

AV 2767 CRUSADER – MV CEMENTCO

WARTIME SERVICE

From a heavy lift shallow draught cargo vessel built for the Army to convey cargo to a beach or similar location in time of conflict, to a coral carrier for private enterprise to convey coral from Moreton Bay to a wharf complex at Seventeen Mile Rocks Road, Oxley. Built by the Melbourne Harbour Trust at Williamstown near Melbourne in 1945 to a design prepared by Major General Clive Steele, Engineer in Chief AIF. MV Crusader was the first heavy lift vessel introduced into the Army Transportation Corps of Engineers.

Several companies assisted in the construction such as Aust Iron and Steel, and the Metropolitan Gas Co. Richardson Gears provided the six winches and derricks capable of lifting 30 tons each to a stand or lirage equipment Ruwolt Engineering provided the six diesel engines of approx. 240 HP made under licence to Ruston Hornsby of England to power the craft. The six screws to propel the vessel were manufactured by the Victorian Railways in the Newport workshops.

She was launched in early August 1945

The approximate dimensions were as follows:

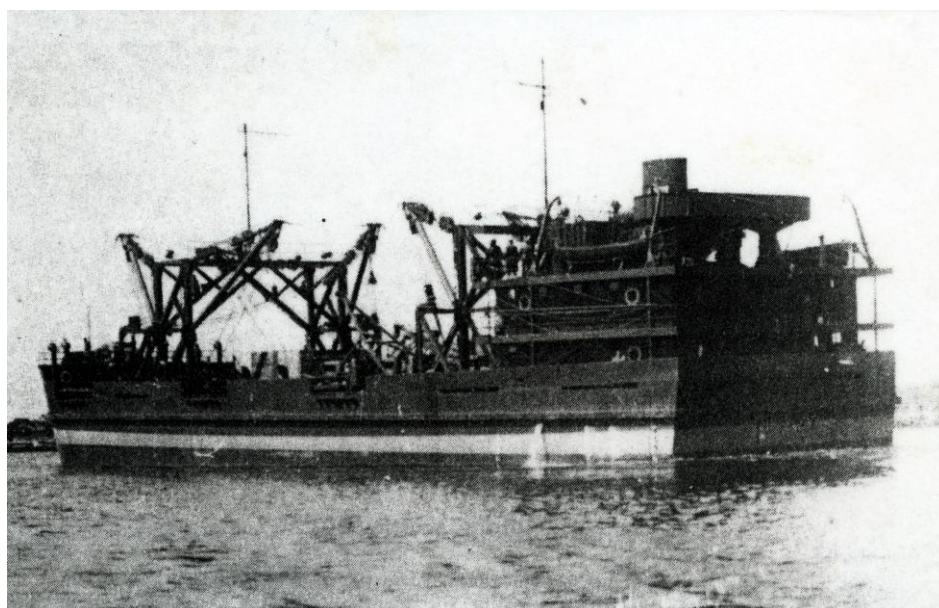
Length: 200ft – Beam 50 ft

Draught: For'd Light 6'6"
Heavy 7'10"
AFT Light 12'2"

Cargo Capacity: 1600 tons

Ship had 6 screws and 4 rudders

After sailing to Rabaul, Lea, Aitape and Torokina in 1946, she brought back equipment from New Guinea that was already there. After discharging her cargo here, she later went to Tasmania where she transported a load of timber to the mainland. She was laid up some time later and offered for sale.



M.V. CEMENTCO BRISBANE

PEACETIME SERVICE

The Queensland Cement & Lime Co. purchased "Crusader" in 1947 and began converting her to a self-propelled coral barge. The former AV 2767 was renamed "Cementco" the wheelhouse was cut free from the remainder of the aft superstructure and sited about 50 feet from the bow all six cranes originally fitted were deleted and the hull cut to provide 110 feet by 32 feet approx 1500-ton area for hoppers. Twenty-two openings each 9 feet x 3 feet were cut into Cementco's bottom. Conversion work was completed in late 1948 and the ship was registered in Brisbane on 17.10.1948 as "Cementco".

She worked almost nonstop until 1973 when the owners extended her length by 20 feet to improve accommodation and loading space. Two extra rudders were added making six in all to improve her handling in shallow waters and increased her capacity to 1600 tons.

She plied the Brisbane River for almost 40 years conveying fossil coral from Moreton Bay to the Q.C.L. Wharf at Oxley for the manufacture of cement at Darra. Note the red diamond and Darra Cement painted on her hull. The skyline of Brisbane with its high-rise buildings along with numerous other projects including some of the bridges over the river are a tribute to the part she played in the growth of the building industry in QLD.

She was affectionately known by many as: "The grand old lady of the Brisbane River". The Queensland cement and lime Co's coral barge "Cementco".

She was withdrawn from service 6.9.1984 due to its age and recession in the building industry.

VALE

A.V. 2767 CRUSADER – M.V. CEMENTCO

She was scuttled 27.7.1986 - 26.58.40S 153.29E (about 300 metres N.N.E. of Flinders reef off Cape Moreton) 19.8.1986 Brisbane Register closed.

R.I.P.

