Queensland Railways AC16 class locomotive

World War II and the occupation by Japanese forces of Pacific Islands and islands to the north of Australia saw Queensland placed under the threat of imminent attack.

This placed a great strain on Queensland Railway's resources in the movement of wartime supplies and troops.
A request was made in 1941 for further, new C17 class locomotives and the specifications were forwarded to the United States where the United States Army Transportation Corps (USATC) drew up plans for a 2-8-2 with specifications similar to a C17 class, which became the USATC S118 Class. These locomotives were intended as a standard design for use on narrow gauge railways in other parts of the world as a wartime measure. Thus twenty engines obtained from the United States under Lend-Lease arrangements and later purchased. They were the only ones of their type to come to Australia out of a total of 741 similar engines built for USATC. They were unloaded in Sydney in 1943 and railed to Brisbane for assembly.

Per Queensland Railway's classification system they were designated the AC16 class, C representing they had four driving axles, and the 16 the cylinder diameter in inches. Because the classification was already being used by an existing class they were designated American C16, i.e. AC16. The American steam locomotive earned it the nickname of *Yank*. The engines entered traffic with their US Army road numbers but had "A" appended to differentiate them from existing engines with the same numbers.



The AC16 is being leased by Southern Downs Steam Railway for about 3 months as an interim measure whist their C17 locomotive is undergoing major repair works. As a requirement of operating vintage equipment on the State rail network, all locomotives and carriages must be examined and maintained to rigorous standards.
Current work on the C17 is mainly on the chassis, suspension and wheel sets. But whilst it is stripped down then it makes sense to check every moving part….and there are a lot of them.
Apologies to those who miss our old faithful but she will be back later in the year better than ever.