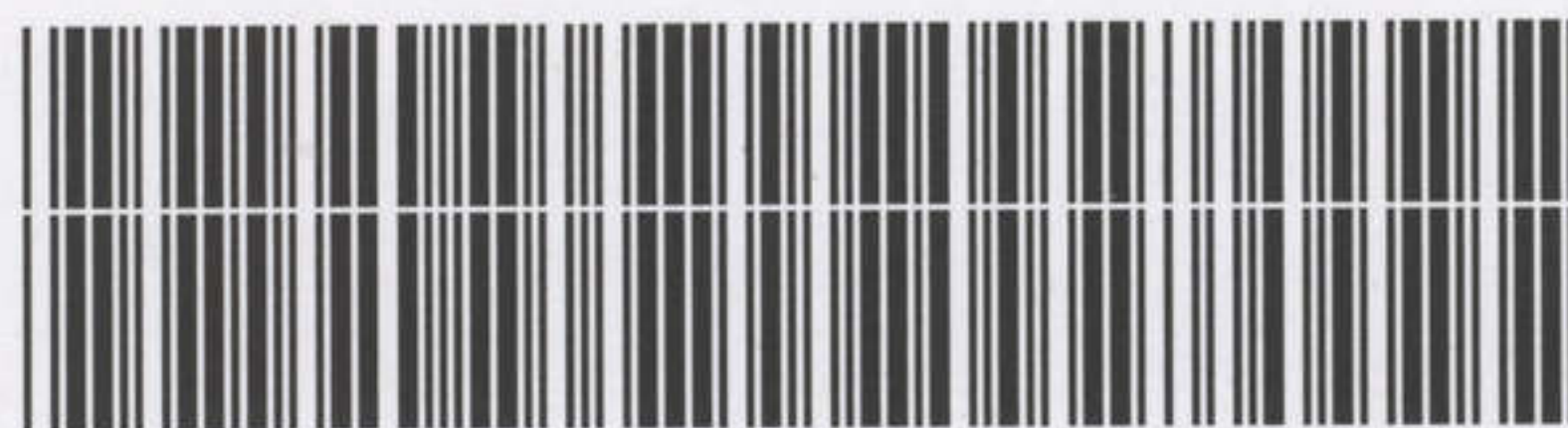


AWM78
**Reports of Proceedings,
HMA Ships and Establishments**

HMAS AITAPE

Item number: 27/2

Title: January-December 1970



AWM78-27/2

[27/2]

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[Signature]

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Signature: *[Signature]* Date: *1 Nov 90*

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AUTHORITY: DIG(N) ADMIN 873

REVIEWER: *R L Smith* LCDR RAN
(for DSSI (Navy)).

Date: *29 March 90*

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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

18.6.1889⁹

HMAS ATTAPE

Report of Proceedings JAN 70

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- NOTES:
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PNG 32/1/019

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

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NAVY—CANBERRA

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OFFICE OF THE
NAVAL OFFICER IN CHARGE
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
LOMBRUM NEW GUINEA

The Secretary
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

HMAS AITAPE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS -

JANUARY 1970

1. Forwarded with pleasure.
2. The District Commissioner, Bougainville, has apologised for the lack of assistance during AITAPE's visit. This is most unusual for the PNGPABRON are well looked after in Kieta.
3. I support the Captain's action in paragraph 43.
4. In respect to paragraph 41 HMAS AITAPE's message DTG 052240Z February 1970 refers.

(G. HALLEY)
Commander RAN

Enclosure: HMAS AITAPE's letter 127/1 of 5th February, 1970.

For Information: The Commander
Australian Mine Warfare and Patrol Forces
HMAS WATERHEN.

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Quote in reply: 127/1

HMAS AITAPE
At LOMBRUM

5th February, 1970

The Naval Officer-in-Charge
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

HMAS AITAPE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - JANUARY 1970

Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings of HMAS AITPAE under my command for the month of January 1970.

2. New Years Day, 1970, found HMAS AITAPE alongside in Madang. The ship cast off and proceeded for Karkar Island at 1230 on 2nd January, and after an uneventful passage, secured to head and stern buoys off Kulili Plantation (4° 33'S, 146° 00'E) at 1450 that afternoon. The purpose of the visit to Karkar was to try to contact a potential PNG recruit. The visit was fruitless; the recruit failed to report.
3. I joined the ship at 0930 on 3rd January, after a most alarming flight from Madang in a Cessna light aircraft. Heavy cloud, gusty conditions and low visibility prevailed throughout the flight: while flying blind at 4,000 feet, I could not help being aware of the fact that the aircraft had no nav aids to speak of, and that the 6,000 foot peak of Karkar lay, invisible, only a mile or two off the aircraft's track.
4. HMAS AITAPE slipped and proceeded from Kulili at 0945 on 3rd January. A rendezvous was made with HMAS LAE (Lieutenant J.E. SCOTT RAN) at 1000; AITAPE and LAE then proceeded in company for Lombrum. Moderate north westerly conditions and heavy rain prevailed for the remainder of the forenoon and the early part of the afternoon, and the passage was uncomfortable one. OOW manoeuvres were carried out during the dog watches, and the two ships berthed alongside at Lombrum at 2010 that night.
5. I assumed command of HMAS AITAPE at 0900 on 5th January and Lieutenant Commander W.S.G. BATEMAN RAN left the ship at 1230.
6. Mr E.G. WHITLAM MP, leader of the Federal Opposition, visited HMAS TARANGAU on 5th January. He was accompanied by two other members of Parliament, Mr K. BEAZLEY MP and Mr S. HAYDEN MP, and numerous personal staff and gentlemen of the press. Mr WHITLAM walked round HMAS SAMARAI as part of his visit to HMAS TARANGAU, and later that evening met TARANGAU and PNGPABRON officers and their ladies in the TARANGAU wardroom. Mr WHITLAM's visit to Papua New Guinea eventually promoted a considerable degree of controversy, and his willingness to make statements on contentious issues is likely to provide topics of conversation in Territory clubs and bars for several months.

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7. A routine underwater inspection on 5th January revealed moderate damage to the starboard screw. To ascertain the effect of the damage the ship proceeded for sea trials on 6th January. As a result of the trials base staff decided that the ship could continue operations.
8. HMAS AITAPE was programmed to remain in Lombrum for the remainder of the week. However at 1700 on 8th January you received word that a merchant ship of Indonesian registration was aground on an island west of Manus, and ordered AITAPE to proceed to the area to pick up the survivors.
9. HMAS AITAPE cast off and proceeded from Lombrum at 1745 on 8th January, and after an uneventful overnight passage, arrived off Suma-Suma Island (1° 27'S, 144° 03'E), the reported position of the wreck, at 0800 on 9th January.
10. There was no sign of a wreck at Suma-Suma, but soon afterwards one was sighted on the reef west of Sama Islands, (1° 22'S, 144° 04'E) a few miles to the north. By 1050 the survivors, eleven men and a woman, had been located and brought onboard, and HMAS AITAPE proceeded for Wewak.
11. The Indonesian ship, M.V. XAVERIUS (93 tons GR), had been adrift for over 6 weeks when she grounded at Sama. The passengers and crew, all of whom survived, subsisted on a diet of margarine and flour from the ships cargo. M.V. XAVERIUS was holed forward when she grounded. The master reported she was flooded throughout her length. Salvage may have been just possible in very calm weather, but the north-westerly swell prevailing put it out of the question for the time being; in any case, the ship was in such a decrepit and unseaworthy condition that salvage would not have been worth the effort.
12. HMAS AITAPE anchored at Wewak at 1800 that evening, 9th January. The Deputy District Commissioner, East Sepik District, Mr D. Steven, and customs and health authorities came on board immediately to supervise the disembarkation of the passengers.
13. Disembarkation was accomplished quickly. AITAPE weighed anchor and proceeded from Wewak at 1830 on 9th January and berthed alongside at Lombrum at 1230 on 10th January.
14. The period from 12th January until the end of the month was spent visiting Coastwatching Stations in the New Guinea Islands.
15. At 0800 on 12th January, HMAS AITAPE cast off and proceeded for Ekaleu Island in the St Matthias or Mussau Group, (1° 32'S, 149° 36'E) where she anchored at 1700 the same evening. While at Ekaleu, an item of economic intelligence was received which may be of some interest to any readers of this report who play the stock market: three geologists from Conzinc Riotinto (Australia) Ltd, are at present working on Mussau to determine the extent and value of known bauxite deposits there.
16. HMAS AITAPE weighed and proceeded from Ekaleu at 0800 on 13th January, and anchored in Eulolo Harbour, Emirau Island (1° 40'S, 149° 57'E) at 1115. A small jetty in the harbour was inspected and found to be suitable for a patrol boat, and the ship moved alongside at 1140.
17. The landing party was exercised during the afternoon. After dark, an intra-ship, PNG v RAN crayfishing competition was arranged, which the PNG won convincingly. There were no winners in the subsequent crayfish cooking competition - all the crayfish turned out to be tough and tasteless.

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18. HMAS AITAPE cast off and proceeded at 0800 on 14th January and anchored at the eastern end of Saraware Passage, Tabar Islands ($2^{\circ} 48'S$, $151^{\circ} 58'E$) at 1630 that afternoon. Action, emergency and leaving ship stations were exercised during the passage from Emirau to Tabar.
19. HMAS AITAPE weighed and proceeded from Saraware Passage at 0800 on 15th January, anchored briefly at Bolegila Plantation from 1000 to 1200, and then proceeded for Kavieng. The ship anchored in Kavieng harbour at 1400 that afternoon.
20. The stay in Kavieng was somewhat marred by a glut of both overseas and coastal shipping, and a shortage of wharf space: this necessitated frequent berth shifting. We shifted berth no less than six times over the weekend. 15/400
21. I called on the District Commissioner, New Ireland District, Mr L. Williams at 0900 on 16th January. Mr Williams came on board for refreshments at 1200 on 18th January, and later entertained me to lunch at the Kavieng Club.
22. HMAS AITAPE cast off from Kavieng wharf at 1010 on 19th January. Departure had been delayed over two hours to wait for a road tanker load of fresh water. The bore water supplied to Kavieng wharf is undrinkable, but CDW very kindly arranged for us to be supplied with tanker loads of rainwater from house tanks. Owing to the frequent berth shifts in Kavieng, the tankers could rarely catch up with the ship. 19/1010
23. HMAS AITAPE arrived off Lagagot River, on the west coast of Lihir Island ($3^{\circ} 08'S$, $152^{\circ} 34'E$) at 1630 on 19th January. This anchorage had not been used by a patrol boat before, and navigational information on it was scanty. I inspected it by boat and decided it was suitable. The entrance between the shore reefs fringing the estuary was narrow but deep and free from danger; once inside the river opened out enough to provide room for a patrol boat to turn. AITAPE entered the harbour, turned short and anchored bows to sea. A stern line was passed to a convenient tree ashore and hauled taut.
24. The ship lay comfortably in the snug and well protected little anchorage for the night, and proceeded at 0600 the following morning 20th January.
25. A brief call was made at Namatanai ($3^{\circ} 39'S$, $152^{\circ} 26'E$) from 0900 to 1000. The ship secured alongside Namatanai wharf and I went ashore to call on the Assistant District Commissioner, Mr H. Redman.
26. HMAS AITAPE anchored in Salat Strait, in the Feni Islands, ($4^{\circ} 01'S$, $153^{\circ} 39'E$) at 1600 that afternoon. The ship remained in the anchorage overnight, and proceeded for Rabaul at 0800 on 21st January.
27. HMAS AITAPE berthed alongside the Wreck Wharf, Rabaul at 1800 on 21st January. The Naval Agent, Rabaul, Mr B.F. Darcey, met the ship on arrival.
28. At 1000 on 22nd January I called on the District Commissioner East New Britain District, Mr H. West.
29. During the two working days in Rabaul the opportunity was taken to paint the ship's side.
30. HMAS AITAPE cast off and proceeded from Rabaul at 0745 on 26th January and anchored in Muliama Harbour ($4^{\circ} 03'S$, $152^{\circ} 59'E$) at 1600 that afternoon.

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31. The ship weighed and proceeded from Muliana at 0600 on 27th January, and secured alongside Sohano wharf, Buka Passage, at 1610 that afternoon. Members of the Ship's Company were entertained to drinks in the Sohano Club that evening.

32. At 0800 on 28th January HMAS AITAPE cast off and proceeded for Kieta. While on passage down the Bougainville coast, action stations were exercised. Co-incident with the sounding of the action alarm, two yachts were sighted, and I altered course to take a closer look at them. The skipper on one of the yachts, S.Y. QUEEQUEEG, seemed unduly alarmed at the sight of an approaching patrol boat with its crew at action stations. He hoisted a large American ensign and made expansive gestures of friendship. I altered course away and continued the passage to Kieta.

33. A possible explanation for the behaviour of the skipper of S.Y. QUEEQUEEG appeared in later discussions with Department of District Administration officials in Kieta. It seems the QUEEQUEEG had, with the exception of her skipper, an all-girl crew. The yacht had spent the previous night in Kieta, on what can only be regarded as an operational visit: the ladies of the QUEEQUEEG did brisk business in the community of about 2,000 Australian copper miners near Kieta. When the District Commissioner heard of such happenings he ordered the yacht and her crew drummed out of town. Possibly the skipper of the QUEEQUEEG thought the approach of HMAS AITAPE heralded the administration of rough justice outside the three-mile limit.

34. HMAS AITAPE berthed at Kieta at 1400 on 28th January. It was not a successful visit.

35. You had advised the District Commissioner by telegram some three weeks earlier of HMAS AITAPE's E.T.A. and fuel requirements. However when we arrived not even the harbourmaster knew we were coming, there was no fuel available, and the District Commissioner was unable to accept my call. I was able to confirm that the District Commissioner had in fact received your telegram.

36. HMAS AITAPE cast off and proceeded from Kieta at 0900 on 29th January. After negotiating Buka passage during the early afternoon a brief call was made at Queen Carola Harbour (5° 08'S, 154° 30'E) to enable a member of the ship's company to spend a few hours with his father who lay ill in a nearby village. The ship proceeded for Rabaul at 2000 that evening.

37. During the middle watch a rare and magnificent view was obtained of Mount Uluwan, the erupting volcano on the northwest coast of New Britain. At that time the volcano was over 100 miles away, but the clouds of fiery smoke belching from its crater could be clearly seen with the naked eye.

38. HMAS AITAPE berthed alongside at Burns Philp's wharf at Rabaul at 0800 on 30th January, and remained there until the end of the month.

Ship Serviceability

39. An alarming defect in the main engines manifested itself on two occasions during the month. In each case, the ship was at sea, running on one engine, and preparing to re-start the second engine. When the starting sequence for the second engine was initiated, the engine already running went into automatic shut-down, and the second engine refused to start thus leaving the ship engine-less in mid ocean. In each case the problem was overcome in a short time.

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The trouble has been traced to earths in the 24 volt system, and will be rectified during the forthcoming S.M.P.

40. The radar was non-operational for about two weeks during the month, but is now functioning satisfactorily.

41. The cause of the damage to the starboard screw (paragraph 7 of this report refers) is unknown, but it is presumed that the ship struck a log during the passage to Madang and back. A signalled report of the damage was made in accordance with RI article 3537. However, at this time of the year floating logs are prevalent north of New Guinea, and three more floating logs were struck during the month. No further damage was sustained, and these collisions were not reported. All three collisions occurred at night. There is little that can be done to avert such collisions, other than avoiding night passages wherever possible. The logs rarely present a radar echo. The effect of the collisions can be minimised by making night passages at slow speed on one engine, and this has been my practice.

42. The ship is otherwise working well and of satisfactory appearance.

Ships Company

43. A case of a PNG able rate striking an RAN leading hand arose during the month. Upon investigation this offence seemed to be not as serious as it might have been: a little bad temper on the part of the PNG sailor was a factor, as also was the RAN sailor's failure to realise that the PNG sense of humour does not always correspond with our own. The offence was dealt with comparatively lightly, and I do not believe it reflected or caused any spirit of bad feeling in the integrated mess deck.

44. In all other respects the conduct, health and morale of the ship's company throughout the month have been very good.

I have the honour to be,

Sir

Your obedient servant.

(Sgd) J.N. LATTIN

(J.N. LATTIN)
Lieutenant Commander RAN
CAPTAIN

Enclosures: A. STEAMING APPENDIX
B. EXERCISE APPENDIX
C. SPORTING APPENDIX
D. MONTHLY RETURN OF SHIP AVAILABILITY

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APPENDIX 'A'

STEAMING APPENDIX (RI Appendix 29A Paragraph 6)

(A)	Distance steamed during the month	2233.3 miles
(B)	Hours underway during the month	152.0 hours
(C)	Total distance steamed since commissioning	58401.5 miles
(D)	Total hours under way since commissioning	4333.6 hours
(E)	Occasions of exceeding economical speed	N i l

APPENDIX 'B'

EXERCISE APPENDIX

Action Stations	2
Emergency Stations	1
Leaving Ship Stations	1
OOW Manoeuvres	1
.50 Cal Browning Firings	1
Landing Party	1
Small Arms Firings	1

APPENDIX 'C'

SPORTING APPENDIX

13 Jan 70.	Crayfishing competition	PNG v RAN - PNG 20 - 0
17 Jan 70.	Soccer v SUNAM	Lost 1 - 6

APPENDIX 'D'

Attached.

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MONTHLY RETURN OF SHIP AVAILABILITY
(TO ACCOMPANY MONTHLY REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS)
HMAS. ALTAPE
DATE. 05 JAN 70

APPENDIX 'B' TO CANO 7/66
AGE SINCE COMMISSIONING 22/12 YEARS
MILES STEAMED SINCE COMM. 58401.5 MILES

I.C. ENGINES SHIPS
PROGRESSIVE TOTAL ENGINE HOURS
NO.1. 302
NO.2. 332

MONTH DAY	AVAILABILITY STATE		OPERAT DUTIES	EXERCIS	WEAPON TRAINING	SPECIAL TASKS	POST RIFIT TRIALS	PASSAGE TIME	VISIT	PROGRAM MAINT.	PROGME REFIT DOCK.	REPAIR	HARBOUR	LONG LEAVE	DEFECTS AFFECTING SHIPS DESIGNED PERFORM (DURATION IN HOURS)										REMARKS
	1	2													H	E	L	G	TAS	ND	C	EW	DL	CPT	
1	✓								✓																
2	✓								✓																
3	✓																								
4	✓							✓									10								
5	✓												✓				24								
6	✓												✓				24								
7	✓												✓				24								
8	✓					✓							✓				24								'L' Defect - radar.
9	✓					✓											24								
10	✓					✓										1/2	24								'E' Defect - main engines.
11	✓												✓				12								
12	✓							✓																	
13	✓							✓																	
14	✓							✓																	
15	✓							✓																	
16	✓												✓												
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27	✓							✓																	
28	✓							✓																	
29	✓							✓																	
30	✓												✓			1/2	6								
31	✓												✓				24								
TOTAL	31					3		12	2				14			1	244								

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18.6.1959

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

HMAS 17 TAPK

Report of Proceedings FEB 1970

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1NM 22/4

2NM 22/4

3NM 22/4

4NM 27/4

SECRETARY 28/4

C of S 27/4

DPR 29/4

AS(NS) (NS35) 29/4

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ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

NAVY—CANBERRA

18

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1959

OFFICE OF THE
NAVAL OFFICER IN CHARGE
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
LOMBRUM NEW GUINEA

10 APR 1970

The Secretary
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

HMAS AITAPE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - FEBRUARY 1970

1. Forwarded.

(G. HALLEY)
Commander RAN

Enclosure: HMAS AITAPE A127/1 of 1st March, 1970

For Information: The Commander
Australian Mine Warfare and Patrol Forces
HMAS WATERHEN

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A127/1

HMAS AITAPE
At PORT MORESBY

1st March 1970

The Naval Officer In Charge
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

HMAS AITAPE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - FEBRUARY 1970

Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings of HMAS AITAPE under my command for the month of February 1970.

2. HMAS AITAPE was alongside in Rabaul at the beginning of the month. At 0800 on 1st February the ship cast off and proceeded for Lombrum. A brief call was made at Kurumyt plantation, on the west coast of New Ireland (3° 39'S; 152° 21'E) from 1100 to 1200, and after an otherwise uneventful passage in beautiful weather, HMAS AITAPE secured alongside at Lombrum at 1000 on 2nd February.

3. On the evening of 2nd February I dined with you Sir, in the company of the Minister for the Navy, the Honourable D.J. Killen, M.P., and other people.

4. On 3rd February Mr Killen walked round HMAS AITAPE as part of his tour of HMAS TARANGAU.

5. HMAS AITAPE was in self maintenance from 5th February to 12th February.

6. On 16th February the ship began what was intended to be a week's daily running from Lombrum. On the first day the ship cast off from Lombrum at 0800 and anchored at Pak Island (2° 03'S; 147° 35'E) from 1000 to 1315. Boatwork training for newly - joined crew members was carried out at Pak. The ship returned alongside at Lombrum at 1500.

7. The next day, 17th February the ship once again sailed at 0800. The weather was unpleasant: strong north westerly winds, driving rain and heavy seas prevailed even inside the harbour. At 1030 you directed HMAS AITAPE to proceed to the Purdy Islands area, south of Manus, to search for a missing work boat. The ship proceeded to the area at maximum speed.

8. During the afternoon Johnston Islands (2° 25'S; 147° 05'E) and Alim Island (2° 54'S; 147° 04'E) were searched, as it was thought the work boat may have taken shelter at one of them. There was no sign of the work boat, but a canoe which had

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, /been blown

been blown off course was found at Johnston. The crew of the canoe had no problems, and were able to continue their passage when the weather moderated the next day. HMAS AITAPE anchored at Alim Island overnight.

9. The ship weighed and proceeded from Alim at 0600 on 18th February, and arrived in the Purdy group at 0915. The missing work boat was found shortly afterwards, anchored in the lee of Mouse Island (2° 53'S; 146° 23'E). The vessel's steering wheel had broken off, and jury steering had been rigged. It was otherwise undamaged and seaworthy, and the skipper was waiting for the wind to ease before continuing his passage.

10. HMAS AITAPE left Mouse Island at 1245 on 18th February and proceeded for Lombrum. A call was made at Johnston Island in the afternoon to check on the canoe that had been found there, but it had already sailed for Manus. The ship berthed alongside at Lombrum at 1900 that night, and remained alongside for the next four days.

11. For most of the search operation conditions on board were uncomfortable, and winds up to force 8 were experienced together with a short, steep, eight-to-ten-foot swell. That the ship was able to maintain speeds of 15 to 20 Knots in these conditions, without shipping a drop of green water, is a tribute to the good hull design of ATTACK class Fast Patrol Boats. Wind and sea eased on the afternoon of 18th February.

12. At 0800 on 23rd February HMAS AITAPE cast off from Lombrum and proceeded for Lae in company with HMAS LADAVA (Lieutenant D.J. Angus RAN). Exercises were carried out during the passage to Lae, where the two ships berthed alongside at 1210 on 24th February.

13. The Captain, HMAS LADAVA, and I called on the District Commissioner, Morobe district, Mr H.P. Seale, on 25th February.

14. HMAS AITAPE cast off from Lae at 1200 on 26th February and proceeded for Port Moresby, once again in company with HMAS LADAVA. Passage was taken through Royle and Hornbill Channels and China Strait and the two ships berthed alongside at the PNG Transportation Squadron wharf in Port Moresby at 0800 on 28th February.

15. HMAS AITAPE was alongside in Port Moresby at the end of the month.

Ship Serviceability

16. A recurring defect in the main engine starting circuit, mentioned in last month's Report of Proceedings,

/has again

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has again been in evidence. The radar and 691 radio have also given some trouble; the radar is now operational but the 691 is awaiting spares. The ship is otherwise working well and of satisfactory appearance.

Ship's Company

17. The conduct, health and morale of the Ship's Company during the month have been very good.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

Sgd (J.N. LATTIN)

(J.N. LATTIN)
Lieutenant Commander RAN
CAPTAIN

Enclosures: A. Steaming Appendix
B. Exercise Appendix
C. Monthly Return Of Ship Availability

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APPENDIX 'A'

STEAMING APPENDIX

(A)	Distance steamed during the month	1607.0
(B)	Hours underway during the month	118.7
(C)	Total distance steamed since commissioning	60,008.5
(D)	Total hours underway since commissioning	4,452.3
(E)	Occasions of exceeding economical speed	N I L

APPENDIX 'B'

EXERCISE APPENDIX

Boarding party:	1
Tow aft:	1
Man overboard:	6
Heaving line transfer approaches:	6

APPENDIX 'C'

Attached.

DATE... 2 MAR 70.

MILES STEAMED SINCE COMM. 69008.5 MILES

NO. 2. 423.

MONTH	DAY	AVAILABILITY STATE		OPERATIONAL DUTIES	EXERCISE	WEAPON TRAINING	SPECIAL TASKS	POST REFIT TRIALS	PASSAGE TIME	VISIT	PROGRAM MAINT.	PROGRAMMED REFIT DOCK. REPAIR	HARBOR	LONG LEAVE	DEFECTS AFFECTING SHIPS DESIGNED PERFORMANCE (DURATION IN HOURS)										REMARKS
		1	2												H	E	L	G	TAS	ND	C	EW	DL	CPT	
	1	✓							✓																
	2	✓											✓												
	3	✓											✓												
	4	✓											✓												
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	29	✓																							
	30	✓																							
	31	✓																							
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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

HMAS

TAPE

Report of Proceedings MAR 1970

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19 MAY A.M.

NAVY REGISTRY

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ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

NAVY—CANBERRA

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TELEPHONE:

IN REPLY QUOTE PNG 32/1/019

OFFICE OF THE
NAVAL OFFICER IN CHARGE
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
LOMBRUM NEW GUINEA

15 MAY 1970

The Secretary
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

HMAS AITAPE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - MARCH 1970

Forwarded.

(G. HALLEY)
Commander RAN

Enclosure: HMAS AITAPE's letter A127/01 of 1st April, 1970.

For Information:

The Commander Australian Mine Warfare and Patrol Forces
HMAS WATERHEN

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A127/01

HMAS AITAPE
At MADANG

1st April 1970

The Naval Officer In Charge
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

HMAS AITAPE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - MARCH 1970

Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings of HMAS AITAPE, under my command, for the month of March 1970.

2. The ship was alongside in Port Moresby at the beginning of the month. At 1200 on 2nd March I called on the Commanding Officer, 1 Battalion Pacific Islands Regiment, Lieutenant Colonel M.B. Pears M.C. The Captain of HMAS LADAVA, Lieutenant D.J. Angus RAN, accompanied me on the call, and we were later entertained to lunch by Colonel Pears.

3. HMA Ships AITAPE and LADAVA left Port Moresby at 1200 on 3rd March and proceeded in company to Samarai. After a rather rough but otherwise uneventful passage both ships secured alongside at Samarai at 0800 on 4th March.

4. The delightful and once - thriving little settlement of Samarai has somewhat diminished in status since the District Commissioner moved to Alotau on Milne Bay. However, commerce is still active. Although it is doubtful whether so small a place can survive for long on a purely commercial basis, local entrepreneurs are hopeful: they see a future for Samarai in the tourist trade, and just might be right.

5. HMAS AITAPE left Samarai in company with HMAS LADAVA at 0825 on 5th March. HMAS LADAVA was detached after clearing China Strait; HMAS AITAPE then proceeded for Tufi, (9°04'S; 149°18'E) and berthed alongside there at 1630 that afternoon. The ship was opened to visitors on arrival and received a good response from local school children.

6. The ship cast off and proceeded from Tufi at 0800 on 6th March. Passage was taken to the head of Tufi Harbour before proceeding to sea. Tufi Harbour is one of a dozen or so long narrow inlets around the Cape Nelson Peninsula, and depths of 40 fathoms and more were found all the way to its head. The sides of the harbour are steep and cliffy, and the scenery quite spectacular. Local inhabitants like to call the inlets "fjords", though they are clearly formed by volcanic action rather than

/glacial

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glacial.

7. HMAS AITAPE cleared Tufi Harbour by 0830 and after an uneventful passage anchored in Mort Harbour (7°36'S; 147°26'E) at 1650 the same afternoon.

8. Mort Harbour used to be a USN Torpedo Boat Base during the Second World War, but there is now no sign of the extensive installations that must once have covered its foreshores. Indeed, in one respect it is unique among good harbours in New Guinea: there is no sign that the hand of man has ever touched it. No coconut trees grow there, no travellers huts have been built, the steep, heavily-timbered hills that surround it show no signs of scars left by timber-getters, and the rotting hulks that must lie in the harbour are concealed from sight in its deep waters. It is tranquil and utterly remote.

9. HMAS AITAPE weighed and proceeded from Mort Harbour at 0600 on 7th March, secured alongside at Lae at 0925, and remained alongside for the weekend.

10. The ship cast off and proceeded at 1600 on 9th March and took overnight passage to Garove Island (4°41'S; 149°30'E) in the Vitu Group, securing alongside at Balangore Mission at 0800 the following morning.

11. The visit to Garove Island was made with the aim of cleaning the upper deck in readiness for a walk round by the Flag Officer Commanding H.M. Australian Fleet. However, of the three full working days spent there, heavy rain prevailed on one day and a half, and not as much was achieved as I would have liked.

12. HMAS AITAPE cast off from Balangore Wharf at 1700 on 12th March and after an uneventful overnight passage secured alongside at Lombrum at 0800 on 13th March.

13. At 0900 on 15th March, HMAS AITAPE ship's company attended HMAS TARANGAU divisions. Divisions were inspected by the Flag Officer Commanding H.M. Australian Fleet, Rear Admiral H.D. Stevenson CBE. Rear Admiral Stevenson walked round HMAS AITAPE at 1545 that afternoon.

14. HMAS AITAPE remained alongside undergoing self maintenance until 20th March. Harbour trials were carried out on that day, and a serious defect in the starboard main engine became evident. It was rectified that evening by base staff.

15. The ship cast off and proceeded at 0800 on 21st March and made a rendezvous with HMAS KIMBLA (Lieutenant Commander K.J. Bale RAN) south east of Lae, at 0900 on 22nd March.

16. Operations with KIMBLA finished at 2000 on 24th March. The ship then proceeded for Lombrum, securing alongside there at 1400 on 25th March.

/17. HMAS

17. HMAS AITAPE spent the Easter weekend in Lombrum, and sailed for Madang at 0800 on 31st March. After a most uncomfortable passage (the north-west monsoon has more than overstayed its welcome) the ship secured alongside at 2100 that night, and remained alongside until the end of the month.

Ship Serviceability

18. The trouble in the starboard main engine was low oil pressure, caused by a relief valve lifting prematurely. With this one exception, the ship has been free of major defects during the month. HMAS AITAPE is of good appearance and is operating normally. The underwater hull is showing signs of growth, and the screws have sustained some chips and dents from the inevitable collisions with floating logs.

Ships Company

19. The health and morale of the ship's company have been very good during the month. With the exception of some of the PNG sailors, the conduct of the ship's company has also been satisfactory.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Sgd) J.N. LATTIN

(J.N. LATTIN)
Lieutenant Commander RAN
CAPTAIN

Annexes (2): A. Steaming Figures
 B. Return of Ship Availability

ANNEX A TO
HMAS AITAPE
LETTER A127/01
DATED 1st April 1970

STEAMING FIGURES

a.	Distance steamed during the month:	2,333.3
b.	Hours underway during the month:	171.6
c.	Total distance steamed since commissioning:	62,341.8
d.	Total hours underway since commissioning:	4,623.9

MONTHLY RETURN OF SHIP AVAILABILITY
 (TO ACCOMPANY MONTHLY REPORT OF PRECEEDINGS)
 HMAS.....
 DATE.....

APPENDIX 'B' TO CANO 7/66
 AGE SINCE COMMISSIONING.....YEARS
 MILES STEAMED SINCE COMM.....MILES

I.C. ENGINES SHIPS
 PROGRESSIVE TOTAL ENGINE HOURS
 NO. 1.....
 NO. 2.....

MONTH DAY	AVAILABILITY STEP		OPERAT DUTIES	EXERCISE	WEAPON TRAINING	SPECIAL TASKS	POST REFIT TRIALS	PASSAGE TIME	VISIT	PROGRAM MAINT.	PROGRAMED REFIT DOCK.	REPAIR	HARBOUR	LONG LEAVE	DEFECTS AFFECTING SHIPS DESIGNED PERFORMANCE (DURATION IN HOURS)											REMARKS
	1	2													H	E	L	G	TAS	ND	C	EW	DL	CPT		
1	✓												✓													
2	✓												✓													
3	✓							✓	✓																	
4	✓							✓																		
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TOTAL	31					3		9	1	7			11													STBD M

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Report of Proceedings Apr 70

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NAVY—CANBERRA

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ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

TELEPHONE:

IN REPLY QUOTE PNG 32/1/019

HMAS TARANGAU
LOMBRUM
NEW GUINEA

13 JUN 1970

The Secretary
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

For Information:

The Commander, AUSTRALIAN MINE WARFARE AND PATROL FORCES.

HMAS AITAPE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - APRIL 1970

1. Forwarded.
2. The remarks in paragraph 14 are concurred in.
All PNG PABRON Captains have to take great care when navigating through coral reefs. It is essential that they use local knowledge when available and only traverse through reefs when the light is behind them.

(G. HALLEY)
Commander RAN

Enclosure: 1. HMAS AITAPE's letter A127/1 of 1 May, 1970.

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A127/1

HMAS AITAPE
At LOMBRUM

1st May 1970

The Naval Officer In Charge
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

HMAS AITAPE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - APRIL 1970

Sir,

I have honour to report the proceedings of HMA Ship AITAPE under my command for the month of April 1970.

2. HMAS AITAPE was alongside at Madang at the beginning of the month.
3. At 1000 on 1st April, I called on the District Commissioner, Madang District, Mr. D. Clifton - Bassett.
4. The ship cast off and proceeded for operations with HMAS KIMBLA at 0715 on 2nd April. The operations were conducted at three points along the north coast of New Guinea: off Madang, off Wewak and off Aitape. They continued until 8th April, often in bad weather conditions. HMAS AITAPE called at Madang and Wewak for fuel on 3rd and 7th April. At 1415 on 8th April she detached from HMAS KIMBLA and after an uneventful overnight passage secured alongside at Lombrum at 0830 on 9th April.
5. The ship remained alongside for the next two days, most of which time was spent cleaning up the results of the rough weather off Madang and Wewak.
6. At 1300 on 11th April HMAS AITAPE cast off and proceeded for Samarai. A brief call was made at Gili Gili anchorage to deliver mail to HMA Ships LADAVA, MADANG and SAMARAI during the forenoon of 13th April, and the ship secured alongside at Samarai at 1120 that day.
7. Fuel and victuals were embarked during the day in Samarai, and at 0700 on 14th April HMAS AITAPE cast off and proceeded to join the other three patrol boats for EXERCISE WOK-WARA.
8. The activities of the patrol boats in the exercise have already been reported to you in detail. However, a broad description of the exercise will be included in this report. The units participating were:
 - a. HMA Ships AITAPE, LADAVA, MADANG and SAMARAI;
 - b. Four RANVR Coastwatchers and a Coastwatching headquarters;
 - c. 'A' Company 1 Battalion Pacific Islands Regiment;
 - d. Two L8M8s of the PNG Transportation Squadron;
 - e. RAAF Caribou aircraft for transport and

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air-drop re-supply.

9. The exercise was conducted in the Milne Bay area, and was based on an anti - infiltration theme. Patrol Boats' landing parties were exercised; 2" rockets were used to illuminate specified areas at the request of the infantry; the soldiers practised day and night landings from patrol boats, using portable army assault craft to carry them to the beach; and the patrol boats operated patrols against water - borne infiltration.

10. In addition, the patrolboats conducted several purely naval exercises, including successful naval gunfire support firings on a rocky and uninhabited island near Samarai, towing exercises, boarding party exercises and officer-of-the-watch manoeuvres. All exercises were well carried out with the exception of the officer-of-the-watch manoeuvres which reflected the squadron's lack of experience in operating in company.

11. From the patrol boats point of view the exercise was interesting and valuable, and a good rapport was established with the PIR and the PNG Transportation Squadron.

12. HMAS AITAPE called at Samarai for fuel from 0945 to 1600 on 19th April, and after an uneventful passage secured alongside at Lombrum at 1000 on 21st April.

13. At 0800 on 22nd April the ship cast off and proceeded for Mbuke Island (2°23'S; 146°50'E). The purpose of the visit to Mbuke was to enable a PNG Midshipman (Midshipman F. Molean) to see his sick parents. Surgeon Lieutenant J. Burgess RAN was also embarked for the passage, as Mbuke is far removed from medical assistance.

14. The approaches to Mbuke include a long and tortuous passage through reefs and shoals. Fortunately the light was good, and the advice of Midshipman Molean was useful. Without these factors I do not think I would have attempted the passage, which is as 'nasty' a navigational problem as one is likely to encounter in the New Guinea area.

15. The ship secured alongside at Mbuke wharf at 1150, the first patrol boat ever to do so. The local people were delighted. HMAS AITAPE remained alongside until 1300, then cast off and proceeded for Lombrum, securing alongside at 1645.

16. The ship remained alongside at Lombrum until the end of the month.

17. There have been no major defects during the month and HMAS AITAPE is of satisfactory appearance.

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The health, morale and conduct of the ships company during the month have been satisfactory.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your Obedient Servant,

(560) J. N. LATTIN

(J.N. LATTIN)
Lieutenant Commander RAN
CAPTAIN

Annexes: A. Steaming Figures
B. Monthly Return of Ship Availability

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ANNEX A TO
HMAS AITAPE
LETTER A127/1
DATED 1st May 1970

STEAMING FIGURES

a.	Distance steamed during the month	2,912.8
b.	Hours underway during the month	205.1
c.	Total distance steamed since commissioning	65,254.6
d.	Total hours underway since commissioning	4,828.0

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MONTHLY RETURN OF SHIP AVAILABILITY
(TO ACCOMPANY MONTHLY REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS)

HMAS. AITAPE
DATE. APRIL 1970

APPENDIX 'B' TO CANO 7/66
AGE SINCE COMMISSIONING 2 1/2 YEARS
MILES STEAMED SINCE COMM. 65,254.6 MILES

I.C. ENGINES SHIPS
PROGRESSIVE TOTAL ENGINE HOURS
NO.1. 693.3
NO.2. 721.9

MONTH DAY	AVAILABILITY STATE		OPERAT DUTIES	EXERCIS	WEAPON TRAINING	SPECIAL TASKS	POST RIFIT TRIALS	PASSAGE TIME	VISIT	PROGRAM MAINT.	PROGME REFIT DOCK.	REPAIR	HARBOUR	LONG LEAVE	DEFECTS AFFECTING SHIPS DESIGNED PERFORM (DURATION IN HOURS)										REMARKS
	1	2													H	E	L	G	TAS	ND	C	EW	DL	CPT	
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TOTAL	30			6		4		6			8		6												

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Report of Proceedings May 70

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TELEPHONE:

IN REPLY QUOTE PNG 32/1/019

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

NAVY—CANBERRA		
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OFFICE OF THE
NAVAL OFFICER IN CHARGE
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
LOMBUM NEW GUINEA

10 JUL 1970

The Secretary
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

For Information:

The Flag Officer Commanding HM AUSTRALIAN FLEET.
The Commander AUSTRALIAN MINE WARFARE AND PATROL BOAT FORCES.

HMAS AITAPE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - MAY 1970

Forwarded.

(G. HALLEY)
Commander RAN

Enclosure: HMAS Aitape's letter A127/01 of 8 June 1970.

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A127/01

HMAS AITAPE
At LOMBRUM

8th June 1970

Naval Officer In Charge
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

HMAS AITAPE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - MAY 1970

Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings of HMAS AITAPE, under my command, for the month of May 1970.

2. The beginning of May found HMAS AITAPE alongside at Lombrum, undergoing an assisted maintenance period.
3. Midshipman F. Molean RAN joined the ship on 9th May and assumed the duties of Navigating Officer.
4. At 0800 on 11th May the ship cast off and proceeded for a cruise in the British Solomon Islands Protectorate.
5. Fuelling stops were made at Rabaul (12th - 13th May) and Kieta (14th - 15th May) and after an otherwise uneventful passage HMAS AITAPE berthed alongside at Gizo, District Headquarters of the Western Solomons, at 1700L on 15th May. The District Commissioner, Mr T. Edgar MBE MC, came on board on arrival.
6. The programme in Gizo was a strenuous one, and included soccer, rugby and basketball matches plus a lively dance in the Gizo Club that continued well into the next day and proved even more exhausting than the sporting engagements.
7. HMAS AITAPE cast off and proceeded for Liapari Plantation (7°57'S; 156°41'E) at 1000 on 17th May. The passage took less than an hour, and as the planter was away from the plantation the ship remained in the anchorage for lunch and then returned to Gizo, securing alongside there at 1325.
8. At 0800 on 18th May the ship cast off and proceeded for Munda. Passage was taken through Blackett Strait and Diamond Narrows and HMAS AITAPE secured alongside at Munda (8°20'S; 157°20'E) at 1045.
9. The ship cast off and proceeded at 0800 on 19th

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May and took passage around the southern side of New Georgia Island. At 1100 special sea dutymen closed up for the passage across Hele Bar and through the shoals between New Georgia and Vangunu. After the ship passed Segi and entered Marovo Lagoon the water became murky and full of shoals. Fortunately the shoals were sand, not coral, so the echo sounder gave ample warning of their presence. However, a local pilot had to be embarked for the last couple of miles of the twenty mile passage, and HMAS AITAPE anchored off Eupi Island ($8^{\circ}27'S; 157^{\circ}55'E$) at 1510 that afternoon.

10. At 0800 on 20th May the ship weighed and proceeded for Honiara. The first rough weather of the cruise was encountered during the 19 knot passage down the Slot, but the ship berthed at Honiara on time at 1700 that afternoon. Representatives of the BSIP Ports Authority, Police and the District Office came on board on arrival.

11. At 0900 on 21st May I called on His Excellency the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, Sir Michael Gass KCMG. The High Commissioner's Aide-de-Camp, Flight Lieutenant P. Walliker RAF returned the call at 1000.

12. An official cocktail party was held on board at 1800 on 21st May, and was attended by His Excellency the High Commissioner and other distinguished residents of Honiara. Since the three ship's officers would have had a hard time entertaining 35 guests, the three petty officers on board were also included as hosts and performed their duties most satisfactorily.

13. At 1215 on 22nd May my navigating officer and I lunched with His Excellency the High Commissioner at Government House.

14. During the four days in Honiara the ship's company participated in soccer, basketball, and rugby matches, plus a very full social programme. The hospitality was superb.

15. At 1200 on 24th May HMAS AITAPE cast off and proceeded for Auki, headquarters of the Malaita district. During the voyage the ship negotiated Mbolli (Utaha) passage. This long, narrow passage runs through the centre of the Nggela group, and is the shortest route from Honiara to Auki. Its reef-infested northern exit has been surveyed and well beaconed by the enthusiastic and hard-working BSIP marine department, and it is navigationally simple.

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16. HMAS AITAPE berthed alongside at Auki ($8^{\circ}46'S$; $160^{\circ}42'E$) at 1600 on 24th May. I called on the District Commissioner, Mr R. Turpin, on arrival. The soccer team had a run against the local side later that afternoon, and the post-match refreshments at the Auki Club continued for most of the night.

17. The ship cast off and proceeded from Auki at 0830 on 25th May and berthed alongside at Marau Sound ($9^{\circ}48'S$; $160^{\circ}52'E$) at 1310 that afternoon.

18. At 0930 on 26th May HMAS AITAPE cast off and proceeded from Marau Sound and anchored off the government station of Kira Kira, ($10^{\circ}26'S$; $161^{\circ}55'E$) headquarters of the Eastern Solomons, at 1600 that afternoon. The District Commissioner was absent on patrol, but as usual the sporting and social engagements came thick and fast.

19. The ship weighed and proceeded from Kira Kira at 1000 on 27th May and anchored in Port Mary, Santa Ana Island, ($10^{\circ}52'S$; $162^{\circ}28'E$) at 1325 the same afternoon.

20. At 0800 on 28th May HMAS AITAPE weighed and proceeded for Rennell Island, and anchored there at Kunggava Bay ($11^{\circ}45'S$; $160^{\circ}22'E$) at 1630 that afternoon. The anchorage was well sheltered from the prevailing unpleasant south-east wind and swell, and was also a place of remarkable beauty: a horseshoe-shaped bay with high coral cliffs all round and blue water of almost unbelievable clarity.

21. The people of Rennell Island are of Polynesian stock. Owing to the inhospitable nature of the coastal regions of the island they all live in the interior, in a fertile, sheltered, upland valley. The following day, 29th May, a party of eight officers and sailors from the ship walked up to the valley, a strenuous five-hour hike. They received a great reception from the villagers, who rarely see visitors in such an inaccessible spot. The party from the ship stayed the night in the villages and walked back to Kunggava Bay the next day.

22. At 1300 on 30th May HMAS AITAPE weighed and proceeded for Gizo. The south east trades coming from right astern made the passage an uncomfortable one. The ship berthed alongside at Gizo at 1200 on 31st May, and was alongside at the end of the month.

23. Gizo was the last port of call in the Solomons cruise. The cruise had been a remarkably successful one,

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with as many sporting and social events on the programme as the ship could handle. The ship was opened to visitors at every port of call and occasioned great interest. The conduct of the ship's company was uniformly excellent at all times, and I received several favourable comments on their behaviour. It seems that a myth exists among the indigenous and expatriate residents of the Solomons to the effect that Papua New Guineans are rather primitive and savage fellows: our presence there may have done something to dispel the myth, to the benefit of south-west Pacific relationships.

24. The appearance of the ship is good and all machinery and electrical equipment is operating normally. The health and morale of the ships company during the month have been excellent.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(SGD) J.N. LATTIN

(J.N. LATTIN)
Lieutenant Commander RAN
CAPTAIN

Enclosures: A. Steaming Appendix
B. Monthly Return of Ship Availability
C. Sporting Appendix

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APPENDIX 'A'

a.	Distance steamed during the month	1,720.9
b.	Hours underway during the month	117.0
c.	Total distance steamed since commissioning	66,975.5
d.	Total hours underway since commissioning	4,945.0

APPENDIX 'B'

Attached.

APPENDIX 'C'

15th May	Soccer	v	Gizo	Lost	4-0
	Basketball	v	Gizo	Won	32-14
	Rugby	v	Gizo	Lost	12-0
18th May	Soccer	v	Munda	Lost	3-0
22nd May	Soccer	v	Honiara	Lost	5-0
	Basketball	v	Honiara	Lost	53-49
23rd May	Rugby	v	Solomon Islands	Lost	25-0
24th May	Soccer	v	Malaita District	Lost	4-0
26th May	Soccer	v	Eastern Solomons	Lost	7-0

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MONTHLY RETURN OF SHIP AVAILABILITY
 (TO ACCOMPANY MONTHLY REPORT OF PRECEEDINGS)
 HMAS.....
 DATE.....

APPENDIX 'B' TO CANO 7/66
 AGE SINCE COMMISSIONING.....YEARS
 MILES STEAMED SINCE COMM.....MILES

I.C. ENGINES SHIPS
 PROGRESSIVE TOTAL ENGINE HOURS
 NO. 1.....
 NO. 2.....

MONTH DAY	AVAILABILITY SCHEDULE		OPERAT DUTIES	EXERCISE	WEAPON TRAINING	SPECIAL TASKS	POST REFIT TRIALS	PASSAGE TIME	VISIT	PROGRAM MAINT.	PROGRED REFIT DOCK.	REPAIR	HARBOUR	LONG LEAVE	DEFECTS AFFECTING SHIPS DESIGNED PERFORMANCE (DURATION IN HOURS)											REMARKS
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HMAS

FITAPE

Report of Proceedings June 76

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AS(NS) (NS55)

- NOTES:
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ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

NAVY—CANBERRA

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OFFICE OF THE
NAVAL OFFICER IN CHARGE
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
LOMBURUM NEW GUINEA

- 5 AUG 1970

The Secretary
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

For Information:

The Flag Officer Commanding H.M. AUSTRALIAN FLEET

The Commander AUSTRALIAN MINE WARFARE AND PATROL FORCES.

The Commanding Officer HMAS AITAPE

HMAS AITAPE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - JUNE 1970

Forwarded. The reference to the radar set in paragraph 14 should be 975 not 978. The set is now serviceable.

(G. HALLEY)
Commander RAN

Enclosure: HMAS AITAPE's letter A127/01 of 2 July 1970.

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A127/01

HMAS AITAPE
At LOMBRUM

2nd July 1970

The Naval Officer In Charge
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

HMAS AITAPE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - JUNE 1970

Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings of HMAS AITAPE for the month of June 1970.

2. The beginning of the month found HMAS AITAPE alongside at Gizo in the British Solomon Islands. At 1200 on 1st June the District Commissioner, Western Solomons, Mr T. Edgar MBE MC, and Mrs Edgar, came on board for lunch.
3. The ship cast off and proceeded at 1600 that afternoon and after an uneventful overnight passage, secured alongside at Rabaul at 1200 on 2nd June.
4. At 1600 on 3rd June the Acting President of the New Guinea Club, Mr Arthur Judd and a member of the club committee Mr Ronald Grimshaw, were entertained to drinks on board.
5. HMAS AITAPE cast off and proceeded at 1400 on 4th June and secured alongside at Lombrum at 1200 on 5th June. The ship began a week's self maintenance period on 6th June. A series inspection of the 40/60 mounting and .50 calibre machine guns was carried out during the SMP.
6. At 1600 on 14th June the ship cast off and proceeded for Madang. Several members of the Base Staff were embarked for the passage, the object of which was to render assistance to HMAS MADANG who had sustained engine room flooding in her name port.
7. HMAS AITAPE secured alongside HMAS MADANG at the Main Wharf Madang at 0800 on 15th June, and remained there while Base Staff effected temporary repairs. These repairs were complete by the evening of 17th June.
8. At 0600 on 18th June HMA Ships AITAPE and MADANG proceeded for Lombrum. It had been planned to make the passage in daylight, but unfortunately HMAS MADANG lost an engine not long after leaving port, and later lost both generators. Consequently the two ships did not arrive in Lombrum until 2320 that evening.

/9. The ship

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RESTRICTED

-2-

9. The ship proceeded to sea for gun functioning trials between 1500 and 1630 on 19th June.

10. Lieutenant C.S.H. Harrington RAN joined the ship at 1730 on 19th June, and Lieutenant S.U. McColl RAN left the ship at 0500 on 21st June.

11. The Papua New Guinea Patrol Boat Squadron exercise period began at 0800 on Monday 22nd June. With HMAS MADANG unserviceable, only HMA Ships AITAPE, SAMARAI and LAE participated, and HMAS SAMARAI was withdrawn for other duties during the last two days of the exercises.

12. The aim of the exercises was to give as much experience as possible to the newly - joined PNG Acting Sub Lieutenants. Consequently, a considerable amount of time was spent on OOW manoeuvres, for which the PNG officers invariably had the con. Other exercises specifically intended to test and train the PNG officers included heaving line transfer approaches, ship handling exercises and formation anchorages. In addition, the squadron carried out boarding and towing exercises, 2" RF and .50 calibre firings, a landing party exercise and a highly successful anti-infiltration exercise. A squadron sports competition was also included in the programme. The PNG officers in general performed well, and had gained a lot of confidence by the end of the week. The exercises finished at 1200 on 26th June.

13. HMAS AITAPE remained alongside until 1500 on 30th June, when she cast off and proceeded for Madang. The ship was at sea at the end of the month.

14. The serviceability of the ship has been good during the month. A little difficulty was experienced when a thermostat jammed shut on the starboard main engine, but this has since been rectified. 978 radar has been partially unserviceable for several months now. Since it is fitted with a non-standard aerial motor, the PPI is unstabilised and blind pilotage is rather difficult. Although it is quite possible to navigate safely with an unstabilised radar, the standard aerial motor will be most welcome when it arrives.

15. The appearance of the ship is satisfactory. The health morale and conduct of the ship's company during the month have been very good.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(SGD.) J. N. LATTIN

(J.N. LATTIN)
Lieutenant Commander RAN
CAPTAIN

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ANNEX 'A'

Steaming Annex:

a.	Distance steamed during the month	1,932.5
b.	Hours underway during the month	121.5
c.	Total distance steamed since commissioning	68,908.0
d.	Total hours underway since commissioning	5,066.5

ANNEX 'B'

Exercises:

OOW Manoeuvres	8
Formation Anchorage	4
HL Transfer approaches	25 approx.
Ship handling	3
.50 cal firings	1
2" RF firings	1
Anti infiltration	1
Tow aft	1
Boarding party	1
Landing party	1

ANNEX 'C'

Sporting Annex:

9 June	Soccer	PNGPABRON	v	TARANGAU	Won	1-0
24 June	(Squadron Sports Afternoon)					
	Basketball	v	SAMARAI	Won	28-2	
		v	LAE	Won	18-6	
	Rugby	v	MADANG	Lost	21-0	
	Soccer	v	MADANG	Won	2-0	
		v	LAE	Won	2-1	
	Waterpolo	v	SAMARAI	Draw	2-2	
	Volleyball	v	SAMARAI	Lost	2-0	

Overall winners of sports afternoon:

Basketball	AITAPE
Rugby	MADANG
Soccer	AITAPE
Waterpolo	MADANG
Volleyball	MADANG

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MONTHLY RETURN OF SHIP AVAILABILITY
(TO ACCOMPANY MONTHLY REPORT OF PRECEEDINGS)
HMAS.....
DATE.....

APPENDIX 'B' TO CANO 7/66
AGE SINCE COMMISSIONING.....YEARS
MILES STEAMED SINCE COMM.....MILES

I.C. ENGINES SHIPS
PROGRESSIVE TOTAL ENGINE HOURS
NO. 1.....
NO. 2.....

MONTH DAY	AVAILABILITY STATUS		OPERAT DUTIES	EXERCISE	WEAPON TRAINING	SPECIAL TASKS	POST REFIT TRIALS	PASSAGE TIME	VISIT	PROGRAM MAINT.	PROGME REFIT DOCK.	REPAIR	HARBOUR	LONG LEAVE	DEFECTS AFFECTING SHIPS DESIGNED PERFORMANCE (DURATION IN HOURS)											REMARKS
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STAND BY
MADANG
GUN FUNCTIONING

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HMAS

Aitape

Report of Proceedings

July 70

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PNG 32/1/09

13 OCT P.M. 17
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ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

NAVY—CANBERRA

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OFFICE OF THE
NAVAL OFFICER IN CHARGE
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
LOMBRUM NEW GUINEA

9 OCT 1970

The Secretary
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

For Information:

The Flag Officer Commanding H.M. AUSTRALIAN FLEET.
The Commander AUSTRALIAN MINE WARFARE AND PATROL FORCES.

HMAS AITAPE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - JULY 70

Forwarded.

(G. HALLEY)
Commander RAN

Enclosure: 1. HMAS AITAPE's letter A127/01 of 12 August 1970.

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AS(US).

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A127/01

HMAS AITAPE
At LOMBRUM

12th August 1970

The Naval Officer in Charge
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

HMAS AITAPE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - JULY 1970

Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings of HMAS AITAPE under my command for the month of July 1970.

2. HMAS AITAPE was alongside in Lombrum at the beginning of the month. At 1530 that day the ship cast off and proceeded for Madang. After an uncomfortable but otherwise uneventful passage the ship secured alongside at Madang at 0800 on 2nd July.

3. Victuals for HMAS TARANGAU were embarked on 2nd July. The ship cast off and proceeded at 1755 that evening, and secured alongside at Lombrum at 0800 on 3rd July. The remainder of the day was spent offloading stores in preparation for slipping.

4. HMAS AITAPE cast off and proceeded from Lombrum at 2000 on 4th July and secured alongside at Madang at 0900 on 5th July.

5. Final pre-slipping tasks were completed on 5th July. The ship moved to Madang Slipway at 0815 on 6th July, and was high and dry by 1000 that day. The ship's company moved into the Smuggler's Inn Motel for the duration of the slipping.

6. A modified tropical routine was worked while the ship was on the slip. Call the hands at the Motel was 0500; the ship's company then worked 0600-1300, with an hour off for breakfast at about 0830.

7. No unusual problems were encountered during the slipping, and it proceeded according to plan.

8. The Prime Minister (The Right Honourable J.G. Gorton MP),

/was touring

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was touring Papua New Guinea while HMAS AITAPE was on the slip. The Prime Minister's party overnighted at Madang on the night of 8th-9th July; Mr and Mrs Gorton and their personal staff were accommodated at the Smugglers' Inn Motel. Mr Gorton was unable to accept my invitation to join the Ship's Company for a beer in the lounge the evening he arrived; however the following morning he spoke informally to members of the Ship's Company for a few minutes.

9. HMAS AITAPE unslipped at 1015 on 13th July. The remainder of the day was spent on post-slipping tasks and on loading victuals for HMAS TARANGAU. The ship cast off and proceeded at 1800 that evening, and secured alongside at Lombrum at 1000 on 14th July.

10. Word was received at 1700 that evening that HMAS LAE was aground off the north coast of New Britain. HMAS AITAPE sailed at 2000 that night, and arrived in the area of the grounding at 1135 the next morning, 15th July. HMAS SAMARAI was already in the area. HMAS MADANG and MWL 256 arrived on the evening of 16th July.

11. A report of the salvage of HMAS LAE has already been submitted to you. She came free of the reef at 0232 on 17th July. HMAS AITAPE proceeded for Lombrum at 1330 that afternoon, and berthed alongside there at 0630 on 18th July.

12. The ship remained alongside in Lombrum for the next 11 days, during the first four of which was at 30 minutes notice to proceed to Rabaul. From 25th to 28th July I was involved in a Board of Inquiry to inquire into HMAS LAE's grounding.

13. HMAS AITAPE cast off and proceeded from Lombrum at 0800 on 29th July. HMAS LAE sailed in company. The passage was uneventful until the morning of 31st July, when, just as the ship was about to enter Hornbill Channel, a steering gear breakdown occurred. At the same time some difficulty was encountered starting the starboard engine. The engine eventually started after about twenty minutes, and Hornbill Channel was negotiated steering by main engines. The starboard engine failed again just as the ship was entering China Strait, and was again restarted. China Strait was also negotiated using main engines, and the ship berthed alongside at Samarai, outboard of HMAS LAE, at 1005 on 31st July. The steering failure was rectified by ship's staff on arrival.

14. HMAS LAE sailed at 1625 to rendezvous with HMAS ANZAC for an escorted passage to the Australian mainland, and HMAS AITAPE remained alongside in Samarai for the remainder of the month.

15. The ship ~~has been~~ somewhat beset by defects

/during

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during the month. At the end of the month the starboard main engine failure, an intermittent defect all this year, was still an alarming mystery. However, at the time of writing it seems that it has at last been isolated and rectified. Base staff traced it to a faulty governor.

16. Another failure connected with the main engines was the fuel transfer pump, whose failure necessitated pumping up the ready-use tanks by hand. This fault has been rectified by ship's staff.

17. The steering gear failure was caused by a burst hydraulic line.

18. Other defects included the failure of all three bridge window-wipers and the persistent unreliability of the 20HP Johnson outboard motor. The behaviour of the outboard was particularly frustrating during the HMAS LAE salvage operation.

19. None of these defects have affected the ship's programme or operational availability, but the fuel transfer pump failure and the main engine trouble resulted in the ship being late for two ETA's.

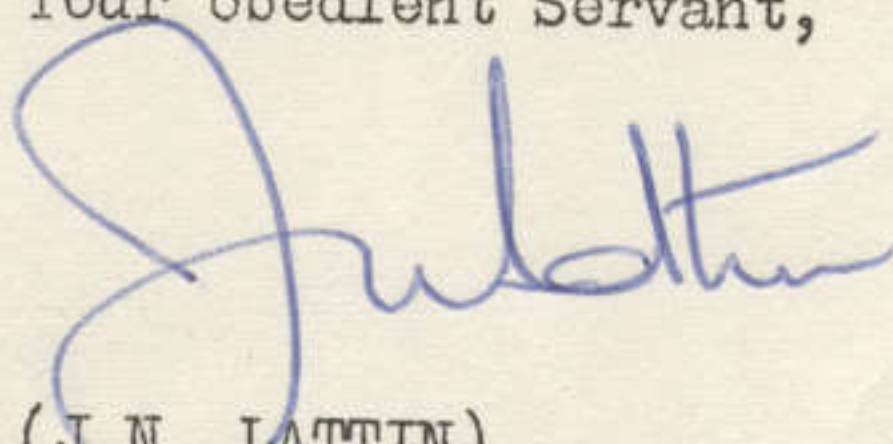
20. The appearance of the ship during the month has been generally satisfactory. On occasions an otherwise smart appearance has been marred by a dirty ensign, as these items are particularly hard to obtain.

21. The health morale and conduct of the Ship's Company during the month have been very good.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,



(J.N. LATTIN)
Lieutenant Commander RAN
CAPTAIN

Enclosures: A. Steaming Appendix
B. Monthly Return of Ship Availability

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ANNEX 'A'

Steaming Appendix:

a.	Distance steamed during the month	1,957.0
b.	Hours underway during the month	139.5
c.	Total distance steamed since commissioning	70,865.0
d.	Total hours underway since commissioning	5,206.0

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MONTHLY RETURN OF SHIP AVAILABILITY
 (TO ACCOMPANY MONTHLY REPORT OF PRECEEDINGS)
 HMAS.....ATAPE.....
 DATE.....JULY 4 1970.....

APPENDIX 'B' TO CANO 7/66
 AGE SINCE COMMISSIONING...2 2/3...YEARS
 MILES STEAMED SINCE COMM...70,865.0...MILES

I.C. ENGINES SHIPS
 PROGRESSIVE TOTAL ENGINE HOURS
 NO. 1...10,357...
 NO. 2...10,405...

MONTH DAY	AVAILABILITY STATUS		OPERAT DUTIES	EXERCISE	WEAPON TRAINING	SPECIAL TASKS	POST REFIT TRIALS	PASSAGE TIME	VISIT	PROGRAM MAINT.	PROGRED REFIT DOCK.	REPAIR	HARBOUR	LONG LEAVE	DEFECTS AFFECTING SHIPS DESIGNED PERFORMANCE (DURATION IN HOURS)											REMARKS
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The need for Patrol Boats to collect vehicles for mending has been discussed by me with NORONG and I hope that better management of TARRAMORRA combined with requested assistance in a regular airlift of fresh (locally grown) fruit & vegetables from mainland N.H. will obviate such a need in future. 24/10

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TELEPHONE:

IN REPLY QUOTE. PNG 32/1/09

13 OCT P.M. 1970

13 OCT 1970

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

NAVY—CANBERRA

18

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2327

OFFICE OF THE
NAVAL OFFICER IN CHARGE
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
LOMBRUM NEW GUINEA

9 OCT 1970

The Secretary
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

For Information:

The Flag Officer Commanding H.M. AUSTRALIAN FLEET
The Commander AUSTRALIAN MINE WARFARE AND PATROL FORCES

HMAS AITAPE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - AUGUST 1970

Forwarded.

(G. HALLEY)
Commander RAN

Enclosure: HMAS AITAPE's letter A127/1 of 25 September 70.

RT

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HMAS AITAPE
At LOMBRUM

25 SEP 1970

The Naval Officer in Charge
PAPUA NEW GUINEAHMAS AITAPE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - AUGUST 1970

Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings of HMA Ship AITAPE, under my command, for the month of August 1970.

2. The beginning of the month found HMAS AITAPE alongside at Samarai. The ship cast off and proceeded at 0900 on 3rd August, and after an uneventful passage via Hornbill Channel, secured alongside at Esa-Ala (09°44.2'S; 150°49.2'E) at 1400 that afternoon.

3. At 0800 the following morning, 4th August, HMAS AITAPE cast off and proceeded for the Marshall Bennet Islands. Passage was taken through Dawson Strait. Once clear of the lee of Normanby Island strong south-easterly conditions were encountered, and the day's passage was an uncomfortable one. The ship anchored off the northern side of Gawa Island (08°57.1'S; 151°57.7'E) at 1455 that afternoon.

4. At 0800 on 5th August, HMAS AITAPE weighed and proceeded for Kitava Island (08°35.5'S; 151°19.5'E). The ship anchored off the northern side of the island at 1155.

5. At 0800 on 6th August the ship weighed and proceeded for Lombrum. Strong south-easterly conditions continued until we had rounded Kiriwina Island, when the passage became more comfortable.

6. At 1335 that afternoon, course was altered to proceed for Lae, in response to a signal from you ordering the ship to proceed there to buy victuals for HMAS Tarangau. Shortly later, at 1530, course was altered again to proceed to the Vitiaz Strait area to search for a missing aircraft.

7. HMAS AITAPE arrived in the search area at 2200 that night. The next two hours were spent in a search of the shorelines of islands in Nesup Channel (05°55.0'S; 148°08.0'E). Nothing more could be achieved that night as the majority of the search area was largely uncharted waters.

8. The missing aircraft, a single-engined privately-owned one, had reported losing visual meteorological conditions at about 1300 on 6th August, when close to the southern point of Umboi Island (04°48.5'S; 148°01.5'E), since when nothing further had been heard. The aircraft failed to arrive at its

/destination

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destination, Talasea. A policeman, his wife and their pet dog were on board the aircraft.

9. HMAS AITAPE was joined by HMAS SAMARAI (Lieutenant J.H. GAULT RAN) at 0630 the following morning, 7th August. Radio contact was made with the SAR centre at Lae, and, on their request, SAMARAI searched the west coast of Umboi Island and AITAPE the east coast. Both ships met at the northern end of the island at 1400, but had found nothing. A search was then made of Tolokiwa Island (05°18'S;147°37'E), but once again with no result. The two patrol boats were released from the search at 1630 that afternoon. HMAS SAMARAI was detached and proceeded for Lae. HMAS AITAPE proceeded to Madang and berthed alongside there at 2130 on 7th August.

10. The forenoon of 8th August was spent embarking victuals for HMAS Tarangau. HMAS AITAPE cast off and proceeded at 0600 on 9th August. A search of Bagabag Island (04°48'S;146°13'E) and Hankow Reef (04°53'S;146°45'E) was conducted enroute for Lombrum, but no sign of the crashed aircraft was found. By this time, some wreckage from the aircraft had already been found near Umboi Island and the SAR authorities had concluded that the unfortunate people in the plane had lost their lives.

11. HMAS AITAPE secured alongside at Lombrum at 2200 on 9th August.

12. The self maintenance period programmed to begin on 10th August was put back for one week in order to permit the ship to make another visit to Madang for victuals. However, before the ship could sail it was necessary to repair an electrical defect in the main engines. Base staff worked on the defect for three days and pronounced the engines serviceable on the afternoon of 12th August. The ship cast off and proceeded for Madang at 1800 that evening, and secured alongside at Madang at 0810 on 13th August.

13. The day was spent loading victuals, and the ship cast off and proceeded for Lombrum at 1800 that evening. After a rough but otherwise uneventful passage the ship secured alongside at Lombrum at 1000 on 14th August. HMAS AITAPE remained alongside for the weekend, and commenced a one-week self-maintenance period on 17th August.

14. During the SMP the ship was prepared for your inspection. The harbour inspection was carried out on 26th August, and the sea inspection on 27th August. The ship then remained alongside until the end of the month. Lieutenant C.S.H. Harrington RAN assumed temporary command on 31st August.

15. The appearance of the ship during the month has been satisfactory. Serviceability has been generally good. Exceptions have been the electrical defect in the main engines (an intermittent fault since January this year), and the anchor windlass which sustained a flooded control box during the bad weather off the Popuan Coast. This defect was repaired by ship's staff.

/16 The health

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-3-

16. The health, morale, and conduct of the Ship's Company during the month have been satisfactory.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(SGD.) J. N. LATTIN

(J.N. LATTIN)
Lieutenant Commander RAN
CAPTAIN

Enclosures: A. Steaming Appendix
B. Monthly Return of Ship Availability

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ANNEX 'A'

Steaming Appendix:

a.	Distance steamed during the month	1,671.8
b.	Hours underway during the month	107.5
c.	Total distance steamed since commissioning	72,536.8
d.	Total hours underway since commissioning	5,313.5

RESTRICTED

MONTHLY RETURN OF SHIP AVAILABILITY
 (TO ACCOMPANY MONTHLY REPORT OF PRECEEDINGS)
 HMAS. Albatross
 DATE. August 1970

APPENDIX 'B' TO CANO 7/66
 AGE SINCE COMMISSIONING... 2 3/4 YEARS
 MILES STEAMED SINCE COMM. 12,526.8 MILES

I.C. ENGINES SHIPS
 PROGRESSIVE TOTAL ENGINE HOURS
 NO. 1... 1114.5
 NO. 2... 1125.7

MONTH DAY	AVAILABILITY STATUS		OPERAT DUTIES	EXERCISE	WEAPON TRAINING	SPECIAL TASKS	POST REFIT TRIALS	PASSAGE TIME	VISIT	PROGRAM MAINT.	PROGME REFIT DOCK.	REPAIR	HARBOUR	LONG LEAVE	DEFECTS AFFECTING SHIPS DESIGNED PERFORMANCE (DURATION IN HOURS)											REMARKS	
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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

RESTRICTED

HMAS

FLITAPE

Report of Proceedings Sept 76

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SECRETARY

C of S

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AS(NS) (NS55)

- NOTES:
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20/10/70

20/26



TELEPHONE:

IN REPLY QUOTE PNG 32/1/019

RESTRICTED.

20 OCT A.M. 1970

REGISTRY

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

NAVY—CANBERRA

18

6

2345

OFFICE OF THE
NAVAL OFFICER IN CHARGE
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
LOMBRUM NEW GUINEA

14 OCT 1970

The Secretary
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

For Information:

The Flag Officer Commanding H.M. AUSTRALIAN FLEET
The Commander AUSTRALIAN MINE WARFARE AND PATROL FORCES

HMAS AITAPE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - SEPTEMBER 1970

Forwarded.

(G. HALLEY)
Commander RAN

RT Enclosure: HMAS AITAPE letter A127/01 of 6 October 1970.

RESTRICTED.

RESTRICTED

A127/01

HMAS AITAPE
At LOMBRUM

- 6 OCT 1970

The Naval Officer in Charge
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

HMAS AITAPE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - SEPTEMBER 1970

Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings of HMAS AITAPE for the month of September 1970.

2. HMAS AITAPE was alongside at Lombrum at the beginning of the month, under the temporary command of Lieutenant C.S.H. Harrington RAN.
3. The ship carried out daily running on 1st and 2nd September. On the first day a brief visit was made to Pak Island (02°05'S; 147°36'E) and on the second, to Kelaua Harbour (02°06'S; 147°16.4'E). A class of PNG recruits was embarked for each day's run.
4. On the morning of 3rd September word was received that the father of one of HMAS TARANGAU's PNG sailors had recently died in Lombrum. HMAS AITAPE was ordered to return the body to the family home on Bipi Island, at the western end of Manus.
5. The coffin was piped aboard at 1035. Several relatives also embarked. The ship cast off and proceeded at 1045, and heve to off Bipi Island (02°06.5'S; 147°24'E) to disembark the coffin and relatives at 1500.
6. At 1600 HMAS AITAPE proceeded towards the Hermit Islands (01°31'S; 145°04'E) and the Ninigo Group (01°13'S; 144°17'E) to search for an unidentified fishing boat. The search was conducted throughout the night but the fishing boat was not found.
7. HMAS AITAPE called at Lombrum for fuel from 1500 to 1830 on 4th September, then proceeded for Rabaul. The ship secured alongside at Rabaul at 1320 on 5th September.
8. I rejoined HMAS AITAPE and resumed command at 1830 on 5th September. The ship cast off and proceeded at 2000 that night, and after an uneventful overnight passage anchored in Salat-Strait in the Feni Islands (04°04'S; 153°38'E) at 0810 on 6th September. Lieutenant G.L.S. Carson RANVR embarked on arrival and HMAS AITAPE weighed and proceeded for the Nuguria Islands (03°40'S; 154°43'E) at 0945. After an uneventful passage the ship secured alongside at Fead Island wharf, in the Nugurias, at 1520 that afternoon.

/9. The Nuguria

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9. The Nuguria Islands are undoubtedly one of the show-places of Papua New Guinea, though in one sense they are far from a show-place: their owner, Lieutenant Carson, discourages visitors. Fortunately the islands are a long way from the beaten track so visitors are rare; fortunately, too, the RAN is always welcome. The islands form a perfect coral atoll: the water inside the atoll is deep, well-sheltered and crystal clear; the fishing and skin-diving are superb. The copra plantation and gardens are beautifully maintained; orchids and other flowering epiphytes, painstakingly collected from all over the south-west Pacific, are everywhere.
10. All non-duty members of the Ship's Company were entertained to dinner ashore that night by Lieutenant Carson. The lavish menu consisted of more crayfish than anybody could eat and trevally baked native-style in banana leaves, supplemented by such delicacies as sea anemones cooked in coconut milk.
11. The following day, 7th September, a make and mend was granted to allow members of the Ship's Company to participate in fishing and scuba-diving expeditions. HMAS AITAPE cast off and proceeded for the Mortlock Islands at 1800 that night.
12. After an uneventful overnight passage the ship arrived off the Mortlock (or Tauu) Islands (04° 53' S; 157° 10' E) at 0800 on 8th September. After a cautious passage through the narrow reef entrance and up the lagoon, HMAS AITAPE anchored off Nukutoa Island, the only inhabited Island in the group, at 0915.
13. Near the end of the nineteenth century the population of the Mortlock Islands was down to less than twenty people. The inhabitants were pure Polynesian and the ravages of the diseases unwittingly introduced by traders and blackbirders had taken their toll. Fortunately plantation labourers were imported from Manus, New Britain, Bougainville and other nearby islands: this influx of new blood bred a disease-resistant strain into the offspring of the surviving Mortlockians and the population flourished once more. To-day, over 500 people live there. The old Polynesian culture and language survive almost unchanged, but sub-cultures and languages based on the homelands of the imported labourers exist side by side with each other and with the original Polynesian customs. The islanders have no local industry, and consequently are visited by traders only very rarely. Only one European lives there, Mr Len Murray, ex RAN Fleet Air Arm. He is the schoolmaster.
14. The ship remained at anchor off Nukutoa Island overnight. The locals turned on a magnificent feast for the Ship's Company: it was composed of large quantities of taro, palm toddy, music and dancing in roughly equal proportions, and lasted most of the night.
15. At 0600 on 9th September HMAS AITAPE weighed and proceeded for Rabaul. A brief visit was made to the Feni Islands enroute to disembark Lieutenant Carson, who had acted

/as pilot

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as pilot for the Mortlock Islands visit. The ship secured alongside in Rabaul at 0840 on 10th September.

16. HMAS SAMARAI (Lieutenant J.H. Gault RAN) and MWL256 berthed in Rabaul during the forenoon of 11th September.

17. The two patrol boats and the MWL were in Rabaul to represent the RAN at the New Britain Agricultural and Horticultural Society's annual show, to be held at Kokopo on 13th and 14th September.

18. At 0855 on 12th September HMAS AITAPE cast off and proceeded for Kokopo (04°38'S; 152°17.5'E). The ship berthed alongside at Vunapope Mission wharf at 0940. The President of the NBA and HS, Mr T. Garrett, came on board on arrival and we discussed the arrangements for the show. HMAS AITAPE then returned to Rabaul, berthing alongside there at 1135.

1045
19. At 0930 on 13th September HMAS AITAPE and HMAS SAMARAI cast off and proceeded for Kokopo. The two patrol boats carried out OOW manoeuvres close to the beach between 1015 and 1145. Break up shot was then fired from the 40/60, and the two patrol boats secured alongside Vunapope Mission wharf at 1100. The ships were opened to visitors from 1300 to 1630, and proceeded for Rabaul at 1700.

20. An identical programme was followed on 14th September. In addition, an unarmed party of sailors from the patrol boats and the MWL participated in the parade to mark the official opening of the show. The opening was performed by Dr John Guise, the Speaker of the House of Assembly of Papua and New Guinea. Officers from the patrol boats attended the official luncheon and were presented to Dr Guise. HMAS AITAPE and HMAS SAMARAI proceeded for Rabaul at 1700.

21. At 0900 on 15th September HMAS AITAPE cast off and proceeded. After an uneventful passage the ship secured alongside at the small government station of Pomio (05°39'S; 151°34'E) at 1655 that afternoon.

22. HMAS AITAPE cast off and proceeded for Kavieng at 1800 on 16th September. The ship secured alongside at Kavieng at 1340 on 17th September. I called on the District Commissioner New Ireland District, Mr M. Brightwell, on arrival.

23. On 18th September a short day run was made to Selapiu Island (02°39'S; 150°36'E). The ship returned alongside at Kavieng at 1740.

24. At 0800 on 19th September HMAS AITAPE cast off and proceeded for Lombrum. After an uneventful daylight passage, the ship secured alongside at Lombrum at 2000 that night.

25. The ship began the 3-week mid-cycle assisted maintenance period on 21st September, and was thus alongside in Lombrum at the end of the month.

/26. Serviceability

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26. Serviceability during the month has been generally good, but the port ^{main} engine retains its alarming habit of shutting down spontaneously. The anchor windlass failed on 6th September and is still unserviceable owing to non-availability of spares."

27. The assisted maintenance period is progressing normally.

28. The health and morale of the Ship's Company have been good during the month. Some leave-breaking offences have occurred.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(SGD.) J. N. LATTIN

(J.N. LATTIN)
Lieutenant Commander RAN
CAPTAIN

Enclosures: A. Steaming Appendix
B. Monthly Return of Ship Availability

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APPENDIX 'A'

Steaming Appendix:

a.	Distance steamed during the month	2,501.4
b.	Hours underway during the month	164.1
c.	Distance steamed since commissioning	75,038.2
d.	Hours underway since commissioning	5,477.6

APPENDIX 'B'

Attached.

RESTRICTED

MONTHLY RETURN OF SHIP AVAILABILITY

HMAS. *Albatross*...
DATE. *Sept. 1940*...

AGE SINCE FIRST COMMISSIONING. *2 5/6* YEARS
MILES STEAMED SINCE FIRST
COMMISSIONING. *75,038.2* MILES

I.C. ENGINE SHIPS
PROGRESSIVE TOTAL ENGINE HOURS

No. 1. *1257.0*.....
No. 2. *1259.4*.....

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1	2	OPERAT. DUTIES	WEAPON TRAIN SPECIAL TASKS	POST-REFIT	PASSAGE TIME	VISIT	PROGRAM MAINT.	PROGRAM REFIT/DOCK	REPAIR	HARBOUR	LONG LV	DEFECTS AFFECTING SHIPS DESIGNED PERFORM. (DURATION IN HRS)					REMARKS
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TELEPHONE:

IN REPL. QUOTE PNG 32/1/019

30 DEC A.M.

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

3 NM R.
31/12/70 18/6/2457

HMAS TARANGAU
LOMBRUM
NEW GUINEA

18 DEC 1970

The Secretary
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

For Information:

The Flag Officer Commanding H.M. AUSTRALIAN FLEET.
The Commander AUSTRALIAN MINE WARFARE AND PATROL FORCES.
The Commanding Officer HMAS AITAPE.

HMAS AITAPE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - OCTOBER 1970

- References:
- A. HMAS AITAPE letter A 127/01 dated 12 November, 1970.
 - B. NOIC PNG letter 32/1/019 dated 03 December, 1970.

K-6-2457 NF

1. The following comments are submitted in respect of para 17 of Reference A.
2. There has been a shortage of 8345-66-025-9502 Ensigns White 2, BDTH since 18 February 1970. This item was overlooked at subsequent replenishments until demanded on the 24 September 1970, Form SX 15 Regd. No. 3182/70/V/2262, Item 4 refers.
3. There has been no necessity to fly dirty ensigns as adequate stocks of 8345-66-025-9504 Ensigns White 4 BDTH were maintained during this period.

4 NM Nded

Then when supply problem
ensigns owing to production
delays but then have all been
fixed and any, demands
made given
21/1

(G. HALLEY)
Commander RAN

17PB

CNS
18/12

DEPT. OF THE NAVYHMAS *Aitape*Report of proceedings *Oct, 70*

AS(NS)

Ch. 11/12.

D of O

14/12

DCNS

Final sentence 4-18/12

1NM

Bn/12

2NM

(A02) 22/12.

3NM

6-31/12

4NM

*AM 5/1. Ref para 12 - then have been delays in production of flags generally by CEF and by GID but efforts are being made to overcome back log with ~~the~~ use of private circulation. *Now fixed in 5/1.**

SECRETARY

Cof S

DPR

AS(NS) (NS55)

22/12

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IN REPLY QUOTE

PNG 3271/019

8 DEC A.M.

A2

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

NAVY—CANBERRA		
18	6	2457

OFFICE OF THE
NAVAL OFFICER IN CHARGE
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
LOMBUM NEW GUINEA

3 - DEC 1970

The Secretary
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

For Information:

The Flag Officer Commanding H.M. AUSTRALIAN FLEET.
The Commander AUSTRALIAN MINE WARFARE AND PATROL FORCES.

HMAS AITAPE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - OCTOBER 1970

Forwarded.

Deegan

Lieutenant Commander RAN
for (G. HALLEY)
Commander RAN

RT Enclosure: 1. HMAS AITAPE's letter A127/01 dated 12 November 70.

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A127/01

HMAS AITAPE
At Sea

12 NOV 1970

The Naval Officer in Charge
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

HMAS AITAPE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - OCTOBER 1970

Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings of HMA Ship AITAPE, under my command, for the month of October 1970.

2. The beginning of the month found HMAS AITAPE undergoing a 3 week assisted maintenance period at Lombrum. The maintenance period ended on 12th October.
3. HMAS AITAPE cast off and proceeded for Madang at 0700 on 12th October. After an uneventful passage in calm weather the ship secured alongside at Madang at 1930 that evening.
4. At 0700 on 14th October the ship cast off and proceeded for Saidor (05°37'S;146°28.5'E). HMAS AITAPE anchored off Saidor from 1010 until 1100 and then proceeded for Madang. The ship secured alongside at Madang at 1430 that afternoon.
5. At 1255 on 15th October HMAS AITAPE cast off and proceeded for Karkar Island. The ship anchored off Dogawan Plantation (04°44'S;145°54'E) at 1540 then moved to a nearby wharf at Kurum Mission, securing alongside at 1635.
6. HMAS AITAPE cast off and proceeded from Kurum at 0755 on 16th October and secured alongside at Bogia (04°18'S;144°58'E) at 1205 that afternoon. It soon became clear that the bollards on the wharf were not strong enough, so the ship moved to an anchorage off the wharf at 1215.
7. At 0755 on 17th October HMAS AITAPE weighed and proceeded. The ship entered the Sepik River at 1045. The 60 mile passage up river to Angoram (04°05'S;144°04'E) was uneventful and the ship secured alongside there at 1700.
8. On 18th October HMAS AITAPE moved downriver to Marienberg Mission (03°57'S;144°15'E). The ship left Angoram at 1220 and secured alongside at Marienberg at 1330.
9. At 0600 on 19th October HMAS AITAPE cast off and proceeded for Madang.
10. The passage of the Sepik River, at least as far as Angoram, is now becoming routine for Patrol Boats of the PNG Patrol Boat Squadron. The old German chart, surveyed about 60 years ago, is still fairly accurate. Depths on the passage to Angoram averaged 10 fathoms on the outside of the bends and 5

/fathoms

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fathoms on the straight stretches. The main dangers are floating logs, which are present in abundance. The fresh water has a most beneficial effect on the ships bottom. It removes every vestige of marine growth in a few hours, leaving the hull as clean as if it had just come off the slip. U

11. HMAS AITAPE secured alongside at Madang at 1500 on 19th October. The ship cast off and proceeded for Lombrum at 1700 the following day, and after an uneventful passage secured alongside at Lombrum at 0800 on 21st October.

12. The series inspection of the main armament began that afternoon. It continued for the rest of the week and over the weekend.

13. Gun functioning trials were carried out off Manus Island during the forenoon of 27th October. The inspection team was disembarked at 1000, and HMAS AITAPE cast off and proceeded for Port Moresby at 1100. The passage was calm and uneventful.

14. A rendezvous was made with HMAS MADANG (Lieutenant K.J. Heynatz RAN) off the Papuan coast during the morning watch on 30th October. HMAS AITAPE and HMAS MADANG entered Port Moresby together, and secured alongside the PNG Transportation Squadron Wharf at 0800. The Deputy Naval Officer in Charge Papua New Guinea, Lieutenant Commander P.P. Stilwell RAN came on board on arrival.

15. HMAS AITAPE was alongside in Port Moresby at the end of the month.

16. The conduct health and morale of the Ship's Company during the month have been satisfactory.

17. Ship serviceability during month has been very good. The appearance of the ship is good, but has been spoilt throughout the month by dirty ensigns. New ensigns are hard to obtain.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,



(J.N. LATTIN)
Lieutenant Commander RAN
Commanding Officer

ANNEX: A. Steaming Figures
B. Monthly Return of Ship Availability

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ANNEX A
to HMAS AITAPE
LETTER A127/01
DATED 12 NOV 1970

Steaming Figures - October 1970

a.	Distance steamed during the month	1,824.4
b.	Hours underway during the month	137.0
c.	Distance steamed since commissioning	76,862.6
d.	Hours underway since commissioning	5,614.6

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MONTHLY RETURN OF SHIP AVAILABILITY

I.C. ENGINED SHIPS
PROGRESSIVE TOTAL ENGINE HOURS

HMAS ANAP
DATE 10 OCT 1970

AGE SINCE FIRST COMMISSIONING 2 1/2 YEARS
MILES STEAMED SINCE FIRST
COMMISSIONING 12,862 MILES

No. 1 13401.2
No. 2 13466.2

1	2	OPERAT. DUTIES	EXERCISE	WEAPON	TRAIN	SPECIAL	TASKS	POST	REFIT	PASSAGE	TIME	VISIT	PROGRAM MAINT.	PROGRAM	REFIT	DOCK	REPAIR	HARBOUR	LONG LV	DEFECTS AFFECTING SHIPS DESIGNED PERFORM. (DURATION IN HRS)					REMARKS
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18/6/2480

DEPT. OF THE NAVY

HMAS *Albatross*

Report of proceedings *Nov, 70*

AS(NS) *Ch. 4/1*

D of O *4/1*

DCNS *4-4*

1NM *28/11*

2NM (A02) *6/1*

3NM *1/1*

4NM *1/1*

SECRETARY *18*

Cof S *22/1*

DPR *22/1*

AS(NS) (NS55) *25/1*

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18/6/2480

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TELEPHONE:

IN REPLY QUOTE PNG 32/1/019

30 DEC A.M.

NAVY DEPT

~~RESTRICTED~~

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

NAVY—CANBERRA

18

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2480

OFFICE OF THE
NAVAL OFFICER IN CHARGE
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
LOMBRUM NEW GUINEA

23 DEC 1970

The Secretary
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

For Information:

The Flag Officer Commanding H.M. AUSTRALIAN FLEET.
The Commander AUSTRALIAN MINE WARFARE AND PATROL FORCES.

HMAS AITAPE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - NOVEMBER 1970

Forwarded.

(G. HALLEY)
Commander RAN

RT Enclosure: HMAS AITAPE'S Letter A127/01 dated 04 December 1970.

RESTRICTED

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7/01

HMAS AITAPE
At PORT MORESBY

- 4 DEC 1970

The Naval Officer in Charge
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

For Information: The Naval Officer Commanding, NORTH AUSTRALIA AREA
The Naval Officer in Charge, QUEENSLAND

HMAS AITAPE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - NOVEMBER 1970

Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings of HMA Ship AITAPE, under my command, for the month of November 1970.

2. HMAS AITAPE was alongside the PNG Transportation Squadron wharf in Port Moresby at the beginning of the month, in company with HMAS MADANG (Lieutenant K.J. Heynatz RAN). Both ships cast off and proceeded for Thursday Island at 1100 on 2nd November. HMAS MADANG was detached at 1130 and proceeded independently for Thursday Island. HMAS AITAPE's passage was uneventful and the ship secured alongside HMAS MADANG at Thursday Island at 1000 on 3rd November. Customs, immigration and quarantine formalities were completed on arrival.

3. HMAS AITAPE cast off and proceeded for Darwin at 0800 on 4th November. The passage from Booby Island to Cape Don was completed in glassy calm conditions. HMA Ships BAYONET (Lieutenant G.S. Stevens RAN) and Buccaneer (Lieutenant S.U. McColl RAN) were encountered on passage.

4. HMAS AITAPE anchored in the approaches to Port Darwin at 1320 on 6th November, to take advantage of the opportunity to clean ship. The ship weighed at 1540 and secured alongside Inner Stokes Hill wharf at 1600K. Clocks were retarded 30 minutes to zone IK on arrival. HMAS ADVANCE (Lieutenant C.J. Pickering RAN) and HMAS ASSAIL (Lieutenant R.B. Forwood RAN) berthed outboard of HMAS AITAPE.

5. I called on the Naval Officer Commanding North Australia Area, Commander K.A. Williams RAN, at 1545IK. Later that evening the ship's officers were entertained to drinks at the Larrakeyah Mess. Members of the Ship's Company went on a bus tour down the Stuart Highway the following day and later had an enthralling evening at the Darwin stock car races.

6. HMAS AITAPE cast off and proceeded from Darwin at 0900 on 8th November. The passage to Thursday Island was uneventful and was once again completed in conditions of no wind and glassy calm. The ship secured alongside at Thursday Island at 1130IK on 10th November. Clocks were advanced 30 minutes to zone K on arrival.

/7. HMA Ships

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7. HMA Ships ATTACK (Lieutenant P.J. Cooke-Russell RAN) and BOMBARD (Lieutenant W.R. Overton RAN) were also in Thursday Island during HMAS AITAPE's visit.
8. HMAS AITAPE cast off and proceeded for Port Moresby at 0800K on 11th November. The ship anchored off Sue Islet ($10^{\circ}12.6'S$; $142^{\circ}48.2'E$) from 1105 until 1300 that day, and secured alongside in Port Moresby at 0800 on 12th November.
9. The ship cast off and proceeded from Port Moresby at 0600 on 13th November bound for Lombrum. That evening, the fuel figures indicated excessively high consumption and the decision was made to call at Lae for fuel enroute to Lombrum. However, a further tank dip at 0800 the following morning showed that the high fuel consumption had not continued, so I decided to proceed direct to Lombrum at reduced speed. It now seems almost certain that, owing to inadequate supervision of fuelling in Port Moresby, the ship was fuelled to only about 80% of capacity. Necessary steps have been taken to prevent a recurrence of this annoying incident. The ship berthed alongside in Lombrum at 1600 on 15th November. A one week self maintenance period was begun on 16th November.
10. A family day was held on 21st November. The ship cast off and proceeded at 0830, visited Mbuke Island ($02^{\circ}22.5'S$; $147^{\circ}49.6'E$) and Baluan Island ($02^{\circ}33'S$; $147^{\circ}17.5'E$) and returned alongside at Lombrum at 1830 that evening. Good weather prevailed for the day and our guests had the opportunity of seeing some of the more remote islands in the Admiralty Group. 2" rocket flares and .5 inch machine guns were fired during the afternoon.
11. HMAS AITAPE cast off and proceeded at 0615 on 22nd November. The ship stopped off Lorengau ($02^{\circ}01'S$; $147^{\circ}16.3'E$) at 0700 and embarked Mr D.O. Hay CBE DSO, Secretary of the Department of External Territories, Mr Walter Lussick MHA, Mr Paliau Maloat MHA and a Patrol Officer. The party visited Derembat, Sou and Tulu, all villages on the north coast of Manus and Ponam, Andra and Hus, all islands off the north coast. They spent about an hour at each place and finally disembarked for the night at Hus at 1745. HMAS AITAPE then proceeded for Lombrum and secured alongside at 1845.
12. The following morning, 23rd November, HMAS AITAPE proceeded from Lombrum at 0600, embarked Mr Hay and his party at Hus at 0715, disembarked them at Lorengau at 0815 and returned alongside at Lombrum at 0855.
13. HMAS AITAPE cast off and proceeded from Lombrum at 0830 on 24th November and secured alongside at Kavieng at 2000 that evening.
14. The ship cast off and proceeded from Kavieng at 0915 on 26th November, proceeded through Silver Sound and the picturesque Albatross Channel ($02^{\circ}44.3'S$; $150^{\circ}42.5'E$) and anchored in Palmen Harbour on Dyaul Island ($02^{\circ}57.8'S$; $150^{\circ}55'E$) at 1300 on 26th November.

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15. HMAS AITAPE weighed and proceeded for Port Moresby at 0800 on 27th November. Passage was taken through St George's Channel. The ship made a brief call at Samarai from 1745 on 28th November to 1600 on 29th November and secured alongside in Port Moresby at 0800 on 30th November. The ship was in Port Moresby at the end of the month.

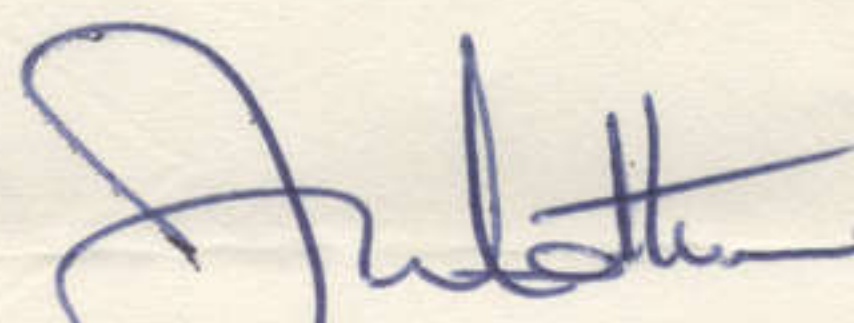
16. Ship serviceability during month has been very good. A little trouble was experienced with the governor of the port main engine but the unit was replaced in Darwin. The engine was not rendered unserviceable by the defect. The ships mileage during November, 4,358.2, is her highest ever (despite a mid-month SMP) so the good performance of all equipment is particularly pleasing. The appearance of the ship is satisfactory.

17. The health, morale and conduct of the Ship's Company during the month have been satisfactory.

I have the honour to be,

Sir.

Your obedient Servant,



(J.N. LATTIN)
Lieutenant Commander RAN
Commanding Officer

Enclosures: A. Steaming Figures
 B. Monthly Return of Ship Availability

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ANNEX A TO
HMAS AITAPE
LETTER A127/01
DATED - 4 DEC 1970

Steaming Figures:

a.	Total distance steamed during the month	4,358.2
b.	Total hours underway during the month	286.0
c.	Total distance steamed since commissioning	81,220.8
d.	Total hours underway since commissioning	5,900.6

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MONTHLY RETURN OF SHIP AVAILABILITY

HMAS. Albatross
DATE. NOVEMBER 1900

AGE SINCE FIRST COMMISSIONING...3...YEARS
MILES STEAMED SINCE FIRST
COMMISSIONING 8,200 MILES

I.C. ENGINE SHIPS
PROGRESSIVE TOTAL ENGINE HOURS

No. 1. 1614.3
No. 2. 1626.1

COMMISSIONING 2,000 MILES															No. 2											
1 2		OPERAT. DUTIES	EXERCISES	WEAPON	TRAIN	SPECIAL	TASKS	POST-	REFIT T	PASSAGE	TIME	VISIT	PROGRAM MAINT.	PROGRAM	REFIT/	DOCK	REPAIR	HARBOUR	LONG LV	DEFECTS AFFECTING SHIPS DESIGNED PERFORM. (DURATION IN HRS)					REMARKS	
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Report of Proceedings Dec, 70

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- NOTES: 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 again to Board Members with Director's comments if there is any matter of special interest in those comments.
- C. Circulation lists numbers 2 and 3 are referred to Directors and Heads of Branches.
- D. If any matter requires comprehensive treatment on reference to another Branch a new file should be raised, a suitable note being made above.

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ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

NAVY—CANDERRA

18 6 2575

OFFICE OF THE
NAVAL OFFICER IN CHARGE
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
LOMBRUM NEW GUINEA

22 JAN 1971

The Secretary
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

For Information:

The Flag Officer Commanding H.M. AUSTRALIAN FLEET.
The Commander AUSTRALIAN MINE WARFARE AND PATROL FORCES.

HMAS AITAPE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - DECEMBER 1970

Forwarded.

W.K. Bird

(W.K. Bird)
Commander RAN

DS
Enclosure: HMAS AITAPE Letter A127/01 dated 30 December 1970.

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127/01

HMAS AITAPE
At LOMBRUM

30th December 1970

The Naval Officer in Charge
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

HMAS AITAPE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - DECEMBER 1970

Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings of HMA Ship AITAPE, under my command, for the the period 1st-30th December 1970.

2. The ship was alongside in Port Moresby at the beginning of the month.
3. At 1330 on 2nd December you, Sir, and other members of the Committee Investigating Pay and Conditions in the PNG Division of the RAN, the Pacific Islands Regiment and the Royal Papua and New Guinea Constabulary, joined HMAS AITAPE. The ship cast off at 1400, and proceeded offshore for exercises designed to demonstrate to the committee the conditions under which PNG sailors live and work. Fortunately conditions offshore were a little choppy, and a three to four foot swell added some reality to the demonstration.
4. 40/60 and .5 inch firings were carried out: they were generally unsatisfactory owing to an intermittent electrical defect in the 40/60 and bad drill on the part of both the 40/60 and .5 inch crews. Excellent marksmanship by the .5 inch crew did something to remedy the situation.
5. Later in the afternoon the boat was lowered to collect a lifebuoy: conditions were marginal for this evolution, and it thus provided a vivid demonstration of the effect of even moderate weather on patrol boat operations.
6. HMAS AITAPE returned alongside at Port Moresby at 1605. You, Sir, and other members of the Committee disembarked on arrival.
7. The unsatisfactory performance of the guns crews obviously necessitated further training, so the ship proceeded to sea at 0600 the following morning, 3rd December. Intensive gunnery training was carried out from 0800 until 1200, and a marked improvement resulted. The ship secured alongside in Port Moresby at 1445. HMAS LADAVA (Lieutenant Commander D.J. Angus RAN) arrived in Port Moresby at 1630 that afternoon.
8. HMAS AITAPE and HMAS LADAVA cast off from Port Moresby at 1600 on 4th December, and proceeded in company for the Fly River mouth.
9. After an uneventful passage in good weather across the

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Papuan Gulf the ships arrived off the entrance to the river at 1000 on 5th December. The islands in the delta and the adjacent coastline were flat and utterly featureless. As the ships closed the entrance the bottom shoaled very gradually to about 2½ fathoms; after crossing the bar it deepened to 5 fathoms, at which depth it remained fairly constant. Good progress was made for about 40 miles, and then the depth began to fluctuate. At the 50 mile mark a 2-fathom sounding was obtained, and it was necessary to go astern and look for another channel. This was successful, and the ships anchored off Lewade Village, 60 miles upriver (8°21'S; 142°46'E) at 1645.

10. A party was sent ashore to find somebody with some local knowledge of the river. Our "pilot", an elderly Papuan named Kewa, joined HMAS AITAPE at 0700 on 6th December. The ships weighed anchor immediately and proceeded upriver.

11. During the forenoon of the second day on the river the ships cleared the delta, and entered the river proper. Initially it was about five miles wide but by the time the 130 mile mark was reached (which locals regard as the limit of tidal influence) it had narrowed to about ½ mile. Several more shallow patches were encountered up to this point, but from 130 miles onward the river became deep and clear. The ship fell naturally into a river passage routine: special sea dutymen (consisting of helmsman, echo sounder operator, wheel and engine order recorder, log lookout and, when required, throttle operator) worked in two watches, with one-hour tricks, as did cable party. A speed of 10.50 r.p.m. on one engine was maintained comfortably. The ships anchored at dusk each evening, using a method not described in the Manual of Seamanship: the ships steamed abreast of each other about 50 feet apart, anchored simultaneously and secured alongside each other.

12. The distances run and the anchoring positions on the second, third and fourth days were as follows:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Day's Run</u>	<u>Total Run</u>	<u>Anchorage Position</u>
6 Dec	135	195	7°49'S; 141°36'E
7 Dec	125	320	7°06'S; 141°08'E
8 Dec	115	435	6°20'S; 141°01'E

13. Most of the day's run on 8th December was spent negotiating that part of the river which forms the border between Papua and West Irian. There was no sign of life on the West Irian bank, except for one deserted and burned-out village.

14. Day 5, 9th December, was the last day of the upriver passage. D'Albertis Junction, where the Alice River joins the Fly, was passed at the 465-mile mark, and from there on the river narrowed and the bends became very tight. One bend required 30° of port wheel while running on the starboard engine. Two engines were used for the last part of the river. The last day's run, 62 miles, ended when the ships berthed alongside at Kiunga (6°06'S; 141°19'E) at 1445 on 9th December. The Assistant

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District Commissioner, Kiunga Sub District, Mr B.F. Creedy, came on board on arrival.

15. After 497 miles on the river, HMA Ships AITAPE and LADAVA were still only 183 miles from the sea. Nevertheless, it was far further from the sea that most members of both ships companies had ever been in their lives. The ships could certainly have proceeded some distance further upriver, (at least 30 miles; possibly 100) but it would have become increasingly difficult and risky, and since HMAS LADAVA's echo sounder was unserviceable, the risk would not have been justified.

16. The unserviceability of HMAS LADAVA's echo sounder necessitated remaining in Kiunga until spares could be flown in, since Kiunga is the only airport on the river with a scheduled air service. To attempt to negotiate the shoals in the delta with only one echo sounder between the two patrol boats would have been most unwise.

17. There was, however, another factor involved in the decision to remain at Kiunga: the river height. The least depth encountered on the 32 miles of river between D'Albertis Junction and Kiunga was 23 feet: on arrival at Kiunga it was found that the river was running some 20 feet above its minimum level, so there remained some risk that the river would drop sufficiently to prevent the Patrol boats proceeding down river. To combat this, a constant watch was kept on the river height, and both ships were kept at one hour's notice to proceed to D'Albertis Junction if the river showed signs of dropping fast. It dropped steadily all the time we were at Kiunga; the total drop was five feet, but it never dropped fast enough to cause any alarm.

18. The echo sounder spares, which had been despatched from Sydney very promptly, became subject to the vagaries of the commercial air cargo services as soon as they were airborne. They eventually arrived just before dark on 13th December, and HMAS LADAVA's echo sounder was repaired that night.

19. In the five days at Kiunga, which could have become tedious and frustrating, various activities were devised to keep the Ship's Companies active. A soccer match resulted in a resounding win for the local team. Some amateur stonemasons constructed a small monument to mark the ships' furthest point upriver; its inscription, "BTYB", may mystify people in years to come. The ships' boats proceeded further upriver and visited several villages; owing to the presence of occasional cannibalism in the area it was considered unwise to allow them to stay away overnight, so they were able to penetrate only another 30 miles. A cocktail party was held on the second night at Kiunga, and proved a resounding success. The most popular institution in town, however, proved to be the wet canteen at the base camp of Kennecott Explorations (Australia) Pty Ltd. Kennecotts are drilling for copper in the mountains about 80 miles north of Kiunga. They use the Fly River to bring in supplies by barge, before shipping them up to the drilling site by helicopter. Kennecott's Kiunga base provided free food and free movies for Naval Personnel: the beer, though expensive, was icy cold, so that the mile-and-a-half

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walk to Kennecotts, over a road knee deep in mud, was more than justified in the eyes of most sailors.

20. HMA Ships AITAPE and LADAVA cast off and proceeded from Kiunga at 0600 on 14th December. After an uneventful day's run of 185 miles the ships anchored at the 312 mile mark (7°08'S; 141°12'E) at 1815. The ships weighed and proceeded downriver at 0630 on 15th December, and secured alongside at Obo (232 mile mark; 7°36'S; 141°20'E) at 1145.

21. One hundred 44-gallon drums of diesel fuel had been pre-positioned at Obo by barge. It had been intended to clear the lower decks of both ships and embark the fuel using sigmund pumps. However, the operation so attracted the local villagers that they were delighted to help out on the sigmund pumps for the small consideration of four cigarettes per man per 44 gallon drum. In cash terms, this represented a wage of approximately \$1.60 per hour, almost certainly a record for unskilled labour in Papua New Guinea. The fuel was embarked in 2½ hours. The ships cast off and proceeded downriver at 1445 and anchored at the 175 mile mark (7°49'S; 141°40'E) at 1815. A log jam developed around the ships later that evening, and berth was shifted to the other side of the river at 2100.

22. HMA Ships AITAPE and LADAVA weighed and proceeded at 0600 on 16th December. A strong current (4 to 5 knots) developed during this the final day on the river, which presented the choice of either making 18.5 knots over the ground on one engine, or 20 knots on two engines. Two engines were used, as the river was deep and clear. The positions of shallows had been noted on the upriver passage, and it was thus possible to reduce speed to slow ahead for short periods to negotiate the shallows when required.

23. The "pilot", Kewa, was dropped at Lewade Village at 1300. He had shown himself to possess an excellent knowledge of the river and had been a conscientious and competent pilot. However, through no fault of his own, he was absent when he was most needed: during the two passages through the shoals of the delta, which were below his village; and during the final 30 miles of the upriver passage from D'Albertis Junction to Kiunga, when he was confined to bed with a bout of malaria.

24. A little difficulty was again experienced negotiating the shoals around the 50 mile mark, but the ships were clear of the river by dusk.

25. HMA Ships AITAPE and LADAVA had been on the Fly River for 12 days, during which time they covered 994 miles. The time on passage was hard work for everyone, and the five days at Kiunga were filled with doubt and uncertainty until the echo sounder spares arrived. Nevertheless, the morale, conduct and attention to duty of the Ship's Company were particularly pleasing during the whole period. The scenery-grassy swamps stretching to the horizon, and dense tropical rain forest-was superb, and full of variety. The river provided no navigational problems other than those already mentioned. A detailed report of the navigational aspect will be forwarded in due course.

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26. HMA Ships AITAPE and LADAVA berthed alongside in Port Moresby at 0800 on 17th December. HMAS LADAVA cast off at 1830 on 18th December, and HMAS AITAPE at 2000. Both ships berthed alongside in Samarai at 1030 on 19th December. HMAS LADAVA cast off and proceeded at 1430 that afternoon; HMAS SAMARAI (Lieutenant R.A. Christie RAN) berthed alongside HMAS AITAPE at 1500.

27. HMA Ships AITAPE and SAMARAI cast off and proceeded at 0800 on 20th December. HMAS SAMARAI was detached, and HMAS AITAPE proceeded for Lombrum by the offshore route outside the Trobriand Islands. A rendezvous was made with HMAS LADAVA off Seeadler Harbour at 0730 on 22nd December, and both ships berthed alongside at Lombrum at 0800. A self-maintenance period began on arrival.

28. Lieutenant Commander J.M. Yates RAN joined the ship at 1500 on 29th December, and will assume command of HMAS AITAPE at 1600 this afternoon.

29. The health, morale and conduct of the Ship's Company during the period under report have been very good.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(SGD.) J. N. LATTIN

(J. N. LATTIN)
Lieutenant Commander RAN
Commanding Officer

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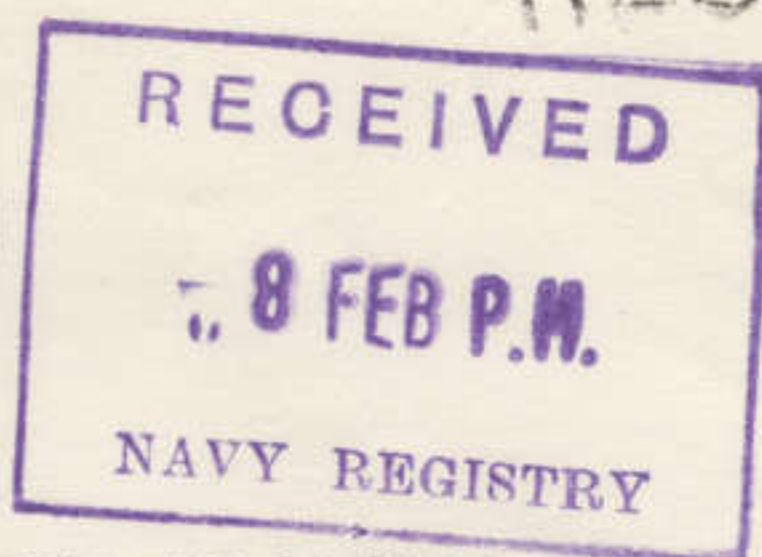
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TELEPHONE:

IN REPLY QUOTE PNG 32/1/019



ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

NAVY - CANBERRA
18/6/2575

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OFFICE OF THE
NAVAL OFFICER IN CHARGE
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
LOMBUM NEW GUINEA

28 JAN 1971



The Secretary
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

For Information:

The Flag Officer Commanding H.M. AUSTRALIAN FLEET.
The Commander AUSTRALIAN MINE WARFARE AND PATROL FORCES.

HMAS AITAPE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - 30 - 31 DECEMBER 1971

Forwarded.

W.K. Bird

(W.K. BIRD)
Commander RAN

RT Enclosure: HMAS AITAPE Letter A127/01 dated 8th January 1971.

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A127/01

HMAS AITAPE
At LOMBRUM

8th January 1971

The Naval Officer in Charge
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

HMAS AITAPE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS -
30,31st DECEMBER 1970

Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings of HMA Ship under my command for the period 30,31st December 1970.

2. I assumed command of HMAS AITAPE at 1600 on 30th December 1970. The ship was berthed port side to on HMAS SAMARAI (Lieutenant R.A. Christie RAN) at Lombrum.

3. At 2000K on Tuesday 30th December 1970 HMAS AITAPE cast off and proceeded for Madang. The weather during the passage was unpleasant and as the NW Monsoon Season was in full swing, winds up to force six were experienced during the night.

4. When in the lee of Karkar Island, latitude 4°40'S; longitude 146°E, a quarterly full power trial was held for one hour and a speed of 19.2 knots was achieved.

5. The ship berthed starboard side to at the Small Ships wharf, Madang at 1315.

6. That evening the generous people of Madang made us very welcome and the New Year was greeted in the usual manner.

7. The health and conduct of the Ship's Company is good, and the morale remains high.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

J. M. Yates
(J.M. YATES)
Lieutenant Commander RAN
Commanding Officer

Enclosures: A. Steaming Appendix
B. Monthly Return of Ship Availability

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APPENDIX 'A'

Steaming Appendix:

a.	Total distance steamed during the month	2,812.4
b.	Total hours underway during the month	204.5
c.	Total distance steamed since commissioning	84,033.2
d.	Total hours underway since commissioning	6,105.1

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MONTHLY RETURN OF SHIP AVAILABILITY

HMAS A-49 AGE SINCE FIRST COMMISSIONING 3 1/2 YEARS
 DATE DEC 70 MILES STEAMED SINCE FIRST COMMISSIONING 8,032 MILES

I.C. ENGINED SHIPS
 PROGRESSIVE TOTAL ENGINE HOURS
 No. 1 1755
 No. 2 1786

COMMISSIONING 8,033.2 MILES												No. 2. 1736-2 1786																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																							
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