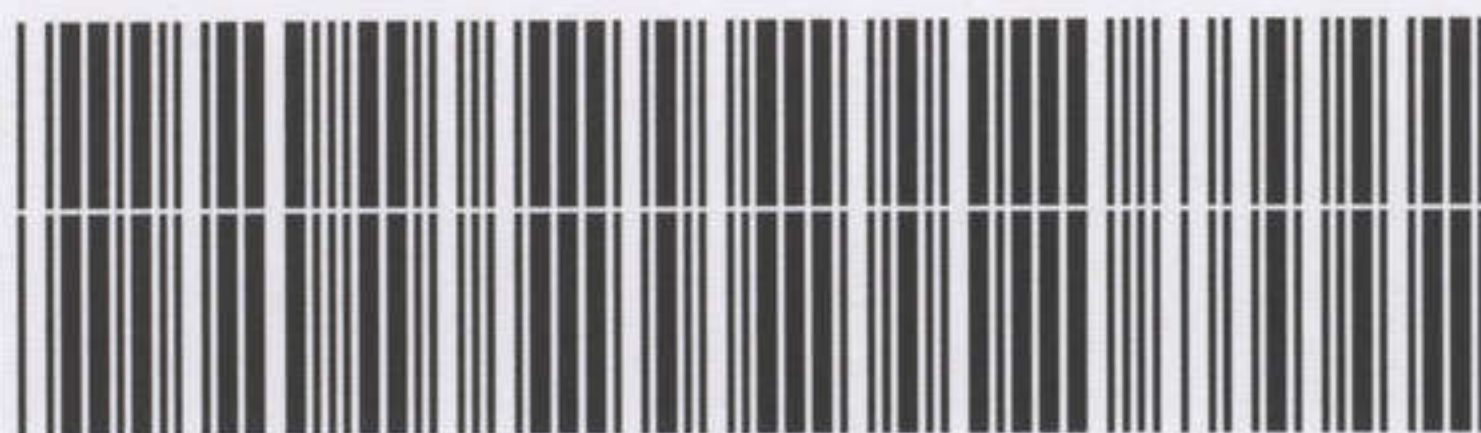


AWM78
**Reports of Proceedings,
HMA Ships and Establishments**

HMAS HYDRA

Item number: 143/1

Title: July-September 1972



AWM78-143/1

[143/1]

HMS 44 Dr A.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL
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Declassification Authority—Defence Records
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Reviewer: LCDR R. L. Smith (RANEM)

Signature: *R. Smith* Date: 1 Nov 90

R of P. 1972-

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVYHMAS "HYDRA" Report of Proceedings July '72

AS(NS)

23/8.

D of O

23/8.

Para 16 - About 1/3 of the ships
sailor complement.

DCNS

1NM

2NM

3NM

4NM

SECRETARY

C of S

DPR

AS(NS)

(NS55)

7/9

- NOTES:
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21/8

10 AUG AM

NAVY—CANBERRA		
18	6	3657
HMS HYDRA		
at sea		

226/1

1 August 1972

The Hydrographer of the Navy

Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings of Her Majesty's Ship HYDRA under my command during the month of July 1972.

2. I berthed alongside the Main Jetty at Honiara at 1030 Saturday 1st July after an uneventful passage from Brisbane. The two replacement main engines had quickly been run in and have since given no cause for alarm. The success of the emergency installation of these two engines by a commercial yard reflects great credit on them and on my ship's staff.
3. The local community in Honiara seemed glad to see the ship back on station and useful discussions with the Government surveying and administrative staffs took place before I sailed for the survey ground at 1315 Sunday 2nd July.
4. Both Hifix camps were re-occupied on 3rd July; that on Vella Lavella island had been unaffected by Cyclone Ida but the mast at Taro Island had been blown down by this storm shortly after the ship had left the area at the end of May. The local resident at Taro had re-erected the tent and no damage had been caused to the equipment so that I was able to resume surveying later on 3rd July.
5. For the remainder of the month, steady progress has been made with Hydrographic Instruction No. 17/72 - Bougainville Strait 1/50,000, Having ~~completed the sounding, sonar sweeping and geophysical observations of the~~ very shallow and uneven area across the centre of Bougainville strait - all of which has had to be interlined - I was able to resume 24 hour surveying in the deeper water to the south.
6. In order to provide a better angle of Hifix out in this area, the station on Taro Island, Choiseul Bay was withdrawn during the forenoon of Saturday 22nd July and re-established later the same day at Sassamunga about 30 miles eastwards on Choiseul Island. The new site was fixed the same day and a tidal station was established to begin 30 days observations.
7. The only respites from the continuous surveying, have been short visits to Kieta from late Friday 14th to very early Monday 17th July and to Gizo for 24 hours on Saturday 29th July. Mail has been transferred by helicopter at Kieta airport as convenient during the month.
8. Weather conditions have been less good than before; daily squalls have produced torrential rain, poor visibility and choppy seas whilst, on Thursday 27th July, warning was received of another unseasonal cyclone thought to be forming close north of Choiseul Island. As a precaution, I proceeded at full speed away from the expected dangerous quarter but the warning was cancelled the following day. Nevertheless the symptoms leading to the warning produced seas which precluded any boatwork for the whole week.

9. Apart from blowing down all the sounding marks which had been left in the area, Cyclone Ida had completely changed the silhouettes of many of the islands. Winds up to an estimated 120 knots had stripped the trees of their leaves and already they had assumed a ghostlike appearance; had the cyclone struck before the survey started much clearing would have been avoided.

10. One 35 foot survey boat has been out of action for most of the month; originally this was due to a cracked cylinder head and a replacement was very promptly supplied from Commodore Hong Kong's stock. Unfortunately, having been fitted and tried successfully by ship staff similar symptoms developed and it was found that three more cylinder heads had cracked. Replacements, although promptly despatched, were held up by strikes en route but have now been successfully fitted.

11. There have been no other major defects during the month although the ship's flight is grounded awaiting spare parts; there have been a crop of minor electrical problems including interference on the radio and Hifix circuits, difficulty with tandem breakers and bridge propulsion console, the Clayton boiler etc. This latter defect has become more critical since water was not available at Gizo; whilst at Kieta no public supply was available and attempts to obtain some from M.V. Forres Bank, whilst secured alongside, resulted in a contaminated supply.

12. It is ironic that Kieta, with a yearly rainfall of over 250 inches, should suffer a water shortage owing to inadequate storage at the wharf. Fortunately the ship's company are exercising voluntary restraint and over 5 tons daily has occasionally been collected from rainfall on the upper bridge.

13. Progress with Hydrographic Instructions is as follows:

- i. In hand H.I. 12/72 Bougainville Strait
- ii. No results despatched during the month
- iii. No results in hand. Cloud and weather conditions have precluded any aerial photography.

14. The following changes of officers have taken place:

2 July - Lieutenant (GL)(H) P.J.L. Kelly left for leave and HMS BULLDOG

14 July - Lieutenant (SL)(H) D. Ives joined vice Kelly.

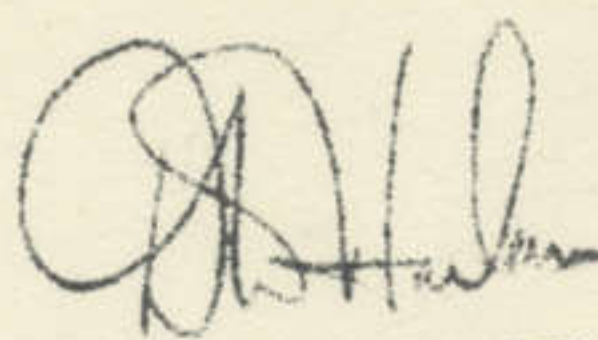
15. The general health of the ship's company remains very good - a fair number take part in a vigorous, daily, "Keep fit" session. One seaman was admitted to Kieta's new hospital to have his appendix removed on 16th July but has now rejoined; my Radio Supervisor has been laid up for most of the month with a slipped disc and will probably have to be sent home on a stretcher before his relief arrives next month.

16. The conduct of the ship's company remains excellent. They have quickly re-adapted themselves to the stretched conditions of the survey grounds routine; about 30 are due for relief after 9 months overseas and will fly home from Manus Island at the end of August. It is to be hoped that their reliefs are of the same high standard.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,



D W HASLAM
CAPTAIN RN

Copies to: Commander-in-Chief, Fleet
Flag Officer, Medway
COMANZUKNAV
Commander, Australian Fleet
A.C.N.B.
R.N.L.O. Canberra
Hydrographer RAN
N.O.I.C. Queensland
R.N.O. Singapore
MOD(N) for Naval Historical Branch
Officer-in-Charge Hydrographic School

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

HMAS HYDRA

Report of Proceedings SEPTEMBER 1972

AS(NS)

D of O

DCNS

1NM

2NM

3NM

4NM

SECRETARY

C of S

CNSW

DPR

AS(NS)

(NS55)

23/10
 23/10 Para 11. Large container ships &
 Rule of the Road is
 interesting. 23/10.

25/10.

26/10

30/10.

Add.

11

17/11

10/11

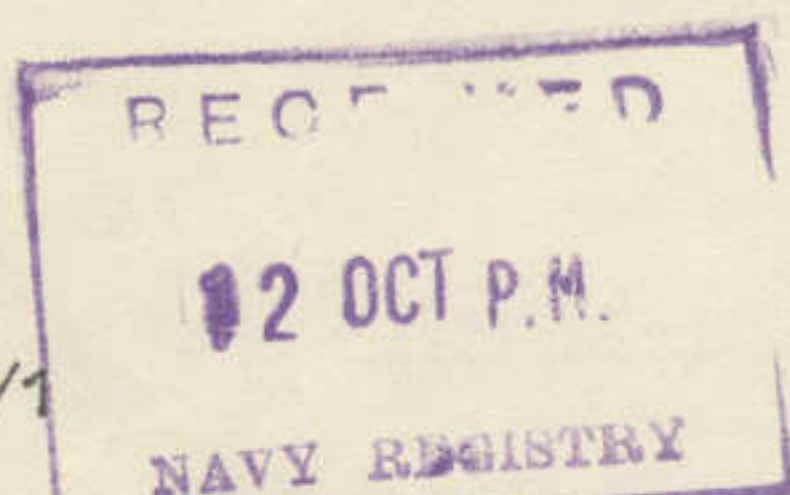
21/11/72.

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16/10.

226/1

The Hydrographer of the Navy
TAUNTON



HMS HYDRA
at Hong Kong

NAVY—CANBERRA		
18	6	3741

4 October 1972

Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings of Her Majesty's Ship HYDRA under my command during the month of September 1972.

2. The passage across the south-western corner of the Pacific Ocean from Manus Island to Hong Kong proved very uneventful - apart from some very interesting passage observations. The precision depth recorder worked well in depths down to 5,275 fathoms, whilst gravity anomalies of up to -254 milligals were recorded near the Emden and Mindinao Deeps, east of the Philippine Islands. I chopped from the operational control of the Australian Commonwealth Naval Board to that of Commander ANZUKNAV pm 3 September and to that of Commodore Hong Kong on 7 September.
3. I berthed alongside HMS TAMAR, at North Arm, at 1530 I on Thursday 7 September and, immediately, a busy weekend of storing ship began. This was the first encounter with another HM Ship since March and, apart from the visit to Brisbane in June, the first opportunity to store ship for the last six months.
4. Very full cooperation was afforded by the Commodore and staffs of HMS TAMAR and the R.A.F. and a full social programme was also fulfilled. I called on Commodore J K Stevens, Commodore Hong Kong, on 8 September.
5. I had sent a Surveying Recorder 1st Class ahead of the ship from Manus, to discuss arrangements for my three Hong Kong surveys with local surveyors and service staffs. He had selected sites for two HIFIX stations to control my first survey - the Eastern Approaches to Hong Kong - and had been flown, by RAF helicopter with Lands Department surveyors who had fixed one site on the local native grid.
6. On Monday 11 September, the RAF had offered to fly all the equipment to the selected HIFIX sites, both of which had to be on ground only accessible by helicopters. All the necessary gear was off-loaded from the ship to HMS TAMAR's parade ground, whence it was to be ferried by the large Wessex helicopters to the sites.
7. Unfortunately, one Wessex became unavailable and all the gear for one site had to be re-embarked late Monday evening. I sailed at 0830 Tuesday 12 September and used my own Wasp helicopter to set up this second station at HMS DAMPIER's triangulation station on Beaufort Island, in the Poi Toi group.
8. This station was perched atop the bare 880 foot summit and, since the Decca engineers are not legal passengers in the Wasp, they and the erecting party had to scramble up the cliffs to receive the gear. One underslung load of a billy hut section had to be jettisoned from the Wasp when it threatened to take charge.
9. By late evening of 12 September, both HIFIX stations were operational, tide camps had been established, by boat, at Stanley Bay and Waglan Island and the survey could have started but I decided to anchor overnight to allow the Decca teams time to settle in to their precipitous perches.
10. Sounding began am 13 September, after a quick HIFIX calibration and bar-check, and continued until midday Friday 15 September. The area of H.I. 8/72 - Eastern Approaches to Hong Kong - 1:75,000 apparently occupied the main fishing grounds of the 80,000 floating population of Hong Kong as well as of an equal number of Chinese and Portuguese based junks. It also lay across the main approach route to Hong Kong, Macau and the Canton River. The 3 extra Seaman Officers borne proved an invaluable safety O.O.W. team.

11. Whilst the smaller craft were punctilious in giving way, the same was not true of the larger container ships whose huge, ungainly, bulk apparently gives them right of way - regardless of any normal navigational rules. One particularly blatant disregard of traditional etiquette has been reported separately.
12. I broke off surveying for the weekend of 15 to 17 September during which a successful cocktail party was held on board, at North Arm, HMS TAMAR. Work on H.I.8/72 was completed by dusk on Thursday 21 September, when I anchored in the Western Anchorage, Hong Kong - having landed dismantling parties at both HIFIX stations during the afternoon.
13. On Friday 22 September, whilst two RAF Wessex helicopters were taking the Hifix stations back to TAMAR, I anchored in the area of H.I.7/72 - Urmston Road to Brothers Point - 1:25,000 sending all boats ashore to erect marks at triangulation stations which had been identified from the Wasp flight earlier in the week.
14. After another weekend alongside at North Arm, HMS TAMAR, I sailed for Castle Peak Bay to start work on H.I.7/72. All surveyors were engaged in extending the triangulation for the first two days, but sounding and coastlining began on Wednesday 27 September.
15. I again returned alongside North Arm, HMS TAMAR for the weekend, late on Friday 29th and intend to repeat this pattern for the rest of October, by which time I expect to have finished H.I.7/72 and also H.I.9/72 - East Lamma Channel 1:25,000.
16. Although there are few seamen hands left on board with all boats and coastlining parties away daily, the period at anchor is providing a good opportunity for the technical departments to catch up on maintenance and for the surveying department to process the plethora of data accumulated during the earlier part of the year.
17. I intend to sail from Hong Kong on Saturday 28 October for Singapore so as to allow a week in harbour before the start of the annual refit. Preparations for this appear to be progressing very smoothly as a result of the carefully coordinated build-up from Chatham, Bath and Taunton. A full-power trial is intended during the passage to Singapore.
18. There have been no mechanical and only minor electrical defects during the month. The use of the Chinese side-party has enabled the upper deck maintenance to catch up on arrears of work and the ship is probably more immaculate than at any time this year.
19. Progress of survey work is as follows:-
 - a. Completed - H.I.8/72. Eastern Approach to Hong Kong 1:75,000
In hand - H.I.7/72. Urmston Road to Brothers Point 1:25,000
 - b. 186 tracings of passage observations, Singapore - Solomons - Brisbane - Solomons - Hong Kong, are ready for dispatch within the next few days.
Advance Report of Survey - "Bougainville Strait 1:50,000" - with details of 182 shoal soundings, is being dispatched this week. Details of Oceanographic work carried out off Rabaul on 23 August will be dispatched in a few days.
 - c. Results of H.I.7/72 "Bougainville Strait 1:50,000" and H.I.8/72 are in hand, but will not be ready for dispatch until at least the end of December 1972.
20. The following changes of Officers have taken place:-

25 September	Lieutenant(P) R Asbey returned UK for temporary courses.
29 September	Instructor Lieutenant Commander R A Greenfield B.Sc.(Eng) joined as Scientific Officer vice Instructor Lieutenant Commander A D White B.Sc.

21. The general health of the Ship's Company remains very good, although there have been many cases of colds. The general conduct of the Ship's Company has been very good, although the 30 newly arrived junior ratings have taken some time to settle in and the extra opportunities for leave breaking have caused a small increase in the numbers of defaulters. Unfortunately, the rapidity of the rise of buildings in Hong Kong has been more than matched by the rise in prices and my present routine of granting leave only on the three nights per week when the ship is not anchored on the survey ground, is probably as much as even our present high rates of pay can afford.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,



D W HASLAM
CAPTAIN RN

Copies to:

Commander-in-Chief, Fleet
Flag Officer, Medway
COMANZUKNAV
Commander, Australian Fleet
A.C.N.B.
R.N.L.O. Canberra
Hydrographer RAN
RNO Singapore
MOD(N) for Naval Historical Branch
Officer-in-Charge, Hydrographic School

AWM 78.