

LST225/A16-k  
Serial No. 011-45

Contributed by Valerie Reckert-Jacobsen

U.S.S. LST 225  
c/o Fleet Post Office,  
San Francisco, California.

Reg. No. 73

R. S. No. 3 0717

24 January, 1945

C-O-M-M-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

From: Commanding Officer.  
To : Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet.  
Via : (1) Commander LST Group Thirty-Seven,  
(2) Commander LST Flotilla Thirteen,  
(3) Commander Administrative Command, Amphibious Force,  
U. S. Pacific Fleet,  
(4) Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet.  
Subject: Action Report - Peleliu landing and subsequent operations -  
15 September 1944 to 23 January 1945.

Reference: (a) U.S. Navy Regulations, 1920, Art. 712, 874 (6).  
(b) PacFleet Conf. ltr. 1st-45.  
(c) LST225 ltr. A16-k, serial 06-45,  
(d) LST225 ltr. A16-k, serial 003-45.

Enclosure: ✓ (A) Executive Officer's report. - p. 7

I (A) This report covers the assault on Peleliu Island on 15 September 1944, the approaches to that assault, this vessel's participation in the assault and the subsequent cargo operations of this vessel in the Palau area. The ship left Tetere Beach, Guadalcanal on 4 September 1944 for Palau and after a passage of eleven days landed assault troops of the First Marine Division at 0716 on 15 September. Combat load was discharged by 26 September. After an abortive sortie from Palau, we remained in the area taking loads from merchant ships at sea and unloading on the beach almost without interruption until 23 January 1945 when we were finally detached from the area for return to the rear areas.

II (A) LST 225, Flagship LST Unit Two, T.U. 32.13.3 comprising LSTs 131, 246, 658, 267, 268, 271, 661, and 225. Lt. Cdr. J.B. Hoyt, USNR Task Unit Commander.

(B) In accordance with operation Plan A501-44 this ship departed Tetere Beach, Guadalcanal at 0900 4 September 1944 in company with the other LSTs of T.U. 32.13. The ship was combat loaded, ammunition understowed LVTs and DUKWs, and pontoon causeways carried outboard. The passage was uneventful. Anti-aircraft gunnery practice was held on 9 September. There were four air alerts en route, but no enemy aircraft were sighted.

(C) Our principal mission was to launch assault troops in LVTs and DUKWs prior to H hour on D day. Secondary missions: launch pontoon causeways on order, act as hospital evacuation ship if ordered, and unload combat load by LVTs or by beaching as tactical situation demanded.

109368

LST225/A16-k  
Serial No. 011-45

U.S.S. LST 225  
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C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

Subject: Action Report - Peleliu landing and subsequent operations -  
15 September 1944 to 23 January 1945.

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(D) \* \* \*

(E) No enemy forces encountered in initial stages.

III (A) Approach. The approach disposition was formed in the afternoon of 14 September. The ship went to General Quarters at 0455 on 15 September. During the final approach the U.S.S. HAZELWOOD became the guide, LSTs being formed in a double column astern of the HAZELWOOD. Two 90° turns were used in this approach into LST Area Baker, the tactical command shifting from Capt. A.J. Robertson, USN in HAZELWOOD first to Capt. Sampson in LST 222 and then to Cdr. E.A. McFall in LST 227. At 0647 course was changed to 085°T and LST 225 was designated as guide, although tactical command was retained by Cdr. McFall. Before the final change of course, the formation was stopped and all small boats were lowered at 0628. The formation arrived in LST Area Baker at 0711 and lay to awaiting orders to disembark vehicles.

(B) Assault.

1. The order to disembark vehicles came at 0716. All vehicles were launched in seven minutes fifteen seconds. Bow doors and ramp were closed and the ship proceeded to LST Area King at 0748. No enemy attacks occurred during this period, either from the beach, or from air or sea.

2. On the nights of 15 and 16 September we participated in night retirement from the area with all LSTs not designated to remain at PELELIU.

3. On the night of 17 September we were designated a casualty transfer ship and at 1700 took station 1500 yards off the landing beaches. A blue light was hung over each bow to identify the ship for small boats bringing casualties. This worked very well and there were small boats waiting at the bow almost constantly all night.

4. Casualties brought in over the ramp were cleared through the first aid station; litter cases to cots on the tank deck, ambulatory cases to the starboard side troop compartments. Urgent cases were transferred to a hospital ship as quickly as possible. All casualties were eventually transferred to a hospital ship or returned to duty ashore, utilizing ships' boats and boats from the PH2. Approximately 200 casualties were handled during the night.

5. As the net was very strong considerable difficulty was experienced in keeping from drifting down on the south end of the beach,

3 0747

2



U.S.S. LST 225  
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24 January, 1945

**C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L**

**Subject:** Action Report - Palali landing and subsequent operations -  
15 September 1944 to 23 January 1945.

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especially as the engines had to be stopped when handling casualties over the ramp. We drew small area fire from the extreme ends of the beaches so that it was necessary on several occasions to stop handling casualties until the ship had moved up current again.

6. Both pontoon causeways were launched the next morning and were towed in to orange beach by the ships boats. The rest of the day and the 19th ships boats were used to unload all cargo ammunition, both from this ship and from other LSTs of the group.

7. Commander LST Group Thirty-Nine and staff were detached at 1400 22 September and this ship reported to Commander LST Group 37 for duty.

8. Ships boats were launched at 0705 25 September and sent to Orange Beach to assist an LCM in bringing a pontoon causeway out to the ship. The causeway was secured to the ramp by means of a rhino horn and, with the ship backing slowly, unloading commenced at 0730. All vehicles were unloaded by 1100 and ship's boats assisted the LCM in returning causeway to beach. At 1747 on this date we beached on Purple Beach to unload our remaining cargo.

9. Due to a scarcity of trucks unloading did not commence until 0840 26 September. Cargo was 100% unloaded by 1600 and the ship retracted at 1614. While on the beach several rounds of shell fire passed over us, landing about 1000 yards to seaward. There were about 20 rounds in all of an estimated 75 mm size.

**(C) Retirement.**

1. The ship beached again at the pontoon causeways on Purple Beach at 0652 30 September to receive troops and vehicles of the First Marine Division. Loading commenced at 1000 and was completed by 1755.

2. This ship sortied with the LSTs of Flotilla 13 to depart from the area at 1630 the next day. Orders were received en route, however, from CTF 32 to return 3 LSTs to PELELIU. LST 225, 226, and 128 were ordered to return at 2100 by ComLSTFlot 13.

3. On 4 October 1944 orders were received to proceed to KOSBOL ROADS where troops were disembarked on the sixth. The following day the ship returned to the PELELIU area to commence cargo operations.

**(D) Cargo Operations.**

1. From this time until finally detached by CTF 94.5 this vessel, with few interruptions, acted as cargo transfer ship between merchant and Navy cargo ships and the beach. Until 13 November 1944 this was carried on under the direction of Com LST Group 37, after which the Commanding Officer LST 131 took charge. Due to the depth of the water in the area, no anchorage facilities

U.S.S. LST 225  
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24 January, 1945

C-O-E-F-I-D-E-H-T-I-A-L

Subject: Action Report - Peleliu landing and subsequent operations -  
15 September 1944 to 23 January 1945.  
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were available. Consequently it was necessary to go alongside ships in virtually open sea, taking advantage whenever possible, of the delicious lee of the island itself. During this period there were two storms of considerable violence on 20 October and 7 November 1944. Loading was halted while the storms raged, but recommenced before the seas had died down. Most of the damage listed as an enclosure to the Executive Officer's report was caused during these periods. Lines parted continually until we had to rely almost entirely on the lines furnished by the merchant ships who were always very reluctant to break them out. Fenders after a short while became compacted so that they acted more as battering rams than as useful fenders. Unloading from the aftermost hold proved especially damaging as the bridge pounded against the counter of the other ship. It was frequently necessary to cast off before the other ship came about into the trough of the sea and go alongside when she was on a safe heading again.

2. Operations on the beach gave no respite. This ship beached only on Purple beach, PELELIU and Blue beach, ANIWA. The latter beach was abandoned for LSTs after we nearly beached on 27 October 1944 as a result of heavy current and swells. Full use of the engines and stern anchor were to no avail and the ship was hurriedly ballasted down before the angle to the beach exceeded 45 degrees. Even so the shaft alloys took a great deal of punishment as a result. The skin and adjacent bulkheads were pushed up with the result that two bearings had to be taken out of each shaft.

3. Orange Beach was very little better. The current ran anywhere up to 4 knots in either direction, although it was stronger when easterly and more frequently in that direction. Heavy swells lifted the ship as it rested on the beach, pounding it on the coral and puncturing most of the forward tanks over a period of time. Towards the end the coral was worn away by the numerous beachings and heavier and heavier ballast forward was necessary on beaching in order to avoid sliding in past the pontoons and having the stern caught on the coral shelf that normally ran about on a line with the auxiliary engine room. With drafts of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  to 8 feet forward, very little ballast could be pumped in after beaching. The result was that after a little of the cargo had been unloaded the bow would float clear of the beach and the remainder of the time on the beach, except during low tide, was spent balancing the ship, ramp against the umuagay, by use of the engines. This naturally caused further damage to the bottom.

4. The use of Barua Bay and Schonian Harbor for unloading merchant ships helped to solve one end of the problem. When this ship took on its final load of cargo at Barua Bay, it was the last LST regularly employed at PELELIU



U.S.S. LST 225,  
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24 January, 1945

C-O-R-F-I-O-R-N-I-T-I-A-L

Subject: Action Report - Pelalin landing and subsequent operations -  
15 September 1944 to 23 January 1945.

in cargo operations. LSTs, LCGs, and LCMs should be able to handle the remainder through the facilities of Orange Beach.

(E) FAIR

1. On 28 December, this ship was temporarily detached from cargo operations and replaced LST 19 as the LST designated to take assault troops to the island of FAIR for purposes of reconnaissance in force and capture. Upon conclusion of this operation, reported in reference (c), the ship returned to AG-301 BOARS for repairs to the forward bilge control room. This compartment had been kept under control by use of submersible pumps, but both pumps, all handy billys and hose had been lost to LST 19 before FAIR for her emergency use while beached. The compartment then got out of hand and repairs were vital before the ship could be used for further operations.

(F) Final landing and detachment.

1. From then until 16 January 1945 when we went alongside S.S. Page for our final cargo, the only event was the action with a midget submarine previously reported by reference (d). 400 tons of ammunition were loaded aboard, the loading being completed on 18 January 1945. After a short period waiting LST 131 to join us, we were detached by CGO 94.5 on 23 January 1945 and proceeded to GALPAN for discharge of our last cargo and onward routing to PEARL HARBOR and much needed repairs.

XV See reference (d)

V See enclosure (A)

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VII 1. There were no personnel casualties. Personnel performance during the long and arduous tour of duty was high. Ingenuity and perseverance in overcoming the continual damage suffered during cargo operations were necessary. Even the simple matter of keeping the ship clean was made enormously difficult owing to the fact that the main and tank decks were almost continually full of cargo, varying from tar to ammunition. The U.S.S. POROSARIST (AO 86) with her unfailing supply of fresh water and the cooperative and understanding spirit of her commanding officer, did much to aid morale, as did the arrival of the U.S.S. ANOTIE just before Christmas with an abundant supply of fresh food, the first seen in three months.

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VIII 1. Unloading during assault period.

The inadequacy of the present control over unloading during the assault period was again demonstrated at PELALIN. No priority of unloading had been assigned to our combat load. When ordered to commence discharging cargo,

5

LST225/A16-k  
Serial No. 011-45

U.S.S. LST 225  
c/o Fleet Post Office,  
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24 January, 1945

C-O-E-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L-

Subject: Action Report - Peleliu landing and subsequent operations -  
15 September 1944 to 23 January 1945.

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our small boat was sent to the control vessel for our beach to inquire what cargo we should unload first. The officer in charge said that none of it was needed or wanted at that time. This was reported, but orders to discharge were reaffirmed. Using our LRVs we commenced unloading from the tank deck only to have several loads returned to the ship as not needed. Small boats belonging to various LSTs, ATs, and APs were observed beaching on the reef and uselessly unloading their cargo into the water where no one was ready or willing to retrieve it.

2. Beach operations.

It is strongly recommended that if in future operations it becomes necessary to use a beach exposed to a strong current and heavy swells that buoys be laid up current for the LSTs to wear to. Several buoys were laid after LST 19 beached to keep her from going further up the beach. These buoys had they been laid sooner might well have prevented any beachings on Purple beach. All the LSTs, whether they actually beached or not, had numerous narrow escapes from beaching. This, furthermore, would have obviated the continual use of the engines while on the beach, with consequent reduction of damage to the bottom.

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3 0717

6



LST225/A16-k  
Serial No. 09-45.

U.S.S. LST 225  
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24 January, 1945.

C-O-N-T-I-N-E-N-T-I-A-L

From: Executive Officer.  
To : Commanding Officer.

Subject: Executive Officer's Action Report.

Reference: (a) Art. 948 U.S. Navy Regulations - 1920.  
(b) Exec. Off. ltr. LST225/A16-k, serial 05-45.  
(c) Exec. Off. ltr. LST225/A16-k, serial 002-45.

Enclosure: (a) Damage sustained during operations at Peleliu, 15 Sept.,  
1944 to 23 January, 1945. - p. 10

1. In accordance with OPF Operation Plan A501-44 this ship departed from anchorage at Tetera Beach, Guadalcanal at 0900 4 September, 1944, to rendezvous with other ships of TG 32.13 and proceed to Peleliu Island, Palau group. Troops of the First Marine Division plus attached units were embarked. Tank deck load consisted of LVT-as, LVT-2s, LVT-4s, and BUEMS. Rations and ammunition was under-stowed, drummed water carried next to the bulkheads. The main deck load consisted of miscellaneous trucks, trailers and construction equipment. Pontoon causeways were carried onboard.

2. The passage was made in approximately eleven days. There were four air alerts enroute, but no enemy aircraft were sighted by this ship. On the first day out heavy seas caused three U-anchors holding down the starboard causeway to pull out. These were welded back in place and no further difficulty was experienced. The SO-1 radar was out for 9 hours on the third day. Four engineering casualties necessitating securing of engines were experienced enroute. All were repaired quickly. On the afternoon of 9 September the ship participated in AA gunnery practice. We commenced maneuvering at 1435 14 September to form the approach disposition.

3. This ship went to General Quarters at 0455 15 September. At 0628 ship's boats with wave guide officers were lowered. At 0647 we were designated guide ship and changed course to 085°T, heading for the beach. The bow doors and ramp had been opened by 0655. Changed course to 087°T at 0707. The order was given to start vehicle engines at 0709. Ship arrived in LST area Baker at 0711 and lay to. Vehicles started over the ramp at 0716. All vehicles were launched in seven minutes and fifteen seconds. Ramp was raised, bow doors closed, and the ship departed LST area Baker at 0748. We proceeded to LST area King and lay to. Ship's boats returned at 1757 and were hoisted.

4. Except as noted below we participated in night retirement exercises each night and returned to lay to in the transport area during the day.

3 0717 7

U.S.S. LST 225  
c/o Fleet Post Office,  
San Francisco, California.

24 January, 1945.

O-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

Subject: Executive Officer's Action Report.

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5. We were designated casualty transfer ship on 17 September, and took station at 1700, 1900 yards off the landing beaches. A blue light was hung over each bow to identify the ship for boats bringing casualties. Boat crews had no trouble finding the ship with these lights to guide them. We drew considerable fire from the extreme ends of the beach, however. The ship-fitter's shop was rigged as a first aid station, and the staff medical officer and ship's pharmacist's took station there. Casualties brought in over the ramp from LVTs, LCAs, LUKs, and anttracks were cleared through the first aid station; litter cases to cots on the tank deck, ambulatory cases to the starboard side troop compartments. Urgent cases were transferred to a hospital ship as quickly as possible. All casualties were eventually transferred to a hospital ship or returned to duty ashore, utilizing ship's boats and boats from the PB 2. Approximately 200 casualties were handled this night. The excellent conduct of the ship's officers and men in handling casualties is deserving of the highest praise. Deserving of special merit was the work of Lt. R.R. Schnoebelen (MC) USNR, R.A. Nieves and J.B. Barr, PHNs 1/c USNR, and R.F. Testa Halc, USNR. Undoubtedly their work saved many lives.

6. One man was dead when brought to the ship. One other died of his wounds shortly after being brought aboard. The dead: Poltrack, F.A., Corp. USMC 295 367; Warbrough, F.W., USMC 458 200. The remains were buried at sea on 18 September at 1434. The flags used for the burial ceremony were sent ashore to the Graves Registration Service to be forwarded to the next of kin.

7. Both pontoon causeways were launched at 0730 on 18 September, preparation before launching requiring approximately one hour. The ship's boats towed the causeways to Orange Beach.

8. Ship's boats were utilized on the 18th and 19th to unload all of the cargo ammunition aboard.

9. All rolling stock on the main deck was lowered to the tank deck on 20 September, and trucks were loaded with cargo rations. This move facilitated the rapid unloading of the remaining cargo.

10. ComLST Group 39 and staff were detached at 1400 22 September and this ship reported to ComLST Group 37 for duty.

11. Ship's boats were launched at 0705 25 September and sent to Orange Beach to assist an LCM in bringing a pontoon causeway out to the ship. The causeway was secured to the ramp by means of a rhino horn and, with the ship backing slowly, unloading commenced at 0730. All vehicles were unloaded

3 0717



U.S.S. LST 225  
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24 January, 1945.

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

Subject: Executive Officer's Action Report.

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by 1100, and ship's boats assisted LCM in returning causeway to beach. At 1747 on this date we beached on Purple Beach to unload our remaining cargo.

12. Purple Beach had many coral heads and the surf caused us to pound, holing fuel tank A418F. Due to a scarcity of trucks unloading did not commence until 0840 26 September. Pontoon causeways were used to reach the shore. Cargo was 100% unloaded by 1600 and the ship retracted at 1614. While on the Beach several rounds of shellfire passed over us, landing about 1000 yards to the seaward. There were about twenty rounds in all of an estimated 75mm size.

13. We again beached on Purple Beach at 0652 30 September to receive troops and vehicles of the First Marine Division. Loading commenced at 1000 and was completed by 1755. The ship retracted at 1810. This ship sortied with other ships of LST Flot 13 to depart from the area at 1630 31 October, 1944. Under orders from CTF 32 and Com LST Flot 13 we were detached from this unit at 2100 to return to Peleliu. High sea's and strong wind made operations extremely difficult for the next few days. We departed from the vicinity of Peleliu at 1036 4 October to proceed to Kossol Passage, arriving at 1755.

14. The troops aboard were transferred to the Liberty ship John C. Ainsworth via LCT 782 on 6 October. In company with LST 128 and LST 226 we departed Kossol Passage to return to Peleliu as cargo transfer ship under orders of ComLSTGroup 37.

15. We continued as cargo transfer ship at Peleliu from this time until finally detached from the orders of ComDesCarSubArea Command on 23 January, 1945. During this period we went alongside 36 merchant ships or Navy supply ships to take on cargo. In discharging this cargo we beached 25 times. During the period 15 September to 23 January we took alongside 77 LCIs, LSMs, LCTs, PCs and other small craft to give them fuel and water.

16. Because of the nature of the beaches which were frequently subjected to heavy surf, and the necessity of going alongside and remaining alongside merchants in open sea during heavy weather, considerable damage to the hull and the bottom was sustained. A detailed list of the damage sustained is given in Enclosure (A), based on known damage. Further damage will doubtless be revealed after dry docking.

17. The period covered includes the FAIS operation and the "midget" submarine action reported in references (b) and (c).

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F.W. McCracken  
Executive Officer.

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9

U.S.S. LST 225  
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ENCLOSURE (A).

List of damage sustained during cargo transfer operations at Peleliu.

1. Following tanks have been holed: All clear ballast tanks in (A) section: A-402V, A-403V, A-407EH, A-408W, A-412W, A-418F, B-404W, & B-409E.

2. Decks, bulkheads, and frames on the 4th deck buckled, bent, and twisted.

3. Misalignment of both main shafts, necessitating removal of one steady bearing and one bulkhd. packing gland from each shaft.

4. Frames and hull plates are bent and twisted from main deck to 3rd deck from frames 1 to 43 on port side and from frames 21 to 41 on stbd. side. Deck plating and transverse bulkheads have been buckled and strained on the main, 2nd, and 3rd decks adjacent to the damaged area.

5. The port wing of the boat deck has been demolished. Deck, stanchions, and gun trib have been carried away.

6. The Port boat davit has been crushed - Stbd. boat davit has been bent.

7. The port bow door has been holed in two places, and is very badly warped.

8. The platform of the truck elevator has been bent.

9. Fifteen tank deck vent hatches have been demolished or damaged.

10. The base of the stern winch has been damaged.

11. Both running lights have been destroyed.

12. The Ramp operating gear has been rendered inoperative.

13. The Elevator machinery has received considerable damage due to shock loads.

14. The bow door operating machinery port and starboard, is badly damaged, also due to shock loads.

15. There has been damaging to some of ship's piping. In some cases only temporary repairs were possible.

16. Several ventilation ducts have been pushed in, and two vent sets were rendered inoperative.