

## CHILE

### The Republic of Chile

The Republic of Chile is situated in the southwestern part of the American continent, and stretches from 17°30' S to Antarctica and from the Andes to the Pacific Ocean. It is bordered in the north by Peru, in the south by Antarctica, in the east by Bolivia and Argentina and, in the west, its insular territory extends across the Pacific Ocean to Easter Island in longitude 109° 26'W.

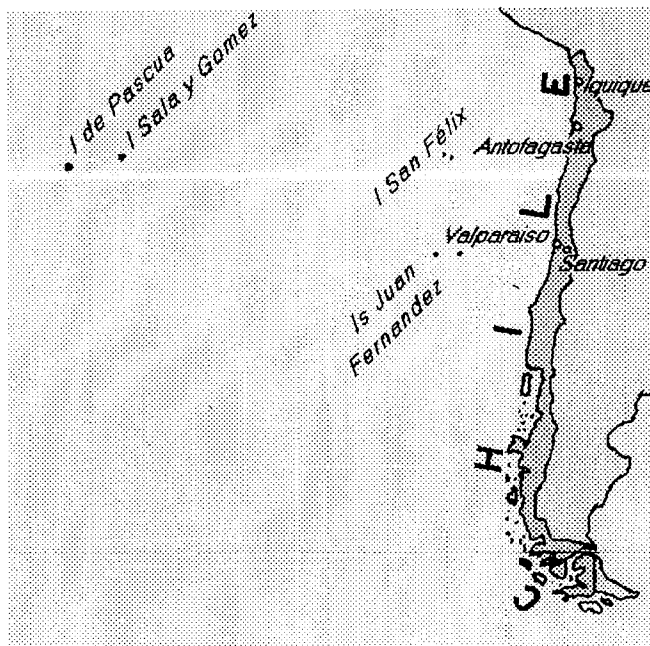


FIG. 1.- Chile.

The sovereignty in the Strait of Magellan, the Beagle Channel and the Drake Passage, gives to Chile the keys of the maritime link between the Pacific and the Atlantic.

The continental and insular area is 756,626 km<sup>2</sup>, with an average width of 177 km and an overall length of 4,200 km. This continental and insular territory, as well as the important activities of Chile in Antarctica, provides the country with a presence in three regions and an influence in the Pacific Ocean basin.

The topography of the country is rugged and mountainous, its fundamental morphological features being: the Cordillera of the Andes, in the east; the Cordillera of la Costa in the west and the depression midway between both. A lowland desert extends across these reliefs, from the Peruvian border to Capiapó; from Capiapó to Santiago, the land is characterized by cultivated transverse valleys; from Santiago to Puerto Montt, a fertile longitudinal valley and from Puerto Montt southwards, the mainland area is broken up into thousands of islands, fjords, gulfs and intervening channels. Due to its length, Chile presents varying climatic conditions, being extremely dry in the north, cool in the central area, cold in the austral zone and polar in Antarctica.

The mineral wealth and the consequent economy has allowed Chile to play a significant role in international affairs. The country is, at present, the leading producer and exporter of copper in the world.

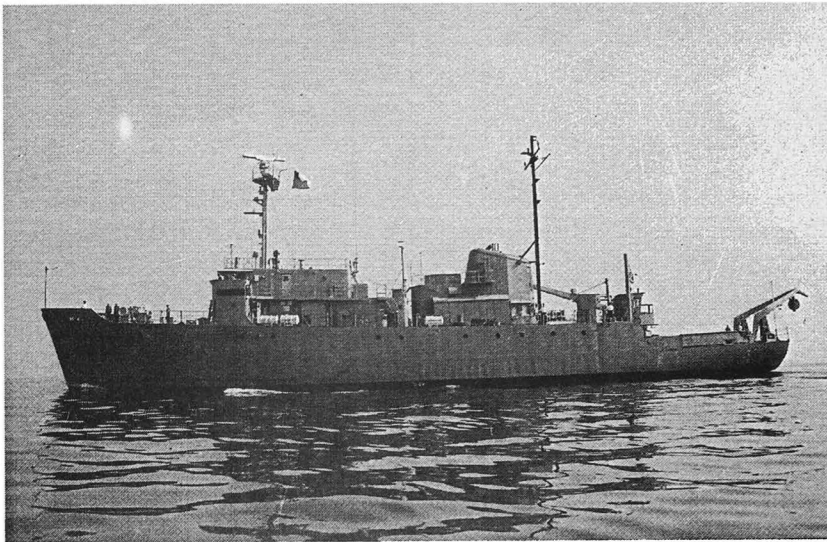


FIG. 2.- AGOR VIDAL GORMAZ.

Farming and forest exploitation, as well as industrial production have grown in recent years, resulting in an economic development with no precedent in the world. The special configuration of Chile, including its important maritime trade, which represents more than 95% of the external trade, and the coastal traffic, have required the establishment of more than 800 Navigational Aids and the drafting of 360 national nautical charts, and about 50 related publications.

Chile is a democratic Republic, with a population of about 14 million. The capital city and seat of the executive power is Santiago, with a population of more than 5 million. Valparaiso, the principal commercial port of the country, is the seat of the legislative power. The independence of Chile from the Spanish Crown took place on 18 September 1810.

## The Hydrographic Service

In 1520, Hernando de MAGALLANES, a navigator of Portuguese origin, later nationalized as a Spaniard, discovered and passed through the Strait which now bears his name. This historical event led to the discovery, exploration and survey of the Chilean coasts. During the XVIth, XVIIth, and XVIIIth centuries, Spanish, Dutch, French and English navigators continued to develop these early discoveries.

This enormous work of finding maritime routes, incorporating territories and surveying the Chilean seas was followed up by Chile, as an independent country after 1834, through the national Navy. In 1874, the Hydrographic Office was officially established, being the second such Centre on the American Continent and the 12th at a world level. In 1914, the Hydrographic Office implemented the first course in Hydrography and Navigation for naval officers. Since then, 270 naval officers, including some from foreign countries, have attended specialization course.

In 1921, together with other similar Hydrographic Services from various countries, the Hydrographic Service of Chile contributed to create the International Hydrographic Organization. The present Hydrographic Institute has actively participated in this Organization. It is to be mentioned that, in 1957, Captain Alberto ANDRADE T., then Director of the Hydrographic Institute, was nominated Vice President of the VIIIth International Hydrographic Conference, and in 1967 and 1972, at the IXth and Xth International Hydrographic Conferences, Captain Raúl HERRERA, at that time also Director of the Hydrographic Institute, was elected Chairman of the Nautical Documents Committee and the Oceanographic Committee respectively.

The privileged geopolitical position of Chile in the Pacific basin, has originated a national and international interest with respect to the economic potential of its waters and marine soil and sub-soil. The effort made in the development of hydrographic, cartographic and oceanographic activities has subsequently been increased within the Chilean limits of sovereignty and Exclusive Economic Zone.

The location of the coasts in a predominantly seismic area has originated the need to establish a National Tsunami Warning System, incorporating it in the International System.

Following the increasing development of the national oceanographic activity control and the interest of foreign countries in marine science and technological investigation, the Government of Chile established, under the leadership of the Hydrographic Institute, the National Oceanographic Committee, in which most state, university and private related institutions are represented.

Hydrographic and oceanographic tasks, initiated in 1834 on board the brig AQUILES (405 tons) are nowadays continued on the R/V PILOTO PARDO (2,800 tons), YELCHO (1,235 tons) and VIDAL GORMAZ (1,490 tons).

The present Director of the Hydrographic Institute of the Chilean Navy is Captain Hugo GORZIGLIA, who was appointed as Hydrographer in 1994 after 22 years of work in the fields of hydrography and oceanography at the Hydrographic Service.