

Basic Detail Report



MB 172

Vessel number

HV000359

Date

1937

Primary Maker

Naval Dockyard Garden Island

Description

MB 172 was one of at least four very similar craft built for naval dockyard officer's use in ports around Australia and Papua New Guinea. Two of the others were MB 168 and MB 170. It is known that one other was built in the early

1920s at Garden Island and went by the name JANET. Drawings show JANET was project number 64 and intended as an officer's launch. The original cabin arrangement featured an open steering position for the helmsman. However later plans for MB 168 show the enclosed wheelhouse, and just refer to the craft as a motor launch. It is thought the other three were built in the late 1930s. The hull is carvel planked in spotted gum with a teak cabin, a heavy and robust construction method. It is almost 12 metres long and currently powered by a Volvo diesel engine. MB 172 has a similar arrangement to MB 168 and both were built in 1936/37 at Garden Island and intended to be used in Papua New Guinea. They were used as an officer's launch and given the title District Officers' Boats, but after World War II they were classed as Senior Officers' Boats. A search of RAN records (which are not complete) indicates MB172 appears to have spent a short period in Darwin Harbour before being sent to the naval shore establishment HMAS LONSDALE in Port Melbourne in 1940. LONSDALE was established in 1940 for the receipt and dispatch of naval recruits during World War II. MB 172 remained there as the NOIC's (Naval Officer in Charge) launch where it was primarily used as the Naval College tender. From 1957 and through the 1960s and 1970s MB 172 was attached to the Royal Australian Naval College (RANC) at HMAS CRESWELL at Jervis Bay, New South Wales. MB 168 was used for survey work on Sydney Harbour, as well as being allocated to the Commanding Officer, HMAS Kuttabul (a shore establishment), but there is no record of MB 172 undertaking similar work. When MB 172 was decommissioned, it was stored ashore and stripped of all equipment that could be used elsewhere. In the late 1980s it was transferred from the Royal Australian Navy to the Australian National Maritime Museum. Apprentice shipwrights at Australian Defence Industries rebuilt the launch at their yard in Ryde, New South Wales and fabricated fittings at their Rosebery foundry. The launch was renamed EPIC LASS at that time in recognition of a sponsorship arrangement with the suppliers of Epiglass paints and adhesives. It is now used as a launch for transporting ANMM guests on Sydney Harbour and has resumed the title MB 172.

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 11.88 m x 3.84 m x 1.53 m, 10 tonnes (38.98 ft x 12.6 ft x 5.02 ft, 9.84 tons)