

War hero awarded DSC for gallantry and devotion to duty

By Jan Roberts Billett

"Bonjour, tout le monde a la maison d'Alphonse" was an announcement from the BBC in the latter days of World War II that scores of people in France, resistance workers and Allied airmen were waiting to hear.

After the announcement was made, resistance workers collected their small bands of evaders and operatives and led them to the House of Alphonse where they remained hidden until it was time to meet the British MGB 502 that would take them across the English Channel to safety.

Lloyd Forrester Bott was the First Lieutenant of that MGB, a vessel of the 15th Motor Gun Boat Flotilla operating on secret missions from Dartmouth.

Lloyd later described these trips across the Channel as the most rewarding of his wartime experience.

Lloyd Bott was born in Thornbury, Melbourne, and remembered that his paternal grandmother's house nearby had an earth floor in the kitchen.

He was educated at Preston South State School and Northcote High School until Leaving. He described himself as an "ordinary student who was more interested in

OBITUARY

LLOYD FORRESTER BOTT DSC CBE
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playing and not doing enough work". Nevertheless he qualified for the Public Service in 1933 and was sent to work in the Post Office in Sydney.

On his return to Melbourne a year later, he managed to study part-time at night, for a Commerce degree at the University of Melbourne, which he completed in 1948 when he returned from the war.

He enlisted in the Royal Australian Navy Volunteer Reserve under the Yachtsmen Scheme 1940-42, to serve in the Royal Navy. He had sailed with his brother-in-law, Royston Siddons, with Royal Melbourne Yacht Club at St Kilda, but undoubtedly his mathematical ability, demonstrated in his choice of degree, qualified him for selection. Lloyd embarked in the Largs Bay in December 1941 for England and on completion of a short course at HMS Collingwood, Portsmouth, volunteered to serve for his sea-time in coastal craft.

Further coastal course training at Fort William and in gunnery at Whale Island



**SERVICE
RECOGNISED:**
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followed and he was drafted to an ML (Motor Launch) operating as a rescue vessel out of Weymouth. He was commissioned in May 1943 and posted to MGB 607 as Navigating Officer, operating out of Great Yarmouth on the east coast, escorting torpedo boats around the Dutch coast at night.

In January 1944, he was posted as First Lieutenant to MGB 502 in Dartmouth. The 15th Motor Gun Boat Flotilla was the communication link between France and England on Intelligence, mainly working with Secret Intelligence Service, including

MI5 and MI9, and the Special Operations Executive. The MLs were special as they were the only high-speed diesels the Navy had. In the six months leading up to D-Day in June 1944, Lloyd was involved in 12 trips across to France, always undertaken on the dark of the moon. Fellow "Yachties" based in Dartmouth never believed he went to sea! After the war in some cases, they discovered the names of some passengers — one was Francis Mitterand.

For his "gallantry, enthusiasm and great devotion to duty while serving in HM MGB 502 in hazardous operations" Lieutenant Lloyd Bott RANVR was awarded a DSC in March 1945.

At the end of hostilities, Lloyd returned to his civilian employment in the Department of Supply thereby beginning a distinguished career in the Commonwealth Public Service. He rose to become Deputy Secretary of the department in 1967. Among the number of boards of which he was a member were Joint Australia/ UK Project (Woomera), Defence Research and Development Policy Committee and the Central Contract Board. He was responsible for the Administration of US Space Projects in Australia and for some international contracts, particularly for Mirage aircraft. The Dassault built

Mirage contract involved spending weeks at a time in France in the late 1950s where he managed to renew some war-time contacts with French Resistance members living in Northern Brittany. In July 1969 he was privileged to be a guest of NASA for the launch of Apollo XI.

In 1969 Lloyd moved to the Department of National Development as Secretary. Here he was involved as commissioner for the Atomic Energy Commission; chairman for the Snowy Mountains Council, deputy president of the Murray River Commission and chaired the Commonwealth/State Officials' Committee involved with the areas of Minerals, Water Resources, Forestry and Northern Development. During this time he was responsible for Australia's off-shore oil and gas resources and was involved in negotiations with the Japanese government relating to the current export of liquefied natural gas to Japan.

In January 1973, Lloyd was appointed as Secretary of the Department of Tourism and Recreation. In the next two years he was responsible for the establishment of the Australian Institute of Sport and Sports Administration bodies on a State level.

His final appointment within the Commonwealth Public Service was as Secretary

to the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs where he chaired the Commonwealth/State Officials' Committee. He retired in 1977.

In his retirement, Lloyd acted as chairman on Ramset and as a director of Siddons' Industries where his perception and guidance was appreciated. He also found time to write a history of the Royal Navy's 15th Motor Gun Boat Flotilla, 1942-45, which was published by the Dartmouth Historical Society in 1997.

Lloyd married his childhood sweetheart Gwendoline Siddons in 1940. He is survived by Gwen, his children Michael, Susan and Stephen and 11 grandchildren.

Jan Roberts Billett is an historian researching and writing about the Yachtsmen Scheme.

She is author of *Memories of War, Fifty Interviews with World War II Veterans of The Naval and Military Club*. Between 1940 and 1942 about 500 Australians volunteered and were selected to serve in the Royal Navy through the Yachtsmen Scheme. Most were commissioned and as a group they were among the most highly decorated Australian servicemen in World War II. They were awarded nine George Medals, four George Crosses, thirty DSCs, thirty-three Mentioned in Despatches, three OBEs, one MBE and one CMG