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*Late morning in winter, and the fishing vessel Glenalbyn etches a scrawling wake onto the glass surface of Northcorps Lake in search of *Trioculum vulgaris*, a species of three-eyed mutating fish reputed to be breeding there. Not yet stirred by the depredations of a dozen racing propellers on sailing day, the lake holds a still mirror to the sky and receives its promise of fine weather.*

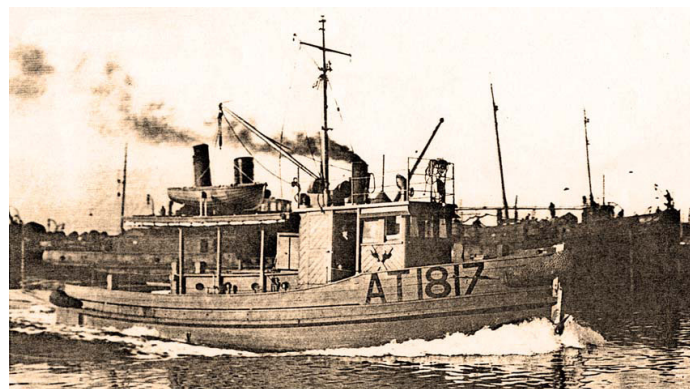
45ft Australian Army Towboat by Murray

Recently I researched an old wooden hull stored undercover at Yarraville (*photo below*). The owner thought it was similar to *Bareki*, a 45' wooden tug now moored at Australian National Maritime Museum in Sydney. He also thought it was built in Williamstown. With no markings and previous owners untraceable, it was proving very difficult to uncover its history.



First I consulted Geoff Dougall, author of the book *Of Full Steam & Tant Hawsers*, which documents 170 years of Williamstown tug history. He identified it as a 45' wooden Australian Army Towboat, most likely built around 1944 by either WC Cone & Co at Port Melbourne or the Melbourne Harbour Trust at Williamstown.

45ft Australian Army Towboat by Murray (cont.)



Geoff believes the original vessel would have looked similar to Army Towboat AT1817 (*photo above, courtesy of G Dougall*). They were built using the same US Army small tug design, but specifications of timbers, engines, gearboxes, propellers and accessories varied due to supply and availability issues at the time.

Then I contacted David Glasson, a marine modeller and authority on 40' Australian Army Workboats -

http://www.boatregister.net/WW2_ArmyWorkBoats.html

hoping he would recognise the hull. Not only did David confirm it as a 45' Army Towboat, he supplied a hull line drawing that matched the vessel exactly. He also supplied photographs of original general arrangement drawings of Towboat AT1520.

David had gathered this information to build a model of *Temora*, a towboat without the rear veranda, mast and dingy (*photo below, courtesy of D Glasson*). His model was exhibited at the 2015 Australian Wooden Boat Festival in Hobart.



Another line of investigation was to compare the diameter and pitch of the 3-blade propeller to that specified for similar US Army 45' Towboats. Their propeller was 37" diameter x 18 1/2" pitch, but my measurements and calculations came up with 45" diameter x 48" pitch. So the current prop did not match, but who knows, it may have been changed throughout its working life.

At least the owner can explore suitable gearbox and engine combinations now that the propeller specification is known. Currently weighing 11 tonne, the rebuilt vessel could weigh as much as 25-30 tonne depending on total liquid load (fuel, water and sullage) and require a 4:1 reduction gearbox and 300HP turbocharged diesel engine. The true identity of the towboat may never be known!