

War Veteran & Top Policeman

By Viv Wilson – Teignmouth Post



A TEIGNMOUTH war veteran and former top policeman has died aged 90.

Jim Stowers saw active service in the navy and army in the Second World War, and rose to become an assistant Chief Constable in the Devon and Cornwall force, and a Commissioner in the Cayman

Islands police force.

Mr Stowers' death was on the front page of the Cayman Islands daily newspaper, the Cayman Compass, on Tuesday.

Mr Stowers was also chairman of the now-disbanded Newton Abbot branch of the Burma Star Association.

He grew up in Vine Cottage, Heywoods Road, Teignmouth, and was a St James' Church choirboy and Scout during the 1930s.

Some West Lawn School teachers were veterans of the First World War, and instilled a deep level of respect for their selfless duty to King and country in their pupils - an example he was destined to follow.

Aged 14 he became a telegram boy, and served in the Home Guard until he joined the Royal Navy at 18, starting at the shore-based HMS Impregnable at Plymouth.

He was trained in communications in a special group known as 'Yøand on the frigate HMS Bann, intercepting enemy transmissions while the ship escorted convoys crossing and re-crossing the Atlantic.

The focus then moved to the Mediterranean where his ship participated in Operation Husky, landing Canadians for the invasion of Sicily. Next, his ship was transporting West

African troops to serve in India, where they ultimately did sterling work in Burma.

Mr Stowers trained in Japanese Morse, and served in the army at Kandy under Lord Louis Mountbatten. Later he would march in the victory parade in Rangoon while Mountbatten took the salute.

His activities in the Far East ranged from operating behind enemy lines in Burma to taking part in the surrender of the Japanese South East Asia command in Saigon.

At Christmas, 1946, he returned home, emaciated after four years away. He married Eileen Westlake at St James Church, then joined the Merchant Navy as a radio officer, sailing the high seas all over the globe.

The birth of sons John and Jim heralded an end to life at sea, and the start of a police career in 1949. He rose to the rank of assistant Chief Constable, and spent the majority of his career in the CID.

Mr Stowers supervised the building of the police training college at Middlemoor, Exeter, opened by Princess Alexandra in 1973.

His next posting was as head of CID in the Cayman Islands, followed by five years as Commissioner of Police.

During her visit to Cayman in 1983, Her Majesty presented him with the Queen's Police Medal for distinguished service in the British and Colonial Police.

During retirement, he travelled widely across the UK to lecture and train the police, and was awarded an honorary research fellowship from Exeter University. He served on committees for military based events in Teignmouth and was, for several years chairman of the Newton Abbot branch of the Burma Star Association, instigating its Book of Remembrance before the branch was decommissioned. A member of Teignmouth Masonic Lodge, he also enjoyed good fellowship at the Royal British Legion in Den Crescent.



Mr Stowers' numerous achievements engendered justifiable pride in his successful career, but he also understood the importance of humility. He was the embodiment of perfect balance between the two, and it was to his credit that after participating in the world war one commemoration Songs for Tommy, in The Den marquee in August, he made a point of congratulating the young children for their contribution to the event.

Despite battling cancer, Mr Stowers read the Kohima Epitaph and laid a Burma Star wreath at the remembrance service last month.

Mr Stowers' honours included the 1939-45 Star, the Atlantic Star, the Burma Star plus bar for the Pacific, the Italy Star, the South East Asia medal 1945-6, the Coronation Medal 1953, the Queen's Police Medal, and the police good conduct and long service medal.

Webmasters Note:

His funeral service took place at St Michael's Church, Teignmouth, December 20th at 11 am and was well attended with over 300 with representatives from Benevolent and other Masonic lodges in the area, the Mayor, Councillors, Royal Naval Association, Burma Star Association, RBL and many decorated veterans to name but a few.