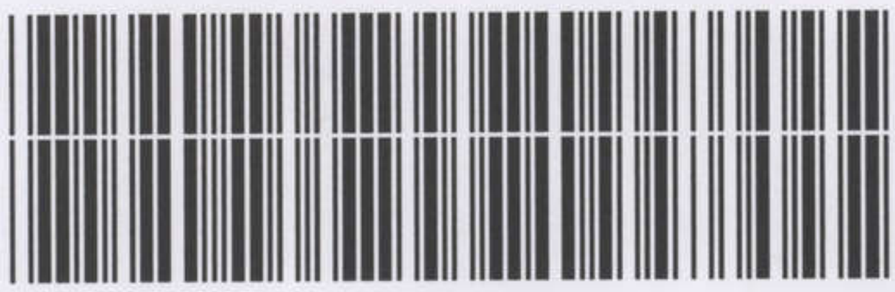
AWM78

Reports of Proceedings, HMA Ships and Establishments

HMAS BENALLA (I)

Item number: 61/2

Title: March-April 1945. Duplicate



AWM78-61/2

"BENALLA"

L. of P.

[61/1]

OPEN

13/7.

4048.

2026/7/ 1270

RECEIVED 6 JUL 1945 L.E.M.

RESTRICTED

SECRET

M. Kelly 17.5.65

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY.

MINUTE PAPER

SUBJECT: H.M.A.S. "Benalla" REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS. April, 1945.

S.N.B. 28/5

2 N.M. 31/5

3 N.M. 6

D. of P. 9/6.

D.R.M.

D.N.I. N.I.S.

Ops. (N) 29/6

N.S.

D.E. (N) 3/7

D.O.T.M. 7/7

D.N.M.S. 12/7

H.

N.A.2.N.M. 13/7

N.S. 14/7

D.N.I. (N.H.R.O.)

Lt Cdr

H.S.

23/7

13 J. /7

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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY.

MINUTE PAPER.

2026/7/1270

3644.

SUBJECT: HMAS "Benalla" Report of Proceedings April, 1945.

D.P.S. p/o 22/5/45

DTSR 23/5

D.O.D. 24/5

DCNS

1ST NM 25/5

NS.

Duplicate

Original

CONFIDENTIAL

The Commanding Officer H.M.A.S. 'Benalla'.

2nd May 1945.

The Secretary of the Australian Naval Board.

Report of Proceedings - April 1945.

Submitted for the information of the Naval Board, the following Report of Proceedings for the month of April 1945.

2. H.M.A.S. 'Benalla' with H.M.A.S. 'Broome' in company, departed Darwin A.M. 4th April for the surveying ground north of Penguin Shoal. At 100 I/5th April, H.M.A.S. 'Hawk' joined company, and at 1300 I, the three ships commenced sounding in company.

3. At 0800 I/6th, 'Castlemaine' arrived on the survey ground and at the same time 'Hawk' was despatched to Darwin to operate under H.M.A.S. 'Shepparton'.

4. Eight floating beacons were laid P.M. 6th April and fixed by Radar ranges and stellar observations taken by 'Benalla' 'Broome' and 'Castlemaine' P.M. 6th and A.M. 7th April. Sounding in company on a scale 1/150,000 was carried out on the 7th, 8th and 9th April. On the latter date a dust haze reduced visibility to 1½ miles and similar conditions prevailed during the following three days.

5. 'Broome' departed for Darwin 0800 I/10th April for fuel, 'Benalla' and 'Castlemaine' continued sounding on 1/150,000.

6. On the 11th April examinations of two banks in positions latitude 12 degrees 37 minutes south, longitude 126 degrees 05 minutes east, and latitude 12 degrees 43 minutes south longitude 126 degrees 09 minutes east, were carried out on a scale of 1/25,000. Least depths obtained in each case was 12 fathoms. On the 12th April, A.M., 'Benalla' and 'Castlemaine' recovered those beacons no longer required for sounding and at 1400 I, proceeded to Darwin arriving 1800 I/13th April.

7. On the 15th April at 0700 I, 'Benalla' and 'Castlemaine' departed Darwin for Baldwin Bank, latitude 12 degrees 52 minutes south, longitude 124 degrees 09 minutes east (approximately) and arrived 0800 I/16th April. Five beacons were laid and fixed and sounding boards prepared on a scale of 1/25,000. The sounding of Baldwin Bank was carried out from the 17th - 20th April inclusive.

HN

18/5E

the survey being completed on the latter date. Least depth obtained was 8 fathoms 4 feet. April 21st, beacons were recovered A.M. and both ships proceeded to Penguin Shoal, arriving at 1430 I. Four beacons were then laid, and the taut wire measurement made and stellar observations taken by 'Benalla' and 'Castlemaine' at one of the beacons P.M./21st and A.M./22nd April.

8. The sounding of Penguin Shoal (on a scale 1/25,000) was commenced A.M. 22nd April and was completed P.M. 23rd. The forenoon of the following day was spent filling in a small gap in the 1/150,000 scale survey, beacons were recovered during the afternoon and at 1600 I 'Benalla' and 'Castlemaine' departed for Darwin, arriving 1700 I 25th April.

9. April 29th, 'Benalla' departed to lay mark buoys to enable U.S.C.G.S.'Mesquite' to

(a) re-lay Abbott Shoal light buoy on western end of Abbott Shoal.

(b) Establish new light buoy in position 11 degrees 41 minutes south, 131 degrees 39 minutes east.

10. Arrived at Abbott Shoal 1730 I/29th April, fixed position of existing light buoy and anchored near the shoal for the night. During the forenoon of April 30th, a beacon was laid to mark the new position of the lightbuoy, and the ship sounded over Abbott Shoal to ensure new postion being relatively correct. 'Benalla' then proceeded to position (b), running with Abbott Shoal beacon astern together with taut wire measurements. The second beacon was laid in position 11 degrees 41 minutes south, 131 degrees 38.9 minutes east and checked by sextant angles between objects ashore. On completion 'Benalla' returned to anchorage at Abbott Shoal, where 'Mesquite' arrived at dusk. The relevant information was passed to 'Mesquite' and at 0700 I 1st May, 'Benalla' departed to rendevous with C.T.U.70.5.3 at Cape Fourcroy, Bathurst Island.

11. En route the positions of Bill Shoal buoy, and that recently established south east of East Vernon light, were fixed. These buoys were found to lie 032 degrees 8 cables and)92 degrees 8 cables respectively from their former reported positions.

12. The health and conduct of the ship's company remains good.

13. Steaming figures for the month are as follows.

Distance steamed	2,542.4 miles
Hours under way	277 15/60 hours
Av.Dist.per ton fuel	8.2.miles.
Dist.steamed since commissioning (28.4.43)	49,873.6 miles.
Average speed.	10.1 knots.
Total hours under way.	4,909 45/60 hours

Lieutenant Commander. R.A.N.
Commanding Officer.

RECEIVED
17 MAY 1945
D.O.T.M.

2026/7/1270

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY.

MINUTE PAPER

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SUBJECT: H.M.A.S. "Benalla" Original REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS. March 1945

S.N.B.

2 N.M.

3 N.M.

D. of P.

D.P.M.

D.N.I.

Ops. (N)

N.S.

D.E. (N)

D.O.T.M.

D.N.M.S.

H.

N.A.2 N.M.

N.S.

D.N.I. (N.H.R.O.)

Lt Rankin

Lt Bennett

Lt McLachlan

Air Mission

H.S. 31/5

28 15

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A 23/4

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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY.

MINUTE PAPER.

Original

2026/7/1270

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3644.

SUBJECT: HMAS "Benalla" Report of Proceedings March 1945.

D.P.S 24/4.

D.T.S.R 26/4

D.O.D 27/4

D.N.S

1ST NM

N 5

1270

O.

DUPLICATE.

CONFIDENTIAL

The Commanding Officer H.M.A.S. 'Benalla'.

7th April 1945.

The Secretary of the Australian Naval Board.

Report of Proceedings.

Submitted for the information of the Naval Board, the following Report of Proceedings for the month of March 1945.

2. March 3rd, 'Benalla' departed Darwin for the survey ground in the vicinity of Penguin Shoal, arriving 1300 I/4th March when sounding was commenced. Four days were spent in this area but little progress was made, mainly due to frequent rain storms and overcast sky, resulting in lack of sufficient astronomical observations to control the soundings.

3. During the night 7th - 8th March, the wind and sea began to rise and by morning the weather conditions prevailing, indicated that a storm was approaching from the north west. H.M.A.S. 'Hawk' was due to depart Darwin A.M. 8th March to rendevous with 'Benalla' on the survey ground. In view of the weather, 'Hawk' was instructed to return to Darwin and 'Benalla' proceeded to that port. Arrived Darwin A.M. 9th March and remained there for three days to allow the weather to clear before returning to Penguin Shoal.

4. During this period, the outstanding section of the Timber Wharf, Darwin, was sounded and results forwarded to the Hydrographic Branch.

HN

5. 'Benalla' and 'Hawk' departed Darwin A.M. 12th March for the Penguin Shoal area and commenced sounding P.M. 13th March. This was an unusually fine day with sea calm, wind West-South West, force 2-3 and sky ¼ covered with cumulus cloud. Such conditions, however, lasted only until the forenoon of the following day, and by 1400 I, it was necessary to despatch 'Hawk' to Port Nelson. 'Benalla' continued sounding until the afternoon of 15th March , when heavy rain storms began to sweep over the area. At 1830 I, course was set for Port Nelson and the ship arrived there at 1200 I 16th March. Very little surveying at Port Nelson was possible for the following two days due to continuous rainstorms, but by the morning of the 19th March, the weather had cleared, and 'Hawk' sounded in Port Nelson while 'Benalla' continued with the coastlining and sounding the approaches to Port Nelson.

26 FC

6. March 20th, while sounding, 'Benalla' developed a leak in the starboard condensor. The ship returned to Port Nelson to open up the condensor, but on anchoring, it was found that the condensor inlet valve could not be closed. It was hoped that the collision mat could be utilised in effecting repairs, but this idea was found to be impracticable due to the proximity of the valve to the bilge keel. 'Benalla' departed Port Nelson 1000 I 21st March steaming on the port engine only. A few lines of soundings were run in the Penguin Shoal area during the 22nd March and the ship then proceeded to Darwin. H.M.A.S. 'Hawk' was left at Port Nelson to continue the coastlining of several small islands west of Port Nelson. The sounding had been completed before 'Benalla's' departure. 'Benalla' arrived Darwin A.M. 24th March and the Base Staff commenced diving operations to effect repairs to the starboard condensor inlet valve. These operations occupied two days and it was found that part of the thread of the inlet valve spindle was stripped. Another spindle was fitted and the starboard condensor opened. Three tubes were found to have leaks and the after tube plate had a general leak over a number of ferrules. The latter were tightened and the defective tubes plugged.

7. 'Benalla' completed with fuel A.M. 27th March, and proceeded P.M. to an anchorage in East Arm, Darwin, for boiler cleaning.

8. The health and conduct of the ship's company, remains very good.

9. Leaky rivets are becoming noticeable in the air fuel tanks, and pitting has commenced on the ship's skin, between the engines. Non-ferrous metals are being attacked, presumably electrolytically, where they are in contact with salt water and occasional condensor failures are attributed to this cause. The boiler tubes show distortion in many cases. The ship's performance however, continues satisfactorily.

10. Conditions on board are made more difficult by the fact that the complement of H.M.A.S. 'Benalla' exceeds that of a normal A.M.S. vessel, resulting in an oppressive atmosphere between decks. Lower deck scuttles are nearly always closed, this being necessary with the ship under way by day and anchored by night in localities where a "black out" is essential. It is not practicable to sleep on deck at night due to frequent rainstorms.

11. Steaming figures for the month are as follows.

Distance steamed:	3,107.7 miles
Hours under way :	324 hours
Average distance per ton of fuel :	10.9 miles.
Distance steamed since commissioning (28.4.43)	47,831.2 miles.

Average spped of : 10.3 knots.
Total hours under way since 28.4.43: 4,632 30/60 hours.

Lieutenant Commander. R.A.N.
Commanding Officer.

RECEIVED 16 MAY 1945 D.I.G.N.I.

2026/7/ 1270

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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY.

MINUTE PAPER

SUBJECT: H.M.A.S. "Benalla" REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS. February 1945

S.N.B.

2 N.M.

3 N.M.

D. of P.

D.R.N.M.

D.N.I.

Ops. (N)

N.5.

~~D.E. (N)~~

D.O.T.M.

D.N.M.S.

H.F.B.

N.A.2.N.M.

N.S.

D.N.I. (N.H.R.O.)

Lt Bennett

Lt McBarlain

H.S. 31/5.

O. 24/5.

9/4

m. Kelly 17.5.65

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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY.

MINUTE PAPER.

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2163

3644.

SUBJECT: HMAS "Benalla" Report of Proceedings February 1945.

D.P.S. 9/4

DTSR 13/4

DoD per 14/4

DCNS

1STNM 16/4

N5

CONFIDENTIAL

St 6339

Commonwealth of Australia.

Department of The Navy.

Royal Australian Navy.

From The Commanding Officer H.M.A.S. 'Benalla'.

Date 2nd March 1945. *Reference No.*

To The Secretary of the Australian Naval Board.

Subject Report of Proceedings.

Submitted, for the information of the Naval Board, the following report of proceedings.

2. H.M.A.Ships 'Benalla', 'Castlemaine' and 'Sleuth' departed survey ground at Port Nelson 4th February for Darwin, leaving 'Stella' to continue with the sounding in that area. On arrival 'Sleuth' was taken in hand for top overhaul and docking and 'Benalla' commenced boiler cleaning. 'Castlemaine' after refuelling, returned to Port Nelson to assist 'Stella'.

During the boiler cleaning period, a start was made on the survey of the Darwin wharves. Progress was slow due to the amount of shipping alongside the various wharves, and when 'Benalla' departed Darwin 15th February, a party was left to complete the work. February 16th, 'Castlemaine' was despatched for docking at Fremantle. En route to Port Nelson, 'Benalla's port condensor developed a leaking tube and defective condensor connection valve. The latter was found to be made of porous metal. On arrival at Port Nelson 17th February, surveying of the anchorage was continued, 'Stella' being employed sounding while 'Benalla' officers carried out coastlining and topography.

February 20th, 'Stella' broke down while sounding, the cam shaft of the governor gear breaking. This was reported to the authorities concerned, together with a request to Naval Officer in Charge Darwin for a tug to tow 'Stella' to Darwin. Instructions were received to tow 'Stella' to West Bay to rendevous with 'Heros', and 'Benalla' proceeded a.m. 22nd Feb. with 'Stella' in tow. Arrived off West Bay 0700 hours (-9) 23rd February, and after transferring 'Stella' to 'Heros', 'Benalla' proceeded to sound north of Penguin Shoal.

Three days were spent in this area, and a bank with less than twenty fathoms was delineated. Least depth obtained was nine fathoms five feet and this area will be examined shortly.

February 27th, 'Benalla' departed for Darwin arriving the following day. The survey of the wharves was completed March 1st except for the western end of the Timber Jetty which could not be sounded as ships were continually alongside. The result of this work has been handed to Officer in Charge Chart Depot, for local reproduction and despatch to Hydrographic Branch.

The sounding of Port Nelson is completed except for inshore work necessitating use of a sounding boat. Coastling of the southern end of this anchorage and about half the

topography is outstanding. In the smaller scale survey of the approaches to Port Nelson, only sounding and coastlining between Colbert Islands and Port Nelson have been carried out recently. The tempoary loss of the 'Sleuth' and 'Stella' will retard progress in this area.

The R.A.A.F. have been asked to take aerial photographs of this area, but to-date, no advice has been received regarding this matter.

About one half of the sounding of the area north of Penguin Shoal has been completed.

Vital statistics for February are as follows.

STEAMED: 2,479.4 miles

HOURS UNDER WAY: 272¼5/60

AVERAGE DISTANCE PER TON OF FUEL: 11.45 miles

Total figures for the ship since commissioning are quoted below for information. H.M.A.S. 'Benalla' was commissioned 28th April 1943.

STEAMED: 44, 723.7 miles.

AVERAGE SPEED: 9.65 knots.

HOURS UNDER WAY: 4308 30/60

The health and conduct of the ship's company remains good.

Lieutenant Commander. R.A.N.
Commanding Officer.

II.

N.T.0600/65 (FEB.)
The Secretary,
NAVAL BOARD.

CONFIDENTIAL

Submitted for the information of the Naval Board.

A/CAPTAIN, R.A.N.
Naval Officer-in-Charge, Darwin.

Naval Headquarters,
DARWIN - N.T.
31st March 1945.

1/3.

152B

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D.O.T.M.
26 FEB 1945
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Mr. Kelly
17-5-65

2026/7/ 1270

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

MINUTE PAPER

SUBJECT: H.M.A.S. "Benalla" -REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS.

December 1944

S.N.B.

2.N.M. 6/2

3 N.M.

D. of P.

D.R.M.

D.N.I.

Ops (N)

D.E.(N) 24/2

D.O.T.M. 26/2

D.N.M.S. 28/2

H.P.B. 1/3

N.A.2.N.M. 1/3

N.5. 5/3

D.N.I. (N.H.R.O.)

Lieut Paulson 6/3

Mr Slessor

File

30/1

95B

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MINUTE PAPER.

2026/7/1270

3644.

SUBJECT: H.M.A.S "Benalla" Report of Proceedings December 1944

Jan 29

D.P.S. 30/1

D.T.S.R.

D.O.D. 1/2

P.C.N.S.

1STAM

N5

Royal Australian Navy.

IN REPLY PLEASE QUOTE
No.

H.M.A.S."Benalla",
31st.December 1944.

Captain D.H.Harries R.A.N.,
Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff,
Navy Office,
Melbourne.
(Copy to O.C.H.B.Sydney)

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

Submitted.

"Benalla" arrived Seeadler Harbour A.M.4th.December and rendezvoused with H.M.A.S."Gascoyne"(Commander R.B.A.Hunt R.A.N.). Boiler cleaning was commenced the following day,and completed 11th.December. A.M.12th.December Benalla proceeded to investigate the reefs reported approximately 40 miles North of Seeadler Harbour. An areaof approximately 350 square miles was sounded and swept by A/S without finding any indication of shoal water. A tracing and report of the work done has been forwarded to O.C.H.B.and Commander Naval Base Manus. Benalla returned to Seeadler Harbour P.M.14th.December,and the following day embarked fresh and dry provisions from V.S.I.S."Merkur", and sailed for Madang A.M.16th.December. Arrived A.M.17th. and departed P.M.the same day.

18th.December arrived Langemak for stores fuel and water,on completion Benalla proceeded to Morobe,arriving there P.M.19th.December. Photographs were obtained by the Department of Information Photographer (Mr.R.J.Edwards) and Benalla departed that evening for Buna.

A.M.20th.December,rendezvoused with H.M.A.S."Warrego" at Buna for conference with C.T.G.70.5,who instructed Benalla to report to C.T.U.70.5.3 at Darwin on completion of the photographic tour of New Guinea. Departed Buna P.M.20th.December and anchored in Porlock Harbour that evening. The following day was spent sounding to Northwestward of Spear Island to check the existence of the shoals reported by Australian Notices to Mariners No's.753 and 772 of 1944. Results have been forwarded to O.C.H.B.

That night the U.S.Liberty Ship"William Campbell" was seen to be aground on Veal Reef,assistance was offered but politely declined. It is difficult to understand why the Ship failed to keep out of trouble as the weather had been excellent all day 21st.December.

Arrived Makawa Mission,Cape Vogel,A.M.22nd.December for further photographs of surveying activities. A mark was erected ashore with a suitable background of natives and waving palms,and photographed togethervwith an Officer manipulating a theodilite. By this time,after having concocted several scenes both onboard and ashore,the Ship's Company had developeda tendency to regard themselves as embroyo film actors. During the stay at Makawa the opportunity was taken to give the Ship's Compnay recreation in the form of football and cricket matches against the Mission natives. Proceeded A.M.24th.December for Moresby Strait where photographs were taken of Fergusson and Goodenough Islands,then proceeded to Nuakata Island where Christmas Day was spent.

Departed Nuakata Island A.M.26th.December for Milne Bay. There fuel,water and some fresh provisions were obtained, and Benalla departed P.M.27th.December for Thursday Island, arriving A.M.30th.December. After topping up with fuel Benalla departed P.M.for the Carpentaria Light Vessel,and anchored close by the light vessel at 2330K. It was intended to check it's position by star sights the following morning but continuous

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS (contd)

heavy rain throughout the night and early morning made this impossible. However from the D.R.position of the Ship at the time of reaching the light vessel it's present charted position appears to be correct. At 0600K/31st.December departed to rendezvous with H.M.A.S."Moresby" at Snake Bay Melville Island.

Lieutenant Commander R.A.N.
COMMANDING OFFICER

19/-

18/1

78B

RECEIVED 15 JAN 1945 N.O.R.T.N.

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2026/7/ 1232

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

MINUTE PAPER

SUBJECT: H.M.A.S. "Benalla" - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS. 11:10:1944 to 5:11:1944.

S.N.B.

2.N.M.

3.N.M.

D. of P.

D.R.M.

D.N.I.

Ops (N)

D.E.(N)

D.O.T.M.

D.N.M.S.

H.P.R.B.

N.A.2.N.M.

N.5.

D.N.I. (N.H.R.O.)

5/12.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

MINUTE PAPER

2026/7/1232

SUBJECT: HMAS. "BENALLA" - Report of Proceedings

11.10.44 to 5.11.44.

D.P.S. 5/12

D.T.S.R. 8/12

D.O.D. 13/12

D.C.N.S. 13/12

I/N/M. 8/12

NS

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY.

RESTRICTED

Mr. Keelan 17.5.65

5th November 1944(Contd) : Preparations were commenced for this Survey, but were badly interrupted on the 8th November 1944 by a Typhoon. A moderate Northerly wind blew during the forenoon, developing into a strong Westerly wind at 1300, with a drop in the barometic pressure. By 1600 the wind had increased to an estimated velocity of 60 m.p.h., still blowing from the West. The barometer continued to fall, although not rapidly.

By this time it was impossible to pick up the various Shore Parties, and they were obliged to spend the night as best they could. By 2200 the barometer had commenced to rise, and the wind backed slowly to the Southward, easing to Force 5 at 0200/9th. From the weather conditions experienced since our arrival in the Phillipines, it appears likely that more working days will be lost than was the case in New Guinea waters.

Lt Cdr J.

(Sgd.) H. GALE.

Lieutenant Commander R.A.N.
COMMANDING OFFICER

COPY for distribution

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY.

H.M.A.S. "Benalla",
9th November, 1944.

Captain D.H.Harries R.A.N.
Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff,
Navy Office,
Melbourne.

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS.

Submitted.

11th October 1944 : H.M.A.S. "Benalla" departed Brisbane for Milne Bay, having completed refit and leave to Ship's Company.

15th October 1944 : Arrived Milne Bay, where several net flotation buoys were embarked, and contact made with U.S. Lighthouse Tender "Buttonwood".

16th October 1944 : Departed for Hollandia.

19th October 1944 : Arrived Hollandia, where written instructions from C.T.G. 70.5 Afloat (Commander R.B.A. Hunt R.A.N.) were received, ordering Benalla to proceed to Leyte Gulf, Central Phillipines, with a convoy leaving Hollandia 29th. October. It was decided that it would be expedient for Benalla to boiler clean at Hollandia in order to have a longer unbroken period for operations at Leyte.

During the Ship's stay at Hollandia, Commanding Officer visited G.H.Q. in order to obtain all information required by the Surveying Task Group, for the future operations in the Phillipines.

29th October 1944 : Benalla and Buttonwood depart-et Hollandia, forming units of the Escort for twenty Liberty Ships and smaller craft.

2nd November 1944 : At 1200 1, the convoy was order to alter course 160 degrees to starboard, and proceed to Palau, a Japanese surface force having been reported. However at 1900 1 the convoy resumed course for Leyte Gulf, so the report of enemy forces in the area was apparently erroneous.

4th November 1944 : Arrived Leyte Gulf without further incident, and having seen the Convoy safely anchored under the protective armament of several battleships, cruisers and destroyers, Benalla proceeded North to San Pedro Bay to rendezvous with H.M.A.S. "Gascoyne".

Several air raids were made during the night, but although anchored uncomfortably close to Tacloban air strip, no bombs fell in the vicinity of the Ship.

5th November 1944 : Commander Hunt and Commanding Officer "Benalla" visited the various U.S. Authorities established at Tacloban, to obtain local surveying requirements pending the next operation. It was decided that a survey of San Pedro Bay should be carried out on a scale of 1/25,000, South of the Line Dio Island - Punubulu Island. The area North of this line had already been surveyed by H.M.A.S. "Gascoyne" and Tenders.