

Basic Detail Report



Lauriana

Vessel number

HV000722

Date

1938

Primary Maker

J Hayes & Sons

Description

LAURIANA is just over 21m long, 4.95m wide and displaces about 53 tonnes. It was built as carvel planked hull and heavily framed, with a high teak superstructure, and a large motor. As such it fits the configuration of motor-sailer, but the launching report adds a confusing detail. It reports the vessel was built for game fishing, but there is no strong evidence it was used for this, the few reports of its sailing prior to the war are simple passages to Pittwater. It is possible the reporter confused it with another large craft being built for the Arnott-s SHANGRI-LA (HV000474) which was a canoe sterned motor cruiser, and more likely to be a game fishing platform offshore. The war came soon after LAURIANA was launched and the Arnotts had only had a year's use of the vessel. On 27 August 1941 it was commissioned by the Naval Auxiliary Patrol as one of the many small craft hastily adapted to support the war effort. It was a powerful and fast vessel with its rigs taken out. Painted grey it carried the number 502. HMAS LAURIANA's task involved patrolling Sydney Harbour and it was the first vessel to spot and attack one of the Japanese mini-submarines in the late May 1942 raid in Sydney Harbour. Although unarmed HMAS LAURIANA earned its first entry in the war records by sighting the third midget M21 coming into Sydney Harbour on the night of May 31-June 1 1942, attempting to ram it, and then bringing it under both ramming and depth charge attack by HMAS YANDRA and the Halvorsen cruiser in war service, SEA MIST. From there HMAS LAURIANA was one of the first NAP vessels to be moved north, making its passage via the US Navy PT base in Cairns. It served in the Papua New Guinea Pacific theatre with distinction. HMAS LAURIANA's gun shot two Japanese Zero fighters in one engagement, and it was credited with 1 ½ kills. Bullet holes from this encounter remain a feature in the hull. IN PNG it frequently carried the Naval-Officer-in Charge, Milne Bay on inspection tours and was referred to by Commander Branson RN as "the flagship pf the Royal Papuan Navy". General Douglas MacArthur used LAURIANA for an inspection tour as well. It was also present at the occupation landings in Wewak and Aitape. After the war LAURIANA went into private ownership again, was re-rigged and found public attention when Vic Meyer operated the yacht as the radio relay vessel for a number of Sydney to Hobart yacht races in the 1950s and 60s. This was an important role, the CYCA who managed the race had quickly taken the role of safety very seriously and part of their arrangements was to provide an escort vessel and craft able to relay radio signals from the yachts to shore,. LAURIANA with its big engine, excellent accommodation and sturdy construction was ideal. A highlight for LAURIANA in 1954 was hosting the Queen and Prince Phillip aboard for a dinner during their coronation tour of Australia.

In later years it remained on Sydney Harbour as a pleasure craft with occasional plans to convert it to a charter boat. The current owner has had it for 20 years, and undertaken a significant overhaul and restoration. The original planking, structure and superstructure remains in excellent condition, it has a new deck planking and has reverted to the cabin length and hatch locations as originally built. The same wooden spars are there, but a modern fitout and sails compliment the original integrity.

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 21.03 m × 17.37 m × 4.95 m, 53.86 tonnes, 232.23 m² (69 ft × 57 ft × 16.25 ft, 53 tons, 2500 ft²)