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Model tug *Torrent* restored

A model of the tug *Torrent* has recently been restored and will be unveiled to the public as part of the new *Push and Pull: Life on Chesapeake Tugboats* exhibit, opening at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michaels, MD on April 21. The exhibit continues through 2014.



Torrent was used as a fireboat in the Baltimore harbor before later working as a tugboat. The city of Baltimore, with its port facilities sprawling around the shores of the Patapsco River, has long relied on a fleet of fireboats to protect valuable waterfront property. The largest vessel to serve the city was the appropriately-named *Torrent*, which served along with fireboats named *Cataract*, *Deluge*, and *Cascade*.

Built on the hull of a steam tug, *Torrent* was launched in 1921 and served until 1956 when she was replaced by a modern diesel fireboat. Carl T. Allison, an engineer on the *Torrent* in the 1930s and 1940s, used his leisure time to build this model of the boat he served aboard. The model was gifted to CBMM by Mildred T. Allison, in memory of Calvin F. Allison.

The model came to the Museum with several parts missing or separated, and CBMM Model Guild member Ed Thieler volunteered to conserve it for the upcoming tugboat exhibit.

The model features not only the five monitors—or nozzles mounted on the main deck, pilot house, aft deck house, and tower, but a grate below the waterline for the water pump intake, discharge gates where hoses can be attached, and other such details.

Although not a scale model—the model is proportionately a little too wide and too deep for its length—many of the technical details are included. This attention to detail is typical of “sailor-made” models, those constructed by a member of a vessel’s crew who knew it intimately.

CBMM’s upcoming *Push and Pull: Life on Chesapeake Tugboats* exhibit explores the world of Chesapeake tugboats and the men and women who work on them. For more information, call 410-745-2916 or visit www.cbmm.org.

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