



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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## (Original Manuscript Survey Chart of Hong Kong) Hong Kong Waters East H.M.S. Challenger November-December 1945

**Stock#:** 55571  
**Map Maker:** Hong Kong Surveying Unit  
**Date:** 1945  
**Place:** Hong Kong  
**Color:** Uncolored  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 32 x 26 inches  
**Price:** SOLD



### Description:

#### ***Rare Manuscript Survey Chart Created In Hong Kong Aboard the HMS Challenger During Surveys To Improve Existing Charts of Hong Kong Harbor***

Manuscript sea chart of Hong Kong with manuscript additions, created by the Hong Kong Surveying Unit in November and December of 1945.

The chart appears to be an original manuscript example of the resurvey work done by the *H.M.S. Challenger*, immediately following the conclusion of World War II. It would appear that the present chart reflects the ongoing surveys then being undertaken by the Challenger and transmitted back to London, in order to revise Chart No. 3279.

While the chart notes that it has been annotated in red (see below), the present copy has contour type lines in the harbor in at least 4 different colors.

Some of the details shown on the chart include:

- Kai Tak Airport and Sea Plane Shipway
- Aircraft Anchorage and Landing Area
- Conspicuous Row of Chinese Houses
- Scrambled Wooden L Wreck



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- A wreck above Taikoo Dock
- Areas being reclaimed southeast of Taikoo Dock
- Futau Chau area (Junks)
- White houses at the northeast corner

The chart includes the following note:

*Tracing of Chart No. 3279 showing resurvey carried out with soundings obtained, wrecks and obstructions fixed, Amended coastline and topography is shown in Red. The area including Taikoo Docks has been resurveyed on a scce of 1/6080 is being rendered separately.*

*Mooring buoys are being raised and relaid and a subsequent tracing will be forwarded with this information when completed together with particulars of anchorages, bethres and salvaged wrecks.*

The chart bears a facsimile signature:

*Approved.*

*C. Sabine*

*Commander in Chart of Survey*

At the end of World War II, the job of improving the existing charts of Hong Kong Harbor fell to a specially commissioned part of the British Admiralty called the Hong Kong Surveying Unit. As noted by Tam Kowng-lim in Making Charts for and around Hong Kong -- Survey Work Since the Second World War":

*Since the Second World War, the British returned to East Asia. Since 1941, under pressure from Japanese naval expansion in Asia, the British China Station was re-organized, with the stipulation that in the event of war, the three main commands in the Far East, the East Indies Squadron, the China Squadron and the Australian Squadron, should all fall under one command called the Eastern Fleet based in Singapore. When the Allied forces gained the upper hand and Japanese expansion was checked, the British created the British Pacific fleet*



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*in 1944 - 1945, and the Eastern Fleet later became the Far East fleet which operated in all Far East areas, including parts of the Pacific Ocean.*

*Similar to the arrangement of the "China Station", the main bases remained in Singapore and Hong Kong, where the survey vessels were based.*

*Partly because of reduced funding and perhaps due to post-war geopolitical realities, British naval survey ships' work in Hong Kong waters was gradually curtailed. Survey vessels stationed in the Far East were often more focused on survey work in Malaysian waters. Often only one survey ship was assigned to the Far East Fleet, covering the survey work of Southeast Asia and occasionally Hong Kong.*

*In 1945, to urgently upgrade and update the pre-war Admiralty charts, a special Hong Kong Surveying Unit was set up and tasked with obtaining local sounding data. A survey ship, HMS Challenger (commissioned in 1932, of 1,140 long ton displacement and a shallow draft of 3.81 metres), was sent to assist the Hong Kong Surveying Unit in surveying and producing two charts: "Hong Kong Waters, East" and "Taikoo Docks and Aldrich Bay". The dock area was heavily bombed during the War and therefore needed re-surveying.*

This would appear to be an original manuscript example of *Hong Kong Waters East*, noted above, which was likely copied and sent back to London for incorporation into the revisions of Chart 3279.

An important post World War II survey chart, which was almost certainly used to improve Chart 3279, however, we locate no surveying examples of this chart.

**Detailed Condition:**