

HYDROGRAPHIC SERVICE OF THE ROYAL HELLENIC NAVY

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The special study of hydrography as a separate branch, and its application to meet the requirements of the Greek Navy as well as its wider application in connection with topography, were for the first time introduced in Greece in 1897, when topography, taught up to then at the Naval Cadet School, was replaced by hydrography.

The first to introduce hydrography, and in general to assist in the establishment of a special service, was Captain Matthaipoulos of the Greek Navy.

The establishment of a compass adjustment station can be considered as the first hydrographic work, which was carried out with the cooperation of the Army Cartographic Service established in 1889.

In 1906 four young officers, who in 1905 were trained in the Army Cartographic Service as geodesists and topographers, performed aboard the sailing ship *Paralos* the first hydrographic works on the east coasts of Thessaly as part of a field team of the Army Cartographic Service. Up to 1910 this ship continued to perform various hydrographic tasks independently.

From 1910 to 1919 the following works were performed: surveys, compilation and publication of the first nautical charts; study and dredging works; designation of shoals and studies pertaining to the establishment of calibration stations.

The inadequate means by which these works were carried out created the need for a special hydrographic section coming under the Ministry of the Navy. This section was founded in June 1919 temporarily until the establishment of a hydrographic service.

During the same year, Greece participated in the First International Hydrographic Conference held in London.

The increased duties of Greece, owing on the one hand to the growth of her Merchant Navy and largely to the nature of the Greek coasts, and on the other to the progress of international navigation, made it necessary to establish a special service to increase the knowledge of the Greek mariner.

In order to meet these requirements the Hydrographic Service of the Hellenic Navy was established at the beginning of 1920, consisting of the Department of Geodesy, Navigation and Cartography, as well as of small workshops to repair and calibrate scientific, navigational and hydrographic instruments of the Navy, Merchant Marine and government services.

During this year (1920) Greece was admitted to the International Hydrographic Bureau, which was then under development.

In 1930 the study of the Greek seas, coasts and navigational conditions, and the development of navigation and marine meteorology, as well as of all sciences connected with navigation, were defined by a new law as the aim of the Hydrographic Service.

The same law and a Royal Decree issued in 1931, designated the organization, duties and jurisdiction of the Hydrographic Service, which has functioned since then accordingly.

By 1940, when Greece entered World War II, the Hydrographic Service had issued 50 nautical charts of the Greek coasts printed in her own printing presses and 4 volumes of Sailing Directions covering all the Greek seas, had carried out a large number of geomagnetic and oceanographic observations, and had participated in four oceanographic cruises in 1921, 1924, 1926 and 1927.

From 1940 to 1954, owing to World War II, when the technical equipment and shops of our Service were destroyed, its activities came to an end due to lack of financial means. The Civil War after the liberation placed the State and in particular the Hydrographic Service in a very difficult position, owing to a serious lack of personnel, instruments and means.

In spite of this, the publication of 49 nautical charts and the revision of 3 volumes of Sailing Directions were achieved.

The Hydrographic Service also participated during this period in operations for the removing of wrecks and in minesweeping operations.

Since 1954 the Hydrographic Service has resumed its activities, and renewed its equipment in hydrographic ships and instruments. It already has a hydrographic ship and a hydrographic launch completely equipped, and another combined hydrographic and oceanographic ship will be ready in the summer of 1960.

The present organization of the Hydrographic Service with its basic duties (according to the above-mentioned law and Royal Decree) is shown in the attached diagram.

Personnel consists of officers of the Royal Hellenic Navy who are in charge of the Service and its departments, and of civil employees permanently attached to the Hydrographic Service. This personnel is reinforced by other reserve officers of the Royal Hellenic Navy with diplomas and experience if possible, by sailors, and by topographic engineers of the National Polytechnic School.

The civil personnel is renewed and increased by the appointment of persons who attend schools in the Hydrographic and Army Geographic Services, and practise in the field during hydrographic cruises.

Care is taken that officers of the Royal Hellenic Navy receive a certain amount of training abroad.

DIAGRAM OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE HYDROGRAPHIC SERVICE R. H. N.

