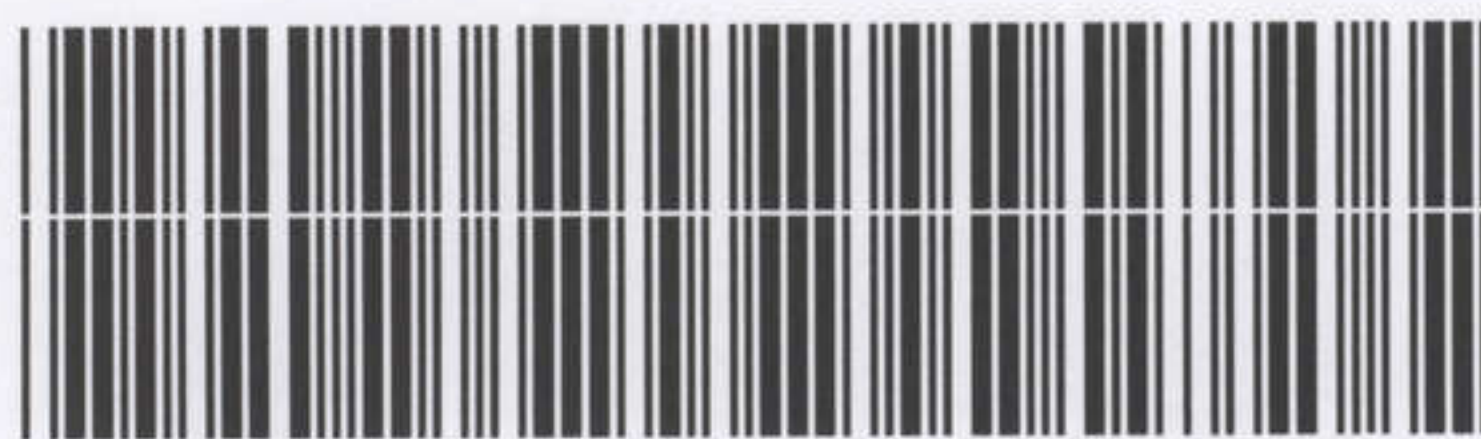


AWM78
**Reports of Proceedings,
HMA Ships and Establishments**

HMAS ECHUCA

Item number: 104/3

Title: March 1943. War diary



AWM78-104/3

ECHUCA W.D. 3/43

[104/3]

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AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL
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Signature: *[Signature]* Date: 1 Nov 90

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NAVAL STAFF OFFICE
TOWNSVILLE
14th April, 1943

*Summ 22/4/43
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Secretary,
Naval Board,
Navy Office,
MELBOURNE

*123
HW*

MONTHLY REPORT - H.M.A.S. "ECHUCA"

The attached monthly report rendered by H.M.A.S. "Echuca" covering the month of March, 1943, is submitted for the information of the Naval Board.

*25 conting. Merakua visit by 3.
Remarks on mails by 4 show need of absolute Administrative Authority in the North.
f. 26/4.
vide page 9 & 2/5. Rowbentley*

D.P.S.

Sent

COMMANDER, R.A.N.
NAVAL OFFICER-IN-CHARGE

*See file
568/20/1096.*

*Head of N
Will recommend that
Propose to refer para. re mail to NOIC Townsville
for remarks, as all mail for ships in northern areas
are sent to NOIC Townsville for forwarding.*

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Royal Australian Navy.

IN REPLY PLEASE QUOTE

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No. _____

From.....Commanding Officer - H.M.A.S."ECHUCA"

Date.....April 1st.1943.

To.....Naval Officer in Charge - Townsville.

Subject.....WAR DIARY of H.M.A.S."ECHUCA" for the month of March 1943.

Forwarded for the information of the Naval Board.

1. "Echuca" weighed and proceeded as escort to Convoy N.T.4."Admiral Chase" "Both" and "Mangola", at 0745L, 1st March, to Cairns. The passage was without event until 1940L, 3rd., when Commodore Convoy, in "Mangola" signalled that "Both" had reported one man not accounted for on mustering at dusk. Course was immediately reversed and all lookouts doubled, but nothing was found during the search. "Both" reported by signal the following morning that NX912222, Pte. H.B. Miller - "B" Platoon, - 2/6th. Aust. Indep. Coy, had not been seen since 1200L 3rd., and was considered to have been lost overboard.

2. "Both" was detached for Townsville on arrival off Fitzroy Island, and "Echuca" proceeded to anchorage with "Admiral Chase" and "Mangola" in Cleveland Bay.

H.M.A.S."Pirie" cleared the Fairway Beacon at 1700L, 4th, and when turning into Grafton Passage, was observed to be flying Black Pendant and dropping Depth Charges. "Echuca" was then under way, and passing into the main Channel. A signal was made to N.O.I.C. Cairns advising him of "Pirie's" actions, and instructions were later received to proceed to sea and carry out A/S. patrol of Cleveland Bay, during the dark hours. "Echuca" passed "Admiral Chase" in the main channel on the way out.

"Echuca" entered Cairns harbour and berthed on "Bowen" during the afternoon of the 5th. Boilers were blown down that night, and preparations made for boiler cleaning. Ships Company was granted 48 hours leave in two watches.

Lieut K.Gourlay R.A.N.R. joined the ship as Executive Officer and commenced taking over from Lieut D.B.Lloyd-Jones R.A.N.R.(S).

S.A.B. ¹³
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 P.C. (3)

Royal Australian Navy.

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11.

No.

4. At 1545L on Saturday March 6th., "Echuca" was with difficulty moved by the Tug "Uta", from alongside "Bowen" to No.3 Oil Lighter. During the process, "Uta" went aground and "Echuca" anchored was in midstream on the flood tide. The tug was eventually pulled off, and succeeded in taking "Echuca" in tow, after 3 shackles had been weighed by hand. Fuelling was completed from oil lighter that night, and "Echuca" remained alongside.
5. Berth was shifted to alongside "Platypus" at 1900L on March 8th. and a boiler cleaning party commenced work. Together with minor work on Main Engines and Auxilliarries, this was completed on Sunday March 14th, and "Echuca" slipped and proceeded to No.4 berth, Cairns on Monday 15th., at 1400L, to await completion of loading of Convoy - S.S. "Baralaba".
6. "Echuca" slipped and proceeded to sea at 1200L, 16th, March, with Lieut. D.B. Logan R.A.N. on board, to exercise "L.L" and S.A. Sweeps in Cleveland Bay. These operations were successfully carried out during the afternoon, and at 1650L, N.A.P. Launches "Hoonah" and "Seeka", were taken in tow for Portland Roads and Thursday Island, respectively. S.S. "Baralaba" cleared the main channel at 1800L, and took station ahead of "Echuca". She remained in Company during the passage to Thursday Island. The voyage was without event, and "Hoonah" was detached at Portland Roads, at 1728L, 17th, March.
7. "Echuca" and Convoy arrived at Thursday Island at 0943L, 19th. "Baralaba" proceeding alongside. N.O.I.C.-T.I., called on the Commanding Officer "Echuca", and discussed part one of the "Augusta" movement. ("Echuca" to escort "Baralaba" to Marauki).

8. "Echuca" and "Baralaba" left Thursday Island for Marauki at 0845L, 20th. The passage was without event, ships arriving off the Outer Fairway Buoy at 1400L, 21st. "Baralaba" proceeded in at 1500L, and "Echuca" anchored off.
9. S.S. "Baralaba" remained at Marauki for 3 days, discharging. During this period, opportunity was taken to exercise "Echuca's" Ships Company in Heaving the Lead, Throwing Heaving Lines, Leadman's Duties, Collision Stations, Sea-boats Crews, Depth Charge Parties Duties and Dummy A/S. attacks on a sunken Coral reef. All short range weapons were exercised at a Kite Target, and Pistol and Rifle practise carried out. It was found that none of the young seamen ratings had any knowledge of how to stream and hand the log, or to heave and call the Lead correctly. They all responded rapidly to tuition. Junior Officers were exercised at bringing the ship alongside a Dan Buoy.
10. "Echuca" proceeded escorting "Baralaba" to Thursday Island at 1600L, 24th, and arrived at Normanby Sound anchorage at 1950L, 25th. R.A.F.A. "Kurumba" arrived during the night and anchored. The passage from Marauki was without event, except for one Aircraft report of a probable periscope, which was investigated and found to be a shoal of fish.
11. "Echuca" proceeded alongside "Kurumba" and refuelled at 0800L, 26th. proceeding on completion to anchorage off Thursday Island Wharf, where she remained until 1445L, 27th.
12. "Echuca" left anchorage at Thursday Island at 1445L, 27th, to rendezvous S.S. "Lady Isobel" off Ince Point, and escort her to Port Moresby. Anchorage was made that night off Ince Point, and ships proceeded at 0626^K, 28th., through Great North East Channel. Anchorage was made at 1802^K, 29th, off Rencel Island, and ships weighed and proceeded at 0632^K, 30th., clearing Bramble Cay at 1328^K, and set course for Port Moresby which was reached at 1130^K, 31st. "Echuca" refuelled from A.M.S. Wharf on arrival, and commenced the return passage to Thursday Island at 1615^K. On the way out, 6 rounds of 4" practise projectile were fired at the "Pruth" wreck.

IV.

12. Bramble Cay was reached at 1150K, 1st. April, and "Echuca", after anchoring at Rennel Island on the night of the 1st-2nd, arrived at anchorage off Thursday Island wharf at 1420K, 2nd.
13. An opportunity was taken to send a boat load of men ashore at Rennel Island for exercise. The health of the ship's company remains excellent, but the lack of a properly organised mail service worries the men. Several opportunities have been available for mail to be forwarded to Thursday Island, but none has been received since leaving Cairns, and this has had an unsettling effect on the Ship's Company.

Total Steaming Distance To-date. 12,062 miles.
" " Hours " 1,397 hours.
Average Speed To-date. 9.1 knots.



R.A. NETTLEFOLD.
Lieut-Commander. R.A.N.R.
COMMANDING OFFICER.

N.O.I.C. - Townsville.

Forwarded for your information.

AWM 78.

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