Emsworth I (TW1), a Moody 28 Yacht in 1996, and sailed mainly the south coast of England, but also on trips across the English Channel to France and the Channel Islands. In 1999 he purchased Tradewinds of Emsworth II (TW2), a Moody 35 Yacht. Initially he sailed the south coast of England and English Channel destinations, but in 2004 embarked on a long voyage to the Mediterranean via the rivers and canals of France. In the years following he has sailed the Mediterranean coastal waters of France, Spain, The Balearic Islands, Italy, Croatia and Greece.

In 2001 he also purchased Tradewinds of Emsworth III (TW3), a Beneteau 40 yacht, which he had delivered to the British Virgin Islands in the Caribbean. In the years that followed he sailed to most islands of the Leeward and Windward Antilles in the Greater and Lesser Antilles as far south as Grenada. He sold this boat in March 2017.

Until 2017 when TW3 was sold, he lived aboard TW2 during the summer months in the Mediterranean and aboard TW3 during winter months in the Caribbean. For many years during the autumn of each year he usually travelled to the United States and Canada to visit friends, but since the autumn of 2016 he began spending his time in Europe (mainly Spain or the Canary Islands of Spain, but also Poland for a month). For a few weeks in the spring he visits family and friends in the UK, travelling the length and breadth of the country to keep in touch and to renew relationships and friendships that would otherwise lapse.

Over the years he enjoyed participating in several sports, including basketball, rowing, tennis, windsurfing, dinghy sailing and yachting. He also enjoyed occasional visits to the gym, mainly during visits to the United States and on public beachfront exercise equipment provided in many Spanish destinations.

From an early age Tony was passionate about cars, and changed his first engine when just 17 years of age. He also passed the UK Driving Test when 17, having bought his first car, a 1938 Morris 8 convertible shortly before. Over the years he also owned two Ford Zephyr 4s, a Ford Cortina, a Morris 1100, two Mercedes, three Audis, a Singer Gazelle convertible, a Sunbeam Alpine sports convertible, a Rover 2000, a Triumph 2000, a Triumph 2.5pi, a Volvo 343, two Vauxhall Cavaliers, an Austin Healy Sprite, a Morris Minor, a Ford Anglia and an Austin Devon.

Cars owned by Tony Dyer:

1938 Austin 8 convertible (painted Red & White!)
1954 Austin Devon (converted with windows) van
1956 Ford Anglia
1962 Ford Zephyr 4
1963 Ford Cortina Mk1
1963 Ford Zephyr 4
1965 Sunbeam Alpine (Owned in Hong Kong)
1968 Morris 1100
1968 Triumph 2000
1965 Singer Gazelle (Owned in Singapore)
1969 Rover 2000
1960 Morris Minor (2nd car)

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1962 Austin Healy Sprite Mk2 (2nd car)
1976 Triumph 2.5 PI
1982 Volvo 343
1987 Vauxhall Cavalier Diesel
1995 Vauxhall Cavalier Diesel
1995 Audi A4 1.9 Tdi Diesel (Company Car)
1997 Mercedes 190D Diesel
2001 Mercedes C Class 2.0 Diesel (Company Car)
2002 Audi A4 1.9 Tdi Diesel
2015 Audi A3 1.9 Tdi Diesel

Tony Dyer's Navy ships:

1959 – 1960 HMS Fisguard at Torpoint, Cornwall. Training establishment
1960 – 1963 HMS Caledonia, Fife, Scotland. Training establishment
1963 – 1963 HMS Wizard. Training ship operating Atlantic and West Coast of USA. Cruised the Great Lakes.
1963 – 1965 HMS Eagle. Aircraft Carrier. Operated UK waters and Far East
1965 – 1967 HMS Pellew. Small Frigate operating from Portland, Dorset
1967 – 1969 HMS Hecate. Ocean Survey vessel operating West Coasts of Ireland and Scotland
1969 – 1971 HMS Tamar. Shore base in Hong Kong
1971 – 1971 RNC Greenwich. Training following being commissioned as Sub Lieutenant
1971 -1972 RNEC Manadon. Naval Engineering College
1972 – 1974 HMS Ark Royal as Flight deck Engineer officer. Aircraft carrier operating Both sides of Atlantic
1974 – 1977 HMS Mermaid as Marine Engineer Officer. Frigate based initially in Singapore. Later in UK waters
1977 – 1979 Chatham Naval Base as engineer officer in Charge of small craft
1979 – 1982 HMS Rhyl as Marine Engineer Officer. Frigate operating worldwide.
1982 – 1986 Portsmouth Naval Base as Lieutenant Commander in charge of Fleet Maintenance and repair.
1983 – 1983 HMS Keren as Marine Engineer Officer. Ro-Ro Ferry taken up from trade.
1986 – 1988 HMS Cardiff as Marine Engineer Officer. Destroyer operating worldwide.
1988 – 1989 HMS Sultan Engineering Training Establishment as Senior Electrical Officer.
1989 – 1992 HMS Southampton as Captain and Marine Engineer Officer. Rank Commander.
1992 – 1995 Commander on staff of Commodore Naval Ship Acceptance in MoD Bath

Tony Dyer's Naval Ranks:

1959 – 1963 Engine Room Artificer Apprentice
1963 – 1964 Leading Engine Room Artificer
1964 – 1965 Acting Petty Officer Engine Room Artificer
1965 – 1965 Petty Officer Engine Room Artificer
1965 - 1971 Engine Room Artificer First Class (Chief Petty Officer)
1971 – 1974 Engineer Sub Lieutenant Royal Navy
1974 – 1982 Lieutenant Royal Navy
1982 – 1989 Lieutenant Commander Royal Navy
1989 – 1996 Commander Royal Navy