

ST Mysteries As of Feb 14, 2014

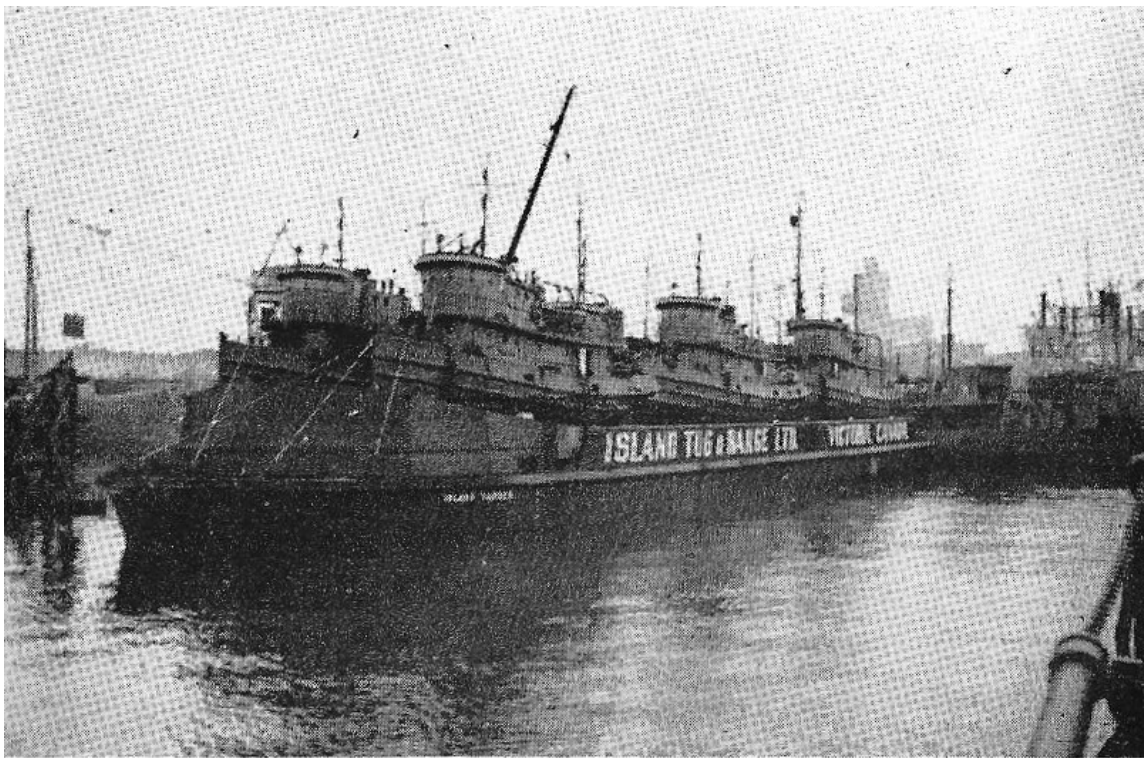
MYSTERY #1

6 Unknown Army ST Tugs to Buenos Aires 1948

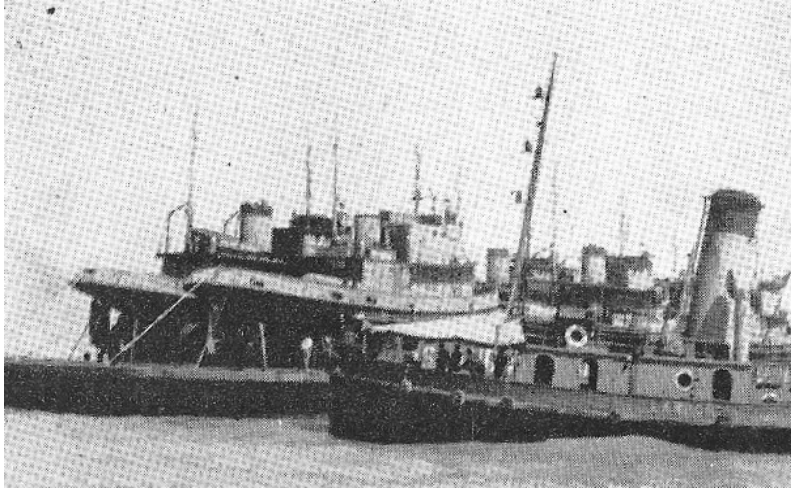
Six small Army "ST" tugs left Seattle, Washington, to make a 10,000 mile trip to Buenos Aires, Argentina, in September of 1947. The converted LST *Island Yarder* that carried the six ST's was towed the entire way by the Canadian former Coast Guard ship *Snohomish* which was almost 40 years old. The story is told in the book "*QED? Snohomish*" by Conrad Burns, the radio operator for the voyage. This really was one of the longest tows in naval history. They made the trip safely arriving in Buenos Aires early in 1948 after one very close call on a reef that almost ended the trip. The *Snohomish* was sold to the Argentines as well. The book does not indicate what the numbers were.

So, which 6 ST's went to Argentina? They are 74 footers (verified in the text), probably design 257, made early in 1943 through early 1944 by the US Army as part of the wartime buildup. They probably had been stored in a depot since the end of WW2 on the West Coast.

The LST when loaded was moored at Pier 55 in Seattle.



Seattle: Six modern, steel-hulled, diesel-propelled towboats perched upon a cut-down LST.



The Six ST's being taken through the Panama Canal by other tugs... *what are their numbers??*

MYSTERY #2

The "Australian" US Army ST Tugs.....

Piet van Damme mentions in his tugslip that a group of tugs were made in Australia for the US Army for use in the SW Pacific and gives the following details:

US Army ST-Tug (Australian built, 15 non sisterships in all - ST 1 / ST 15 resp.: COATESVILLE, CAMBRIDGE, CANTERBURY, CARFILL, CARTERTON, CASTLECLIFF, CATLINS, CAVERSHAM, CHATHAM, CHRISTCHURCH, CLINTON, CLIVE, COLLINGWOOD, COOK, CULVERDEN)

diesel, 400bhp, bp 4,5t

ST 18 (CARBEEN?)

1944: Built by "J. & A. Brown and Abermain-Seaham Collieries Ltd" at Hexham, Newcastle, NSW.(AUS)

(designed by the "Australian Shipbuilding Board")

1944: delivered to the US Army (USA)

fate unknown

And here's an excerpt from the book *The Forgotten Fleet 2*:

US ARMY SMALL SHIPS SECTION UNITED STATES ARMY SERVICES OF SUPPLY (USASOS) IN AUSTRALIAN WATERS DURING WWII

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, a group of specialists were assembled in the USA and sent to Australia to scour all the harbours between Adelaide and Cairns and identify and commandeer every small ship they could find that could support the war effort. Their mission was known as "Mission X".

Many Australians served with the US Army Small Ships Section of the US Army Services of Supply (USASOS) in the [Southwest Pacific Area \(SWPA\)](#) during WWII. They generally signed contracts which lasted for typically 6 - 12 months. ***The list of ships below also contains some US Army Transport Service (ATS) ships which were manned by Small Ships men. US Army Transport Service later changed its name to the US Army Transportation Corps. !!***

Many of the Australian crew members of the US Small Ships were aged as young as 15 years old. And some were as old as seventy years old.

		ST-1 (S-347, Coatesville)
ST-3 (S-349, Canterbury)	ST-10 (S-396, Christchurch)	ST-12 (S-398, Clive)
ST-14 (S-400, Cook)	ST-17 (S-277, Carbanup)	ST-18 (S-279, Carbeen)
ST-19 (S-278, Carbethon)	ST-21 (S-706, Carcoola)	ST-22 (S-340, Carinya)
ST-26	ST-27	ST-38 (S-848, Chullora)
ST-40 (S-850, Cobadong)	ST-42 (S-341, Cobarup)	ST-43 (S-342, Cobbora)
ST-46 (S-1018, Cobacup)	ST-66 (S-1019, Coonatto)	ST-68 (S-1021, Coonong)
ST-72 (S-1025, Corio)	ST-74 (S-1027, Cowal)	ST-75
ST-76 (S-1029, Cowlong)	ST-131	ST-145
ST-179	ST-309	ST-357
ST-381 (S-577)	ST-405 (S-648)	ST-468 (S-583)
ST-472 (S-641)	ST-729	

So SOME of these were US Army small ships; others were scrounged up or made in Australia; most with young boys and older men as crew; most volunteers from Australia, under US Army control? Quite a few are here, and we know almost nothing about them. I'm trying to get a copy of this book....I can't find any other references to these boats but in many cases *their boat number is a duplicate of other existing ST's!*

This might also help explain several Pacific convoys with ST's that did not make sense as the existing records reflect the boats were in the European Theatre.....and could not possibly be in a Pacific convoy. The convoy database is reflecting trips of some of the *Australian* US ARMY ST boats; not the *European* theater US ARMY ST boats. But since many of the "non-Australian" ST's went to the Pacific as well this is becoming even more of a mess.

Rather than keep up this confusion I've created a separate chart on the home page for "Pacific ST's". I think "AST" is a good way to differentiate them from a "regular" ST, as any chart of Pacific ST's must include not only the Australian sourced boats, but the ones sent from the USA as well. I also will continue research on the names provided which seem to follow a general pattern of starting with a "C" and perhaps an explanation of the general list of boats by the "S" number is in the book.

Mystery #3

Here are some reports, books, and a short film that I cannot yet find:

FORGOTTEN FLEET 2 Lunney Finch (The Australian source)

"The Army Goes to Sea" MCG 27 (August 1943): 43-44 1946): 68.

"Bringing' Em Back", Army Transportation Journal, I (January, 1946), 10.

Vessels owned, chartered to, or allocated to the U. S. Army lost during WW2. Chief of Transportation, 1945

"Report of Army Small Boat Construction , 1 July 1940 to 31 May 1945" (War Department, 1945)

SHORT FILM: Edward R Murrow, "A Harbor is Born"...has footage of ST 247 and Jack Boggs standing near the rail....Little Ships – Tugboats at D-Day Normandy

Mystery #4

This ST probably is ST 248: the last digit is partially obscured. The photo was in the history of the 333rd Harbor Craft company and the caption indicated the photo was taken at Le Havre in 1945. It probably is not ST 243 as that boat was not known to be in Europe. Any other info provided to help verify it would be appreciated. The caption also indicates it was known as the Edward J. Roccanti. That sailor had been previously killed in an airplane crash while headed to: DeLand's ST 674! Amazing....another DeLand Wartug tie-in.



Mystery #5

Corrected List of ST's At Normandy

*"The construction of harbors was a massive undertaking and required the use of 158 tugboats. The Army Transportation Service (ATS) supplied **74 ST small tugs** and 6 LT large tugs.*

Army Transportation Museum Website.....

Where is the list of these 74 tugs?????

Thamestugs.uk & Piet van Damme's *tugslist*

US ARMY ST'S ACTIVE AT NORMANDY BEACHES D-DAY

(30 ST tugs) *thamestug.uk* list: 16, 247, 248, 253, 335, 338, **344**, 698, 705, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 778, 780, 781, 794, 795

(3) Additional ST tugs from the Piet Van Damme database:
ST 86, **479**, 732 = a total of **33 NORMANDY ST tugboats**.

(PLUS: two more tugs had one man killed each at Normandy according to USMM.org: **ST 539** on 9/19/44; and **ST 725** on 10/20/44. These dates are a bit too late for Mulberry work; but they MIGHT have been there. Not added yet.)

This total of 33 ST tugs that possibly were at D-Day Normandy leaves 41 as yet unidentified tugs assuming the number of 74 sent to Normandy, according to the US Army Transportation Museum, is correct. The 41 would come from the well over 100 ST tugs that *could* have been there; as they were sent to a depot at war's end at Antwerp or Rotterdam, so they made the trip over to Europe....but only further details will add to the list. And certainly, some of the 33 listed here *may not* have been at Normandy at all!

Mystery #6:

Where is the info on these ST's?



I can't find any info on this ST at all! Not a 257-327 design...caption indicates this boat was at INCHON, Korea, in late 1954 or early 1955.....



Photo on Ebay 11 22 13; looks like a 65' Korean era boat: the tugboat number list including some ST's continues into the 1300's? The 3,000's? Apparently so, but no details exist other than these two photos as proof. I've also seen a blog for an "ST" bell found with a number in the 1100's...???????

Mystery #7:

D-Day Normandy ST Revelations

Here are two excerpts from "Force Mulberry - The Planning And Installation Of Artificial Harbor Off U.S. Normandy Beaches In World War II" by Alfred Stanford

"In the middle of March (1944), seven of the YMS "towing vessels" which the U.S. had promised arrived. The number of ocean-going tugs had grown to eight. The U.S. Army had six small 85-foot harbor ST tugs it was willing to allocate to Mulberry. These tender ST's, vessels of 750 hp., were manned by civilian crews, signed on in the States for non-combat duty. The tugs themselves were inadequately equipped. They had one 800-pound anchor, but no hawse pipe and no cable nor any windlass with which to weigh an anchor once down. They had no compasses and no charts. Most of the civilian crews had virtually no towing experience. **Some of these same tugs later on, while under control of the Army, lost their way so completely as to fall into enemy hands off the Channel Islands, many miles off their course.** But they were at least tugs. Three more U.S. Navy and six U.S. Army ocean tugs were supposed to be en route to the U.K. from the U.S. Thus **twenty-four of a needed huge fleet of tugs** were all that could be counted on for the present. Portland's docking, fueling and repair space to handle the vessels now based there was already inadequate....."

(Wonder which tugs were captured? Is this the same group mentioned that is described below? Or by Jack Boggs later on in this list?)

"This is typical of what these companies were up against at Cherbourg: the crew of one ST-75 in a July 18 (1944 - DF)convoy from Southampton to Cherbourg was made up of men from the 328th and 335th Harbor Craft Cos. In a dense fog this ST-75 and five other boats became separated from the convoy about midnight. Fired on when he approached the shore on the following morning, the ST-75's ship's master set a course to the north. Before he could clear the Channel Isles, enemy shore batteries opened

fire.

The first round took off the foremast. Seven of the crew went overboard. One soldier-sailor refused to abandon ship and went down. A sergeant was so badly injured that he later died. An officer was severely wounded in the leg. The survivors clung to a rubber raft until nearly dark the next day, when they were picked up by a British destroyer and returned to England.")

As Convoy EWC1A began its trip to Normandy on D-Day: With a stowaway ST!

"It was 1230 by the time the coasters and nine army ST tugs were lined up in two-column formation. SC 1329 took the port forward position and SC 1352 the starboard, while H.M.S. Keppel, a destroyer, and two British motor torpedo boats completed the thin escort force. As the SW Shingles buoy passed abeam at 1447, the sun broke through, and the water looked bright and dancing for the first time in days. The traffic rounding the Isle of Wight was so dense and the old coasters had so much trouble holding speed or understanding the American instructions bawled at them over the bull horns of the two SC's, that it was 1825 before the convoy made the entrance to Channel No. 6 off Selsey and turned south for the Far Shore. From the flagship SC 1329 to SC 1352 now came a visual signal. Captain Glark had been counting his chicks, eyes glued to his binoculars. *"You have one too many tugs,"* read the signal. After frantic flashing of the signal lamp Lieutenant Barton's MFV was induced to draw alongside SC 1352 and Lieutenant Barton made his confession over the bull horn. *"I painted the numbers out on her bow and put some new ones in place. The Army will never be able to figure out which tug it really is. These boys just wanted to come along."* This news was duly relayed to Captain Clark while Lieutenant Barton retreated into his wheelhouse and let his bulky MFV slowly slink to the rear portion of the convoy. There was no commendation or appreciation of this neat bit of thievery from the flagship; merely a curt "Signal received.""
(Wonder which tug this actually was? DF)

".....Captain Clark was having difficulties too. As a task force commander he had, of course, reported arrival of his force to the assault area commander, Admiral Hall. His repeated message, however, was ignored. Admiral Hall never acknowledged the presence of Task Force 128. Several of the ST tugs in his section of the Mulberry group were promptly commandeered by assault commanders to rescue landing craft. Before he could intervene, ***one ST tug was sunk in a salvage effort and another badly damaged.*** "
(Wonder which tug was lost, which was damaged? No ST is officially recorded as lost at D-Day Normandy - The damaged tug might be ST 778, which is recorded as being damaged, and the "sunk" tug might be ST 247 which hit underwater obstruction and was beached for 3 days for repairs as detailed in Little Ships – Tugboats at D-Day Normandy But it was never sunk.... DF)

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Mystery #8

Mystery ST captured by Germans: Jack Boggs in his narrative in Little Ships – Tugboats at D-Day Normandy recounts that early in the D-Day effort a column of six ships were headed into the Channel, and for unknown reasons one ST veered off towards the French coast. A German E-boat came out and escorted it in. Which ST was this? P. 218

Any help or comment about these ST mysteries would be appreciated. dfriend001@cfl.rr.com