

## THE REPUBLIC OF ARGENTINA

### The Republic of Argentina

The Republic of Argentina is situated in the extreme south of the American continent. It is bordered by Uruguay, Brazil, Paraguay, Bolivia and Chile. The total land area is 3,761,274 km<sup>2</sup>, of which 2,791,810 km<sup>2</sup> is on the American continent.

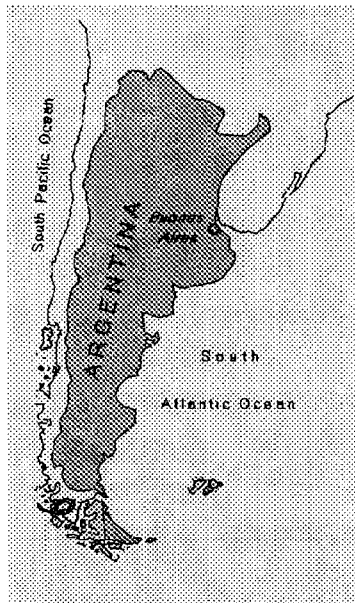


FIG. 1.- Argentina.

The continental shelf has an approximate area of 2,000,000 km<sup>2</sup>, of which 1,397,130 km<sup>2</sup> are associated with the Exclusive Economic Zone. The territorial waters of Argentina extend to 200 nautical miles from the baselines, except when the continental shelf exceeds this distance.

The system of government of Argentina is a Federal Representative Republic. The population is about 32 million. The capital city is Buenos Aires.

Port activities have historically been an important factor in the development of the country, since its birth as a Spanish colony, in 1536. Consequently, the city

of Buenos Aires and its port grew at the same time as its maritime trade. When the Royal Decree of Tariffs and Free Trade was established, in 1778, the closed system of monopoly was eased and the volume of trade increased, being even larger than that of Lima, which was until then the major trading centre of the area.



FIG. 2.- Hydrographic Survey Vessel COMODORO RIVADAVIA.

After the "Revolution of May", in 1810, the Government Assembly recognized the importance of controlling the waters of the "Rio de la Plata" and to protect this area, the first naval flotilla, comprised of 3 vessels, was created. The naval campaign of 1814, commanded by Admiral Guillermo BROWN is known as one of the most glorious naval battles of Argentina, and one of the most decisive for the freedom of the country.

Until 1914, when the Panama Canal was opened, the geopolitic situation of Argentina was a very important factor, the country being located across the route between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. From 1914 onwards, its importance was based on the traffic of the South Atlantic and its proximity to Antarctica.

The Argentine coast follows a NNE-SSW direction and includes a diversity of forms and features. Some parts are low, as those which can be found in areas of coastal platforms and estuaries; others are high, with more or less linear cliffs.

The total gross tonnage of the fleet is 3,250,621, of which 3,151,193 are from the merchant fleet and 99,428 from the Navy.

### **The Hydrographic Service**

The "Comandancia general de Marina" was created by a Decree in 1876. Some hydrographic tasks were then assigned to it, and 3 years later, on 6 June 1879, the "Oficina Central de Hidrografia", the former name of the present

Hydrographic Service, was established. The first Director was Lt. Col. D. Clodomiro URTUBEY AN. A very fruitful period then began, mainly with respect to subjects related to maritime safety. The first hydrographic campaign was carried out by the gunboat CONSTITUCION, commanded by Sergeant Major Martin RIVADAVIA, who, later, became the first Minister of the Navy. This campaign produced the first nautical chart published by the naval authorities, in 1883.

In 1884, maritime aids and buoyage services started with the construction of the first lighthouses, Martin Carcia and San Juan de Salvamento. During the following years, the system grew up in accordance with the development of optical engineering and lights in general. Important surveys were carried out in that period, mainly in the southern channels of Isla Grande (Tierra del Fuego), in the "Río de la Plata" and in the "Ria de Bahia Blanca". Since then, the Hydrographic Service, under different names but without changing its specific task, has extended its fields of competence and reached its present development, as a result of the implementation of new technologies and working methods.

At present, the "Servicio de Hidrografia Naval" carries out studies, other various tasks, and scientific research to promote maritime safety and to contribute to the progress and defence of the country.

Its main task is to provide safety of navigation in areas of national interest, including the necessary aids for this purpose; to define the system of buoyage and to publish the information required for maritime safety in the area of competence of the "Direccion de Transporte Fluvial y Marino", based on the data bases provided by this Institution; to provide the necessary information on the geographical characteristics of the strategic maritime areas, as well as the standards and elements for naval operations ; to carry out and to promote studies, scientific research and other tasks related to marine activities relevant to the scientific and economic development of the country.

The present Chief of the "Servicio de Hidrografia Naval" is Captain Carlos Daniel CARBONE, who took over as Hydrographer on 20 December 1996. The staff, including military and civilian, is 550.