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Commander 'Yogi' Jenson, who has died aged 83, survived a sinking and a run of bad luck during the Second World War to go on to a second career as a marine artist.

Jenson was the 21-year old gunnery officer in the Canadian destroyer *Ottawa*, escorting the eastbound convoy ON127 on September 14 1942 when she was hit by a German torpedo 500 miles off Newfoundland. Kapitänleutnant Heinz Walkerling, commanding the submarine U-91, brought *Ottawa* to a stop when he fired twice.

Jenson recalled going below deck where he saw "grotesquely twisted limbs, like a scene from hell" as he tried to restore order. Ten minutes later, a second salvo of torpedoes hit amidships, and *Ottawa* blew up.

On being flung overboard in the dark, Jenson was surprised to find that the water was not frozen, then remembered that they were in the Gulf Stream. As he looked about him he observed, seemingly in slow motion, "*Ottawa's* stern tipping out of the water as the bows sank. Soon the rudder and propellers were right out of the water, and the 4.7-inch gun slipped out of its mounting and plunged downward. The stern now vanished beneath the waves. It was like a dream." Thick furnace oil spread over the sea, covering Jenson's face and hands, and filling his nostrils and mouth as he recited the Lord's Prayer for five hours in the heaving sea.

Several ships passed before Jenson and 60 others were rescued at first light by a British corvette; 114 of *Ottawa's* crew were lost. Afterwards Jenson said that it was the second time he had lost all his possessions, including his sketchbooks; but years later he recreated scenes from the ship's sinking for his memoir *Tin Hats, Oilskins and Seaboats* (2000).

One of the most poignant of his 200 line drawings depicts *Ottawa's* final moments as she sank; Jenson himself, alone in the water, appears on the left of the picture, clinging to a Carley float. He remained haunted by the memories of trapped men screaming when the order to abandon ship was given, and also by his time in the water, though the latter was extinguished when he made the sketch almost 60 years later.

The board of inquiry into *Ottawa's* loss commended Jenson, "who, for a young officer, displayed considerable initiative and powers of command".

Latham Brereton Jenson was born on May 2 1921 in Calgary to a family of British homesteaders. He was given the nickname Yogi when he tied up his hair in a towel like a fakir after skinny-dipping in the Elbow River. Although he was not to see the sea until he joined up, he trained as a sea cadet at the Calgary Armouries. At 17, he considered going to the United States to train as a commercial artist, but went instead to Portsmouth as a special entry cadet in the Royal Canadian Navy.

Jenson was under training in the battlecruiser *Renown* when she hunted the German raider *Graf Spee* in the South Atlantic. *Renown* was involved in a brief duel with the German battle cruisers *Gneisenau* and *Scharnhorst*; *Gneisenau* was damaged and the Germans retreated under cover of a

snow storm, but not before a heavy shell had destroyed everything in Renown's midshipmen's gunroom, including Jenson's kit. He then served briefly in the destroyer Matabele, leaving her before she was torpedoed by U-454 off the Kola Inlet in January 1942.

Next Jenson served in the battlecruiser Hood, where his promotion to sub-lieutenant led to his return to Canada just weeks before the ship was sunk, with the loss of all but three crew, in her duel with the German battleship Bismarck.

After the sinking of Ottawa, Jenson joined the elderly American-built destroyer Niagara as second-in-command, aged just 21, and in 1943 he briefly commanded the Flower-class corvette Long Branch, when he was the RCN's youngest commanding officer.

When Jenson became second-in-command of the destroyer Algonquin in 1944 his navigator, Lieutenant Dick Steels, learning of Jenson's luck, exclaimed: "My God, man, if I had known it, I never would have served with you." Years later Steel added: "But I thank God I did." Describing Algonquin as "the fairest of my loves", Jenson took part in operations off the Norwegian coast, Arctic convoys and Operation Neptune, the landings in Normandy.

After the war, he taught at Royal Roads, the RCN naval college on Vancouver Island, and at the Nato Defence College in Paris. He also commanded the destroyers Crusader and Micmac, the frigate Fort Erie and the Seventh Escort Squadron.

After retiring Jenson wrote or illustrated 16 books on maritime subjects. In 1970 he produced a set of drawings recording the dimensions and details of the hull, sails and rigging of the Grand Banks schooner Bluenose II. Four years of painstaking freehand work resulted in 32 large plates, published in 1975, that are considered definitive of all two-masted schooners.

Jenson was a founder of the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, helping to acquire and restore the last remaining Second World War corvette, Sackville. As vice-president of the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia, he also helped prevent the demolition of several old ironstone buildings on the Halifax waterfront, and was appointed a Member of the Order of Canada.

A slim, handsome man, Jenson was regarded by his sailors and friends as unflappable, modest and quick-witted. When, on Bermuda, a drunk seaman stole a mobile crane, Jenson relieved the tension by exclaiming: "It's all my fault. I only told them not to steal bananas."

Yogi Jenson married, in 1967, Alma Doupé; she survives him, with their three children.