

# Australian Hydrographic Service

The Service reports that HMAS Melville recently completed a wide-ranging surveying season covering much of Papua New Guinea (PNG) in support of the PNG Hydrographic and Charting Redevelopment Project. This is jointly sponsored by the Australian Hydrographic Service, a service within the Royal Australian Navy, and the PNG Maritime Safety Authority and funded by the Asian Development Bank with the aim of providing new charts, including ENC's, and improving existing charts in the PNG area. CPCS Transcom, a Canadian company, is managing the rehabilitation project on behalf of the Asian Development Bank, whilst Australian Hydrographic Service management of the chart-production component has been outsourced to HSA Systems, the Australian company very experienced in both Australian and New Zealand charting projects.

Many already existing charts were based on surveys undertaken by the RAN Hydrographic Branch in the late 1920s, with increasing efforts during the 1930s by the then RAN Hydrographic Depot. The Second World War engendered a previously unseen level of hydrographic effort by what had then become the RAN Hydrographic Service (RANHS), including surveys in many areas now occupied by our adversary. Ultimately, the RANHS was given responsibility for all allied Hydrography/Charting for the South-West Pacific war zones. These wartime surveys were quite obviously undertaken under great difficulty, mostly on local datum as opportunity allowed. In fact, in some places the same area was surveyed with the point of origin having two different geographical positions - not disastrous so long as one was navigationally position fixing on the appropriate local terrestrial features.

After the war PNG Administration made an attempt to establish its own hydrographic service but this was not as successful as was desirable, and in 1961 the RANHS accepted responsibility for PNG Hydrography/Charting when it assigned HMAS Paluma to the area. The PNG Hydrographer Mr Joseph Kunda joined Melville in Alotau, the administrative centre and main port of Milne Bay to provide language and liaison assistance. She proceeded to conduct surveying tasks in the China Strait. This was an important short-cut to the Goschen and Ward Hunt Straits and western Solomon Sea for traffic coming from Port Moresby and from the west. This voyage was made via the north-eastern tip of Australia and thence across the Gulf of Papua, Seeadler Harbour Manus Island in the Admiralty Islands, Kavieng New Ireland, Kimbe New Britain, Aitape and Wewak New Guinea and Marshall Lagoon Papua. The main task of the belated and much needed precision-GPS ground truthing of established datum points was greatly assisted by Iuluai, local village chiefs able to lead the detached survey teams directly to the survey marks. In most cases these were small, brass, survey trig plates; these had over the decades since their establishment become local folklore.

In addition to the above activities, Melville employed her two Survey Motor Boats (SMB) in multi-beam echo sounder surveys in various remote locations, ultimately recording some 46 square nautical miles of new data. With the two SMBs, one single-beam echo sounder-fitted light utility boat and three GPS teams all fully occupied, 37% of Melville's ship's company was directly employed in detached hydrographic survey tasks. Many of the ship's tasks involved transit through previously uncharted waters, all of which was accomplished safely and confidently with the employment of the fitted forward-looking sonar, supported by visual lookouts. Despite encountering Tropical Cyclone Kate on passage, Melville returned to her base-port Cairns on schedule, having achieved 100% completion of all Hydrographic instructions, which inter alia included 618 linear miles of soundings over 52 days of survey availability.

## AHS Education Award

As we approach the second semester of Academic Year 2006 it is time to remind potential applicants for the AHS Education Award for Academic Year 2007, worth Aus\$2500, that they should start preparing their application documentation. In past years there have been some invalid applications, so the Rules & Conditions are reiterated here. (1). Applications will be accepted from nationals and persons with official residential status, whether studying at home or abroad, from Australia, New Zealand, East Timor, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, The Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, whether or not they are current members of AHS. The award also carries one year's free membership of AHS. (2). All applications must be for supported, further education or academic, industrial or commercial research in broadly defined Hydrography, as per IHO/FIG/ICA Standards of Competence for Hydrographic Surveyors, IHO Publication M-5, Ninth Edition, dated May 2001. Ab initio or baccalaureate education in Hydrography below Honours or equivalent is not eligible. At Council's discretion the award can be made to an applicant for consecutive years, provided there is substantiated satisfactory progress according to the applicant's Head of School or Director of the Research Laboratory. It may be of assistance to applicants submitting applications related to Nautical Cartography to make themselves aware of the contents of IHO/FIG/ICA Standards of Competence for Nautical Cartographers, IHO Publication M-8, First Edition, May 2003. This publication can be downloaded free from [www.iho.shom.fr](http://www.iho.shom.fr). (3). All applications must be in original typescript or hand-written manuscript. Applications in whole or part will not be accepted by telephone, by fax or by email. (4) Evidence of the applicant being accepted for the further education course or research must be substantiated and certified by the Supervisor or Head of School with original ink signature and preferably displaying the stamp or seal of the involved education or research establishment. (5). All applications must be received, by the stated date of closure, by the Education Award Selection Board at the advertised Australian address. Late arrivals will not be accepted. (6). The applicant selected by the Award Selection Board is to be approved by the AHS Council and Council's decision on the successful applicant is final. (7). The AHS Council retains the right to vary the monetary value of the Award from year to year and also to withhold making the Award in the event of there being no worthy candidate in the opinion of the Council. (8). Application forms can be downloaded from the AHS Website, [www.ahs.asn.au](http://www.ahs.asn.au). The closing date for applications to be received for Academic Year 2007 at the address below is Friday 15th December 2006; address: Australasian Hydrographic Society, Education Award Selection Board, 8 Cowdroy Avenue, Cammeray, New South Wales, 2062, Australia.

Att. E. R. Whitmore  
4/6 Carrington Street  
Wahroonga, New South Wales  
2076  
Australia  
Tel: +61 2 94892091  
Fax: +61 2 94892048  
E-mail: seacon@rotamail.com

---

<https://www.hydro-international.com/content/article/australian-hydrographic-service-4>

---