

Contributed by John Peterson



Diary of John Peterson MOMM/2 – (1944-1945) – Log of Ship LST 663

LST stands for “Landing Ship Tank” – this ship was used for moving troops, vehicles and equipment (ammo, water, supplies, fuel, etc) around. Top speed for these ships was about 10 knots (11.5mph). These vessels would land very close to beaches to unload support troops, vehicles and supplies during battles. LST 663 was involved in the Pacific theater including the battles of Leyte, Palau, and Okinawa. An MOMM/2 (machinist mate, 2nd class) on an LST was responsible for maintaining diesel engines, generators and all of the ship’s auxiliary equipment.

4/28/1944

This is the first day we went to our ship LST 663. Left American Bridge Company for New Orleans, which is 1800 miles away

4/29/1944

Just getting my sea legs since the training cruise at Little Creeks, VA. We are using ballast cooling because of the dirty Ohio & Mississippi Rivers.

4/29/1944

Very little sleep coming down the river, arrive in Cincinnati @ 8:00am and in Louisville at 3:30pm.

5/1

Arrived in Evansville, hit the Mississippi River, southern IL, Missouri & Tennessee.

5/1

Am seeing high water and the flat areas are flooded. Saw a floating barn. Cattle & Horses are floating near the ship.

5/3

Arrived in Baton Rouge, we are 130 miles from New Orleans – nice day today and I have a swell tan.

5/4

Arrived in New Orleans, saw my first palm tree, called home which cost \$4.00, mother enjoyed it, our ship was commissioned today.

5/5

We went to liberty and changed into our whites.

5/6

We pick up our LCT with a crew of 12. Our ship and 557 side swiped each other putting a big hole in the starboard. We are in the Pendleton shipyard.

5/7

Went on liberty in the French Quarter which did not interest me.

5/8

Got paid \$51.00 - \$5.00 went to ship services and \$1.00 to a PA system. Our ship was camouflaged with black polka dots.

5/9

Left Pendleton shipyard, loaded 9 months of supplies from 8pm to 6am, dead tired.

5/10

In dry dock, our tank decks are being fixed up with a crib. Loaded ammo and stored supplies from 8pm to 4am.

5/11

Went on liberty this evening.

5/12

Left New Orleans and went to the Gulf of Mexico, saw my first porpoise. Many guys were sea sick and laid on the deck and prayed they would see land.

5/13

Arrived in Panama City Florida and went on liberty

5/14

Training

5/15

Left Panama City and set our compass

5/16

Had target practice in the Gulf and did better than the other LSTs.

5/17

Still on firing maneuvers.

5/18

Practiced breaching, painted the shaft alleys.

5/19

Had general quarters, firing a sleeve near Panama City

5/20

Captain opened up the bow door and we swan in the Ocean. Practiced refueling LST 555. We hit the starboard side three times.

5/21

In the Gulf doing practice maneuvers.

5/22

Practiced beaching and docking & painted today.

5/23

Practiced towing with LST 658.

5/24

Fire drills, lifesaving drills. Got compliments on our good work, not by Captain.

5/25

Left Panama City for New Orleans.

5/26

Went on liberty in New Orleans, Oh My! (I think he slept with a female Russian sonar tech)

5/27

Called home, met Bill Starna from Little Falls who built our ship's crib.

5/28

Went on liberty to the American Legion where they had a dance, and enjoyed it.

5/29

Quiet, worked on auxiliary equipment.

5/30

Had Liberty, met Miss Thompson who was pretty snazzy.

5/31

Changed Docks

6/1

The black swede (me) had liberty and went to a dance.

6/2

Jumped ship to buy my supplies; 2 loaves of bread, salami and pepper and had a feed.

6/3

Loaded 5 thousand cases of beer and 15 tons of ammo. We are headed for Pearl Harbor or San Pedro. I swiped two cases of beer.

6/4

Left New Orleans

6/5

Issued belts and had GQ.

6/6

Issued foul weather gear and I doubt we will need it.

6/7

Left our convoy and heading toward Cuba & the Panama Canal. Now sailing with 8 LSTs and 2 sub-chasers. Saw Cuba land today.

6/8

Rained all day, water is over the bow, submarines are in the area.

6/9

Saw the Fitzgerald Island, saw a red and white little church.

6/10

We picked up a radio signal stating that a tanker got torpedoed off the coast of Cuba.

6/11

Rained all day, stayed below decks.

6/12

Arrive in the Panama Canal went through mine fields, saw a few P38s, PBMs and PCs.

6/13

Tied up @ Cow Sola Naval Base, went swimming at the base pool. Bought mother and Catherine some jewelry. Tired to find Chief NJ Lowe but he had left.

6/14

Went through the Canal, painted the auxiliary room.

6/15

Left Panama on way to California.

6/16

Didn't do much today.

6/17

Washed clothes and getting ready for liberty in California.

6/18

Slept most of the day.

6/19

Can see the coast today.

6/20

Can see mountains.

6/21

GQ because of enemy submarines.

6/22

Same old crap today.

6/23

Off the coast of lower California, was issued fur-lined jackets.

6/24

Passed a fishing schooner which we thought was a submarine.

6/25

Nothing new.

6/26

Getting closer to California, we have our lights on.

6/28

Arrived in San Diego, can see aircraft carriers and mine fields. Received letters from Catherine.

6/29

In dry dock, on port side duty.

6/30

On liberty, went to barber shop, had a good time, had a steak supper. Called home at the cost of \$15.00.

7/1

Scraped paint and painted bilges.

7/2

Went to church, met Oleon, Bob Benjamin, Scottie and a few others. Hitched a ride to Los Angeles to Rofit Buy, boy was she tickled to see me. Went to dinner with her and stayed till 9:00pm. My buddies were at the Paladium and I joined them to see Jimmy & Tom Dorsey's in Hollywood.

7/3

Got back at 0500, shame on me. Got chow at 0800, Raferty worke me and had a letter for me. I sent post cards to brothers Bob and Alan.

7/4

Left for San Pedro this morning, arrived at 6:45, went through mine fields.

7/6

Went on liberty, three girls picked us up and drove us all over.

7/7

Under way for Pearl Harbor.

7/8

Had GQ after a submarine sighting.

7/8

Refueled a YMS, we have 4 YMS's, 7 LCIs and 4 LSTs.

7/9

Underway

7/10

Scraped and painted bilges

7/11

Underway and studying for MOMM-2/C Exam.

7/12

Underway with engine trouble but didn't fall out of the convoy.

7/13

Had GQ, fired, fell out of the convoy for awhile.

7/14

Hid our beer for fear of unloading it in Pearl Harbor.

7/15

Arrived @ Pearl Harbor, saw Hickam AFB and the ruins. Went aboard a freighter which had great coffee & cookies.

7/16

Went to subbase, saw the dolphin and sail fish, met a guy in the machine shop from Amsterdam.

7/17

Went on Liberty to Honolulu & Waikiki, our beer is nearly gone off the deck, had a wisdom tooth pulled, the LST 758 was sunk two days out of Pearl Harbor.

7/18

Rumors flying that we might go back to the States. We unloaded 11,000 cases of beer, no one can get in trouble for stealing beer & candy.

7/19

In Pearl Harbor we loaded our LCT which rides atop of our LST. It slid off so our LST listed 12 degrees. LST 661 headed back to the States.

7/20

LST 662 pulled alongside us and we are awaiting orders.

7/21

Went to Waikiki, bought 3 pounds of pepperoni, met up with Glen Davis, also got sardines and napkins & a table cloth for mother.

7/22

Quiet

7/23

Went to the Royal Palm Hotel swimming. It is very nice, had lights out because of enemy threat. Saw bombers returning from a mission.

7/24

Moved docks and are tied up next to the TN & MA, bought shoes, met Dave Vincent from Hilldale, NY from LST 1014.

7/25

On liberty with Bob Klinger, and saw the Bob Hope Show. We are getting ready for an inspection from President Roosevelt, Captain told us to give back the stolen beer or be court martialed.

7/26

Saw President Roosevelt go by us, where is Elenor? We are tied next to the 606, 1014, 20, 37 & 662. Put pontoons on our ship.

7/27

We are tied up next to the Oklahoma which came out of dry dock upside down after the attack on Pearl Harbor. President Roosevelt & MacArthur are here making plans for an invasion in China & the Mariana Islands or the Philippines. Saw the Arizona & heard 7 LSTs were sunk a month ago.

7/28

We aboard the Oklahoma.

7/29

Went on Liberty, went aboard the repair ship LST which was tied up next to the Oklahoma and is a beautiful ship.

7/30

We pulled off today and anchored near Waikiki. We practiced with the Army pulling 7 tanks out through the bow doors.

7/31

We beached with the Army and their amphibious tanks. We tied up to the 606. Parnell is staying @ Pearl City.

8/1

Went on Liberty to see Parnell at Pearl City and Sod Mountain is 5 miles away via Jeep. Ate chow @ the Army Base. He gave me a new pair of shoes.

8/2

Beautiful day, took on about 8,000 gallons of fuel, 100,000 gallons of water.

8/3

Took a swim around the ship, took the small boat to Royal Hawaii Hotel & took a dungaree Liberty and almost got caught.

8/4

Went on Liberty with Davis. We are being loaded topside with trucks and field equipment by the Seabees. LST 480 blew up in Pearl Harbor – heard the Royals Hawaii Orchestra and it was nice.

8/5

We are nearly loaded with cement mixers, bulldozers, tractors & Seabees.

8/6

Went to church, our ship is loaded with 250 Negroes and Seabees.

8/7

We have loaded 350 Negro troops, 16 negro officers, 25 Seabees and plenty of ammo and gasoline.

8/8

Left Pearl Harbor, our convoy has 25 LSTs, 606, 662, 663, 737. I was sick but felt better later. 1015 is our flagship, it was just changed to LST 601, we have 555, 557, 668 also with us.

8/9

Rained all day, trouble with our cook stoves.

8/10

Quiet

8/11

One of our guys fell down in the boiler room.

8/12

We moved a few dozen cases of beer tonight.

8/13

We refueled the PC 1379, the PC 1390 is nearby in case something goes wrong.

8/14

We are near the Marshall Islands, and the Equator.

8/15

Rainy and muggy, Negro troops gave us tobacco so I rolled my first cigarette. Had GQ 4 Jap Destroyers are within 400 miles, not so good for me.

8/16

Had GQ, our SCs picked up a Jap submarine 500 yards away. 7 depth charges were dropped.

8/17

Passed the International Date Line.

8/18

A Jap submarine is 8 miles behind us and we all were jittery, our SC has made contact 150 yards away. We refueled, PCs 1390 and SC 275, 295. 275 rammed our ship and broke her steering gear and put a hole in the bottom. A fellow from the 737 was buried.

8/19

A submarine is trailing us.

8/20

We passed the equator and it's hotter than hell.

8/21

We passed 120 miles from the Japanese held Island of Makino. We have a battle wagon and Cruiser escorting us.

8/22

Hot and rainy. Major generator trouble because of overloads. Captain Lambert shit his pants and we almost had to pull out of the convoy. Received my summons for initiation.

8/23

Crossing the Equator & initiation. Got paddled and fanny is sore. 115 enlisted men and all but two officers got the works. Had my 30-day beard shaved off they got the best of the Black Swede today.

8/24

Sore fanny, we refueled YMS 841, the SC 275 pulled alongside to give supplies. The Captain's orders are for Guadalcanal. The SC 275 rammed us and they broke their mine sweeping equipment, they will get tough shit chit.

8/25

Safford, SCYC and I sighted land. Saw our first plant in 18 days.

8/26

Saw the northern lights, cut the curly locks of Harper while he was sleeping.

8/27

Anchored near Guadalcanal went to Protestant Church but it is all the same. Went to Tulagia as the small boat engineer.

8/28

Went to jungles of Guadalcanal, saw snakes, crocodiles, large black spiders & Lizards. The soldiers who fought here must have had it terrible.

8/29

Went to a native village and was greatly interested in their huts made out of bamboo palms, hog pens. Boys wore hardly anything, women wore only grass skirts. We bought 3 dozen bananas for 25 cents and coconuts for a dime.

8/30

On the way to the village we burned up the small boat salt water pump, coxswain almost got scalded and jumped overboard. We got it fixed later.

8/31

Had a swell time on Tulagi, bought 3 gallons of ice cream @ 70 cents/gallon. Everyone enjoyed it, it rained hard.

9/1

Gave 24,000 gallons of crap fuel to a repair ship, took on 43,000 gallons of water totaling 90,000 gallons. Made MOMM2 today. Someone on board tried to sabotage our main engine by pumping all of the oil (750 gallons).

9/2

Quiet day, plan on going to Liberty to get a few bottles of beer on Tulagia. We received orders we are going to attack YAP 400 miles south of the Philippines.

9/3

Going to Lyons point for church. The Maryland, Idaho, Oklahoma and Massachusetts are tied up with us. Ves and Cox from our crew didn't return last night from Liberty.

9/4

Our captain said we are going to invade two Islands (Palau). We will be used as decoys, our flotilla consists of 25 LSTs, 20 LCIs, 10 PCs, 4 YMSs, 4 aircraft carriers, 6 battle wagons and a few small vessels. These islands are 400-600 miles from the Philippines. Left today with the convoy.

9/5

Put a few bottles of beer in the ice cooler. Army guys shared their rations, we spotted an enemy plane.

9/6

An aircraft carrier shot down a plane. Our crew was able to buy two bottles of beer.

9/7

Slept most of the day.

9/8

We are in a convoy of 50 ships, today was a beautiful day, and engine room was 110 degrees. We passed a Jap held island which cannot get supplies in.

9/9 (Sunday)

Still in the convoy, the carriers are scouting planes out in which we enjoyed watching them. Got a hair cut, my beard is growing long again.

9/10 (Monday)

Cloudy day. We had GQ. 4 hours on and 8 hours off is our schedule.

9/11

Had GQ twice, carriers laid down a smoke screen.

9/12

Refueled PC 1379

9/13

Battle wagon Maryland has passed us. I greased the stern and anchor wench to be ready for beaching. D-Day is Friday September 15th.

9/14

Getting close to our goal, went topside to watch the gun flash and flares from the planes.

9/15

Could see 10 small islands & 60 ships. We are pulling a faint now and gun fire is sporadic around us. We are on condition 3.

9/16

We are encircling the island and making a faint. @090 six troop ships were lost from our convoy but were later found safe.

9/17

At day break our ships were shelling Anjaur & Palau. There are 100's of ships and plants shelling the island, we are 1000 yards off shore and troops landed on Anjaur. We were drawing a faint to draw the enemy away from the landing troops.

9/18

The islands were shelled all night and the convoys sent up star shells to find the ships offshore. Early this morning small craft were landing supplies. Battle wagon were shelling pillboxes that we could see. Our plants dropped eggs, we refueled an LCI and we were fired on by Jap batteries.

9/19

Enjoying the fireworks. A few dead japs floated by, we were fired on and they missed us by 150 feet.

9/20

We beached our LST on Palau and took off part of the Negro army and glad they are off. The beach we landed at is Red Beach and it is a wicked site. A dead Jap floated by and they cut his hob nailed shoes off. We were shelled and missed by 120 feet. The star shells are exploding over our bow.

9/21

So far they have all but one hill which is 300 yards from our ship.

9/22

Early this morning our Marines captured a Japanese soldier coming in our bow doors which were down, he surrendered and gave him a shower and food and then he was taken off. We are waiting to unload our Seabees and pontoons, one Seabee had a fit and was put on a hospital ship.

9/23

We beached at 10:00am, we have dents on our ship from beaching next to coral in shallow waters. Our Seabee chief shot a few Japs while out on a scouting party. We pulled off the beach and getting rid of the rest of the Army. Thank God.

9/24

Took on 60,000 gallons of water, fueled PC 1389, we are heading for Holllandia, New Guinea.

9/27

We expect to get to New Guinea in 4 days. Greased all the deck equipment and enjoyed being topside. Our ship got a big thank you from the big shot. Thanking us for the work we did on the invasion of Palau and Anjuar.

9/28

Was sick today, worked on the superior diesels, crossed the Equator.

9/29

We were really busy moving lockers from starboard to port and scrubbing it down. We are 184 miles from Hollandia, New Guinea. We had a BIG fight in our compartment but the Black Swede came out on top.

9/30

We arrived @ Humbolt Bay, Hollandia. Our fireman Mr. Vies got busted to F1/C and Cox down to F2/C.

10/1

Went on island to go to church but was late so we toured around. This place is built up really well. Refueled PC 622, went to AK to see the movie Falcon. Other guys brought back Jap souvenirs.

10/2

Went ashore, bought shoes and clothes. Had my broken finger looked at from a Marine stepping on it coming down the nets.

10/3

Went to the beach, met up with 122nd Seabees group swapped some U.S. Coins for Aussie coins got some Jap souvenirs.

10/4

Worked on the superior diesel which had a fouled heat exchanger. Cox got 5 days on bread and water as well as McGinley. Took 118 cans of beer.

10/5

Went ashore, bought some Japanese souvenirs and beer.

10/6

Got my finger x-rayed.

10/7

Went to the OTUS repair ship to get my finger put in a splint.

10/8

This is our last night in Humbolt Bay

10/9

Had special sea duty four times, we beached off near the Post Office N5113, tied up near 737 and 991. Another sailor said we are going back to the Philippines. I wonder?

10/10

Sent some Japanese money to Alan and Bob.

10/11

Our next goal is 300 miles away (Oaui) and will pick up troops.

10/12

We saw gunfire today.

10/13

We beached today on the island of Oaui. We picked up Army equipment for an air fighting unit, went ashore and got some cat eyes and lemonade from the Red Cross girls. They are doing their best but this is a war zone and they should be back in the States. This is a war zone, not a rest area. The Air Force Aviators think it is a rest stop and having fun with the girls.

10/14

We will be taking on 202 enlisted men and eighteen officers. We are going back to Hollandia and Leyte. We will be up against heavy opposition from 4 task forces. Today is D+4. This army outfit are night fighters flying P11s or black widows.

10/15

We now have a pet parrot sleeping below me. We hit something and our ship is vibrating like hell. We were told when we hit Hollandia we will get a new screw.

10/16

Aired my bedding, met a guy from Auburn and had a nice chat.

10/17

We pulled into Hollandia next to the repair shop HD7 and they have replaced our screw. Loaded supplies today.

10/19

We have 60 ships in our convoy. Worked on the bracket for C McDonnell, passed the Equator.

10/20

We initiated the 421st army men by paddling them and scalping them.

10/21

Radio saying there is a lot of Japanese near Leyte, we added 15 ships to our convoy

10/22

Tokyo rose announced that our flotilla had been sunk. As far as I know, I am still here.

10/23

D+3 we passed a Jap held island we will land on the beach in the morning.

10/24

Today is invasion day and was topside. We are surrounded by all of our ships. Blinkers are going off from ships around, just enough to show our positions and get us blown up from shore batteries. Had 7 Jap air attacked with one having 100 planes. An LCI was bombed killing 40.

10/25

A few Jap planes attacked us, an LST was hit but the fire was extinguished. A cruiser was nearly sunk by one of our planes, our gunners hit a Japanese plane but it smoked out into the hills and crashed. There is a heavy gun battle at the entrance to the Gulf of Leyte, we are now blocked in and can't get out. The USS Princeton was sunk.

10/26

We lost 18 landing craft not too far away. We were going to make a run for it to break out of the Gulf, but they have changed their minds. We ran out smoke machines later and made a go for it, getting dive bombed all the way out. Our ships shot down 19 Jap planes, we just missed getting hit when a Jap plane dropped bombs and burst into flames right over us.

10/27

We are underway to Hollandia our guys are tired, we spotted a few Jap planes but they didn't bother us.

10/28

Still underway to Hollandia, slept near the gun tub.

10/29

Heavy rain storm rolling our ship 30 degrees, LST 558 is back in the convoy after having engine trouble.

10/30

Slept topside but the rain gear kept me dry. Our convoy consists of 25 LSTs, 3 PCs or SCs, 2 Des and LST 558.

10/31

Still underway.

11/1

Pulled into Hollandia.

11/2

Warm today and were told we could write home about the Leyete Invasion.

11/3
Quiet

11/4
Met Red Finn from the 537.

11/5
Went ashore and saw a Japanese ammunition dump.

11/6
We were trying to load water today but there were so many LSTs also trying that there was no water pressure.

11/7
Went to the LST 775 for water.

11/8
A LST was tied up next to us and it was shot up really bad and it looked a soup strainer. 7 Navy personnel were killed and 24 Army personnel were killed.

11/9
Pulled off the beach to our normal berth.

11/10
We took on Army soldiers. The LST 695 is back in port after being torpedoed Oct 25.

11/11
Beached our 663, and the Army crew built a loading platform of sand bugs. They are 200 Army air core guys.

11/12
We are underway for Leyte, our convoy has 25 LSTs, 10 liberty ships, 3 destroyers and a few PCs and SCs.

11/13
Underway and had target practice.

11/14
We joined another convoy of twenty LSTs near Biak or Oui (Indonesian Islands).

11/15
Passed the Equator.

11/16

We had an enemy submarine near us. Destroyers dropped depth charges and I think they got it.

11/17

Spotted a Jap observation plane, our convoy has 70 ships and we plan to land on Red Beach with plenty of air opposition.

11/18

We went through a narrow channel where there was a big naval battle Oct 24.

11/19

We are in Leyte, had a dozen air raid alerts, we went ashore and got some Japanese money. We have 14 LST, 7 Liberty ships, 7 Des and a few PCs around us.

11/20

Had a terrible storm. We have 7 LSTs with us and have lost others, the Liberty ships finally appeared.

11/21

At 9:30 we were dive bombed by two Jap planes and it dropped an egg missing us by 100 feet, then it tried crashing into the 554 but missed, dropped a few more eggs and tried crashing into the 694, but missed. We eventually shot it down.

11/22

On alert all day, our aircraft carrier left the convoy and we are traveling at flank speed.

11/23

Quiet day.

11/24

We are near Hollandia and saw a few Jap bodies float by.

11/25

Arrived @ Hollandia this morning. I got a package from brother Bill and his wife Betty.

11/26

Washed clothes and went to mass.

11/27

We painted our shaft alleys.

11/28

Saw a movie on a Liberty ship.

11/29

Had a treat and saw a show on Hollandia at the 113 CB. They had a great orchestra and a movie.

11/30

Quiet day, went to a Liberty ship and saw a movie.

12/1

We went into dry dock and the whole crew turned to and scraped and painted the bottom and put a new shaft on our starboard side.

12/2

Still painting, got our new shaft and went to work on our torn apart generator. We went to an LSD to see a movie.

12/3

Left dry dock.

12/4

Our MOMM 1/C resigned and the chief took over.

12/5

Put in a ventilator over the port escape in the auxiliary engine room. Went to LST 1015 to see a show.

12/6

We left the water hole and picked up 60 barrels of SAE 9370 weighing 450 lbs each.

12/7

Worked in shaft and auxiliary shaft alleys.

12/8

Had special sea duty, 12 LSTs in convoy left Hollandia.

12/9

Underway and painting engine room.

12/10

Got cholera shots and had a party on board.

12/11

Arrive at a Naval base

12/12

Our engineering officer went out and got 2 pairs of pants and shoes. Received 350 troops and 18 officers from the 33rd Division.

12/13

Went ashore and rode 20 miles past the WAACS base on the island of Nistchi and we stole a truck and rode around the Naval base. Two MPs stopped us but we talked our way out of it.

12/14

Our fellows stole a weapons carrier with 68 miles on it and drove it on to our ship. Had to repair a stuck main engine valve which gave us a big problem. Our crew threw 68 cases of beer overboard so the Navy Officers and Army Officers wouldn't drink it like last time. LST 558 is right behind us on our way to Hollandia.

12/15

Had cholera shots again. The captain found out we threw the beer overboard and put the crew on restricted quarters, 4 on 4 off and said he wouldn't give two cents for the whole crew.

12/16

4 on 4 off, we hope we don't get court martialed.

12/17

Arrived at Hollandia, 48 ships in our convoy including LSMs, LSTs and what not. Had a party tonight.

12/18

Passed the coast of New Guinea.

12/19

There was a Captain's mast, McGinley got busted to F1/c. We are in a convoy with 554 in the lead.

12/20

Crossed the Equator.

12/21

Arrived @ Maritai today and we were escorted by torpedo boats. We are unloading and there are plenty of planes here with 9 airstrips. The Japs are just beyond the strip. The 33rd is relieving the 31st.

12/22

Still unloading we are off restrictions, the price of cigarettes will go up to pay for the 136.00 worth of beer thrown overboard. We took up a collection and paid it off.

12/23

Left the beach and anchored on the other side of the island. The fellows on the ship played football. The whole crew seems homesick.

12/24

We to church. Christmas carols are being played over the speakers.

12/25

Today is Monday X-Mas day. Japs flew over and bombed our airstrip and fuel dump. 2 more jap planes flew over but we could not catch them. Had a party @ the 84th C.Bs. 200 men ate at the theatre, had turkey, cranberries, ice cream, etc. Rained all day and catching a cold. LST 171 got hit last week. 991 got strafed with 2 killed.

12/26

Went to an army base to see a movie. Japs are flying overhead but we can't find them. We are tied up next to the 660 taking on supplies. 3 air raids last night.

12/27

Rained all day, waiting to see Charlie/Jap planes tonight.

12/28

Went to the Pitoe air strip tonight. Our friend Charlie hit 2 USA planes X-Mas eve leaving only 2 motors standing. 1000 planes are on base. We saw the movie of Bob Hopes show in Pearl Harbor and it was the same show we were at previously.

12/29

We were on the beach loading up.

12/30

We are on the beach and loaded, we had a show party tonight but I could not go because of boiler duty.

12/31

We went ashore, stole a Jeep and drove around the island.

1/1/1945

Dad's Birthday. This is the first day of the year, so shortly after Midnight of Dec 31st, 1944 I wrote my dad a letter which him a happy birthday. At 10:30 the shore batteries shot up flares and tracers to celebrate New Years' Day. Our captain told us we were going to Luzon. Left today at D+2. Having a party tonight.

1/2/1945

Had a bad storm about 4am, waves broke over the bow, the first time since we left the Caribbean Sea. Rained all day, I will write home tonight.

1/3/1945

Quite today, had the 1800-2000 watch, and the 0400-0800 watch. We have 50 ships in our convoy.

1/4

Quiet today, got letters from home, should be in Leyte today, PC 563 is nearby.

1/5

AS usual quiet today, we picked up 2 more convoys today about 80 miles from Leyte.

1/6

We sighted land and should off load mail today and we received mail today. Last night we nearly ran down some natives in dugouts in front of our convoy. You can see lights occasionally off our starboard bow.

1/7

We saw a plane overhead and saw barges in our convoy.

1/8

D-Day, kinda quiet, the ship is rolling badly, and some of our guys are seasick. We are now in the China Sea, saw several of our planes overhead. Today is D-Day in Luzon.

1/9

Stormed all night but calmed down by morning and everyone is feeling better. At dawn we hit Mindore and all you can see are ships along the shore. At 9am we passed Maragan, today they fought and dropped eggs on Manila.

1/10

Sea is pretty rough, another convoy pulled ahead of us and behind us, our planes are flying overhead today & you could hardly sleep in your rack without falling out.

1/11

We had GQ all day and sent out smoke screens. Some Japs swam out to tie bombs on to the bow and the stern of our ship. We used our tommy guns to shoot at all floating objects with the help of spotlights. LST 736 fell out of the convoy due to crapped out engines. The 567 & 670 crashed in the convoy doing quite a bit of damage.

1/12

We had GQ @ 0745. A few Jap planes flew between two of our convoys but we got the plane. We had 4 alerts and shrapnel fell across our bow, one piece tore a life raft apart near the gun turret. Six fellows and 1 19-year sailor of the 637 got killed with shrapnel on the beach. At 0700 we had GQ and threw up a smoke screen.

1/13

We plan to hit the beach this afternoon, our smoke screen is not working but has stopped us from landing – we finally got it working. We nearly crashed into another ship on the beach.

1/14

We are still at anchor. We hit the beach at 2 o'clock, we are going @ flank speed, our engines are strong and pushing in @ one foot at a time where the waves hit. At 1800 they just got the ramp hooked up. They figure the army of the 43rd engineering will be off by day break.

1/15

We have been on the beach since yesterday, the waves are rough and we are going to try and break off the beach. We finally got off at 10am after trying for 1 ¾ hours. We came off a long shallow beach of 500 feet and in doing so caught our anchor in the screw and broke the screw and it will only turn @ 240. We are running on our star board engine only and on our way to Leyte @ expect to be there by Saturday or Sunday.

1/16

We are underway under rough seas. I tied my bunk and myself topside so I would not roll off. It turn out to be a pretty day, had GQ from 1945-2200.

1/17

Another rough day at sea, our Des picked some enemy surface craft and sank them. It turned out to be a beautiful day.

1/18

Beautiful day, just about the opposite of Panay. (Island in the Philippines)

1/19

Quiet day, one day till we hit Luzon.

1/20

Dropped anchor, we are near a village called Samar.

1/21

Received 30 letters, hit the sack @ midnight.

1/22

The natives from dugouts came out and I bought some shell necklaces to send back home.

1/23

Couldn't go on Liberty because of a 12-4 boiler watch.

1/24 (Wednesday)

Went ashore to Leyte, went through the native villages and talking to them about the Japanese attacks. They are different from the others because they live in 2 huts off the ground. We had out screw fixed and the cable removed.

1/25

We moved our ship to another AK that carried ammunition @ we took on 45 tons. Pulling away we put our cable in the screw and knocked the hub of it off. Our starboard engines only turn 290.

1/26 (Friday)

This morning I helped remove the cable from the screw in the water.

1/27

Had the 4-8 watch, worked on the main engines. We pulled alongside the 610 & 611. The 611 had 4 killed from a bomb in their engines. Both main @ auxiliary engines were destroyed and had to be towed back to the USA. The two ships got hit when two Jap ships in Luzon set off a charge badly damaging the port side. The starboard side was badly damaged when an LST knocked on the beach @ Luzon. The 925 got blown up.

1/29 (Monday)

Quiet today, we are tied up next to the 610 and 611, and a fuel tanker.

1/30

Nothing new, we mustered @0745.

1/31

Went ashore in the small boat to base. I traded a blanket for a bolo knife & now I have one for Bob & Alan (brothers). Took the small boat back @ 11:00pm received 2 letter from Pat Rogers from England.

2/1

Had the 12-4 watch, quiet as usual.

2/2

I had the midnight to four watch, worked in the engine room all day. Getting 140 cases of beer today.

2/3

Quiet today, had our first beer in 2 months, we are listening to the hit parade, received word that they have 1000-1800 sacks of mail. Went to church on the repair ship, saw Bob Courtney from Little Falls, NY, he gave me Pete Moyikens address of LST 554.

2/4

Went to the repair ship Rigel to see Bob Courtney brought him some cigarettes and candy.

2/5

We pulled up on the beach to pick up troops. Met Sam Petra from Little Falls and PC Vickers is on a APA-A2.

2/7

Quiet today, we pulled out for Mindoro tonight.

2/8

We are underway with 350 men and 27 officers. It is crowded and the ship is rolling badly.

2/9

Quiet

2/10

Not much doing, can see land.

2/11

Beached today, unloaded the men, saw plenty of black spiders and the airstrip.

2/12

Anchored and soon to leave for Leyte.

2/13

Underway, our small boat and generator needs repair.

2/14

Underway.

2/15

My birthday, anchored visited the 693.

2/16

Went over to the repair ship Rigel.

2/17

Nothing new.

2/18

Went to church.

2/19

Moved to near airstrip.

2/20

Underway rough sea, headed for Ulithi. (Micronesian Atoll)

2/21

Rough seas, out leader is PA 151 which will head for the States as far as Ulithi.

2/22

Still underway, out convoy consists of 9 LSTs, we are in the lead with the 737 in back of us. 24 is with us along with a few Des and PCs.

2/23

Underway, ship will not stop rolling.

2/24

Still rolling badly, due to hit Ulithi tomorrow.

2/25

Saw a few subs at a distance.

2/26

At anchor, we took on a load of bombs.

2/27

Tied to ammunition ship, carrier 77 nearby.

2/28

Still loading ammo, loaded 14" shells @ 1500 lbs each.

2/29

Still loading ammo.

3/1

Loading ammo.

3/2

Loading ammo.

3/3

The fleet is coming into port including battle wagons, Saratoga, Yorktown.

3/4

Tied up to the Victory, getting ammo. Never saw so many ships, Des and Carriers.

3/5

There are 30 carriers within sight.

3/6

Anchored next to the Essex, went to Trifoil supply ship, we went aboard light cruiser Pensacola for a shaw party, it was hit last week at Iwo Jima killing 20, injuring 80. Essex speed was 31 knots, now 18 knots and lost a plane and was damaged pretty bad. Lexington will return to the States next week, plane went through the main deck.

3/7

Quiet today, went over to the supply ship Oahu, saw a show on the cruiser Pearland, the Springfield is anchored nearby.

3/8

Took Liberty, went to the Pasadena.

3/9

Sent a blinker to the Essex looking for Sullivan of Scranton, PA, saw Admiral Sherman on board. His flag ship just returning after a raid 100 miles from Tokyo after returning from Iwo Jima.

3/10

Moved from Essex to the supply and repair ship, took on 115,000 gallons of water, USS Sumner threw a party.

3/11

Went over to the Tennessee for a shaw. About 8:30pm we had a red alert and a Jap plane dove into the carrier Randolph and Essex, damage was bad killing 18, injuring many others. The other Jap plane crashed into the beach.

3/12

Went on Liberty, had a red alert. A plane looking like a PBY wouldn't identify itself and was shot down. Got paid, moving to dock east of Anchorage, met signalman SM3 Bill Sullivan from Albany.

3/13

Started painting engine room, moved near ammo ships.

3/14

Loaded ammo from Walter Williams taking on 6" shells.

3/15

Painting

3/16

Finished painting, docked at dock Anchorage tied up near the Tennessee.

3/17

Quiet today, Captain went over to LSD, many carriers have left port including the Essex.

3/18

Went to battle wagon Idaho for a movie which was good, underway at 0730.

3/19

Pulled alongside APA for two cranes. 999 had an explosion from ammo tank deck.

3/20

Captain told us that we were on the way to take Okinawa on April 1st (D-Day). We are scheduled to go in on D+6 to give ammo as need and return to Luzon.

3/21

Underway, our convoy has 8 LSTs, and 4 Des, 999 will be with us but back because of their explosion. Rough seas.

3/22

Ship has been rolling all night.

3/23

Rough seas.

3/24

This ship is rolling hard. I've never been so sick.

3/25 (Sunday)

It's cold, we have broken our fur-lined jackets, our submarines are supposed to surface near our flagship.

3/26

Cold day, wearing my fur-lined jacket.

3/27

Getting close to Okinawa, had GQ today.

3/28

We pulled into small convoy and anchored, shortly after an LCI pulled up for ammo. At 1800 we all got underway staying away from the beach. As we pulled out Japs shelled our equipment on the beach and blew up an ammunition dump. At 0600 we will load a wagon and destroyer with ammo.

3/29

Today we pulled up to the New Mexico and bought clothes, this is a big Battlewagon, had an air raid at 12:30, task force 88 nearly shot down two bombers.

3/30

Today we pulled alongside the cruiser San Francisco to give ammo and wrecked our small boat beyond repair, later we pulled alongside the Indianapolis.

3/31

We had a busy day today loading the Maryland, Minneapolis, and the Tennessee. The Indianapolis got hit by a suicide bomber and they also got hit from a Jap submarine. A Jap plane was shot down and we were sitting by ourselves. Saw what a Jap suicide bomber did to a 725 after hitting it midship.

4/1

D-Day, kinda quiet, later tonight we saw the gun flares and heard the shells. Smoke was pretty dense and no doubt coming from Okinawa. At 2020 they began firepower from the beach and shore batteries from the beach. 80,000 Jap troops are on Okinawa.

4/2

This morning we had an attack at 7am but was fought off. Last night the West Virginia got hit by a suicide plane badly damaging it – it will no doubt be returning to the States. At 9:30 we tired up to the New Mexico for ammo, went aboard NM for dinner and a haircut. New Mexico just returned from Pearl Harbor after being hit in Luzon. Had GQ, task force 58 shot down 2 plants. One submarine sunk about 70 miles out.

4/3

Had GQ, this morning we found out that 200 men died on the West Virginia after getting hit by a suicide plane. We are supposed to give ammo but have no callers.

4/4

Quiet tonight, have not unloaded ammo today.

4/5

We arrived at Okinawa to get ammo from other LSTs. Nearly all of old outfit is around 1014, 1015, 603, 1013, 554, 555, 556, 557, 662 and what not. They are shelling the beach intensely and had frequent GQs. LST 1006 and 918 pulled alongside giving us ammo and practically wrecking us. The star shells are lighting the beach.

4/6

Had GQ @ 0515, unloaded ammo from LCVPS. 3 Jap planes hit an LCI & a PC destroying both, we destroyed 3 Jap aircraft carriers, one Jap submarine was sunk in the harbor.

4/7

Was topside, star shells sent from the shore make us to be seen too clearly.

4/8

Loaded ammo, got two new small boats from PA 203, give them our old ones.

4/9

A suicide squadron flew in and hit PA 67 pretty badly.

4/10

Anchored outside of Okinawa, USS Idaho got hit by a suicide plane.

4/11

Tied up along the cruiser Salt Lake City.

4/12

Unloading an LCT, pulled along cruiser Salt Lake City, a plane was shot down over us, the Tennessee was hit today by a suicide plane carrying three bombs spreading flames and killing 125 men.

4/13

Unloading an LCT starting at 2am, got up at 4am and started unloading it but had to quit after condition Red. We returned to Okinawa and pulled alongside of the heavy cruiser Tuscaloosa.

4/14

Things got hot last night, two or three planes were shot down. The Tuscaloosa got hit but not sure how bad, it is 89 degrees outside, the 808 looks like it took a crash hit on the port side. We heard on the radio that the war in Europe is over.

4/15

Two planes overhead were shot down, shore batteries had their search lights on and Jap planes could not be hit even with the search lights on. We were using 20's or 40's. Jap planes dropped 7 eggs off our bow, the war being over in Europe was a false rumor.

4/16

We are beached, a Jap plane strafed one of our LSTs 2000 yards away and they were shot down by two corsairs. Jap bombers hit a few Des and small craft, the Jap planes headed towards us but it was too dark, we picked up shrapnel off the deck, two of our boys got hit in the helmet and through their life jackets.

4/18

Quiet, had GQ

4/19

Quiet, had GQ

4/20

GQ @ 2100, loaded an LCM which was taking supplies out to the Tuscaloosa, had GQ.

4/21

GQ 0030, 0225, bombs were dropped on the beach. A Jap plane strafed our starboard side very close to us. We unloaded ammo onto an LCM. GQ 2100, 2200, 2030.

4/22

GQ most of the day, unloaded mortar shells to an LCM, after dinner LST 622 came alongside and gave us ammo. LCI 439 took off shells.

4/23

We are tied up next to LST 622 taking on more ammo, and then we anchored out. The New York is 600 yards away.

4/24

News was 49 Jap planes shot down and one of our ships sunk.

4/25

Notified we were to pull out of the invasion.

4/26

Saw a mine sweeper, the destroyer 590 took on ammo from us.

4/27

Destroyer 390 took ammo from us.

4/28

We shot down a plane 200 feet from our stern.

4/29

Gave ammo to the Tennessee and the Salt Lake City, the USS Comfort hospital ship got hit badly.

4/30

We gave the cruiser St Louis ammo and the Destroyer Wadsworth took on powder.

5/1

We unloaded ammo onto the Light Cruiser Birmingham and gave the Tennessee the last of our 5" shells.

5/2

Rained all day, Hitler died today.

5/3

Moved from Okinawa.

5/4

GQ, set off smoke pots.

5/5

Took on 90,000 gallons of water.

5/6

A plane broke through the picket line.

5/7

Gave ammo to the 818 and took on some. The Birmingham was hit a few nights ago, saw Gilboy on LST 222

5/8

The war in Germany is over @ 0241. Rained all day, tired up to the 818 and the mobile aircraft carrier USS Shangri La got hit by 7 suicide planes with 1400 casualties, and later sunk. DD 745 was hit pretty bad and survivors were picked up by the St. Louis.

5/9

Tied up to ammo ship AE14.

5/10

Tied up to AE14.

5/11

Took on ammo from LCM.

5/12

Quiet.

5/13

Tokyo Rose claims they hit a battlewagon. Mother's Day.

5/14

Had small boat duty, DD 470 was being towed by a tug after being hit midship with a few dead on the fan tail. We pulled alongside the Mississippi and unloaded 14" star shells. The New Mexico got hit today.

5/15

We pulled alongside the Mississippi and then anchored out.

5/16

Condition Red, we can see fires on the beach close to us.

5/17

Had small boat duty and GQ.

5/18

Scuttlebutt says we are going back to Pearl Harbor June 15th.

5/19

Condition Red all day.

5/20

Went to the AD20 and met Sam Trenconi. The ADD took a bad hit, YDT 54 is listing badly.

5/21

Quiet.

5/22

Took on 5" projectiles from LC5

5/23

Went to LST 1014 and saw Dave Vincent, rained all day.

5/24

Small boat duty, nothing new.

5/25

Had a bomb go off close by.

5/26

Pulled alongside LST 1001, nearly wrecking our portside.

5/27

We took ammo from LST 1101. At 2100 Japs dropped flares and a torpedo on us but missed.

5/28

Seven destroyers were hit on the picket line and some sunk.

5/29

12 Jap planes were overhead so we set off smoke pots.

5/30

We pulled alongside of the 818 and gave them our rocket shells. Received a package with provisions.

5/31

A Jap plane dropped a bomb about 1000 yards off our bow. DE 416 took on ammo.

6/1

Got paid 326 after 3 months not getting paid. Got a money order for 275.

6/2

Quiet

6/3

Received ammo, rained all day.

6/4

Condition Red, unloaded 14" powder to the 820.

6/5

Took on ammo from an ammo ship.

6/6

Anchored out.

6/7

GQ today, not much going on. Took on water from water ship 93, met Joe Austrin, received a letter from Catherine.

6/8

Took liberty.

6/10

Went to church and movies tonight, washed clothes.

6/11

Worked my shift, slept in the afternoon.

6/12

Went to the AD20.

6/13

Quiet.

6/14

Our dog fell over the side between us and the LST53 while unloading shell, but was rescued. Took on chicken and potatoes and what not.

6/15

Pulled alongside DD795 taking on 5" shells.

6/16

Captain's inspection and small boat duty.

6/17

Went to church.

6/18

Went ashore plenty of dead Japs and how they stink.

6/19

Was told we are going to Okinawa, Guam and Pearl Harbor for repair and will be converted into an Ammo Ship. Loaded 5"-38s onto the Victory Ship.

6/20

Quiet.

6/21

A Jap plane broke the picket line and went overhead and hit the seaplane Tender AV4, plane was shot down.

6/22

Jap plane dropped flares on our fantail, we unloaded detonators on to an LCM today.

6/23

Battle Wagon Tennessee took on 14" shells, BD43, Admiral Olendorf came onboard. He was hero of Leyete.

6/24

We are underway with 9 LSTs headed for repair.

6/25

Quiet.

6/26

Underway, getting broadcasts from Saipan.

6/27

Beautiful day, underway.

6/28

Underway at 10 knots, LST 277 is towing a PC with only one engine running.

6/29

We are near Saipan and should be there tonight. Saw a lot of B29s on their way to a mission.

6/30

Close to Saipan, listening to broadcast from Saipan on a stolen KSIA.

7/1

Underway, met a convoy of LCIs & LSTs going toward Okinawa and are opposite of Saipan. LST 277 is towing LST 24.

7/2

Underway.

7/3

Underway, clocks set ahead one hour.

7/4

Underway.

7/5

Sighted land, dropped anchor.

7/6

Went on Liberty, met Slim Hoffman, went to a movie.

7/7

Stayed aboard ship.

7/8

Pulled up anchor, now in convoy.

7/9

Our dog lady gave birth to 6 pups, 4 black, one brown and one cocoa.

7/10

A PC broke down and slowed down the convoy.

7/11

Nice weather, PC 1499 in tow.

7/12

Engine trouble, water line broke, still in convoy.

7/13

Underway.

7/14

Crossed International Date Line.

7/15 (Sunday)

Tonight we ran with lights on.

7/16

Warm day, cool night.

7/17

Underway.

7/18

There is talk of going back to the States.

7/19

Our pups opened their eyes today for the first time.

7/20

Field day, we turned our names into the SK with home addresses.

End of Diary.

John E. Peterson Jr. Note:

My dad joined the Navy in October 1942 and was discharged from the Navy in August 1945 at San Francisco. He moved back to Ilion, NY, got married in 1946 to Elizabeth Davis, had 3 children including Christine (1949), John (1953) and Theodore (1956). Prior to WWII he was an apprentice tool and die maker at the Remington Arms factory and after the war, he resumed working for Remington Arms as a tool and die maker and later on he worked for General Electric as a tool and die maker, primarily working on surface-to-air missiles. He died in 1988 at the age of 69. His brother Bill died in 1956, his brother Alan died in 1985 and his brother Bob is still alive and living in Syracuse (age 85). His son John (me) joined the Navy and served from 1971 to 1975 at Sub Base Pearl Harbor as an EN2. Son Theodore served in the Secret Service and daughter Christine is living in Syracuse.