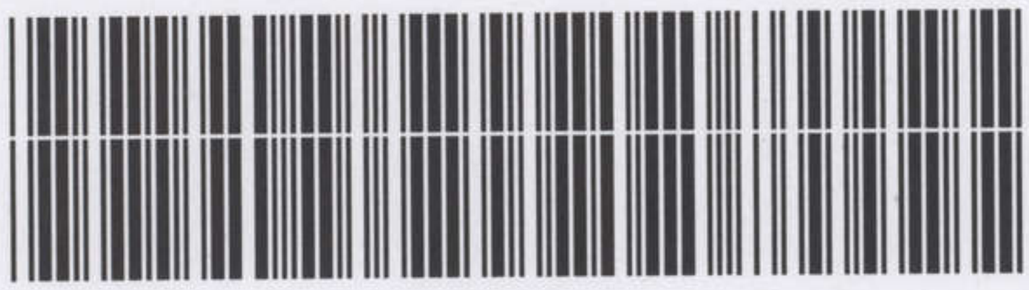
AWM78

Reports of Proceedings, HMA Ships and Establishments

HMAS AIR SPRITE

Item number: 23/1

Title: August 1963 - December 1964



AWM78-23/1

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HMAS HIR SPRITE

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CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY 18.206.296

MINUTE PAPER

HMAS Air Sprite Report of Proceedings. Dec 64

DP 2/2.

DTWP GRG 9/2

D of O 11/2

D/DTWP (AIR) 10/2

DNI 14/2/65.

HPB 23/2

DCNP 23/2

DOA 24/2.

DMT

DDM

DPS 2/3

DGS 4/3.

D/D of P(A) 5/3

DNR 5/3

DNES 9/3

MDG 10/3

DCNPS 17/3

DEE 16/3

DME 18/3.

DNC

DW 26/3 30/3

HNB (N5)

REGISTRAR

35-/23

12 MAR 1965

~~HNB~~	DCNS	2NM	4 NM	CNPR	~~REGISTRAR~~	) Separate Report
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NOTE: (a) This report should be dealt with and passed on promptly.

(b) On this file comments should be brief if any matter required comprehensive treatment, reference to another Branch, or approval of a Board Member, a new file should be raised, cross-references to this one.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY 18·206·296

MINUTE PAPER

HMAS Air Sprite Report of Proceedings Dec '64

HNB

D of C

DCNS

1ST NM

2ND NM

3RD NM

4TH NM

SEC

DPR

HPB (N5)

REGISTRAR

premature failure of engine will be investigated

33/5

DP	DNI	DMT	DNR	DEE	HNB (N5)
DTWP	HPB	DPS	DNES	DME	REGISTRAR
D of C	DCNP	DGS	MDG	DNC	
D/DTWP (AIR)	DOA	DAP	DCNTS	DW	
		DDM			

Separate Report Circulating

NOTE: (a) This copy is circulated so that Board Members may see these reports soon after they reach Navy Office.

(b) The report will be given to Board Members with Director's comments if there is any matter of special interest in those comments.

CONFIDENTIAL

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From:
FLAG OFFICER-IN-CHARGE,
EAST AUSTRALIA AREA.

CL.

18 206 296

H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - DECEMBER, 1964.

(H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE letter No. AS 1/65 dated 14th January, 1965.)

INDEXED
INIT.
DATE 29/1/65

28 JAN 1965

II

NC.1/16/32

The Secretary,
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY.

(Copy to: The Commanding Officer,
H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE.)

Forwarded for the information of the Naval Board.

REAR ADMIRAL

Naval Headquarters,
GARDEN ISLAND.

29/1

29/1

CONFIDENTIAL

(B) 22/1

NC1-16-32

C O N F I D E N T I A L

AS 1/65.

HMAS AIR SPRITE
at Jervis Bay,

14 January, 1964.

The Flag Officer-in-Charge,
EAST AUSTRALIAN AREA

Copy to :- The Captain,
HMAS Creswell

The Naval Officer-in-Charge,
Queensland.

H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - DECEMBER 1964

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the Report of Preceedings for H.M.A. Ship under my command for the month of December, 1964.

Tuesday 1st to Sunday 6th December.

2. AIR SPRITE remained alongside the Town Wharf Bundaberg while engine repairs were being effected. Dismantling of the Port engine commenced at 0800 Tuesday 1st December and by 1430, sufficient portions of the engine had been removed revealing that two pistons had disintegrated and that the block casting had a pronounced crack throughout. NOIC QLD was informed of the unserviceability of the port engine.

3. On Wednesday 2nd December advice was received from NOIC QLD that a replacement Port engine was being dispatched and that it would arrive in Bundaberg by Monday 7th December. At the same time I was instructed to remove the Starboard engine and report its defects. The Port engine was re-assembled to a satisfactory state for shipment to Sydney.

4. The Starboard engine was removed from AIR SPRITE and transported to a garage ashore at 1030 Thursday 3rd December. Except for some minor adjustments in the timing gear mechanism no other defects were found in this engine and by 1130 Saturday 5th December the Starboard engine was reassembled ready for return to AIR SPRITE.

5. At 0830 Sunday 6th December AIR SPRITE provided a berthing party for KIMBLA on its arrival at 1000 at the fuel wharf Bundaberg Port, and also provided a slipping party when KIMBLA proceeded at 1800.

6. The replacement Port engine arrived from Sydney at 1030 Sunday 6th December, which was immediately removed from its crate and lowered into position in AIR SPRITE, Opportunity was taken with the crane available, to collect and transport the Starboard engine from the garage ashore. Both engines were in position in AIR SPRITE by 1300.

Monday 7th to Friday 11th December.

7. During Monday 7th December work progressed on both engines and by 1515 the Starboard engine was started and run for 20 minutes with the propellor shaft disconnected. Both engines were fully connected by 1615 Tuesday 8th December.

C O N F I D E N T I A L.

8. Basin trials were carried out at 0800 Wednesday 9th December and at 0955 AIR SPRITE cast off and prodeeded for engine trials in Hervey Bay. Trials were satisfactory and AIR SPRITE returned to harbour securing Starboard side to Town Wharf, Bundaberg, at 1245. NOIC QLD was informed that AIR SPRITE was ready in all respects to proceed. There was no requirement for AIR SPRITE throughout Thursday 10 December.

9. AIR SPRITE cast off and proceeded for Venue C at 0430 Friday 11th December, securing alongside KIMBLA at 0805. Lt. W. Jamieson R.A.N.R. joined from KIMBLA for passage to Brisbane. At 1130 trials personnel were embarked and AIR SPRITE cast off and proceeded to Bundaberg, securing alongside Fairymead wharf at 1530. Trials personnel were disembarked by 1540.

Saturday 12th to Thursday 17th December.

10. AIR SPRITE slipped at 0830 Saturday 12th December and proceeded to Brisbane via Great Sandy Straits with KIMBLA acting as escort, and remaining in radio contact. The passage through the Great Sandy Straits was completed by 1400. AIR SPRITE arrived off Caloundra Head at 1740 and after passage via the North West Channel and Brisbane River, AIR SPRITE secured to a G.P.V. at H.M.A.S. MORETON at 2050.

11. Lt. W. Jamieson R.A.N.R. was discharged to shore at 2115 for air passage to Melbourne.

12. On completion of fuelling AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded at 2300. On reaching Moreton Bay winds of 25-30 knots and a heavy short swell was experienced. This heavy weather caused AIR SPRTIE's return to harbour, securing at H.M.A.S. MORETON at 0200 Sunday 13th December. The heavy weather conditions continued throughout Sunday.

13. AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded at 1150 Monday 14th December and continued the passage from Moreton Bay via the North East Channel. The remainder of the passage to Coffs Harbour continued without incident and AIR SPRITE arrived at Coffs Harbour securing to the Northern Buoy at 0210 Tuesday 15th December.

14. On completion of embarking fuel AIR SPRITE cast off and proceeded at 0915 Tuesday 15th December arriving in Sydney at 2115 and securing at Sullage Wharf, Garden Island.

15. During the forenoon of Wednesday 16th December fuel was embarked, Confidential Books returned and preparations made for escorting T.R.V.2 to Jervis Bay. A series of engine trials in T.R.V.2 were carried out during the afternoon and at 1555 T.R.V.2 slipped and proceeded. AIR SPRITE cast off and proceeded at 1620 maintaining station one to two miles astern of T.R.V.2.

16. At 1955 E.R.A. Taylor reported that the Port Engine had developed peculiar noises. An investigation was carried out and as the exact nature of the defect could not be confirmed, the Port engine was left running at 1000 revolutions and the Starboard engine reduced to 1400 revolutions. At 2230 the Port engine stopped and AIR SPRITE proceeded on the Starboard engine, informing NOIC JERVIS BAY of the deteriorating weather conditions. AIR FAITH arrived from Jervis Bay and acted as escort for the remainder of the voyage to Jervis Bay. AIR SPRITE and T.R.V.2 secured to Marine Section Jetty at 0012.

17. Machinery.

The defects in the replacement Port engine were consistent with those experienced in the original Port engine. At 2245 on Wednesday December the Port engine began to emit heavy metallic noises from the lower sump area particularly when the engine took up the load due to the existing sea conditions. While a closer investigation was being carried out the sound of metallic disintegration was heard emitting from the sump area, followed by severe backfiring in the carburettors. The engine was then shut down. Subsequent attempts to turn the Port engine by hand, on the following day, revealed that the engine was jamming during rotation. A replacement Port engine was received from Garden Island and installed in AIR SPRITE. Engine Trials were carried out and found satisfactory.

18. Health and Morale.

The health and morale of the crew continued to be satisfactory.

19. APPENDIX

The following appendix is attached:

(A) Distance and hours steamed duting the month.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your Obedient Servant,

(A.D. VODIC)
Lieutenant, (SD), (B),
Commanding Officer.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

APPENDIX (A) TO H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE'S REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR DECEMBER, 1964.

DISTANCE AND HOURS STEAMED DURING THE MONTH:

	During Month.	Total since Commissioning.
Hours Underway:	66	167
Distance Steamed:	976.2	2,339.4

C O N F I D E N T I A L

N A V Y R E G I S T R Y

RECORDING AND INDEXING DIRECTIONS

REGISTER ON CARD 18/2061

FILE TITLE HMAS Ark Royal

Report of Proceedings

MARK TO HN BRANCH

OTHER DIRECTIONS

INDEXING HISTORY

	SUBJECT INDEX SYMBOLS	NAME INDEX SYMBOLS	DATE
INITIAL INDEXING		A2	
SUBSEQUENT INDEXING			

CLASSIFIER B

DATE 29-1-60

RESTRICTED

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

Copy 18·206·263.

MINUTE PAPER

HMAS Air Sprite — Report of Proceedings. Nov '64.

~~DDTP~~ 8/1.

~~DP~~ 8/1.

~~DTWP~~ 8/1.

~~D. of C~~ 20/1.

D/DTWP (AIR) 20/1.

~~DNI~~ 25/1

~~HPB~~ 28/1

~~DCNP~~ 3/2

~~DOA~~ 3/2

~~DMT~~ 4/2

~~DDM~~ 4/2.

~~DPS~~ 9/2

~~DGS~~ 11/2.

~~D/D of P(A)~~

~~DNR~~ 11/2

~~DNES~~ 12/2

~~MDG~~ 16/2

~~DCNPS~~ 18/2

~~DEE~~ 19/2

~~DME~~ 26/2

DNC

DPW 9/3.

~~HNB (N5)~~ 23/3

REGISTRAR

~~HNB DCNS 2NM 4 NM CNPR REGISTRAR~~) Separate Report

~~D of O 1 NM 3 NM SEC HNB (N5)~~) Circulating

25/9

NOTE: (a) This report should be dealt with and passed on promptly.

(b) On this file comments should be brief if any matter required comprehensive treatment, reference to another Branch, or approval of a Board Member, a new file should be raised, cross-references to this one.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY 18·206·263.

MINUTE PAPER

HMAS Air Sprite Report of Proceedings Nov '64

HNB

D of O

DCNS Refuse FORGER's para 3. AIR SPRITE is in fact the only relatively new SAR having been completed by Halvorsen in 1959.

1ST NM 3 NM Mean very low old the engines are.

2ND NM

3RD NM - **see remarks attached.**

CNS Thank You - The sooner we get the new Patrol Boats the better.

4TH NM

SEC

DPR

HNB (N5)

REGISTRAR

DP	DNI	DMT	DNR	DEE	HNB (N5)
DTWP	HPB	DPS	DNES	DME	REGISTRAR
D of C	DCNP	DGS	MDG	DNC	
D/DTWP (AIR)	DOA	DAP	DCNTS	DW	
		DDM			

Separate Report Circulating

NOTE: (a) This copy is circulated so that Board Members may see these reports soon after they reach Navy Office.

(b) The report will be given to Board Members with Director's comments if there is any matter of special interest in those comments.

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COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

MINUTE PAPER

18/206/263.

H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE : REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS NOV. '64.

RESTRICTED

By Third Naval Member.

Detailed records of the engines at present fitted in AIR SPRITE are not available. However, it is known that when built (commissioned July, 1960) she was fitted with re-conditioned engines ex other S.A.R's which had been purchased from the R.A.A.F. in 1945-1946, and acquired by that Service between 1942-45.

2. There has been no import of Hall Scott engines since the original delivery to the R.A.A.F., and they are now out of production.

3. In general, spares for these engines are now very difficult to obtain.

14th January, 1965.

Third Naval Member.

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

PW.

H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - NOVEMBER, 1964

(H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE letter No. A.S. 7/64 dated 7th December, 1964.)

II

NC 1/16/32

The Secretary,
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY.

(Copy to: The Naval Officer in Charge, QUEENSLAND.

The Commanding Officer, H.M.A.S. CRESWELL.

The Commanding Officer, H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE.)

Forwarded for the information of the Naval Board.

2. Dockyard investigation showed that the fuel blockage reported in paragraph 8 was caused by scraps of rubber from the disintegrating "sandwich" circumference of the man-hole of the starboard fuel tank.

3. A separate report on the engine failure (paragraph 16)is being made but failures must be expected when S.A.R. craft with these very old engines installed are operating outside their role and are being involved in long ocean passages.

REAR ADMIRAL.

Naval Headquarters,
GARDEN ISLAND.

RESTRICTED

NC1-16.32

A.S. 7/64.

H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE,
at Bundaberg,

7th December, 1964.

The Flag Officer-in-Charge,
EAST AUSTRALIAN AREA.

Copy to: The Naval Officer-in-Charge,
Queensland.

The Captain,
H.M.A.S. CRESWELL.

H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - NOVEMBER 1964

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the Report of Proceedings for H.M.A. Ship under my command for the month of November, 1964.

Tuesday 10th to Monday 16th November.

2. AIR SPRITE cast off from Marine Section jetty at 0600 Tuesday 10th November and proceeded to Sydney acting as escort for AIR FAITH which was proceeding to Sydney on one engine. The voyage was completed without incident and both vessels secured alongside the Sullage Wharf, Garden Island at 1400. The remainder of the week was utilised in embarking stores, adjusting compasses and preparing AIR SPRITE for its passage to Bundaberg.

Tuesday 17th to Saturday 21st November.

3. AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded at 0400 Tuesday 17th November for Coffs Harbour. On clearing the heads, a moderate north east wind was blowing and choppy seas were being experienced. At 1115 the north east winds began gusting to 25 knots, accordingly speed was reduced to 1400 revolutions and a further reduction to 1300 revolutions was made again at 1300. AIR SPRITE was still being pounded by heavy seas causing the hull to "complain" and numerous leaks were becoming evident in the vicinity of the wheelhouse. It was impossible to continue in this direction without risking the lives of the crew and causing damage to the vessel. At 1315 course was reversed and speed increased to 1600 revolutions with the intention of seeking shelter in Port Stephens. AIR SPRITE arrived in Port Stephens at 1600 but sufficient shelter could not be found so vessel was sailed for Newcastle, securing alongside Water Police jetty, Newcastle at 1805.

4. At 0000 Wednesday 18th November another attempt was made to proceed to Coffs Harbour. On clearing the entrance conditions began assuming the proportions of the previous day and AIR SPRITE returned to Newcastle securing alongside the Water Police jetty at 0045 Thursday 19th November. While in Newcastle opportunity was taken to wash and dry clothing. The Water Police offered the use of their facilities and assisted in every way possible.

5. AIR SPRITE cast off and proceeded for Coffs Harbour at 1105 Thursday 19th November. At 1955 the starboard engine stopped without any prior warning. Immediate investigation by ERA Taylor revealed that fuel starvation to the starboard engine had caused the stoppage and then the port engine also stopped indicating fuel starvation. Fuel suction valves were checked and found open and correct. A dip of both fuel tanks was made and it was found that the port tank had only 200 gallons of fuel and had lost suction. The starboard tank contained

640 gallons. A thorough examination was carried out and it was ascertained that the blockage was somewhere in the suction line, in the fuel tank before the fuel suction valve. All attempts to clear the blockage failed and on receipt of a detailed report from ERA Taylor it was obvious that to attempt to proceed on one engine capable of only intermittent suction would prove dangerous.

6. During this period the MS CABARGO had hove to on my request, and offered to tow AIR SPRITE south, although a suggestion was made for the tow to head for Coffs Harbour. At 2105 the tow was connected and MS CABARGO with AIR SPRITE in tow proceeded south for Newcastle.

7. At 1130 Friday 20th November the Master of CABARGO signalled that he intended seeking shelter in Port Stephens because of the deteriorating weather conditions. Both vessels entered Port Stephens at 1330 and the tow was slipped at 1420, AIR SPRITE securing alongside the Fishermen's Co-operative wharf, Nelsons Bay at 1445. With the aid of the local fire engine, petrol was pumped from the starboard tank across to the port tank. AIR SPRITE cast off and proceeded for Sydney at 1830, rendezvousing with PALUMA at 1955. The passage to Sydney continued without incident and AIR SPRITE secured alongside Sullage Wharf, Garden Island at 2315.

8. At 0730 Saturday 21st November dockyard personnel and 4 M(E)'s from PENGUIN arrived onboard to assist in making good defects. AIR SPRITE slipped at 0900 and proceeded on the port engine, for Berry Bay arriving alongside BP installation wharf at 0930, when the suspect fuel from the starboard tank was removed and samples of the fuel taken for laboratory tests. Opportunity was taken to fuel the port tank and AIR SPRITE cast off and proceeded at 1000 securing alongside Sullage Wharf, Garden Island at 1020. Work was completed on the starboard tank fuel lines late Saturday when wood shavings and fine pieces of rubber insertion were found lodged in the suction pipe which was then thoroughly cleaned.

Sunday 22nd to Wednesday 25th November.

9. During the forenoon of Sunday 22nd November petrol was embarked into the starboard tank from AIR FAITH. Both engines were then given a thorough running and fuel supply changes from the port to the starboard tank were made satisfactorily. Dockyard hull surveyers examined the hull for signs of strain as the result of towing and reported that the hull suffered no damage. I subsequently reported to the Duty Staff Officer that AIR SPRITE was in all respects ready to proceed.

10. At 2000 AIR SPRITE cast off and proceeded. On reaching the open sea speed was reduced because of the heavy short swell being experienced and the prevailing strong north east winds. A further reduction in speed to 11 knots was made but the seas were still coming inboard and as AIR SPRITE was being subjected to severe pounding, course was reversed to enter harbour. AIR SPRITE secured alongside Sullage Wharf, Garden Island at 2120.

11. AIR SPRITE sailed for Coffs Harbour at 0930 Monday 23rd November arriving there at 2230. Fuel was embarked at 1000 Tuesday 24th November and AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded for Brisbane at 1100. After passage through the northwest channel and Brisbane River AIR SPRITE secured alongside a GPV at H.M.A.S. MORETON at 0145 Wednesday 25th November.

12. I called on NOIC QLD at 0900 Wednesday 25th November at H.M.A.S. MORETON depot having arranged for fuel and provisions to be embarked prior to departure at 0800 Thursday 26th November. During the afternoon one PO UW and one L/M(E) joined from hospital ashore for passage to Bundaberg and KIMBLA.

Thursday 26th to Monday 30th November.

13. AIR SPRITE was prevented from sailing on Thursday 26th November because of the 20 to 25 knot north east winds and rising seas but slipped and proceeded at 0800 Friday 27th November for Bundaberg via the Great Sandy Straits. AIR SPRITE entered the Great Sandy Straits at 1400 and proceeded until 1655 when a report from the engineroom watchkeeper, L/M(E) Mitchell, that heavy vibrations were developing in the port engine. At 1656 ERA Taylor reported that he had shut down the port engine and that in his opinion a piston or pistons had disintergrated and that the engine was siezed solid. (A report detailing the full circumstances is being forwarded seperately.) AIR SPRITE proceeded on the starboard engine at 11 knots and completed the passage through the Great Sandy Straits at 1710, arriving at Burnett Heads at 2020 and securing alongside Fairymead Wharf, Bundaberg at 2120. During this passage knocks were heard to be coming from the starboard engine.

14. At 2130 I walked to Fairymead Sugar Mills some 2 miles distant and telephoned NOIC QLD informing him of engine defects. Leaving a watchkeeper onboard with a telephone connected, remainder of the crew proceeded to shore accomodation at the Ramble Inn Motel, Bundaberg.

15. One PO UW and one L/M(E) were discharged to KIMBLA by helicopter at 0830 Saturday 28th November. I received a telephone call from NOIC QLD at 1030 and was instructed to prepare the port engine for removal to a garage ashore. At 1530 I went to Hinkler Airport, Bundaberg, and met Lt Bambrick and C ERA Mooney who had arrived by helicopter from the operation area with instructions to investigate and report the defects of both engines.

16. Upon inspection of the port engine oil filters, extensive residual metallic particles were found adhered to the filters and it was then assumed that a piston or pistons had disintergrated. Samples of the metallic particles were taken by Lt Banbrick and he together with the C ERA returned to Hinkler Airport and departed by helicopter at 1740.

17. At 0730, Sunday 29th November, dismantling of the port engine for its removal ashore was commenced and all preparations were completed by late Sunday afternoon.

18. On instructions received by telephone from NOIC QLD I contacted a Mr M. Saunders, the proprietor of a shipbuilding yard near the Town Wharf, Bundaberg and arranged for cranage, transport and a berth at the Town Wharf, for Monday 30th November.

19. Mech Munton and ERA Bibo arrived from Sydney By air at 1840 Sunday and were met and accommodated at the Ramble Inn Motel.

20. AIR SPRITE slipped from Fairymead Wharf 1030 Monday 30th November and proceeded on the starboard engine, berthing alongside the Town Wharf at 1130. Because of the unavailability of a mobile crane, the port engine was lifted out at 1530, loaded onto a 3-ton truck and transported to J. & D. Motors, East Bundaberg.

21. As the result of inadequate transport facilities available and the increased requirements brought about by the commitments undertaken by the air group and caused by AIR SPRITE's defects I sought and received approval from NOIC QLD for the hire of a car which was effected through Avis Rent-a-car Company, Bundaberg.

22. Hull.
During each passage it was noticed that leaks still appeared in the vicinity of the wheelhouse windows in spite of recent efforts by dockyard to remedy this persistent fault. No other defects concerning the hull were noticed.

23. Health and Morale.
The health of the crew has been good. The morale of the crew had earlier been affected by the bad weather and the various delays in sailings, but this was only a general show of frustration. Morale has improved to a satisfactory state which is due largely to the present shore accomodation, recreation facilities.

24. Appendix.
The following appendix is attatched:
(A) Distance and hours steamed during the month.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your Obedient Servant.

(A. D. Vodic)
Lieutenant (SD)(B) R.A.N.
COMMANDING OFFICER.

APPENDIX (A) TO H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE's REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR NOVEMBER, 1964.

Distance and hours steamed during the month.

Hours underway	101
Distance steamed	1363.2 MILES

NAVY REGISTRY

RECORDING AND INDEXING DIRECTIONS

REGISTER ON CARD 18/206/D

FILE TITLE HMAS "Air Sprite"

Report of Proceedings

Nov 1964

MARK TO HN BRANCH

OTHER DIRECTIONS

INDEXING HISTORY

	SUBJECT INDEX SYMBOLS	NAME INDEX SYMBOLS
INITIAL INDEXING		A2
SUBSEQUENT INDEXING		

CLASSIFIER

DATE 5-1-65

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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

MINUTE PAPER

18-206-57

3NM 1/2/64

H.M.A.S. AIR SPRATE

Report of Proceedings 1st Oct to 7th Nov, 1st - 30th Sept, 6th to 31st August 1963

DCS 3/1

DTSE 4/2

DSD 10/2

DATOT 11/2

DNI 13/2

HPB 27/2

DCNP 27/2.

DOA 28/2

DMT 3/2

DBM 3/3.

DPC 5/3

DGS 6/3/3.

DAP

DNR 14/3

DNES 19/3

MDG 25/3

DCNTS 3/4

DEE 1/4

DME 5/4

DNC 15/4

DW 23/7

HNB (N5) 20/4/64.

REGISTRAR

~~HNB DCNS 2 NM 4 NM CNPR REGISTRAR~~) Separate Report
~~DOD 1 NM 3 NM SEC HNB (N5)~~) Circulating

NOTE: (a) This report should be dealt with and passed on promptly.

(b) On this file comments should be brief if any matter requires comprehensive treatment, reference to another Branch, or approval of a Board Member, a new file should be raised, cross-references to this one.

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379

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M.D.O.
24 MAR 1964
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DEPT. OF NAVY
18/206/57
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C 0211 16 JAN 64

HNB
8/1/64

The Flag Officer-in-Charge,
EAST AUSTRALIA AREA.

H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE - REPORTS OF PROCEEDINGS

Reference: Your memorandum NC.1/16/32 dated 7th January, 1964.

I am directed by the Naval Board to inform you that H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE's Report of Proceedings for the period 6th - 31st August, 1963, only, has been received.

2. It is requested that the Report of Proceedings, in respect of the periods 1st - 30th September, 1963, and 1st October - 7th November, 1963, be forwarded.

Secretary.

after Despatch
10/1 HNB.(N5)

Please keep a check on this
HNB 15/1

MOS 15/1

CONFIDENTIAL

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18/206/57

C 0305 23JAN64

The Flag Officer-in-Charge,
EAST AUSTRALIA AREA.

H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE - REPORTS OF PROCEEDINGS

Reference: Your memorandum NC.1/16/32 of 7th January, 1964.

I am directed by the Naval Board to inform you that the information in Navy Office memorandum C 0211 of 16th January, 1964, was incorrect in that H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE's Reports of Proceedings for the periods 6th to 31st August, 1st to 30th September and 1st October to 7th November, 1963, were received under cover of your abovequoted memorandum.

2. However, to allow adequate circulation throughout Navy Office it is requested that one additional copy be forwarded. The instructions contained in Appendix 29A of Regulations and Instructions for the R.A.N. refers.

Secretary.

CONFIDENTIAL

HNB (N5)

CONFIDENTIAL

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

TELEPHONE:
FL[illegible]44

CL.

DEPT. OF NAVY
18/206/57
St 6300

IN REPLY QUOTE No. NC.1/16/32

OFFICE OF THE
FLAG OFFICER IN CHARGE,
EAST AUSTRALIA AREA,
~~WYNDEYSTREET, POTTS POINT~~
GARDEN ISLAND.

HN 8/1/64

RECEIVED
24 JAN P.M.
NAVY REGISTRY

23 JAN 1964

The Secretary,
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY.

H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE - REPORTS OF PROCEEDINGS.

Reference: (a) Navy Office letter No. 18/206/57 dated 16th January, 1964.
(b) F.O.I.C.E.A. letter No. NC.1/16/32 dated 7th January, 1964.

Be pleased to lay before the Naval Board duplicate copies of H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE's Report of Proceedings for the periods 6th - 31st August, 1963, 1st - 30th September, 1963, and 1st October - 7th November, 1963, omitted from reference (b).

(G.G.O. GATACRE)
REAR ADMIRAL

Encls.

CONFIDENTIAL

(3) CONFIDENTIAL

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

St 6299

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IN REPLY
QUOTE NO.

H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE
At JERVIS BAY.
29th. November, 1963

H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS
1st. OCTOBER 1963 to 7th. NOVEMBER, 1963

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the report of proceedings for H.M.A. Ship under my command for the period 1st. October to 7th. November, 1963, inclusive.

2. H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE slipped from Fairymead Wharf Bundaberg at 0905 on Tuesday 1st. October. The passage through Hervey Bay and the Great Sandy Strait was uneventful. The Wide Bay bar was crossed at 1600 and course set for Brisbane. AIR SPRITE secured alongside the boom punt H.M.A.S. MORETON at 2205.

3. At 0800 on Thursday 3rd. October AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded for Sydney. A strong South easterly wind was encountered on Moreton Bay causing the seas to be very choppy. The Freeman Channel was negotiated at 1015. The full force of the strong winds, gusting to force eight, and the rough seas, was felt at 1040 when abeam of Cape Moreton Lighthouse. I decided to return to Brisbane at 1050, but was unable to turn AIR SPRITE for about five minutes. The Freeman Channel was negotiated at 1105 and AIR SPRITE secured alongside H.M.A.S. MORETON at 1400.

4. The strong winds and rough seas continued for the next six days, AIR SPRITE remaining alongside H.M.A.S. MORETON Wharf throughout this period.

5. Commander J.H.S. OSBORNE, R.A.N., and one Petty Officer Survey Recorder joined AIR SPRITE at 2200 on Wednesday 9th. October. AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded for Fraser Island to carry out survey duties; the seas were still rough with a south east swell and strong south east winds. The seas were too rough to allow AIR SPRITE to cross the Wide Bay bar. Breaksea Spit light vessel was sighted at 1035; after passing it, AIR SPRITE was forced to proceed into the wind and sea to make the shelter of Sandy Cape. AIR SPRITE anchored off Sandy Cape Lighthouse at 1330. Commander OSBORNE and his P.O.S.R. were landed by dinghy at 1410 and returned onboard at 1800. AIR SPRITE proceeded to Platypus Bay, anchoring for the night at 1830.

6. Anchor was weighed at 0700 and AIR SPRITE returned to the anchorage off Sandy Cape lighthouse at 0745. The survey party was landed at 0805 and remained ashore until 1900. When the survey party returned, the relieving assistant lighthouse keeper was with them, to take passage to Bundaberg. AIR SPRITE weighed and proceeded at 1930, securing outboard of the dredge FITZROY at Fairymead wharf at 2245. Commander OSBORNE and his P.O.S.R. left to carry out surveying duties in the Bundaberg area, on arrival at Fairymead.

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7. AIR SPRITE shifted berth to the old Town Sugar Wharf at 0630 on Saturday 12th. Berth was shifted on Sunday morning to alongside FITZROY at Fairymead to fuel, then AIR SPRITE returned to the old Town Sugar Wharf, securing alongside at 1015. Ship was dressed overall on return to the old Town Sugar Wharf, as requested by the organisers of the local Sugar Festival. AIR SPRITE was berthed approximately 200 yards upstream of the Bundaberg motorboat Club and acted as flagship for their regatta. Berth was shifted at 1700 Monday 14th. to alongside the FITZROY at the oil wharf New Bundaberg.

8. AIR SPRITE slipped for Brisbane at 0300 on Tuesday 15th. October. Choppy seas were encountered in Hervey Bay and the Great Sandy Strait, a strong south easterly wind was still blowing. Wide Bay Bar was crossed at 0810 but the sea was found to be too rough for the passage to Brisbane, so the Bar was re-crossed and AIR SPRITE proceeded to the mouth of the Mary River, where it anchored at 1015. Anchor was weighed at 1557 and AIR SPRITE commenced negotiating the Mary River, securing alongside Walkers down stream wharf at 1800.

9. At 1700 on Wednesday 16th. October I was ordered to leave AIR SPRITE and proceed to Maroochydore by police car to investigate an object washed up on the beach there. I returned onboard at 0715 on Saturday 19th. October.

10. AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded at 1215 on Saturday 19th. to assist in the search for the missing Midshipmen from H.M.A.S. SYDNEY. AIR SPRITE was clear of the Mary river by 1353 and Great Sandy Strait by 1447. The passage to Gladstone was uneventful, AIR SPRITE securing alongside the Fisheries Wharf at 2018. On completion of fuelling at 2147 AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded for Mackay, securing alongside south wharf Mackay at 0915 on Sunday 20 October. On completion of fuelling, a deck cargo of eight 44-gallon drums was embarked to assist AIR SPRITE to remain in the search area longer.

11. AIR SPRITE slipped at 1045 and proceeded direct to Allonby to commence searching for the missing whaler at 1200. AIR SPRITE carried out a search 20 to 50 yards offshore of all islands in the Sir James Smith and Lindeman groups of islands before anchoring off the north western corner of Hook Island at 1715. At 1915 AIR SPRITE weighed and proceeded with H.M.A.S. SYDNEY to investigate an object sighted by an aircraft. H.M.A.S. ANZAC also proceeded to the area reported, and established a datum before SYDNEY and AIR SPRITE arrived AT 2115. AIR SPRITE carried out searches as ordered by SYDNEY until 0130 on the 21st. when all vessels stopped and drifted until dawn. Expanding searches were carried out around SYDNEY by ANZAC and AIR SPRITE between 0530 and 0750. At 0750 SYDNEY's motor boat transferred Midshipman K.F. MARIEN, R.A.N., Midshipman B.T. SWAIN, R.A.N., and three ratings, to AIR SPRITE to assist during the search. Lieutenant M. CARTER, R.A.N.R. took passage for Hayman Island to act as Liaison officer between naval vessels and local small craft. Two civilian passengers were embarked for passage to Bowen.

12. AIR SPRITE proceeded from the SYDNEY to Cape Upstart and commenced carrying out a search along the coast from Cape Upstart to Bowen at 0820. AIR SPRITE secured alongside Bowen Wharf at 1030, slipping at 1045 to carry on searching between Glouser Head and Pioneer Pt. After reaching Pioneer rocks at 1510, AIR SPRITE proceeded direct to Hayman Island to land Lieutenant CARTER before returning to Bowen at 1820.

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13. A spare crew, maintenance party and equipment for the helicopter operating from H.M.A.S. SYDNEY were embarked before slipping and proceeding at 0600 on Tuesday the 22nd.; after transferring all personnel and equipment for the helicopter to SYDNEY, AIR SPRITE proceeded to Abbot Point and carried out a search of the coast between Abbot Point and Mt. Kangaroo. Mt. Kangaroo was abeam at 1510, AIR SPRITE then commenced a search of Long Island and Pine Island before proceeding to Dent Island lighthouse, which was abeam at 1525. AIR SPRITE continued up the western shores of Dent, Cid and Whitsunday Islands, and circumnavigated Hook and Hayman Islands before proceeding to Eshelby Island. AIR SPRITE hove to off Eshelby Island and lowered the dinghy to recover a search party of two, dropped on the island by helicopter. A second party of two was recovered from Rattray Island before proceeding to Gloucester Head to look for SYDNEY's motor cutter and seardh parties landed on Gloucester Head.

14. A small fire was sighted on the north eastern corner of Gloucester Head at 1928, but could not be investigated as the seas were too rough for the dinghy to land. SYDNEY's motor cutter was sighted at 1940 and instructed to join AIR SPRITE at anchor in Bona Bay. AIR SPRITE proceeded to Bona Bay and anchored 200yds. off shore at 2030. SYDNEY's motor cutter was sighted at 2050. While attempting to come alongside AIR SPRITE's port side, the midshipman in charge of the boat made an error of judgment and rammed AIR SPRITE amidships, smashing a four-inch hole into the Commanding Officer's cabin, about 3ft. above the waterline. H.M.A.S.SYDNEY was informed of the damage, and a party was sent to AIR SPRITE to carry out repairs. The Midshipman in charge of the motor cutter informed me that eleven members of the search party and boats crew were still ashore on Gloucester Island, without food or water, and two were without footwear of any kind. AIR SPRITE established a base camp on Bona Beach for the search party before weighing anchor and proceeding for SYDNEY at 2300.

15. Twenty ratings from H.M.A.S. SYDNEY were embarked before proceeding to Bowen. AIR SPRITE secured alongside No.4 berth at 0200 on Wednesday 23rd.October. AIR SPRITE fuelled during the forenoon and sailed at 1030. After landing food and water at the camp on Bona Beach, AIR SPRITE proceeded along the south western coast of Gloucester Island. A R.A.A.F. Neptune Bomber reported sighting three persons on the north eastern point of Gloucester Head at 1223, AIR SPRITE proceeded there at 25 knots. The persons on the beach were found to be three members of the search party, they were recovered by dinghy. AIR SPRITE then proceeded down the eastern coast of Gloucester Island and took off the remaining eight members of the search party, returning to Bona Bay and anchoring at 1640. Anchor was weighed at 1930, and AIR SPRITE proceeded to SYDNEY to transfer stores and personnel to SYDNEY's motor cutter. Midshipman K.F. MARIEN R.A.N., and Midshipman B.T. SWAIN, R.A.N. were also transferred to H.M.A.S. SYDNEY. AIR SPRITE then secured alongside ANZAC at anchor off Gloucester Head at 2030.

16. AIR SPRITE slipped from alongside ANZAC at 0445 on Thursday 24th October, and proceeded to Bona Bay, anchoring at 0500. At 0645, anchor was weighed and a search commenced from Bona Bay, round Gloucester Head to Grimston Point, including all off-lying islands. The starboard engine oil pump became defective at 1130, necessitating anchoring off Grimston point at 1200 to effect temporary repairs. AIR SPRITE weighed at 1415 and proceeded direct to Bowen, securing alongside Bowen wharf at 1558.

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17. A replacement oil pump was received in Bowen early in the afternoon of Sunday 27th October. When unpacked, it was found that an incorrect pump has been supplied, but it could be modified in a reasonably well equipped workshop. Arrangements were made to use the Queensland Railway's workshop to do this work, and the pump was ready to be fitted by 2100. AIR SPRITE was fully serviceable at 2350.

18. On Monday 28th October at 0710, AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded to join SYDNEY off Hayman Island. AIR SPRITE lay off SYDNEY's quarter while stores and four passengers were transferred by SYDNEY's motor boat. At 1025 AIR SPRITE proceeded for Bowen, securing alongside at 1215. AIR SPRITE fuelled during the afternoon and slipped at 2120, to return to SYDNEY, anchored off Hayman Island. At 2330 AIR SPRITE stopped and received stores and personnel from SYDNEY's motor boat, for passage to Bowen. AIR SPRITE sailed for Bowen at 2348, securing alongside at 0145.

19. Nine R.A.A.F. officers joined AIR SPRITE at 0625 on Tuesday 29th October for passage to SYDNEY, to attend the Board of enquiry. AIR SPRITE slipped at 0630 and transferred the R.A.A.F. officers to SYDNEY's motor boat at 0845. AIR SPRITE anchored off Langford Island between 0900 and 1105; after weighing anchor at 1105, AIR SPRITE lay 20 yards off SYDNEY's port side and received 3 relatives of the missing midshipmen and the nine Air Force officers by boat, before proceeding for Bowen at 1145. AIR SPRITE secured alongside Bowen wharf at 1330 and after all passengers had disembarked, sailed at 1340 to rejoin H.M.A.S. SYDNEY. At 1600 AIR SPRITE proceeded alongside ANZAC while the Commanding officer was briefed about further searches on board H.M.A.S. SYDNEY. The Commanding officer returned onboard at 1800. Sub Lieutenant R.H. WOOLRYCH, R.A.N., joined AIR SPRITE at 1810 to assist with watchkeeping duties during the remainder of the search. AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded at 1850, securing alongside Bowen wharf at 2100.

20. On completion of fuelling at 0300 on Wednesday 30th October, 5 drums of helicopter oil were loaded onboard before slipping at 0310. AIR SPRITE proceeded to rendezvous with SYDNEY at 0400 and after transferring the helicopter oil, AIR SPRITE returned to Bowen, securing alongside at 0500. AIR SPRITE slipped at 0815 and proceeded to rendezvous with SYDNEY at 0925. Six search parties were embarked from SYDNEY and AIR SPRITE proceeded to the Double Bay - Woodwork Bay area, where the parties were landed to carry out a search of the shores of both bays. The starboard engine commenced running roughly at 1130. After landing the last search party, AIR SPRITE anchored to investigate the engine defect. AIR SPRITE weighed at 1400 and after embarking an Engineer officer from the SYDNEY, proceeded to recover all shore parties, returning alongside SYDNEY at 1725. The rough running of the starboard engine was diagnosed as being caused by contaminated fuel, probably from the 44-gallon drums that were used to fuel AIR SPRITE at Bowen. The search parties and Engineer officer were transferred to SYDNEY's motor cutter at 1725.

21. Captain W.J. DOVERS, D.S.C., R.A.N., the Captain of H.M.A.S. SYDNEY, boarded AIR SPRITE at 1730. Captain DOVERS addressed the Ship's Company of AIR SPRITE and thanked them for all that they had done during the search. Captain DOVERS departed at 1750. AIR SPRITE proceeded at 1810 for Mackay, securing alongside the south wharf at 2143.

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22. AIR SPRITE slipped from Mackay at 0600 on Thursday 31st.October. The passage to Gladstone was uneventful, AIR SPRITE securing alongside Fisherman's Wharf at 1745. On completion of fuelling at 2015, AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded for Brisbane. The Great Sandy Strait was entered at 0305 on the 1st. November. AIR SPRITE anchored off White Cliffs from 0500 until 0615, when there was sufficient water.over the Sheridan Flat shallows to negotiate them safely. The Wide Bay Bar was crossed at 0740 and course set for Brisbane. AIR ~~PSIR~~ SPRITE secured alongside the Boom punt H.M.A.S. MORETON at 1400.

23. AIR SPRITE sailed from Brisbane at 0500 on Saturday 2nd. November. The starboard engine commenced running roughly at 1100, but cleared itself and was running correctly at 1115. At 1250 the port engine oil pressure dropped, course was altered to shelter behind Cape Byron. AIR SPRITE anchored in the lee of Cape Byron at 1300. An investigation of the port engine lubricating system revealed that the copper suction pipe had fractured. The pipe was removed and temporary repairs carried out by ship's staff using fittings from the stove and fresh water system. AIR SPRITE weighed and proceeded at 1515. The remainder of the trip to Coff's Harbour was uneventful, AIR SPRITE securing alongside the jetty at 2025. On completion of fuelling at 2212, AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded for Sydney. The passage to Sydney was uneventful, AIR SPRITE secured outboard of the tug WATTLE at the Sullage wharf Garden Island at 1040 on Sunday 3rd. November.

24. Dockyard personnel inspected both engines during the forenoon of Monday 4th. November and commenced work on both engines during the afternoon. Work continued during Tuesday the 5th and Wednesday 6th. of November. The mast from H.M.A.S. AIR MASTER was placed onboard the upper deck before proceeding on engine trials during the forenoon of Thursday 7th. Trials were satisfactory, so AIR SPRITE slipped at 1300 and proceeded for Jervis Bay. Strong westerly winds were encountered off Wollongong, forcing AIR SPRITE to hug the coast to avoid the short choppy seas caused by the wind. AIR SPRITE secured outboard of S.A.R. Y.257 at the Marine Section Wharf at 1750.

25. During this period numerous mechanical defects occurred. The starboard engine oil pump had to have new gaskets placed in it, and the complete pump changed over at a later date. The cause of the trouble with this pump was a wedge-shaped flaw in one of the faces of the casing of the pump where it was joined by a gasket, it was ~~curious~~ OBVIOUS that this pump had not been inspected when the engine had been overhauled. All copper pipes on both engines were brittle and needed annealing, this was the reason for loss of oil pressure in the port engine during the passage from Brisbane to Coffs Harbour. Fuel contamination, probably from the 44-gallon drums used at Bowen, caused the rough running of both engines, and necessitated the removal and cleaning of all carburettors by dockyard on return to Sydney. While this was being carried out it was found that one of the carburetter floats in the starboard engine was holed, causing rough running at slow speeds. The planking in the engine room at the after end, shrunk due to the continuous heat of the engines, this can be easily repaired by caulking. The mast was badly attacked by dry rot and was in a dangerous condition from early in October. H.M.A.S. AIR MASTER's mast was brought from Sydney to Jervis Bay as deck cargo, by AIR SPRITE, and AIR SPRITE's mast was removed and AIR MASTER's fitted in its place, by Marine Section staff, on Friday the 8th. November.

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26. Morale remained high throughout this period. It was felt by many members of the Ship's Company that three months living continuously onboard a S.A.R. was a strain on the individual, and it is recommended that ship's companies be changed round at least every two months while S.A.Rs are on detached duties in future.

27. There were no defaulters during the period AIR SPRITE was on detached duties, nor were there any cases of sickness.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(R. J. BURNS)
LIEUTENANT, R.A.N.
COMMANDING OFFICER

Appendix "A".

The Flag Officer-in-Charge,
EAST AUSTRALIA AREA

APPENDIX "A"

TO H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE Report of Proceedings
for period 1 Oct - 7 Nov 1963

(1)	Distance steamed during this period	4,130 miles.
(2)	Hours under way during this period	234 hours.
(3)	Total distance steamed while on detached duties -	10,189 miles.

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ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

TELEPHONE:

CONFIDENTIAL

IN REPLY
QUOTE No.

H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE

At JERVIS BAY

29th. November, 1963

H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

1st. - 30th. SEPTEMBER, 1963

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the report of proceedings for H.M.A. Ship under my command, for the period 1st. to 30th. September, 1963.

2. H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE slipped from the Town Wharf Bundaberg at 0400 on Sunday 1st. September, and proceeded to Fairfax Island. A search of the area within ten miles of Fairfax Island was carried out before AIR SPRITE negotiated the entrance to Lady Musgrave Lagoon; anchoring inside the lagoon at 0850. At 0950 AIR SPRITE sailed to rendezvous with H.M.A.S. STUART off North reef at 1200, to take off a rating suffering with Appendicitis.

3. STUART was sighted at 1235 approximately 5 miles north of North Reef. While proceeding alongside at 1245 the Port engine failed. The Starboard engine jammed in ahead gear, causing AIR SPRITE to turn to port and ram STUART amidships on her starboard side. STUART was dented and some electrical fittings thrown from the ship's side, the only damage to AIR SPRITE was the bending of the jackstaff.

4. AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded as soon as Surgeon Lieutenant G.A. MENDE, R.A.N. and his patient were embarked. The passage to Bundaberg was uneventful, AIR SPRITE secured alongside the ~~old~~ old wharf New Bundaberg at 1805. No ambulance was present to convey the patient to hospital, so an Army Landrover was stopped and the doctor and patient taken to hospital in it.

5. On completion of fuelling at 0330 AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded to Fairfax Island ~~to land~~, carrying out a search of the area on arrival. The missile was fired at 1330, and a search commenced immediately. At 1600 the search was abandoned. AIR SPRITE proceeded alongside KIMBLA to embark twenty-two A.R.L. personnel and equipment before sailing for Bundaberg at 1810.

6. At 1950 the port engine suddenly increased in revolutions, and made a large banging noise for 10 to 20 seconds, then stopped. The engine was inspected and an unsuccessful attempt was made to restart it. AIR SPRITE proceeded at 1200 r.p.m. on the starboard engine. At approximately 2005 the starboard engine began to run roughly and appeared to be misfiring on two or three cylinders. The revolutions began to fluctuate 200 rpm about those set, noises could be heard in the gear box.

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7. H.M.A.S. SYDNEY was sighted at anchor approximately six miles ahead at 2110, AIR SPRITE commenced calling her by light, and continued until 2230 without receiving a reply, at this time AIR SPRITE was less than two miles from SYDNEY. AIR SPRITE secured alongside New Bundaberg oil wharf at 2335.

8. During the forenoon of Tuesday 3rd. September, two Engineer officers and two E.R.As from H.M.A.S. SYDNEY came aboard and inspected both engines, but were unable to repair either. H.M.A.S. KIMBLA was ordered to return and tow AIR SPRITE to Sydney. A good liaison had been established between the Army Small Craft Section participating in exercise "CARBINE" and AIR SPRITE, so arrangements were made with them for AIR SPRITE to be towed to the Breaksea spit light vessel, to wait for H.M.A.S. KIMBLA.

9. The Army Tug "JOE MANN" took AIR SPRITE in tow at 1700 on the 3rd. September, and proceeded at 8 knots for the Breaksea spit light vessel. The Army Tug "THE LUKE" accompanied the "JOE MANN" as a safety vessel. The tow to the light vessel was uneventful, AIR SPRITE securing astern of the light vessel at 2300. "THE LUKE" and "JOE MANN" returned to Bundaberg as soon as AIR SPRITE was secured.

10. H.M.A.S. KIMBLA, with ex-R.A.A.F. tender 015-73 in tow, was sighted at 0320. By 0540 AIR SPRITE was secured astern of the tender, and KIMBLA proceeded for Sydney. The tow was uneventful until 0258 on Thursday the 5th.September, when the tow parted between KIMBLA and the tender. It was decided not to attempt to repass the tow until dawn, so the tender's engine was started in order to keep AIR SPRITE head to wind. KIMBLA commenced passing the tow at 0630, but owing to the rough seas, it was not until 0800 before KIMBLA was able to proceed with both the tender and AIR SPRITE in tow. The remainder of the tow was uneventful, and KIMBLA entered Sydney Harbour at 1400 on Saturday the 7th. September. AIR SPRITE was slipped off Garden Island at 1515 and was secured alongside the sullage wharf at 1535.

11. AIR SPRITE was moved by tug during the forenoon of Monday the 9th. September. After de-fuelling at Pulpit Point AIR SPRITE was moved to the East dock wall astern of the floating dock. The dockyard commenced working on AIR SPRITE Tuesday morning, and had lifted out both engines by Tuesday afternoon. Work on the engines continued all Wednesday. AIR SPRITE was fuelled at Pulpit Point during the forenoon of the 12th.

12. At 0900 on Friday 13th.September, AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded on dockyard engine trials. The port engine was found to be running very hot at 0935, so AIR SPRITE returned to Garden Island, securing alongside the northern end of the South-east Boat Pound at 1020. It was thought that the high engine temperature was caused by a damaged propellor, so a diver was sent for. The diver surfaced at 1210 and reported that the port propellor was completely undamaged, but the starboard propellor was extensively damaged. At 1610 AIR SPRITE was lifted onto the west dockwall, by the west dockwall crane. An inspection of the starboard propellor revealed only slight cavitation marks.

13. The starboard propellor was replaced during the early forenoon of Saturday 14th September, and AIR SPRITE was lifted back in the water at 0905. Dockyard personnel found the cause of the overheating in the port engine at 1000, the sump and gear box had been overfilled with oil, causing the scavanger pumps to be overloaded. The port engine was drained of oil and re-filled correctly. AIR SPRITE slipped at 1245 and proceeded on dockyard trials. The trials were successful and AIR SPRITE secured alongside the West dock wall at 1435.

14. During the forenoon of Monday 16th. September AIR SPRITE was fuelled before slipping at 1300 for Brisbane. The passage from Sydney to Brisbane was uneventful. AIR SPRITE secured alongside Coffs Harbour Jetty at 0430 on Tuesday 17th. and after fuelling, slipped and proceeded at 0715, securing alongside the Boom punt H.M.A.S. MORETON at 2300.

15. AIR SPRITE fuelled and provisioned during the forenoon of the 18th. before slipping at 1025 for Bundaberg. The passage was uneventful and at 1645 Wide Bay bar was crossed and AIR SPRITE proceeded through the great Sandy Strait to Hervey Bay. AIR SPRITE secured alongside the Fairymead Wharf, Bundaberg, at 2155.

16. An engine oil change was carried out during the forenoon of Thursday the 19th., while waiting to be fuelled. AIR SPRITE slipped at 1453 and after stopping at the New Bundaberg sugar terminal for water, proceeded to Fairfax Island, securing for the night alongside H.M.A.S. KIMBLA.

17. On Friday the 20th September at 0700 AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded on an area patrol within ten miles of Fairfax Island. AIR SPRITE secured alongside H.M.A.S. KIMBLA in the holding area at 1000. At 1055 AIR SPRITE slipped to intercept pleasure craft "WALAHAWEEII" registered in Sydney. The craft was requested to leave the area, but was most reluctant to do so. It followed AIR SPRITE back to KIMBLA, before finally leaving the area. A second area search was carried out between 1300 and 1450 when AIR SPRITE took up her position for the firing. The Missile was fired at 1540, and a search commenced immediately, but this was called off at 1700, without anything being found. AIR SPRITE proceeded alongside STUART and KIMBLA to collect mail before proceeding for Bundaberg. After watering from the dredge "FITZROY" at New Bundaberg, AIR SPRITE secured alongside Fairymead wharf at 2020.

18. AIR SPRITE slipped at 0315 on Monday 23rd. and after filling up with water from the dredge "FITZROY" proceeded to Fairfax Island. AIR SPRITE stopped at STUART to deliver mail, then secured alongside KIMBLA. At 1430 AIR SPRITE was despatched to intercept the pleasure craft KIAMA II, registered at Brisbane. This craft was requested to leave the area but was most reluctant to do so, and continued to within 200 yards of STUARTs quarter before finally leaving the area. After collecting mail from KIMBLA and STUART, AIR SPRITE sailed for Bundaberg at 1800, securing outboard of the Japanese Molasses tanker S.S.SYOTOKU MARU at Fairymead wharf about 2145.

19. On Wednesday the 25th. at 0320 AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded to the Fairfaz Island area, carrying out an area patrol on arrival. At 0930 AIR SPRITE secured alongside KIMBLA in the holding area, slipping again at 1445 and proceeding to her firing position. The Missile was fired at 1452, and sighted by AIR SPRITE at 1458. The Missile recovery line was secured at 1502, and transferred to KIMBLA at 1520. The diving team was transferred to KIMBLA and after collecting mail AIR SPRITE proceeded to STUART to embark STUART's Stores Petty Officer (V) and mail before proceeding to Bundaberg. After taking on water from the dredge FITZROY, AIR SPRITE secured alongside Fairymead wharf at 1945.

20. AIR SPRITE slipped for Fairfax Island at 0320 on Friday 27th September. Provisions and mail were transferred to STUART and KIMBLA before carrying out an area search. At 0900 AIR SPRITE took station 400 yards off STUART's starboard bow to allow//

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allow photographs of the firing to be taken. The Missile was fired at 1002 and a search carried out immediately. Nothing was found and the search was abandoned at 1200. AIR SPRITE remained alongsideKIMBLA during the afternoon until 1610 when mail was collected from STUART, and AIR SPRITE proceeded to Bundaberg, securing alongside Fairymead Wharf at 2000, after having taken on water from the dredge FITZROY at New Bundaberg.

21. AIR SPRITE fuelled and provisioned during the forenoon of Saturday 28th before sailing at 1020. Mail and provisions were transferred to STUART and KIMBLA before proceeding on a north-easterly course from FAIRFAX Island to rendezvous with H.M.A.S. SUPPLY. A heaving line transfer of mail was carried out with H.M.A.S. SUPPLY at 12 knots between 1600 and 1612, on completion of this transfer AIR SPRITE returned to Fairfax Island, securing to the buoy laid by KIMBLA, at 1805.

22. An area patrol was carried out between 0500 and 0830 on Sunday 29th September. On completion of the area search the diving team and photographers were embarked from KIMBLA before AIR SPRITE proceeded to her holding position. The missile was fired at 0901 and located at 0910 by AIR SPRITE. The recovery line was secured at 0915 and passed to KIMBLA at 1000. The diving team and photographers were transferred to KIMBLA before AIR SPRITE proceeded to a position midway between Fairfax Island and the mainland for search and rescue duties for the chartered helicopter. The helicopter passed overhead at 1145, AIR SPRITE altered course to follow it back to KIMBLA. A leak developed in the starboard engine oil pump at 1225 while going alongside KIMBLA. Temporary repairs were effected before proceeding on S.A.R. duties for the return flight of the chartered helicopter at 1500. AIR SPRITE returned to KIMBLA after the helicopter passed overhead, securing alongside at 1635. After ten A.R.L.personnel were embarged for passage to Bundaberg, AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded to Bundaberg, stopping every hour to top up the oil in the starboard engine. AIR SPRITE secured alongside Fairymead wharf at 2130.

23. Major defects which occurred during this period were the seizure of the Port engine on Monday the 2nd.September, and the rough running of the starboard engine on the same day; both engines were replaced by Garden Island dockayrd. Numerous small defects were repaired by ship's staff and the staff of H.M.A.S. KIMBLA. A replacement power unit for the AT5/AR8 Transceiver obtained during the period the ship was in Sydney was found to be unserviceable when it was tested onboard after leaving Sydney. This necessitated retaining the power unit borrowed from the R.A.A.F. mentioned in my August Report.

24. Lieutenant W. JAMIESON R.A.N.R., a Security officer for the Department of Supply was embarked during the periods AIR SPRITE was in the operational area. This officer considers that he gained much valuable training in the handling of high speed craft, and general duties while he was onboard. It is suggested that other R.A.N.R. officers may wish to do their Annual Continuous Training in S.A.R. craft if there are no vacancies for them in the fleet.

25. Morale remained high throughout this period. There were no defaulters during the period, nor were there any cases of sickness.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient Servant,

R J Burns

(R.J. BURNS)
LIEUTENANT, R.A.N.
COMMANDING OFFICER

The Flag Officer-in-Charge,
EAST AUSTRALIA AREA.

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APPENDIX "A"

TO H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE Report of Proceedings for September, 1963

Fishing and pleasure craft found in the Venue area during the period 1st - 30th. September, 1963:

20th. September:	WALAHAWEE II	- Registered Sydney.
23rd. September:	KIAMA II	- Registered Brisbane.

Both vessels were reluctant to leave the area.

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APPENDIX "B"

TO H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE Report of Proceedings for September, 1963

(a)	Distance steamed during the Month	-	2,853
(b)	Hours underway during the Month	-	247
(c)	Total distance steamed while on detached duties (6th. August to 30th. September)	-	6,058

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H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE
At Sydney

12th September, 1963.

The Flag Officer in Charge,
EAST AUSTRALIA AREA

H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS 6TH TO 31ST OF AUGUST, 1963

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the report of proceedings for H.M.A. Ship under my command for the period 6th to 31st of August, 1963.

2. AIR SPRITE sailed from Jervis Bay at 0600 on Tuesday 6th August arriving alongside the Sullage Wharf Garden Island at 1000. The next two and a half days were spent preparing the vessel for detached duties. During the forenoon of the 8th August AIR SPRITE was fuelled and the last stores and Charge Books embarked before proceeding to No. 4 buoy to swing compasses.

3. AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded at 1800 on Thursday 8th of August. The passage to Coffs Harbour was wet but uneventful. AIR SPRITE secured alongside the north western end of Coffs Harbour Jetty at 0650 on the 9th August. A heavy swell was running so AIR SPRITE was held off the jetty by use of a kedge anchor and moored by the method used by all the local fishing fleet.

4. AIR SPRITE was fuelled prior to departure at 1800. The passage from Coffs Harbour to Brisbane was made in rough weather; speed being reduced to 16½ knots after clearing the Coffs Harbour breakwater. Heavy rain lowered visibility during the morning watch and the vessel hove to off Cape Moreton for ten minutes to allow a squall to pass before negotiating the north eastern passage into Moreton Bay. AIR SPRITE secured alongside the Boom Punt H.M.A.S. MORETON at 0930.

5. The Commanding Officer of H.M.A.S. KIMBLA, Lt. Cdr. F.R. WOODS R.A.N. and I called on the Naval Officer in Charge for Queensland, Commander J. Ferguson D.S.C., R.A.N. at 1215 on Saturday the 10th August.

6. During the afternoon of Monday 12th August, Sub Lieutenant J. Crompton R.A.N. joined to take passage to H.M.A.S. KIMBLA. A Department of Supply Security Officer, Lieutenant W. Jamieson R.A.N.R. joined late in the afternoon. It was intended that he would remain on AIR SPRITE until completion of the trials.

.../2

CONFIDENTIAL

7. AIR SPRITE sailed from Brisbane at 0500 on Tuesday 13th of August, making an uneventful passage to the Great Sandy Strait Bar which was reached at 1100. AIR SPRITE steamed along the complete length of the Bar before attempting to cross it on the leads with the tide at half flood. Once inside the Bar it was found that the next set of leads on Inskip Pt. had been washed away by heavy seas and the vessel had to be navigated by eye until the second set of leads were sighted. It was found that there were many discrepancies between the Admiralty Charts and the Queensland Sailing Instructions for this area. The Sailing Instructions were used to navigate through the Great Sandy Strait. The passage through the strait was found to be reasonable and with favourable tidal sets it was found that AIR SPRITE averaged twenty five knots through some parts.

8. AIR SPRITE arrived off the entrance of the Burnett River at 1500. No Australian nor Admiralty Chart of the Burnett River was held, but a dredgers work sheet had been obtained from the Harbour Master at Brisbane. Unfortunately all buoys, light floats and some beacons shown in the sheets had been removed and new beacons placed in different positions. It was high tide on arrival and the Port hand breakwater was found to be completely covered. AIR SPRITE proceeded at slowest possible speed up the river until clear of the sea reach when the channel was found to be clearly marked, and speed was increased to 7 knots until the oil wharf at New Bundaberg was reached at 1610.

9. As soon as AIR SPRITE was secured to the oil wharf I proceeded onboard the dredger FITZROY and spoke to her master who was able to give me the latest instructions for navigating the river as far as Bundaberg. FITZROY's showers and other facilities were placed at the disposal of AIR SPRITE's crew.

10. On Wednesday 14th AIR SPRITE proceeded to FAIRFAX ISLAND, joining H.M.A.S. KIMBLA at 1700. After disembarking Sub Lieutenant Crompton, AIR SPRITE secured to a mooring laid by H.M.A.S. KIMBLA.

11. AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded at 0600 on Thursday 15th. A search of the area was carried out. The Security Officer proceeded into Lady Musgrave Lagoon in the 9ft. dinghy to speak to fishing and pleasure craft anchored inside the lagoon while AIR SPRITE proceeded to a position halfway between Fairfax Island and the Mainland to act as a beacon and rescue vessel for the chartered helicopter. As soon as the helicopter passed overhead at 0725 AIR SPRITE proceeded to Lady Musgrave Island and recovered the Security Officer and dinghy, before proceeding alongside KIMBLA at 0930.

12. Equipment and victuals for the tender were embarked during the day from KIMBLA. A second search of the area was carried out between 1600 and 1800 before securing to the buoy for the night.

13. AIR SPRITE proceeded to Gladstone to fuel during the forenoon of the 16th. Lieutenant T. Jones R.A.N. and one R.O. had been embarked from KIMBLA for passage to Townsville to join the tender. The Security Officer transferred to KIMBLA for the period AIR SPRITE was to be absent.

.../3

14. The Main Radio Power Unit became unserviceable while alongside in Gladstone. The M.T.R.-1 radio carried for the tender was rigged and tested before AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded to Mackay.

15. Extremely heavy fog caused AIR SPRITE to anchor at 0250. Both Main Engines were running roughly at low revolutions and after anchoring it was found that both engines had been suffering from fuel starvation due to excessive dirt in the fuel filters; anchor was weighed when the fog began to clear at 0650. AIR SPRITE fuelled in Mackay during the forenoon then proceeded to Townsville securing alongside Tender 015-73 at the Royal Australian Air Force Marine Section Wharf at 1910.

16. The R.A.A.F. Marine Section personnel were extremely helpful during AIR SPRITE's stay. A serviceable Radio power unit was borrowed from them, when it was found that the unit supplied by SNASO Sydney was of the wrong polarity.

17. Before sailing at 1000 on Monday 19th of August, the tender was inspected and stored. R.A.A.F. personnel stated that it had been in service one month previously and was in good condition.

18. AIR SPRITE's passage from Townsville to Gladstone was uneventful. One night was spent at Mackay to fuel. AIR SPRITE rejoined H.M.A.S. KIMBLA at Fairfax Island about 1600 on Wednesday 21st of August. A one hundred hour overhaul on both main engines was commenced on arrival and was completed p.m. on the 22nd.

19. On Friday 23rd August, AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded at 0500 securing alongside New Bundaberg oil wharf at 0800. Twelve personnel from the Aeronautical Research Laboratory were embarked and AIR SPRITE rejoined KIMBLA at Fairfax Island at 1515.

20. H.M.A.S. STUART hove to off Fairfax Island at 0630 on Saturday 24th August. AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded alongside KIMBLA, embarking her Commanding Officer Lt. Cdr. F.R. WOODS R.A.N. AIR SPRITE then proceeded to STUART where she secured across the stern. Both Commanding Officers called on the Captain of H.M.A.S. STUART, Cdr. M.L. MALONEY R.A.N. at 0730. AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded resecuring alongside KIMBLA at 0815.

21. At 0450 on Sunday 25th August AIR SPRITE was despatched to Bundaberg to investigate the whereabouts of the tender. No contact had been made with it since the 22nd. Overseas Telecommunication Station Rockhampton and Townsville stated the only contact with the tender had been when it passed its sailing signal on the 20th. The Queensland police radio network checked all coastal stations but the vessel had not been sighted. The Duty Staff Officer was informed at 1100 that the tender was missing. An Air Search was immediately ordered. AIR SPRITE returned to Fairfax Island at 1420.

.../4

22. The forenoon of the 26th was spent carrying out Area Clearance duties. At 1400 AIR SPRITE was despatched to Bundaberg to fuel and receive the Dakotas records. AIR SPRITE returned to Fairfax Island at 0030 securing astern of STUART. At 0800 AIR SPRITE carried out a search of the area then proceeded to New Bundaberg securing outboard of the dredge FITZROY.

23. AIR SPRITE sailed from New Bundaberg at 0500 on the 28th. At 0810 a heaving line transfer was carried out with H.M.A.S. STUART to transfer mail. On completion AIR SPRITE proceeded on Area Clearance duties, asking four fishing boats to clear the area. On completion of firing AIR SPRITE proceeded to the oil wharf New Bundaberg securing at 2330.

24. On Thursday 29th AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded at 1500. H.M.A.S. KIMBLA was sighted at 1700 and a heaving line transfer was carried out to transfer mail. AIR SPRITE then proceeded to Bundaberg securing alongside the Town Wharf at 2000. The tender secured alongside AIR SPRITE at 0120 on the 30th August. General maintenance was carried out alongside the Town Wharf during the 30th and 31st.

25. During this period no major defects have occurred onboard. Main Engine gear boxes and clutches have had to be adjusted, frequently and routine maintenance work has been carried out on all machinery.

26. The ship's company morale has remained high. There has been no sickness.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

R J Burns

(R.J. BURNS)
LIEUTENANT R.A.N.
COMMANDING OFFICER

CONFIDENTIAL

APPENDIX 'A'.

Fishing and Pleasure Craft found in the Venue Area during the period 15th to 28th August, 1963:

15th August,	MAIKARA	- Brisbane
	DOROTHEA W.	
	TOM PIPER	- Southport
	LAURA BADA	- Brisbane (Commodore C.Y.C. Qld.)
24th August,	BOONAROO	LFB 1328
28th August,	AKOONAH	
	MAIDA	
	JANSSENS	LFB 1823
	JESALIA	LFB 213

CONFIDENTIAL

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APPENDIX 'B'

(a) Distance steamed during the Month 3205 miles

(b) Hours underway during the Month 163 hours.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

18-206-57

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

MINUTE PAPER

H.M.A.S. Air Sprite Report of Proceedings Sept '63

HNB Report for period 6-31 Aug only received. Further 2 Reports mentioned by FOICEA have been requested.

DOD

"AIR SPRITE" was invaluable during the trials period and it is unfortunate that FOICEA has taken so long to forward this report and to omit to forward the other two reports.

DCNS

1st NM When the other two reports have been received pls let me have all them. Remarks below.

2nd NM

3rd NM The other two reports now attached for letter as CNS*

4th NM Para 1 of CNS of 24 Jan being dealt with separately.

SEC

CNPR

HNB (N5)

REGISTRAR

DP	DNI	DMT	DNR	DEE	HNB (N5)	Separate Report Circulating
DTSR	HPB	DPS	DNES	DME	REGISTRAR	
DSD	DCNP	DGS	MDG	DNC		
DAWOT	DOA	DAP	DCNTS	DW		
		DDM				

NOTE: (a) This copy is circulated so that Board Members may see these reports soon after they reach Navy Office.

(b) The report will be given to Board Members with Director's comments if there is any matter of special interest in those comments.

* Letter to FOCAF hereunder.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

DEPT. OF NAVY
CANBERRA
St 6300
18 | 206 | 57
IN REPLY QUOTE No. NC.1/16/32

LEPHONE:
L 0444

CL.

RECEIVED
- 8 JAN A.M.
NAVY REGISTRY

INDEXED
INIT. BC
DATE 8/1/64

OFFICE OF THE
FLAG OFFICER IN CHARGE,
EAST AUSTRALIA AREA,
~~WXDEXXREEXXFOKDSXPOINX~~
GARDEN ISLAND.

-7 JAN 1964

The Secretary,
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY.

H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE - REPORTS OF PROCEEDINGS.

Be pleased to lay before the Naval Board Reports of Proceedings for periods 6th-31st August, 1st-30th September and 1st October - 7th November, in respect of H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE.

2. This small ship, ill-suited to operating away from a well found base, has carried out the many tests demanded of it in an exemplary manner. In particular the work done during the search for H.M.A.S. SYDNEY's missing whaler and its crew of Midshipmen was particularly gruelling but of the utmost value in that this little ship relieved the larger ones of those mundane but necessary 'ferry' duties.

3. Lieutenant Burns and his ship's company displayed much common sense and initiative and despite some misdemeanours such as giving passage to the relieving assistant Lighthouse Keeper from Sandy Cape to Bundaberg without the approval required by R.I. 1705, have done much to enhance the name of the R.A.N.

4. I have commended Lieutenant Burns and Petty Officer Air Fitter (A.E.) R.L. Conellan, R.36271, for their good services and devotion to duty during the period 6th August to 7th November, 1963.

NS

(G.G.O. GATACRE)
REAR ADMIRAL

Encls.

CONFIDENTIAL

McC:JMB

29 JAN 1964

The Flag Officer Commanding,
Her Majesty's Australian Fleet (Staff),
H.M.A.S. SYDNEY,
C/- G.P.O.

(Copy to: The Commanding Officer,
H.M.A.S. SYDNEY).

H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS
FOR SEPTEMBER, 1963.

I am directed by the Naval Board to bring to your notice the following extract from the September, 1963, Report of Proceedings for H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE. This portion of the Report relates to a passage by H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE from Fairfax Island to Bundaberg on 2nd September, during which H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE experienced engine difficulties.

> "H.M.A.S. SYDNEY was sighted at anchor six miles ahead at 2110, AIR SPRITE commenced calling her by light, and continued until 2230 without receiving a reply, at this time AIR SPRITE was less than two miles from SYDNEY ..".

Secretary.

HNB 3011

St 6299 N81-16-32

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

TELEPHONE:

IN REPLY
QUOTE No.

CONFIDENTIAL

H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE
At Sydney

12th September, 1963.

The Flag Officer in Charge,
EAST AUSTRALIA AREA

H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS 6TH TO 31ST OF AUGUST, 1963

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the report of proceedings for H.M.A. Ship under my command for the period 6th to 31st of August, 1963.

2. AIR SPRITE sailed from Jervis Bay at 0600 on Tuesday 6th August arriving alongside the Sullage Wharf Garden Island at 1000. The next two and a half days were spent preparing the vessel for detached duties. During the forenoon of the 8th August AIR SPRITE was fuelled and the last stores and Charge Books embarked before proceeding to No. 4 buoy to swing compasses.

3. AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded at 1800 on Thursday 8th of August. The passage to Coffs Harbour was wet but uneventful. AIR SPRITE secured alongside the north western end of Coffs Harbour Jetty at 0650 on the 9th August. A heavy swell was running so AIR SPRITE was held off the jetty by use of a kedge anchor and moored by the method used by all the local fishing fleet.

4. AIR SPRITE was fuelled prior to departure at 1800. The passage from Coffs Harbour to Brisbane was made in rough weather; speed being reduced to 16½ knots after clearing the Coffs Harbour breakwater. Heavy rain lowered visibility during the morning watch and the vessel hove to off Cape Moreton for ten minutes to allow a squall to pass before negotiating the north eastern passage into Moreton Bay. AIR SPRITE secured alongside the Boom Punt H.M.A.S. MORETON at 0930.

5. The Commanding Officer of H.M.A.S. KIMBLA, Lt. Cdr. F.R. WOODS R.A.N. and I called on the Naval Officer in Charge for Queensland, Commander J. Ferguson D.S.C., R.A.N. at 1215 on Saturday the 10th August.

6. During the afternoon of Monday 12th August, Sub Lieutenant J. Crompton R.A.N. joined to take passage to H.M.A.S. KIMBLA. A Department of Supply Security Officer, Lieutenant W. Jamieson R.A.N.R. joined late in the afternoon. It was intended that he would remain on AIR SPRITE until completion of the trials.

.../2

CONFIDENTIAL

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

MINUTE PAPER

18/206/57

H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - SEPTEMBER, 1963

By C.N.S.

There appear to have been some cases of issue of defective gear from Sydney stores.

2. I presume 4 N.M. will look into this.

3. Perhaps SYDNEY's attention might be drawn via F.O.C.A.F. to content of paragraph 7 of report dated 30th September, 1963.

29 Nov

W A Harrington

24th January, 1964.

Chief of Naval Staff.

CONFIDENTIAL

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY.

NAVY OFFICE FILE NO
18-206-57.

OFFICE OF THE
FLAG OFFICER IN CHARGE,
EAST AUSTRALIA AREA,
GARDEN ISLAND.

7 JAN, 1964,

The Secretary,
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY.

H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE - REPORTS OF PROCEEDINGS.

Be pleased to lay before the Naval Board Reports of Proceedings for periods 6th - 31stAugust, 1st-30th September and 1st October - 7th November, in respect of H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE.

2. This small ship, ill-suited to operating away from a well found base, has carried out the many tests demanded of it in an exemplary manner. In particular the work done during the search for H.M.A.S. SYDNEY'S missing whaler and its crew of Midshipman was particularly gruelling but of the utmost value in that this little ship relieved the larger ones of those mundane but necessary 'ferry' duties.

3. Lieutenant Burns and his ship's company displayed much common sence and initiative and despite some misdemeanours such as giving passage to the relieving assistant Lighthouse Keeper from Sandy Cape to Bundaberg without the approval Required by R.I. 1705, have done much to enhance the name of the R.A.N.

4. I have commended Lieutenant Burns and Petty Officer Air Fitter (A.E.) R.L. Conellan, R. 36271, for their good services and devotion to duty during the period 6th August to 7th November, 1963.

(G.G.O. GATACRE.)
REAR ADMIRAL.

Encls.

CONFIDENTIAL

7. AIR SPRITE sailed from Brisbane at 0500 on Tuesday 13th of August, making an uneventful passage to the Great Sandy Strait Bar which was reached at 1100. AIR SPRITE steamed along the complete length of the Bar before attempting to cross it on the leads with the tide at half flood. Once inside the Bar it was found that the next set of leads on Inskip Pt. had been washed away by heavy seas and the vessel had to be navigated by eye until the second set of leads were sighted. It was found that there were many discrepancies between the Admiralty Charts and the Queensland Sailing Instructions for this area. The Sailing Instructions were used to navigate through the Great Sandy Strait. The passage through the strait was found to be reasonable and with favourable tidal sets it was found that AIR SPRITE averaged twenty five knots through some parts.

8. AIR SPRITE arrived off the entrance of the Burnett River at 1500. No Australian nor Admiralty Chart of the Burnett River was held, but a dredgers work sheet had been obtained from the Harbour Master at Brisbane. Unfortunately all buoys, light floats and some beacons shown in the sheets had been removed and new beacons placed in different positions. It was high tide on arrival and the Port hand breakwater was found to be completely covered. AIR SPRITE proceeded at slowest possible speed up the river until clear of the sea reach when the channel was found to be clearly marked, and speed was increased to 7 knots until the oil wharf at New Bundaberg was reached at 1610.

9. As soon as AIR SPRITE was secured to the oil wharf I proceeded onboard the dredger FITZROY and spoke to her master who was able to give me the latest instructions for navigating the river as far as Bundaberg. FITZROY's showers and other facilities were placed at the disposal of AIR SPRITE's crew.

10. On Wednesday 14th AIR SPRITE proceeded to FAIRFAX ISLAND, joining H.M.A.S. KIMBLA at 1700. After disembarking Sub Lieutenant Crompton, AIR SPRITE secured to a mooring laid by H.M.A.S. KIMBLA.

11. AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded at 0600 on Thursday 15th. A search of the area was carried out. The Security Officer proceeded into Lady Musgrave Lagoon in the 9ft. dinghy to speak to fishing and pleasure craft anchored inside the lagoon while AIR SPRITE proceeded to a position halfway between Fairfax Island and the Mainland to act as a beacon and rescue vessel for the chartered helicopter. As soon as the helicopter passed overhead at 0725 AIR SPRITE proceeded to Lady Musgrave Island and recovered the Security Officer and dinghy, before proceeding alongside KIMBLA at 0930.

12. Equipment and victuals for the tender were embarked during the day from KIMBLA. A second search of the area was carried out between 1600 and 1800 before securing to the buoy for the night.

13. AIR SPRITE proceeded to Gladstone to fuel during the forenoon of the 16th. Lieutenant T. Jones R.A.N. and one R.O. had been embarked from KIMBLA for passage to Townsville to join the tender. The Security Officer transferred to KIMBLA for the period AIR SPRITE was to be absent.

.../3

14. The Main Radio Power Unit became unserviceable while alongside in Gladstone. The M.T.R.-1 radio carried for the tender was rigged and tested before AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded to Mackay.

15. Extremely heavy fog caused AIR SPRITE to anchor at 0250. Both Main Engines were running roughly at low revolutions and after anchoring it was found that both engines had been suffering from fuel starvation due to excessive dirt in the fuel filters; anchor was weighed when the fog began to clear at 0650. AIR SPRITE fuelled in Mackay during the forenoon then proceeded to Townsville securing alongside Tender 015-73 at the Royal Australian Air Force Marine Section Wharf at 1910.

16. The R.A.A.F. Marine Section personnel were extremely helpful during AIR SPRITE's stay. A serviceable Radio power unit was borrowed from them, when it was found that the unit supplied by SNASO Sydney was of the wrong polarity. *

17. Before sailing at 1000 on Monday 19th of August, the tender was inspected and stored. R.A.A.F. personnel stated that it had been in service one month previously and was in good condition. *

18. AIR SPRITE's passage from Townsville to Gladstone was uneventful. One night was spent at Mackay to fuel. AIR SPRITE rejoined H.M.A.S. KIMBLA at Fairfax Island about 1600 on Wednesday 21st of August. A one hundred hour overhaul on both main engines was commenced on arrival and was completed p.m. on the 22nd.

19. On Friday 23rd August, AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded at 0500 securing alongside New Bundaberg oil wharf at 0800. Twelve personnel from the Aeronautical Research Laboratory were embarked and AIR SPRITE rejoined KIMBLA at Fairfax Island at 1515.

20. H.M.A.S. STUART hove to off Fairfax Island at 0630 on Saturday 24th August. AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded alongside KIMBLA, embarking her Commanding Officer Lt. Cdr. F.R. WOODS R.A.N. AIR SPRITE then proceeded to STUART where she secured across the stern. Both Commanding Officers called on the Captain of H.M.A.S. STUART, Cdr. M.L. MALONEY R.A.N. at 0730. AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded resecuring alongside KIMBLA at 0815.

21. At 0450 on Sunday 25th August AIR SPRITE was despatched to Bundaberg to investigate the whereabouts of the tender. No contact had been made with it since the 22nd. Overseas Telecommunication Station Rockhampton and Townsville stated the only contact with the tender had been when it passed its sailing signal on the 20th. The Queensland police radio network checked all coastal stations but the vessel had not been sighted. The Duty Staff Officer was informed at 1100 that the tender was missing. An Air Search was immediately ordered. AIR SPRITE returned to Fairfax Island at 1420.

.../4

22. The forenoon of the 26th was spent carrying out Area Clearance duties. At 1400 AIR SPRITE was despatched to Bundaberg to fuel and receive the Dakotas records. AIR SPRITE returned to Fairfax Island at 0030 securing astern of STUART. At 0800 AIR SPRITE carried out a search of the area then proceeded to New Bundaberg securing outboard of the dredge FITZROY.

23. AIR SPRITE sailed from New Bundaberg at 0500 on the 28th. At 0810 a heaving line transfer was carried out with H.M.A.S. STUART to transfer mail. On completion AIR SPRITE proceeded on Area Clearance duties, asking four fishing boats to clear the area. On completion of firing AIR SPRITE proceeded to the oil wharf New Bundaberg securing at 2330.

24. On Thursday 29th AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded at 1500. H.M.A.S. KIMBLA was sighted at 1700 and a heaving line transfer was carried out to transfer mail. AIR SPRITE then proceeded to Bundaberg securing alongside the Town Wharf at 2000. The tender secured alongside AIR SPRITE at 0120 on the 30th August. General maintenance was carried out alongside the Town Wharf during the 30th and 31st.

25. During this period no major defects have occurred onboard. Main Engine gear boxes and clutches have had to be adjusted, frequently and routine maintenance work has been carried out on all machinery.

26. The ship's company morale has remained high. There has been no sickness.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

R J Burns

(R.J. BURNS)
LIEUTENANT R.A.N.
COMMANDING OFFICER

CONFIDENTIAL

APPENDIX 'A'.

Fishing and Pleasure Craft found in the Venue Area during the period 15th to 28th August, 1963:

15th August,	MAIKARA	-	Brisbane
	DOROTHEA W.		
	TOM PIPER	-	Southport
	LAURA BADA	-	Brisbane (Commodore C.Y.C. Qld.)
24th August,	BOONAROO		LFB 1328
28th August,	AKOONAH		
	MAIDA		
	JANSSENS		LFB 1823
	JESALIA		LFB 213

CONFIDENTIAL

APPENDIX 'B'

(a) Distance steamed during the Month 3205 miles

(b) Hours underway during the Month 163 hours.

ST 5340

TELEPHONE:

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

CONFIDENTIAL

NC1-16-32

IN REPLY
QUOTE No.

H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE

At JERVIS BAY

29th. November, 1963

H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

1st. - 30th. SEPTEMBER, 1963

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the report of proceedings for H.M.A. Ship under my command, for the period 1st. to 30th. September, 1963.

2. H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE slipped from the Town Wharf Bundaberg at 0400 on Sunday 1st. September, and proceeded to Fairfax Island. A search of the area within ten miles of Fairfax Island was carried out before AIR SPRITE negotiated the entrance to Lady Musgrave Lagoon; anchoring inside the lagoon at 0850. At 0950 AIR SPRITE sailed to rendezvous with H.M.A.S. STUART off North reef at 1200, to take off a rating suffering with Appendicitis.

3. STUART was sighted at 1235 approximately 5 miles north of North Reef. While proceeding alongside at 1245 the Port engine failed. The Starboard engine jammed in ahead gear, causing AIR SPRITE to turn to port and ram STUART amidships on her starboard side. STUART was dented and some electrical fittings thrown from the ship's side, the only damage to AIR SPRITE was the bending of the jackstaff.

4. AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded as soon as Surgeon Lieutenant G.A. MENDE, R.A.N. and his patient were embarked. The passage to Bundaberg was uneventful, AIR SPRITE secured alongside the ~~old~~ OIL wharf New Bundaberg at 1805. No ambulance was present to convey the patient to hospital, so an Army Landrover was stopped and the doctor and patient taken to hospital in it.

5. On completion of fuelling at 0330 AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded to Fairfax Island ~~to land~~, carrying out a search of the area on arrival. The missile was fired at 1330, and a search commenced immediately. At 1600 the search was abandoned. AIR SPRITE proceeded alongside KIMBLA to embark twenty-two A.R.L. personnel and equipment before sailing for Bundaberg at 1810.

6. At 1950 the port engine suddenly increased in revolutions, and made a large banging noise for 10 to 20 seconds, then stopped. The engine was inspected and an unsuccessful attempt was made to restart it. AIR SPRITE proceeded at 1200 r.p.m. on the starboard engine. At approximately 2005 the starboard engine began to run roughly and appeared to be misfiring on two or three cylinders. The revolutions began to fluctuate 200 rpm about those set, noises could be heard in the gear box.

CONFIDENTIAL

...7/

7. H.M.A.S. SYDNEY was sighted at anchor approximately six miles ahead at 2110, AIR SPRITE commenced calling her by light, and continued until 2230 without receiving a reply, at this time AIR SPRITE was less than two miles from SYDNEY. AIR SPRITE secured alongside New Bundaberg oil wharf at 2335.

8. During the forenoon of Tuesday 3rd. September, two Engineer officers and two E.R.As from H.M.A.S. SYDNEY came aboard and inspected both engines, but were unable to repair either. H.M.A.S. KIMBLA was ordered to return and tow AIR SPRITE to Sydney. A good liaison had been established between the Army Small Craft Section participating in exercise "CARBINE" and AIR SPRITE, so arrangements were made with them for AIR SPRITE to be towed to the Breaksea spit light vessel, to wait for H.M.A.SL KIMBLA.

9. The Army Tug "JOE MANN" took AIR SPRITE in tow at 1700 on the 3rd. September, and proceeded at 8 knots for the Breaksea spit light vessel. The Army Tug "THE LUKE" accompanied the "JOE MANN" as a safety vessel. The tow to the light vessel was uneventful, AIR SPRITE securing astern of the light vessel at 2300. "THE LUKE" and "JOE MANN" returned to Bundaberg as soon as AIR SPRITE was secured.

10. H.M.A.S. KIMBLA, with ex-R.A.A.F. tender 015-73 in tow, was sighted at 0320. By 0540 AIR SPRITE was secured astern of the tender, and KIMBLA proceeded for Sydney. The tow was uneventful until 0258 on Thursday the 5th.September, when the tow parted between KIMBLA and the tender. It was decided not to attempt to repass the tow until dawn, so the tender's engine was started in order to keep AIR SPRITE head to wind. KIMBLA commenced passing the tow at 0630, but owing to the rough seas, it was not until 0800 before KIMBLA was able to proceed with both the tender and AIR SPRITE in tow. The remainder of the tow was uneventful, and KIMBLA entered Sydney Harbour at 1400 on Saturday the 7th. September. AIR SPRITE was slipped off Garden Island at 1515 and was secured alongside the sullage wharf at 1535.

11. AIR SPRITE was moved by tug during the forenoon of Monday the 9th. September. After de-fuelling at Pulpit Point AIR SPRITE was moved to the East dock wall astern of the floating dock. The dockyard commenced working on AIR SPRITE Tuesday morning, and had lifted out both engines by Tuesday afternoon. Work on the engines continued all Wednesday. AIR SPRITE was fuelled at Pulpit Point during the forenoon of the 12th.

12. At 0900 on Friday 13th.September, AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded on dockyard engine trials. The port engine was found to be running very hot at 0935, so AIR SPRITE returned to Garden Island, securing alongside the northern end of the South-east Boat Pound at 1020. It was thought that the high engine temperature was caused by a damaged propellor, so a diver was sent for. The diver surfaced at 1210 and reported that the port propellor was completely undamaged, but the starboard propellor was extensively damaged. At 1610 AIR SPRITE was lifted into the west dockwall, by the west dockwall crane. An inspection of the starboard propellor revealed only slight cavitation marks.

13. The starboard propellor was replaced during the early forenoon of Saturday 14th September, and AIR SPRITE was lifted back in the water at 0905. Dockyard personnel found the cause of the overheating in the port engine at 1000, the sump and gear box had been overfilled with oil, causing the scavanger pumps to be overloaded. The port engine was drained of oil and re-filled correctly. AIR SPRITE slipped at 1245 and proceeded on dockyard trials. The trials were successful and AIR SPRITE secured alongside the West dock wall at 1435.

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14. During the forenoon of Monday 16th. September AIR SPRITE was fuelled before slipping at 1300 for Brisbane. The passage from Sydney to Brisbane was uneventful. AIR SPRITE secured alongside Coffs Harbour Jetty at 0430 on Tuesday 17th. and after fuelling, slipped and proceeded at 0715, securing alongside the Boom punt H.M.A.S. MORETON at 2300.

15. AIR SPRITE fuelled and provisioned during the forenoon of the 18th. before slipping at 1025 for Bundaberg. The passage was uneventful and at 1645 Wide Bay bar was crossed and AIR SPRITE proceeded through the great Sandy Strait to Hervey Bay. AIR SPRITE secured alongside the Fairymead Wharf, Bundaberg, at 2155.

16. An engine oil change was carried out during the forenoon of Thursday the 19th., while waiting to be fuelled. AIR SPRITE slipped at 1453 and after stopping at the New Bundaberg sugar terminal for water, proceeded to Fairfax Island, securing for the night alongside H.M.A.S. KIMBLA.

17. On Friday the 20th September at 0700 AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded on an area patrol within ten miles of Fairfax Island. AIR SPRITE secured alongside H.M.A.S. KIMBLA in the holding area at 1000. At 1055 AIR SPRITE slipped to intercept pleasure craft "WALAHAWEEII" registered in Sydney. The craft was requested to leave the area, but was most reluctant to do so. It followed AIR SPRITE back to KIMBLA, before finally leaving the area. A second area search was carried out between 1300 and 1450 when AIR SPRITE took up her position for the firing. The Missile was fired at 1540, and a search commenced immediately, but this was called off at 1700, without anything being found. AIR SPRITE proceeded alongside STUART and KIMBLA to collect mail before proceeding for Bundaberg. After watering from the dredge "FITZROY" at New Bundaberg, AIR SPRITE secured alongside Fairymead wharf at 2020.

18. AIR SPRITE slipped at 0315 on Monday 23rd. and after filling up with water from the dredge "FITZROY" proceeded to Fairfax Island. AIR SPRITE stopped at STUART to deliver mail, then secured alongside KIMBLA. At 1430 AIR SPRITE was despatched to intercept the pleasure craft KIAMA II, registered at Brisbane. This craft was requested to leave the area but was most reluctant to do so, and continued to within 200 yards of STUARTs quarter before finally leaving the area. After collecting mail from KIMBLA and STUART, AIR SPRITE sailed for Bundaberg at 1800, securing outboard of the Japanese Molasses tanker S.S.SYOTOKU MARU at Fairymead wharf about 2145.

19. On Wednesday the 25th. at 0320 AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded to the Fairfax Island area, carrying out an area patrol on arrival. At 0930 AIR SPRITE secured alongside KIMBLA in the holding area, slipping again at 1445 and proceeding to her firing position. The Missile was fired at 1452, and sighted by AIR SPRITE at 1458. The Missile recovery line was secured at 1502, and transferred to KIMBLA at 1520. The diving team was transferred to KIMBLA and after collecting mail AIR SPRITE proceeded to STUART to embark STUART's Stores Petty Officer (VO) and mail before proceeding to Bundaberg. After taking on water from the dredge FITZROY, AIR SPRITE secured alongside Fairymead wharf at 1945.

20. AIR SPRITE slipped for Fairfax Island at 0320 on Friday 27th September. Provisions and mail were transferred to STUART and KIMBLA before carrying out an area search. At 0900 AIR SPRITE took station 400 yards off STUART's starboard bow to allow//

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Para 20 (contd)

allow photographs of the firing to be taken. The Missile was fired at 1002 and a search carried out immediately. Nothing was found and the search was abandoned at 1200. AIR SPRITE remained alongsideKIMBLA during the afternoon until 1610 when mail was collected from STUART, and AIR SPRITE proceeded to Bundaberg, securing alongside Fairymead Wharf at 2000, after having taken on water from the dredge FITZROY at New Bundaberg.

21. AIR SPRITE fuelled and provisioned during the forenoon of Saturday 28th before sailing at 1020. Mail and provisions were transferred to STUART and KIMBLA before proceeding on a north-easterly course from FAIRFAX Island to rendezvous with H.M.A.S. SUPPLY. A heaving line transfer of mail was carried out with H.M.A.S. SUPPLY at 12 knots between 1600 and 1612, on completion of this transfer AIR SPRITE returned to Fairfax Island, securing to the buoy laid by KIMBLA, at 1805.

22. An area patrol was carried out between 0500 and 0830 on Sunday 29th September. On completion of the area search the diving team and photographers were embarked from KIMBLA before AIR SPRITE proceeded to her holding position. The missile was fired at 0901 and located at 0910 by AIR SPRITE. The recovery line was secured at 0915 and passed to KIMBLA at 1000. The diving team and photographers were transferred to KIMBLA before AIR SPRITE proceeded to a position midway between Fairfax Island and the mainland for search and rescue duties for the chartered helicopter. The helicopter passed overhead at 1145, AIR SPRITE altered course to follow it back to KIMBLA. A leak developed in the starboard engine oil pump at 1225 while going alongside KIMBLA. Temporary repairs were effected before proceeding on S.A.R. duties for the return flight of the chartered helicopter at 1500. AIR SPRITE returned to KIMBLA after the helicopter passed overhead, securing alongside at 1635. After ten A.R.L.personnel were embarked for passage to Bundaberg, AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded to Bundaberg, stopping every hour to top up the oil in the starboard engine. AIR SPRITE secured alongside Fairymead wharf at 2130.

23. Major defects which occurred during this period were the seizure of the Port engine on Monday the 2nd.September, and the rough running of the starboard engine on the same day; both engines were replaced by Garden Island dockayrd. Numerous small defects were repaired by ship's staff and the staff of H.M.A.S. KIMBLA. A replacement power unit for the AT5/AR8 Transceiver obtained during the period the ship was in Sydney was found to be unserviceable when it was tested onboard after leaving Sydney. This necessitated retaining the power unit borrowed from the R.A.A.F. mentioned in my August Report.

24. Lieutenant W. JAMIESON R.A.N.R., a Security officer for the Department of Supply was embarked during the periods AIR SPRITE was in the operational area. This officer considers that he gained much valuable training in the handling of high speed craft, and general duties while he was onboard. It is suggested that other R.A.N.R. officers may wish to do their Annual Continuous Training in S.A.R. craft if there are no vacancies for them in the fleet.

25. Morale remained high throughout this period. There were no defaulters during the period, nor were there any cases of sickness.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient Servant,

R J Burns

(R.J. BURNS)
LIEUTENANT, R.A.N.
COMMANDING OFFICER

The Flag Officer-in-Charge,
EAST AUSTRALIA AREA.

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APPENDIX "A"

TO H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE Report of Proceedings for September, 1963

Fishing and pleasure craft found in the Venue area during the period 1st - 30th. September, 1963:

20th. September:	WALAHAWEE II	-	Registered Sydney.
23rd. September:	KIAMA II	-	Registered Brisbane.

Both vessels were reluctant to leave the area.

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APPENDIX "B"

TO H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE Report of Proceedings for September, 1963

(a)	Distance steamed during the Month	-	2,853
(b)	Hours underway during the Month	-	247
(c)	Total distance steamed while on detached duties (6th. August to 30th. September)	-	6,058

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St 6299

(3)

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

TELEPHONE:

CONFIDENTIAL

IN REPLY
QUOTE No.

H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE
At JERVIS BAY.
29th. November, 1963

H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS
1st. OCTOBER 1963 to 7th. NOVEMBER, 1963

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the report of proceedings for H.M.A. Ship under my command for the period 1st. October to 7th. November, 1963, inclusive.

2. H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE slipped from Fairymead Wharf Bundaberg at 0905 on Tuesday 1st. October. The passage through Hervey Bay and the Great Sandy Strait was uneventful. The Wide Bay bar was crossed at 1600 and course set for Brisbane. AIR SPRITE secured alongside the boom punt H.M.A.S. MORETON at 2205.

3. At 0800 on Thursday 3rd. October AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded for Sydney. A strong South easterly wind was encountered on Moreton Bay causing the seas to be very choppy. The Freeman Channel was negotiated at 1015. The full force of the strong winds, gusting to force eight, and the rough seas, was felt at 1040 when abeam of Cape Moreton Lighthouse. I decided to return to Brisbane at 1050, but was unable to turn AIR SPRITE for about five minutes. The Freeman Channel was negotiated at 1105 and AIR SPRITE secured alongside H.M.A.S. MORETON at 1400.

4. The strong winds and rough seas continued for the next six days, AIR SPRITE remaining alongside H.M.A.S. MORETON Wharf throughout this period.

5. Commander J.H.S. OSBORNE, R.A.N., and one Petty Officer Survey Recorder joined AIR SPRITE at 2200 on Wednesday 9th. October. AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded for Fraser Island to carry out survey duties; the seas were still rough with a south east swell and strong south east winds. The seas were too rough to allow AIR SPRITE to cross the Wide Bay bar. Breaksea Spit light vessel was sighted at 1035; after passing it, AIR SPRITE was forced to proceed into the wind and sea to make the shelter of Sandy Cape. AIR SPRITE anchored off Sandy Cape Lighthouse at 1330. Commander OSBORNE and his P.O.S.R. were landed by dinghy at 1410 and returned onboard at 1800. AIR SPRITE proceeded to Platypus Bay, anchoring for the night at 1830.

6. Anchor was weighed at 0700 and AIR SPRITE returned to the anchorage off Sandy Cape lighthouse at 0745. The survey party was landed at 0805 and remained ashore until 1900. When the survey party returned, the relieving assistant lighthouse keeper was with them, to take passage to Bundaberg. AIR SPRITE weighed and proceeded at 1930, securing outboard of the dredge FITZROY at Fairymead wharf at 2245. Commander OSBORNE and his P.O.S.R. left to carry out surveying duties in the Bundaberg area, on arrival at Fairymead.

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7. AIR SPRITE shifted berth to the old Town Sugar Wharf at 0630 on Saturday 12th. Berth was shifted on Sunday morning to alongside FITZROY at Fairymead to fuel, then AIR SPRITE returned to the old Town Sugar Wharf, securing alongside at 1015. Ship was dressed overall on return to the old Town Sugar Wharf, as requested by the organisers of the local Sugar Festival. AIR SPRITE was berthed approximately 200 yards upstream of the Bundaberg motorboat Club and acted as flagship for their regatta. Berth was shifted at 1700 Monday 14th. to alongside the FITZROY at the oil wharf New Bundaberg.

8. AIR SPRITE slipped for Brisbane at 0300 on Tuesday 15th. October. Choppy seas were encountered in Hervey Bay and the Great Sandy Strait, a strong south easterly wind was still blowing. Wide Bay Bar was crossed at 0810 but the sea was found to be too rough for the passage to Brisbane, so the Bar was re-crossed and AIR SPRITE proceeded to the mouth of the Mary River, where it anchored at 1015. Anchor was weighed at 1557 and AIR SPRITE commenced negotiating the Mary River, securing alongside Walkers down stream wharf at 1800.

9. At 1700 on Wednesday 16th. October, I was ordered to leave AIR SPRITE and proceed to Maroochydore by police car to investigate an object washed up on the beach there. I returned onboard at 0715 on Saturday 19th. October.

10. AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded at 1215 on Saturday 19th. to assist in the search for the missing Midshipmen from H.M.A.S. SYDNEY. AIR SPRITE was clear of the Mary river by 1353 and Great Sandy Strait by 1447. The passage to Gladstone was uneventful, AIR SPRITE securing alongside the Fisheries Wharf at 2018. On completion of fuelling at 2147 AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded for Mackay, securing alongside south wharf Mackay at 0915 on Sunday 20 October. On completion of fuelling, a deck cargo of eight 44-gallon drums was embarked to assist AIR SPRITE to remain in the search area longer.

11. AIR SPRITE slipped at 1045 and proceeded direct to Allonby to commence searching for the missing whaler at 1200. AIR SPRITE carried out a search 20 to 50 yards offshore of all islands in the Sir James Smith and Lindeman groups of islands before anchoring off the north western corner of Hook Island at 1715. At 1915 AIR SPRITE weighed and proceeded with H.M.A.S. SYDNEY to investigate an object sighted by an aircraft. H.M.A.S. ANZAC also proceeded to the area reported, and established a datum before SYDNEY and AIR SPRITE arrived at 2115. AIR SPRITE carried out searches as ordered by SYDNEY until 0130 on the 21st. when all vessels stopped and drifted until dawn. Expanding searches were carried out around SYDNEY by ANZAC and AIR SPRITE between 0530 and 0750. At 0750 SYDNEY's motor boat transferred Midshipman K.F. MARIEN, R.A.N., Midshipman B.T. SWAIN, R.A.N., and three ratings, to AIR SPRITE to assist during the search. Lieutenant M. CARTER, R.A.N.R. took passage for Hayman Island to act as Liaison officer between naval vessels and local small craft. Two civilian passengers were embarked for passage to Bowen.

12. AIR SPRITE proceeded from the SYDNEY to Cape Upstart and commenced carrying out a search along the coast from Cape Upstart to Bowen at 0820. AIR SPRITE secured alongside Bowen Wharf at 1030, slipping at 1045 to carry on searching between Glouser Head and Pioneer Pt. After reaching Pioneer rocks at 1510, AIR SPRITE proceeded direct to Hayman Island to land Lieutenant CARTER before returning to Bowen at 1820.

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13. A spare crew, maintenance party and equipment for the helicopter operating for H.M.A.S. SYDNEY were embarked before slipping and proceeding at 0600 on Tuesday the 22nd.; after transferring all personnel and equipment for the helicopter to SYDNEY, AIR SPRITE proceeded to Abbot Point and carried out a search of the coast between Abbot Point and Mt. Kangaroo. Mt. Kangaroo was abeam at 1510, AIR SPRITE then commenced a search of Long Island and Pine Island before proceeding to Dent Island lighthouse, which was abeam at 1525. AIR SPRITE continued up the western shores of Dent, Cid and Whitsunday Islands, and circumnavigated Hook and Hayman Islands before proceeding to Eshelby Island. AIR SPRITE hove to off Eshelby Island and lowered the dinghy to recover a search party of two, dropped on the island by helicopter. A second party of two was recovered from Rattray Island before proceeding to Gloucester Head to look for SYDNEY's motor cutter and seardh parties landed on Gloucester Head.

14. A small fire was sighted on the north eastern corner of Gloucester Head at 1928, but could not be investigated as the saas were too rough for the dinghy to land. SYDNEY's motor cutter was sighted at 1940 and instructed to join AIR SPRITE at anchor in Bona Bay. AIR SPRITE proceeded to Bona Bay and anchored 200yds. off shore at 2030. SYDNEY's motor cutter was sighted at 2050. While attempting to come alongside AIR SPRITE's port side, the midshipman in charge of the boat made an error of judgment and rammed AIR SPRITE amidships, smashing a four-inch hole into the Commanding Officer's cabin, about 3ft. above the waterline. H.M.A.S.SYDNEY was informed of the damage, and a party was sent to AIR SPRITE to carry out repairs. The Midshipman in charge of the motor cutter informed me that eleven members of the search party and boats crew were still ashore on Gloucester Island, without food or water, and two were without footwear of any kind. AIR SPRITE established a base camp on Bona Beach for the search party before weighing anchor and proceeding for SYDNEY at 2300.

15. Twenty ratings from H.M.A.S. SYDNEY were embarked before proceeding to Bowen. AIR SPRITE secured alongside No.4 berth at 0200 on Wednesday 23rd.October. AIR SPRITE fuelled during the forenoon and sailed at 1030. After landing food and water at the camp on Bona Beach, AIR SPRITE proceeded along the south western coast of Gloucester Island. A R.A.A.F. Neptune Bomber reported sighting three persons on the north eastern point of Gloucester Head at 1223, AIR SPRITE proceeded there at 25 knots. The persons on the beach were found to be three members of the search party, they were recovered by dinghy. AIR SPRITE then proceeded down the eastern coast of Gloucester Island and took off the remaining eight members of the search party, returning to Bona Bay and anchoring at 1640. Anchor was weighed at 1930, and AIR SPRITE proceeded to SYDNEY to transfer stores and personnel to SYDNEY's motor cutter. Midshipman K.F. MARIEN R.A.N., and Midshipman B.T. SWAIN, R.A.N. were also transferred to H.M.A.S. SYDNEY. AIR SPRITE then secured alongside ANZAC at anchor off Gloucester Head at 2030.

16. AIR SPRITE slipped from alongside ANZAC at 0445 on Thursday 24th October, and proceeded to Bona Bay, anchoring at 0500. At 0645, anchor was weighed and a search commenced from Bona Bay, round Gloucester Head to Grimston Point, including all off-lying islands. The starboard engine oil pump became defective at 1130, necessitating anchoring off Grimston point at 1200 to effect temporary repairs. AIR SPRITE weighed at 1415 and proceeded direct to Bowen, securing alongside Bowen wharf at 1558.

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17. A replacement oil pump was received in Bowen early in the afternoon of Sunday 27th October. When unpacked, it was found that an incorrect pump has been supplied, but it could be modified in a reasonably well equipped workshop. Arrangements were made to use the Queensland Railway's workshop to do this work, and the pump was ready to be fitted by 2100. AIR SPRITE was fully serviceable at 2350.

18. On Monday 28th October at 0710, AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded to join SYDNEY off Hayman Island. AIR SPRITE lay off SYDNEY's quarter while stores and four passengers were transferred by SYDNEY's motor boat. At 1025 AIR SPRITE proceeded for Bowen, securing alongside at 1215. AIR SPRITE fuelled during the afternoon and slipped at 2120, to return to SYDNEY, anchored off Hayman Island. At 2330 AIR SPRITE stopped and received stores and personnel from SYDNEY's motor boat, for passage to Bowen. AIR SPRITE sailed for Bowen at 2348, securing alongside at 0145.

19. Nine R.A.A.F. officers joined AIR SPRITE at 0625 on Tuesday 29th October for passage to SYDNEY, to attend the Board of enquiry. AIR SPRITE slipped at 0630 and transferred the R.A.A.F. officers to SYDNEY's motor boat at 0845. AIR SPRITE anchored off Langford Island between 0900 and 1105; after weighing anchor at 1105, AIR SPRITE lay 20 yards off SYDNEY's port side and received 3 relatives of the missing midshipmen and the nine Air Force officers by boat, before proceeding for Bowen at 1145. AIR SPRITE secured alongside Bowen wharf at 1330 and after all passengers had disembarked, sailed at 1340 to rejoin H.M.A.S. SYDNEY. At 1600 AIR SPRITE proceeded alongside ANZAC while the Commanding officer was briefed about further searches on board H.M.A.S. SYDNEY. The Commanding officer returned onboard at 1800. Sub Lieutenant R.H. WOOLRYCH, R.A.N., joined AIR SPRITE at 1810 to assist with watchkeeping duties during the remainder of the search. AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded at 1850, securing alongside Bowen wharf at 2100.

20. On completion of fuelling at 0300 on Wednesday 30th October, 5 drums of helicopter oil were loaded onboard before slipping at 0310. AIR SPRITE proceeded to rendezvous with SYDNEY at 0400 and after transferring the helicopter oil, AIR SPRITE returned to Bowen, securing alongside at 0500. AIR SPRITE slipped at 0815 and proceeded to rendezvous with SYDNEY at 0925. Six search parties were embarked from SYDNEY and AIR SPRITE proceeded to the Double Bay - Woodwork Bay area, where the parties were landed to carry out a search of the shores of both bays. The starboard engine commenced running roughly at 1130. After landing the last search party, AIR SPRITE anchored to investigate the engine defect. AIR SPRITE weighed at 1400 and after embarking an Engineer officer from the SYDNEY, proceeded to recover all shore parties, returning alongside SYDNEY at 1725. The rough running of the starboard engine was diagnosed as being caused by contaminated fuel, probably from the 44-gallon drums that were used to fuel AIR SPRITE at Bowen. The search parties and Engineer officer were transferred to SYDNEY's motor cutter at 1725.

21. Captain W.J. DOVERS, D.S.C., R.A.N., the Captain of H.M.A.S. SYDNEY, boarded AIR SPRITE at 1730. Captain DOVERS addressed the Ship's Company of AIR SPRITE and thanked them for all that they had done during the search. Captain DOVERS departed at 1750. AIR SPRITE proceeded at 1810 for Mackay, securing alongside the south wharf at 2143.

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22. AIR SPRITE slipped from Mackay at 0600 on Thursday 31st.October. The passage to Gladstone was uneventful, AIR SPRITE securing alongside Fisherman's Wharf at 1745. On completion of fuelling at 2015, AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded for Brisbane. The Great Sandy Strait was entered at 0305 on the 1st. November. AIR SPRITE anchored off White Cliffs from 0500 until 0615, when there was sufficient water.over the Sheridan Flat shallows to negotiate them safely. The Wide Bay Bar was crossed at 0740 and course set for Brisbane. AIR ~~PSIR~~ SPRITE secured alongside the Boom punt H.M.A.S. MORETON at 1400.

23. AIR SPRITE sailed from Brisbane at 0500 on Saturday 2nd. November. The starboard engine commenced running roughly at 1100, but cleared itself and was running correctly at 1115. At 1250 the port engine oil pressure dropped, course was altered to shelter behind Cape Byron. AIR SPRITE anchored in the lee of Cape Byron at 1300. An investigation of the port engine lubricating system revealed that the copper suction pipe had fractured. The pipe was removed and temporary repairs carried out by ship's staff using fittings from the stove and fresh water system. AIR SPRITE weighed and proceeded at 1515. The remainder of the trip to Coff's Harbour was uneventful, AIR SPRITE securing alongside the jetty at 2025. On completion of fuelling at 2212, AIR SPRITE slipped and proceeded for Sydney. The passage to Sydney was uneventful, AIR SPRITE secured outboard of the tug WATTLE at the Sullage wharf Garden Island at 1040 on Sunday 3rd. November.

24. Dockyard personnel inspected both engines during the forenoon of Monday 4th. November and commenced work on both engines during the afternoon. Work continued during Tuesday the 5th and Wednesday 6th. of November. The mast from H.M.A.S. AIR MASTER was placed onboard the upper deck before proceeding on engine trials during the forenoon of Thursday 7th. Trials were satisfactory, so AIR SPRITE slipped at 1300 and proceeded for Jervis Bay. Strong westerly winds were encountered off Wollongong, forcing AIR SPRITE to hug the coast to avoid the short choppy seas caused by the wind. AIR SPRITE secured outboard of S.A.R. Y.257 at the Marine Section Wharf at 1750.

25. During this period numerous mechanical defects occurred. The starboard engine oil pump had to have new gaskets placed in it, and the complete pump changed over at a later date. The cause of the trouble with this pump was a wedge-shaped flaw in one of the faces of the casing of the pump where it was joined by a gasket, it was ~~curious~~ OBVIOUS that this pump had not been inspected when the engine had been overhauled. All copper pipes on both engines were brittle and needed annealing, this was the reason for loss of oil pressure in the port engine during the passage from Brisbane to Coffs Harbour. Fuel contamination, probably from the 44-gallon drums used at Bowen, caused the rough running of both engines, and necessitated the removal and cleaning of all carburettors by dockyard on return to Sydney. While this was being carried out it was found that one of the carburetor floats in the starboard engine was holed, causing rough running at slow speeds. The planking in the engine room at the after end, shrunk due to the continuous heat of the engines, this can be easily repaired by caulking. The mast was badly attacked by dry rot and was in a dangerous condition from early in October. H.M.A.S. AIR MASTER's mast was brought from Sydney to Jervis Bay as deck cargo, by AIR SPRITE, and AIR SPRITE's mast was removed and AIR MASTER's fitted in its place, by Marine Section staff, on Friday the 8th. November.

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26. Morale remained high throughout this period. It was felt by many members of the Ship's Company that three months living continuously onboard a S.A.R. was a strain on the individual, and it is recommended that ship's companies be changed round at least every two months while S.A.Rs are on detached duties in future.

27. There were no defaulters during the period AIR SPRITE was on detached duties, nor were there any cases of sickness.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(R. J. BURNS)
LIEUTENANT, R.A.N.
COMMANDING OFFICER

Appendix "A".

The Flag Officer-in-Charge,
EAST AUSTRALIA AREA

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APPENDIX "A"

TO H.M.A.S. AIR SPRITE Report of Proceedings
for period 1 Oct - 7 Nov 1963

(1)	Distance steamed during this period	4,130 miles.
(2)	Hours under way during this period	234 hours.
(3)	Total distance steamed while on detached duties -	10,189 miles.

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NAVY REGISTRY

RECORDING AND INDEXING DIRECTIONS

REGISTER ON CARD 18/206/1

FILE TITLE AMPS Cur Strike

Reports of Proceedings

6/8/63 to 7/4/63

MARK TO NN BRANCH

OTHER DIRECTIONS

INDEXING HISTORY

	SUBJECT INDEX SYMBOLS	NAME INDEX SYMBOLS	DATE
INITIAL INDEXING		N2	
SUBSEQUENT INDEXING			

CLASSIFIER

DATE 8/4/64