

= HMS Hunter (H35) =

HMS Hunter was a H class destroyer built for the Royal Navy in the mid 1930s . During the Spanish Civil War of 1936 ? 1939 the ship enforced the arms blockade imposed on both sides by Britain and France , until she struck a mine in May 1937 . She was under repair for the next year and a half , after which she rejoined the Mediterranean Fleet . During the first few months of World War II , Hunter searched for German commerce raiders in the Atlantic Ocean until she was transferred back to Britain in February 1940 . Returning to action in the Norwegian Campaign , she was sunk by German destroyers during the First Battle of Narvik in April 1940 .

= = Description = =

Hunter displaced 1,350 long tons (1,370 t) at standard load and 1,883 long tons (1,913 t) at deep load . The ship had an overall length of 323 feet (98 m) , a beam of 33 feet (10 m) and a draught of 12 feet 5 inches (3.8 m) . She was powered by Parsons geared steam turbines , driving two shafts , which developed a total of 34,000 shaft horsepower (25,000 kW) and gave a maximum speed of 36 knots (67 km / h ; 41 mph) . Steam for the turbines was provided by three Admiralty 3 drum water tube boilers . Hunter carried a maximum of 470 long tons (480 t) of fuel oil that gave her a range of 5,530 nautical miles (10,240 km ; 6,360 mi) at 15 knots (28 km / h ; 17 mph) . The ship 's complement was 137 officers and men in peacetime , but this was increased to 146 in wartime .

The ship mounted four 45 calibre 4.7 inch (120 mm) Mark IX guns in single mounts . For anti aircraft (AA) defence , Hunter had two quadruple Mark I mounts for the 0.5 inch Vickers Mark III machine gun . She was fitted with two above water quadruple torpedo tube mounts for 21 inch (533 mm) torpedoes . One depth charge rail and two throwers were fitted ; 20 depth charges were originally carried , but this increased to 35 shortly after the war began .

= = Career = =

Ordered on 13 December 1934 , Hunter was laid down by Swan Hunter & Wigham Richardson at Wallsend on Tyne , England , on 27 March 1935 . She was launched on 25 February 1936 and completed on 30 September . Excluding government furnished equipment such as armament , the ship cost £ 253,167 . Hunter was assigned to the 2nd Destroyer Flotilla of the Mediterranean Fleet upon commissioning .

= = = Spanish Civil War = = =

The destroyer patrolled Spanish waters during the Spanish Civil War , enforcing the edicts of the Non Intervention Committee . Hunter struck a mine south of Almeria , Spain on the afternoon of 13 May 1937 . She suffered severe damage , with a heavy list , her radio wrecked and the bow flooded . Eight of her complement were killed and 24 wounded . The ship was towed clear of the minefield by the Spanish Republican destroyer Lazaga . The mine had been laid several weeks earlier by two ex German Spanish Nationalist E boats , the Falange and the Requeté . Hunter was towed to Almeria by Hyperion , where she arrived in the early hours of 14 May . The light cruiser Arethusa towed her to Gibraltar , where she was temporarily repaired from 15 May to 18 August . Hunter was towed to Malta for permanent repairs in August 1937 , but they were not completed until 10 November 1938 . The ship was assigned to the 2nd Destroyer Flotilla once her repairs were finished and she was given a brief overhaul in Malta between 24 June and 4 July 1939 . Hunter was sent to Plymouth for a more thorough refit in mid August 1939 that lasted through 27 August .

= = = World War II = = =

When World War II began on 3 September , Hunter was en route to Freetown , Sierra Leone to search for German commerce raiders , before being transferred to the North America and West Indies Station in late October . Hunter remained on that station until she was transferred to the British Isles in February 1940 and began a refit at Falmouth that lasted until 9 March . The ship rejoined the 2nd Destroyer Flotilla of the Home Fleet at Scapa Flow on 17 March . On 6 April Hunter and the rest of the 2nd Destroyer Flotilla escorted the four destroyer minelayers of the 20th Destroyer Flotilla as they sailed to implement Operation Wilfred , an operation to lay mines in the Vestfjord to prevent the transport of Swedish iron ore from Narvik to Germany . The mines were laid on the early morning of 8 April , before the Germans began their invasion , and the destroyers joined the battlecruiser Renown and her escorts .

During the First Battle of Narvik on 10 April 1940 , Hunter and four other H @-@ class ships of the 2nd Destroyer Flotilla attacked the German destroyers that had transported German troops to occupy Narvik in northern Norway the previous day . The flotilla leader Hardy led four of her half @-@ sisters down Ofotfjord in a surprise dawn attack on Narvik harbour during a blinding snowstorm . Hotspur and Hostile were initially left at the entrance , but Hunter followed Hardy into the harbour and fired all eight of her torpedoes into the mass of shipping . One torpedo hit the German destroyer Z22 Anton Schmitt in the forward engine room , followed by one of Hunter 's 4 @.@ 7 @-@ inch shells . As the British ships were withdrawing , they encountered five German destroyers at close range . Two of the German ships crossed the T of the British ships and quickly set Hardy on fire and forced her to run aground . Hunter eventually took the lead , but was severely damaged by the Germans , probably including one torpedo hit , and her speed dropped rapidly . Hotspur , immediately behind her , was temporarily out of control due to two hits , and rammed her from behind . When the ships managed to disengage , Hunter capsized . 107 men of the crew were killed and another five died of their wounds . The German destroyers rescued 46 men , who were released into Sweden on 13 April .

= = Rediscovery = =

The wreck was discovered on 5 March 2008 by the Royal Norwegian Navy mine control vessel HNoMS Tyr , after being unknown for nearly 70 years , and will be marked as a war grave to commemorate the lost members of her crew . A series of coordinated memorial ceremonies were held on board British and Norwegian warships on Saturday 8 March 2008 , honouring all those who died during the battles of Narvik . Over a thousand NATO personnel took part , including British and Norwegian sailors , Royal Marines and soldiers . Led by HMS Albion , the UK 's Fleet Amphibious Flagship , five warships steamed in line past the spot where the ship lies , marked for the occasion by Tyr . Hunter 's final resting place was marked with wreaths cast into the sea .