

Basic Detail Report

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Title

Watercolour chart of Arorae or Hurd Island, Kiribati

Date

1957

Primary Maker

Brett Hilder

Medium

Watercolour on board

Dimensions

Overall: 383 x 558 mm, 2 mm, 0.25 kg

Name

Chart

History

Brett Hilder born in 1911 was the youngest son of renowned watercolourist Jesse Jewhurst Hilder. In 1927 he became a crewmember for ships owned by Burns Philp & Co. He traveled extensively to the Dutch East Indies and South Pacific Islands, and eventually became a ship's master. During WWII he taught navigation to Australian air crew and attained the rank of Wing Commander. He flew on Catalina flying boats for the Royal Australian Air Force. After the war Hilder resumed his career as a merchant sea-captain. He was Captain aboard the TULAGI from 1955 to 1961. During the war Hilder started painting watercolours depicting landscapes, details and portraits of the people and places he visited. He also wrote extensively about navigation and his travels for magazines such as 'Walkabout'. Hilder is the author of numerous books on his own experiences and in 1966 published 'The Heritage of JJ Hilder' a book about his father's art career. This accompanied a national touring exhibition of his father's work organised by the Queensland Art Gallery. Brett Hilder passed away in April 1981. The navigational sketch surveys the recommended anchorage points for the island, showing island landmarks and depths. The chart includes navigational bearings to island landmarks and details such as recommendations for the best time and place to anchor. Hilder made charts of several harbours and islands where he felt those provided by the Hydrographic Service were inadequate. He used his charts for his own reference on future voyages. Hilder also sent copies of his work to the Royal Australian Navy Hydrographic Service and has been credited in some of published charts. He was an exceptional navigator who founded the Australian Institute of Navigation and trained RAAF pilots in navigation during World War II. MV TULAGI (2) was built for the company in 1954 and operated until 1971. In 'Navigators of the South Seas', Hilder describes Arorea as a small island pointing south-east into the trade winds. He tells of borrowing a bicycle and traveling with a local guide to visit the

island's navigation stones. He recalls the eight stones pointed in five different directions and describes how he pondered for many months regarding their use.