



Captain George Edward Hunt DSO* DSC* and MID RN Rtd**

(Honoury Commodore & S.N.O.W.I. 1957-58)

Captain George Edward Hunt DSO* DSC* and MID** RN Rtd., died in Brisbane on Tuesday morning, 16 August 2011, aged 95.

George joined the Royal Navy Reserve in January 1930 as a midshipman while training to become a Merchant Marine officer. In February 1938 George officially transferred to the Royal Navy and after a year of undertaking various technical courses and Junior Officers' war courses, George spent a short time on the destroyer HMS Foxhound where he

volunteered for submarine service. On the 1 January 1939, George began his initial submarine officer training at HMS Dolphin. During this time the trainees were required to go to sea on two of the L class submarines HMS L26 and L27.

In March 1939, George, now a lieutenant was appointed to his first submarine HMS Unity based in Blyth as the Signals and Navigation Officer, unfortunately his time in Unity would not last for long. With the declaration of war against Germany and U-boat activity in the North Sea, Unity was sent north on the night of 29 April 1940 this was a very foggy night and unawares to the submariners in Unity they were sailing into an unknown southbound convoy. Out of the fog came the Norwegian merchant ship Alte Jarl, while trying to take evasion action the ship sliced through the fore-ward section of the submarine, the captain called for abandon ship, all but two submariners escaped and two drifted off by the tide. George managed to keep the men together until they were rescued by the Alte Jarl. For his part in the rescue George was Mentioned in Despatches in the New Year's Honours List of 1941 for his bravery and leadership during the Unity sinking.

With a war on, George was not able to take his survivors leave and he was appointed to the Royal Netherlands submarine O.10 as the Liaison Officer from May to June 1940, this submarine undertook patrols covering the evacuation of troops from the beaches of Dunkirk.

After that stint, George was appointed First Lieutenant in HMS H 31 from July to December and undertook two patrols one in the North Sea and the other in the Bay of Biscay.

In December 1940, George was made the Liaison Officer of the Polish submarine Sokol where he made one patrol in the North Sea. He left the boat in March 1941.

In April, George was made the First Lieutenant of HMS Proteus and reported to Portsmouth where the boat was in dry-dock undergoing repairs.

On undocking and run-up trials, Proteus was sent to join the Eight Flotilla based on HMS Medway in Alexandria and their first patrol, one of 7 for George, was in the Aegean Sea. George had participated in five successful patrols, the sixth patrol left Alexandria on 29 January to be taken off Cephalonia, while on the surface at night charging batteries a dark shape was seen in the distance which was assumed was a U-boat and a surface attack was undertaken with the CO on the bridge and George in the control room. Unfortunately the torpedoes missed and the target turned and was bearing down on Proteus. The captain turned the submarine head on so as not to be sliced in two. The CO having ordered 'Collision stations' with the impact of port forward hydroplane which ripped a long gash down the side of an Italian destroyer, then broke off, landing in the engine room of the destroyer. To

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compound the damage the starboard hydroplane fell off allowing water to pour into the torpedo room. Meanwhile, George's leadership and knowledge were working to save the boat from sinking once the holes could be plugged and the torpedo room was drained the CO ordered George to dive the boat and proceed at periscope depth back to Alexandria. This took a lot of skill for George using the aft hydroplanes. George would not be on Proteus for her next patrol after repairs, as he had received orders to report to HMS Dolphin as he had been accepted to undertake the Commanding Officers' Qualifying Course and began the course at the end of March 1942 and passed in April

In July 1942, George took command of HMS H33 on Firth of Clyde in Scotland and was required to sail down to Sheerness at the mouth the Thames to be docked for repairs.

In the London Gazette dated 30 June 1942, it was stated that George had been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions when Proteus was rammed. George and his wife Phoebe attended the investiture of the DSC by the King on 28 July 1942.

August 1942 George had taken over command of HMS H50 for several months this boat was being used for clockwork mousing with destroyers and also carried out war patrols in both the bay of Biscay and the North Sea, in October he was ready for his next command.

The next command was in October 1942 to stand by for the building of HMS P53, later to be named Ultor after the Roman God of War Mars Ultor. On commissioning and completion of work up and acceptance trials, Ultor was sent on her first patrol in early January 1943 off North Cape of Norway after a very cold and unsuccessful patrol Ultor returned to Scotland.

Ultor was sent to the Mediterranean and the Eighth Flotilla based off HMS Maidstone at Algiers. George was given his first patrol off the French Riviera this was to be the first of 16 patrols in the Med. On the completion of the patrol, having sunk the German MV Penerf (2,150 tons) and attacking two others, one which sunk and the other sustaining damage, Ultor completed her patrol and returned to Algiers. Penerf was the first of Ultor's successful war career, all up George was able to sink a total of 18 ships and damage two more, he was also able to sink two axis war ships and in gunnery his team was able to sink 11 caigues with gun fire including one on the stocks. Ultor was also used as a light house for the landing of troops in the in Operation Shingle the Allied landings at Anzio.

One particular patrol stood out for George's seniors to take note and it was off the coast of Nice, having attacked a ship with success and avoiding the ship's escorts, Ultor moved away. After loading new torpedoes into the tubes a new convoy target was spotted off Cape Antibes of a tanker under tow with an escort of five ships and five aircraft above, and, to compound the difficult target the four escorts from the previous sinking joined the convoy of the tanker. Now making it 9 escorts and five aircraft. After sizing up the situation from afar, George decided to enter into the area between the escort screen and the tanker. Having been able to avoid detection, Ultor was now in a position for George to make a torpedo attack at 1,500,



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yards. At 0831, he fired both torpedoes and went deep to 300 feet almost to the boat's maximum safe diving depth and within seconds of the torpedoes slamming into the tanker, depth-charges began to rain down causing damage to the boat, including the stern glands which began to leak, after over 100 depth-charges over an hour the boat managed to creep away until the bombardment ceased.

In a report by the Captain of Tenth Flotilla stated: 'The attack on the 3,000 ton merchant ship was brilliantly carried out, but I have no hesitation in saying that, in my considerable experience of submarining, the attack on the tanker only three hours later is the most superlative exhibition I have heard of. That Lieutenant Hunt should achieve an unseen undetected position at 1500 yards inside such a massive and violently zigzagging screen suggests consummate technical skill, but shows, moreover, determination and courage of the highest order.' Lieutenant Hunt very seriously described the screen and their manoeuvres to me on his return as 'very off-putting' a rather attractive understatement. A performance that will be difficult for his own or any other submarine rival.

George, had been awarded a bar to his DSO in February 1944 after a patrol. George was informed of another report that had been sent to their Lordships that stated: 'Great credit to the Commanding Officer of HM Submarine Ultor Lieutenant G.E. Hunt DSC*, RN, for this most satisfactory patrol during which one 'F' lighter, one 3,000 ton motor vessel and one tanker were sunk. HM Submarine Ultor's actions on the morning of 27th June rank with some of the most outstanding of the war.'

In early September 1944, Ultor returned to Holy Loch on the Firth of Clyde. In November 1944, George was appointed CO of the T-class submarine HMS Taku, a command he held until April 1945. While in command George was informed that he was appointed a Companion of the Distinguished Service Order for his service in HMS Ultor. The investiture was held at Buckingham Palace on 7 November 1944, the King requested that all 13 Officers and crew who were awarded medals and MiDs attend together, this was a rare event which was witnessed by George's wife Phoebe and the other crew's wives.

All up, George received a Mention in Despatches for his beach marking while in command of Ultor in May 1944 and a bar to the DSO for attacks on 27 June 1944 while in command of Ultor. On being awarded the bars George attended the investiture at Buckingham Palace each time.

With the cessation of the war in 1945, George moved away from submarines and on his application form to the SAA he stated that he did a Staff Course and 'big ship time', that being First Lieutenant on the aircraft carrier HMS Triumph.

In 1947, George returned to submarines taking command of HMS Ambush. In November, Ambush was sent to undertake trials under the ice in and around the Arctic Ocean which was stated as being memorable and unnerving experience.

George's next command from 1948 was Teacher-Captain of the submarine CO's Qualifying Course it was here that George was promoted to Commander he held this position until May 1950. His next appointment was as Operations Officer on Flag Officer Submarines Staff at HMS Dolphin a position he held until 1952.

It was more 'big ship time', having been made Second in Command and Executive Officer of the aircraft carrier HMS Theseus during this time he was promoted to Captain in 1953.

In January 1954, George took command of HM Underwater Detection Establishment at Portland, Dorset this appointment was terminated in January 1956.

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The next appointment was to HMS Bigbury Bay, this was an anti-submarine frigate and was sent to Bermuda where George was made an honorary Commodore and relieved the Commander-in-Chief and became the Senior Naval Officer West Indies, a position held until 1958.

On return to Britain, George relinquished his Commodore rank and was back to Captain and took up the appointment to Chief of Staff to FOSM this time Chief Staff Officer until 1960.

George's last appointment in 1960 was Director of Naval Equipment; he held this position from 1960 to 1963. At aged 46, George contemplated continuing his naval career for he saw that there were major changes on the horizon for the Royal Naval and decided to retire.

George, Phoebe and their daughter Susan migrated to Australia and settled in Queensland and George transferred to the RAN Emergency List.

George joined the SAA on 22 October 1985. On the formation of the Queensland Branch George was asked and he accepted the position of Branch Patron. At the 1997 AGM, George was nominated Life Membership which was accepted by the members at the AGM.

Compiled by Peter Smith,

Honorary Historian.