

# Basic Detail Report

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## Amber AWB 4010

### Vessel number

HV000810

### Date

1965

### Description

AMBER AWB 4010 is 40ft work boat built in 1965 by the Royal Australian Navy at the Williamstown Naval Dockyard. A second 40ft workboat AWB 4009 was also constructed in 1965 at the Williamstown Naval Dockyard. These vessels were constructed for use in utility operations around Sydney Harbour. AWB 4010 is a rare example of a workboat built during the 1960s, and one of few RAN workboats remaining. It is currently used privately in Port Jackson for towage and salvage operations. 40 ft workboats of this kind were almost all commissioned between 1943 and 1946, and allocated duties around Australia and New Guinea. AMETHYST AWB420 (HV000792), constructed in 1943, is one such example. The workboats were employed in numerous ways including carrying supplies, personnel transport, ambulance work, refrigerated goods transport and patrol duties. They were manoeuvrable and powerful and often outperformed larger vessels. Most were constructed for the Australian Army and given AM prefix numbers, but some were also built for the Royal Australian Navy and the RAAF. Records show a large list of allocated numbers, and it is known that some of these were probably never built. The origins of the design are attributed to builder Botterill and Fraser in Victoria, but it has also been noted that the design is almost identical to a 50-foot workboat in North America. It may be that a North American design was adapted to suit mass production construction in Australian factories. These yards included Botterill & Fraser in Melbourne, AT Brine from WA, along with the vehicle builders General Motors at their Victorian and South Australian plants, and the Ford Motor Company in Victoria. The 40-foot workboats were often built by tradesmen and factory workers, with a skilled foreman overseeing the production. The builder's name was usually cast into the steering wheel. AMBER AWB 4010 has a carvel hull that is copper and bronze fastened. It has a fibreglass wheelhouse with taller standing headroom than previous workboats, and a short cabin. A fibreglass sheathing was applied to AMBER's hull at the time of construction, a feature only added retrospectively to other work boats. This was somewhat of a unique feature, and it wasn't until the mid-1980s that the RAN normalized like fibreglass sheathings. A tow hook was also mounted on AMBER AWB 4010 near midships. All components of the vessel are original, including the engine and steering (shaft, tanks and prop). Only the windows on the side cabin have been removed due to rot. Work boats AWB4002 to AWB42007 were further 1960s vessels built between 1963-1964 by Phoenix Shipbuilding in Launceston. AWB4002 and AWB4008 were both sold at public auction on 15 February 2013, AWB4003 was based in Jervis Bay in 1983, and the status of the others is unknown. A further 1960s launch, AWB4011, was constructed in 1966 likely by the Halvorsen shipyard in Ryde and used as a tender for the trials of America's Cup contender Gretel before purchase by the RAN. AMBER AWB 4010 regularly won Naval

awards for best maintained and most useful vessel. It has assisted in supporting prominent vessels such as HMY Britannia, and submarines from the Oberon Class. It operated frequently out of Spectacle Island. Ausport Marine Services operated AMBER following the RAN and more recently it has transferred between a series of private owners and has been under restoration. AMBER AWB 4010 is currently moored at Pearl Bay Middle Harbour, and is undergoing paint work restoration, engine servicing, and deck maintenance. Prepared with assistance from The Register of Australian and New Zealand Boats, which carries a page on the 40 Ft Workboats [http://www.boatregister.net/WW2\\_ArmyWorkBoats.html](http://www.boatregister.net/WW2_ArmyWorkBoats.html)

### **Dimensions**

Vessel Dimensions: 12 m × 12.19 m × 1.52 m (39.37 ft × 40 ft × 5 ft)