

Compiled by
LTjg. Phineas Stevens

LST FLOTILLA SEVEN
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Contributed by
Guy G. Guthridge

HISTORY OF LST FLOTILLA SEVEN

LST Flotilla SEVEN was organized at Panama City, Florida in February 1943, with Captain John B. Mallard, USN, as Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN, Lieutenant Commander Thomas C. Green, USN, as Commander LST Group NINETEEN, Commander Richard M. Scruggs, USN, as Commander LST Group TWENTY, and Commander Clarence H. Peterson, USCG, as Commander LST Group TWENTY-ONE. Lieutenant Commander Danford M. Baker, USNR, assisted in the organization of the Flotilla as Chief Staff Officer on the staff of Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN.

The following ships were originally assigned to LST Flotilla SEVEN: LSTs 18, 22, 26, 66, 67, 68, 168, 170, 171, 181, 201, 202, 204, 206, 245, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 473, 474, and 475.

Due to the fact that the ships of LST Flotilla SEVEN were commissioned at different times and in different areas, and first reported for duty with the Flotilla throughout a period of eleven months, the assignment of ships to Divisions and Groups varied during the early phase of the Flotilla's operation.

After organization at Panama City, Florida, Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN, Group Commanders, and staff personnel proceeded to the West Coast of the United States to join the ships of the Flotilla that had been commissioned in that area.

LST 452 was the first ship of LST Flotilla SEVEN to depart from the United States for the combat area. This ship left San Francisco, California on 2 March 1943, and proceeded via Pearl Harbor, Fiji Islands, and New Caledonia to Brisbane, Australia, arriving at Brisbane on 13 April 1943. This ship was the first LST to arrive in the Southwest Pacific area.

LSTs 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, and 459 also departed from the United States for Australia in March 1943.

On 24 April 1943, Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN in LST 470, with LSTs 462, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, and 471 departed from San Francisco, California. This unit arrived at Tutuila, Samoa on 14 May 1943, proceeded to Wellington, New Zealand on 29 May 1943, and arrived at Sydney, Australia on 8 June 1943.

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Upon arrival in Australia, Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN reported for duty to Commander SEVENTH Amphibious Force of the United States SEVENTH Fleet. LST Flotilla SEVEN then commenced operations with the SEVENTH Amphibious Force and remained under the operational and administrative control of that Command during the next two years of operations in the Southwest Pacific area.

The first enemy action encountered by units of LST Flotilla SEVEN occurred on 16 June 1943. On that date LST 469, while in convoy with several other ships of the Flotilla, was hit on the starboard quarter by a torpedo from an enemy submarine while only one day out of Sydney harbor. Both propellor shafts and all machinery aft of frame 41 were disabled; casualties among the crew totaled seventeen (17) killed, nine (9) missing, and fourteen (14) wounded. LST 469 was taken in tow and returned to Sydney for repairs. This ship underwent repairs in Sydney and Brisbane, Australia until 13 March 1944.

The first ships of LST Flotilla SEVEN to participate in an amphibious operation loaded combat troops in Townsville, Australia in June 1943. On 26 June the first assault echelon of LSTs in the Southwest Pacific departed Townsville and landed at Woodlark Island, New Guinea on 30 June. None of the LSTs participating in this operation encountered enemy opposition.

Milne Bay, New Guinea was established as the first operating base in the forward area for LST Flotilla SEVEN, and during the months of July and August 1943 ships of this Flotilla were engaged in the transportation of troops and equipment in support of American and Australian forces on Woodlark, Kiriwina, and Goodenough Islands, New Guinea.

The first major amphibious operation in this area was the assault on Lae, New Guinea on 4 September 1943. The following LSTs were engaged in this operation: LSTs 452, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 466, 467, 468, 470, 471, 473, 474, and 475. During all phases of this operation the enemy resisted by frequent air attacks with dive and torpedo bombers. LSTs 455, 471, and 473 were severely damaged by bomb and torpedo hits. LSTs 471 and 473 were disabled by this encounter and were returned to Australia for repairs. LST 455 returned to Milne Bay for repairs. Due to intensity of the damage and the inadequate repair facilities in Australia, LST 471 was not returned to active service until September 1944. LST 473 did not return to the forward area until December 1944.

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Numerous casualties to the crews and troops embarked were suffered by several ships of the Flotilla during this operation. Casualties aboard LSTs 471 and 473 totaled sixty (60) killed, three (3) missing, and fifty-one (51) wounded.

In spite of heavy enemy resistance the amphibious assault on Lae was successful, and was followed immediately by landings at Finschafen, New Guinea on 22 September 1943. LSTs 18, 67, 168, 452, and 454 were used for the initial assault on Finschafen. LSTs 202, 456, 457, 458, 459, 466, 467, 468, 474, and 475 participated in support landings for this operation.

Numerous resupply trips to Woodlark, Kiriwina, Goodenough, Buna, Oro Bay, Cape Sudest, Lae, and Finschafen (Cape Cretin) were made during September, October, November, and December 1943. Frequent enemy air attacks continued throughout this phase of the New Guinea campaign, and numerous enemy planes were destroyed by anti-aircraft fire from ships of this Flotilla. During this period of operations Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN was in LST 466(FP), and Milne Bay continued to be the principal operating base. By 20 December 1943 all ships of LST Flotilla SEVEN, except LSTs 181 and 245, had reported for duty with the Flotilla.

On 20 December 1943 Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN moved to Cape Cretin, New Guinea, and on 24 December loading operations were commenced for the invasion of Cape Gloucester, New Britain. The first LST echelon for this operation departed Cape Sudest on 24 December 1943, and landed troops and equipment of the 1st Marine Division at Cape Gloucester during the early morning of 26 December 1943. This unit consisted of LSTs 18, 66, 67, 68, 202, 204, and 466, with Commander C. H. Peterson, USCG, in LST 18(GF) as echelon commander and Captain J. B. Mallard, USN, in LST 466(FP) in tactical command. This unit was followed by LSTs 22, 26, 452, 456, 457, and 465, with Captain R. M. Scruggs, USN, in LST 452(GF) OTC, which arrived in the target area around noon on 26 December 1943. Support echelons of eleven LSTs commanded by Lieutenant Commander D. M. Baker, USNR, in LST 459 and Lieutenant Commander T. C. Green, USN, in LST 474(GF), followed the initial assault with landings on 27 December 1943. Most LSTs arriving at Cape Gloucester were unloaded and departed from the target area on the day of their arrival, and returned to Cape Sudest for immediate turn-around runs. By 30 December 1943, thirty-five (35) LST loads had been discharged at Cape Gloucester. Enemy resistance was encountered by all units participating in the operation.

On 28 December 1943 Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN shifted flag to APc 8, which had been turned over to this Flotilla for use as a flagship. This ship was used as a permanent flagship and subsequent to this date LST Flotilla SEVEN shifted to LST 466 only during initial assault operations.

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Immediately following the Cape Gloucester assault, initial landings were made at Saidor, New Guinea. LSTs 22, 170, 454, 456, and 466, with Captain Scruggs in LST 452(GF) in command, loaded at Goodenough Island and landed at Saidor on 2 January 1944. A support landing was made at Saidor on 3 January 1944 by LSTs 168, 171, 206, 468, and 475 with Commander Green OTC in LST 474(GF).

The resupply of Cape Gloucester and Saidor continued throughout January and February 1944. During this time Cape Sudest was used as the principal operating base for the Flotilla.

On 1 January 1944, LSTs 469 and 471 were in Sydney, Australia; LSTs 458, 467, and 473 were in Brisbane, Australia; and LST 455 was at Milne Bay, New Guinea. All these ships were undergoing repairs. LST 462 was at Teorbul, Australia at this time, having been temporarily assigned as a training ship. LST 201 had been taken out of operations and converted into a Motor Torpedo Boat Tender. All other ships of the Flotilla were in active operation with the Flotilla on 1 January 1944 except LST 181 which first reported for duty at Cape Sudest on 17 January 1944, and LST 245 which reported for duty on 20 January 1944. LST 458 returned from Australia and rejoined the Flotilla in New Guinea on 20 January 1944.

On 8 January 1944, Captain R. M. Scruggs, USN, relieved Captain J. B. Mallard, USN, as Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN. Lieutenant Commander D. M. Baker, USNR, assumed command of LST Group TWENTY.

During the early part of January 1944, LSTs 452, 454, 456, 459, 466, and 468 proceeded to Milne Bay for approximately three weeks during which time the majority of men and officers aboard were sent to Australia for recreational leave. LSTs 18, 67, 168, 470, 474, and 475 also participated in this program in February 1944. Subsequent to that date no organized leave parties were sent from this Flotilla, but during the remainder of the New Guinea campaign a few men and officers from the various ships of the Flotilla were permitted to proceed independently to Australia for a maximum of ten days recreational leave.

LST 467 returned to active operation in the New Guinea area on 9 February 1944 after completing repairs in Brisbane, Australia.

During the latter part of February 1944 preparations were completed for the invasion of the Japanese occupied Admiralty Islands, and the loading of LSTs for this operation was commenced at Cape Cretin on 28 February. The initial assault units for this landing were commanded by Captain R. M. Scruggs, USN, Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN, and Lieutenant Commander James E. Van Zandt, USNR, Commander LST Division FORTY, and

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consisted of LSTs 22, 171, 202, 454, 458, and 466. These ships landed at Hyane Harbor, Los Negros, Admiralty Islands on 2 March 1944. In addition to attacks from enemy aircraft, shore artillery fire was encountered and was returned by the LSTs engaged.

Resupply echelons to the Admiralty Islands in support of this operation were continued by ships of this Flotilla throughout March 1944.

On 16 March 1944, LST 469 arrived at Milne Bay, New Guinea, and resumed operations with the Flotilla. Extensive battle damage repairs had been completed in Australia.

In March 1944, the assignment of ships of this Flotilla to Divisions and Groups became definite, and Commander in Chief, U. S. Fleet announced the composition of LST Flotilla SEVEN as follows:

<u>LST Group NINETEEN</u>		<u>LST Group TWENTY</u>		<u>LST Group TWENTY-ONE</u>	
<u>Div. 37</u>	<u>Div. 38</u>	<u>Div. 39</u>	<u>Div. 40</u>	<u>Div. 41</u>	<u>Div. 42</u>
LSTs	LSTs	LSTs	LSTs	LSTs	LSTs
171	469	452	458	18	168
181	470	453	459	22	170
245	471	454	462	26	201
466	473	455	463	66	202
467	474	456	464	67	204
468	475	457	465	68	206

The ships of LST Group TWENTY-ONE were manned by U. S. Coast Guard personnel; the ships of LST Groups NINETEEN and TWENTY were manned by U. S. Navy personnel.

As previously mentioned, LST 201 had been converted into a MTB tender. This ship was later designated as the U.S.S. PONTUS (AGP 20). LST 455, which had suffered severe battle damage during the Lae operation, was repaired at Milne Bay, and converted into an ARL and later designated as the U.S.S. ACHILLES (ARL 41). LST 453 was also converted into an ARL and later designated as the U.S.S. REMUS (ARL 40). LST 464 was supplied with medical equipment and used as a first-aid ship. This ship was later equipped with extensive hospital facilities and used exclusively as a first-aid and casualty evacuation ship, with the designation of LST (H) 464. All of the above ships were removed from operations with LST Flotilla SEVEN.

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In March 1944, LST Flotilla SEVEN was based at Cape Sudest, New Guinea. Captain R. M. Scruggs, USN, Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN, was in APC 8. Commander T. C. Green, USN, Commander LST Group NINETEEN and Commander LST Division THIRTY-EIGHT, was in LST 474(GF). Lieutenant Commander D. M. Baker, USNR, Commander LST Group TWENTY and Commander LST Division THIRTY-NINE, was in LST 452(GF). On 9 March 1944, Commander Frank D. Higbee, USCG, relieved Captain C. H. Peterson, USCG, in LST 18(GF), as Commander LST Group TWENTY-ONE and Commander LST Division FORTY-ONE. Lieutenant Commander Albert Schlott, USNR, was in command of LST Division THIRTY-SEVEN, and Lieutenant Commander James E. Van Zandt, USNR, was in command of LST Division FORTY. On 15 March 1944, Lieutenant Commander K. A. E. Lindquist, USCG, assumed command of LST Division FORTY-TWO. The duties of Commander LST Division FORTY-TWO as Echelon Commander had previously been fulfilled by Lieutenant Commander Howard A. White, USCG, Commanding Officer of LST 66.

At this time the LSTs of Flotilla SEVEN were the only LSTs operating in the Southwest Pacific area. On 17 March 1944 LSTs 38, 122, and 270 arrived at Cape Sudest from the South Pacific area, and reported for temporary duty with the SEVENTH Amphibious Force. By 4 April 1944 the following additional LSTs had arrived from the South Pacific area for temporary duty with this Force: LSTs 41, 78, 117, 118, 219, 220, 221, 227, 241, 243, 247, 269, 276, 339, 395, 397, 447, 460, 472, 476, 477, 478, 479, 481, and 482. These ships were assigned to the SEVENTH Amphibious Force to supplement LST Flotilla SEVEN in the large-scale assault that was to follow on Hollandia, Tanahmerah Bay, and Aitape, and operated under the command of Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN during the time they were in the New Guinea area.

LST 462 returned to operations with the Flotilla in April 1944 after completing a period of temporary duty in Australia as an amphibious training ship.

During the latter part of March 1944, LST training programs were inaugurated at Goodenough Island and Cape Cretin, New Guinea, under the supervision of Commander T. C. Green and Lieutenant Commander D. M. Baker.

On 1 April 1944, Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN moved from Cape Sudest to Cape Cretin to supervise final preparations for the next operation. At this time all ships of the Flotilla were located in the Buna, New Guinea area, except LST 471 and 473 undergoing repairs in Australia, and those ships participating in the training programs.

LSTs 467(F), 171, 220, 245, 468, 470, and 475, under the command of Commander T. C. Green at Goodenough Island were loaded for the invasion of Tanahmerah Bay, New Guinea, and departed on 17 April 1944.

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LSTs 452(F), 38, 122, 221, 241, 270, and 456, under the command of Lieutenant Commander D. M. Baker, loaded at Cape Cretin for the invasion of Aitape, New Guinea.

LSTs 466(FF), 118, 454, 457, 458, 463, and 465, under the command of Captain R. M. Scruggs, loaded at Cape Cretin for the assault on Hollandia, New Guinea.

These three units rendezvoused off Cape Cretin on 18 April 1944, joined Task Force 77, and proceeded to their destination. Landings at Aitape, Hollandia, and Tanahmerah Bay were made on the morning of 22 April 1944. The LSTs were unloaded, and departed the same day for the rear area. Only slight enemy opposition was encountered in this operation.

Support echelons commanded by Commander F. D. Higbee, Lieutenant Commander J. E. Van Zandt, and Lieutenant Commander Albert Schlott landed at Tanahmerah Bay, Hollandia, and Aitape on 23 April 1944. Resupply echelons to these areas followed in rapid succession until 12 May 1944.

Immediately following the Hollandia-Tahamerah-Aitape operation, all but five of the LSTs from the South Pacific Command that had operated temporarily under Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN were released from this temporary assignment and returned to the South Pacific area in the early part of May 1944. LSTs 339, 395, 397, 460, and 472 remained in the New Guinea area and were permanently assigned to LST Flotilla SEVEN.

On 14 May 1944 loading was commenced at Aitape in preparation for the next amphibious operation, and on the morning of 17 May 1944 eight LSTs of the Flotilla under the command of Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN landed at Wakde Island, New Guinea. This assault was supported by landings on subsequent days by other units of the Flotilla. Little air opposition was encountered during the Wakde operation, but ground forces were met by stiff enemy resistance. A few casualties among LST personnel resulted from enemy action during this operation.

On 24 May 1944 LST 168 departed from Hollandia to undergo repairs at Buna. From Buna this ship proceeded to Brisbane, Australia for main engine repairs, returning to the New Guinea area in August 1944.

The occupation of Wakde was followed immediately by an assault landing on Biak Island on 27 May 1944. This operation followed the same pattern as the Wakde invasion, with eight ships of the Flotilla making the initial landing under the command of Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN. Other units of the Flotilla under the command of Group and Division Commanders

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Landing reinforcement elements on 28, 30 May, 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, and 18 June 1944. Strong enemy resistance was encountered by Army forces in this operation, and the initial and support units of LSTs were subjected to frequent attacks from Japanese aircraft. A few personnel casualties resulted from these encounters, but no LST received other than minor material damage.

At this time Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN in APc 8 was based at Humboldt Bay, Hollandia, New Guinea.

In June 1944 LSTs 454 and 474 proceeded to Cape Cretin to engage in a training program designed to train Army personnel for amphibious operations, and were engaged on this assignment until July 1944. LSTs 460 and 465 proceeded to Milne Bay during June 1944 for another amphibious training program, and operated on this assignment in the vicinity of Milne Bay until 10 July 1944 at which time they proceeded to Bougainville for training purposes. These ships completed this assignment in August 1944.

On 26 June 1944 rehearsals were commenced in Maffin Bay, Toem, New Guinea, in preparation for the invasion of Noemfoor Island, off the northwest coast of New Guinea. On 30 June 1944 eight LST of LST Flotilla SEVEN under the command of Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN assisted by Commander LST Division FORTY, departed Maffin Bay and arrived at Kamiri, Noemfoor Island at dawn of 2 July 1944. The LSTs participating in this invasion carried assault waves of Army LVTs and DUKWs, and towed LCTs to the target area. Due to the presence of a coral reef close off shore of this island, no LSTs could beach, and all cargo was offloaded into LCTs, LCMs, LCVPs, LVTs, and DUKWs. All ships were unloaded and departed the same day to return to Maffin Bay. Six resupply units of LSTs completed this operation in July 1944. No enemy opposition was encountered by LSTs during this operation.

In July 1944 LST 549 arrived in the New Guinea area as the first representative of LST Flotilla EIGHT to report to Commander SEVENTH Amphibious Force for duty. This ship operated temporarily under the command of Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN pending the arrival in this area of Commander LST Flotilla EIGHT. At this time LSTs 339, 395, 397, 460, and 472, which had been assigned to LST Flotilla SEVEN in May 1944, were reassigned to LST Flotilla EIGHT. Those ships also continued operations under the command of Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN pending the arrival of Commander LST Flotilla EIGHT.

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On 30 July 1944, Lieutenant I. K. Stevenson, USNR, Commanding Officer LST 468, assumed temporary command of LST Division THIRTY-SEVEN as relief for Lieutenant Commander Albert Schlott, USNR, who had gone to Australia in June and subsequently detached from duty with this Flotilla. Lieutenant Stevenson was subsequently relieved of command of LST 468 and on 26 August 1944 assigned permanent duty as Commander LST Division THIRTY-SEVEN.

On 27 July 1944, LSTs 18(GF), 26, 66, 68, 170, 202, 206, and 466(F), with Commander F. D. Higbee, Echelon Commander and Captain R. M. Scruggs OTC, departed Maffin Bay for initial landings at Cape Sansapor, New Guinea. This unit arrived at Cape Sansapor in the early morning of 30 July, completed unloading, and departed for Maffin Bay on the same day. Subsequent echelons of LSTs landed at Cape Sansapor on 1, 3, 7, 9, 11, 15, 17, 19, 23, and 25 August 1944.

By August 1944, LST Flotillas EIGHT, FIFTEEN, TWENTY-TWO, and TWENTY-FOUR had been assigned to Commander SEVENTH Amphibious Force for duty, and during this month a number of these ships arrived in the Southwest Pacific area. Most of the new LSTs first reported for duty at Manus, Admiralty Islands, and underwent a training program at that base. Lieutenant Commander James E. Van Zandt, Commander LST Division FORTY, was assigned as Training Officer, SEVENTH Amphibious Force, and on 10 August 1944 reported at Manus to supervise the training of these ships for combat operations. Several ships of LST Flotilla FOURTEEN also reported in August 1944 for temporary duty with the SEVENTH Amphibious Force.

Upon the arrival of these additional LSTs Captain R. M. Scruggs, USN, Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN, was designated as Commander LST Flotillas, SEVENTH Amphibious Force, and remained in command of all LSTs operating under Commander SEVENTH Amphibious Force.

On 1 September 1944, Commander Paul H. Wiedorn, USN, relieved Commander Thomas C. Green, USN, as Commander LST Group NINETEEN.

On 6 September 1944 rehearsal operations were begun at Maffin Bay in preparation for the invasion of Morotai Island, N. E. I. On 11 September 1944, LSTs 458(F), 181, 245, 452, 456, 459, 462, 467, 468, 470, 472, 474, under the command of Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN, departed from Maffin Bay and arrived for the initial landings at Morotai on 15 September 1944. After launching LVTs and unloading cargo at Morotai these ships proceeded to Cape Sansapor to load for support landings at Morotai, N. E. I.

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Additional landings by ships of LST Flotilla SEVEN, supplemented by several LSTs of Flotillas EIGHT, FOURTEEN, and FIFTEEN, continued throughout September and the first part of October 1944. The resupply echelons for the Morotai operation were commanded by Captain F. D. Higbee, USCG, Commander P. H. Wiedorn, USN, Commander D. M. Baker, USNR, and Lieutenant Commander W. R. Riedel, USCG. Scattered enemy air attacks were encountered during the early stages of this operation, but no damage was done to the LSTs participating.

On 24 September 1944, Lieutenant Commander W. R. Riedel, USCG, assumed command of LST Division FORTY-TWO as relief for Lieutenant Commander K. A. E. Lindquist, USCG. Lieutenant Commander Riedel had previously served as Commander LST Group TWENTY-ONE for a short period during the temporary absence of Captain F. D. Higbee.

On 26 September 1944, LST 471 arrived at Hollandia, New Guinea, and resumed operations with this Flotilla after having been in Australia for extensive battle damage repairs.

On 28 September 1944, Lieutenant Commander J. E. Van Zandt was relieved as SEVENTH Amphibious Force Training Officer by Lieutenant I. K. Stevenson, USNR, Commander LST Division THIRTY-SEVEN. On 2 October 1944, Commander Norman M. Nelson, USCG, relieved Captain Frank D. Higbee, USCG, as Commander LST Group TWENTY-ONE. On 8 October 1944, Lieutenant Commander James E. Van Zandt, USNR, relieved Captain Paul H. Wiedorn, USN, as Commander LST Group NINETEEN.

During September and the first part of October 1944, a number of LSTs of this Flotilla were given availability for repairs at Humboldt Bay and Alexishafen, New Guinea, in preparation for the occupation of the Philippines. Most of this repair work was done with the assistance of the U.S.S. RIEGEL (AR 11) which had served as the only repair activity assigned for LSTs in the forward area throughout the New Guinea campaign. During this time Captain R. M. Scruggs, as Commander LST Flotillas, SEVENTH Amphibious Force, located at Humboldt Bay, supervised the staging of LSTs for the Leyte invasion, and assisted Commander SEVENTH Amphibious Force in the scheduling and assignment of LSTs for this operation.

Approximately ninety-five (95) LSTs of the SEVENTH Amphibious Force were used for the initial assault and first support landings at Leyte, P.I., in October 1944. Twenty-one (21) of these ships, all of Flotilla SEVEN, were used for the initial landing. These ships, under the command of Captain R. M. Scruggs, USN, Commander N. M. Nelson, USCG, Commander D. M. Baker, USNR, and Commander J. E. Van Zandt, USNR, loaded at Finschafen,

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Aitape, Biak, Hollandia, and Manus between the 8th and 13th of October and departed from Hollandia on the afternoon of 13 October. Each ship carried approximately five hundred (500) troops with a full load of combat equipment. These ships landed at Red and White Beaches in the vicinity of Tolosa, Leyte, P.I., on 20 October 1944. Most of these ships were unloaded and departed Leyte Gulf during the late afternoon of 21 October and returned to Hollandia on 27 October 1944. The remainder of this unit was unloaded and departed Leyte Gulf on the following day.

All other ships of LST Flotilla SEVEN, except LST 473 which was still in Australia for repairs, participated in support landings at Leyte.

All of these ships engaged in enemy action during the Leyte operation, and a number of casualties to personnel of the Flotilla resulted from these engagements. While some damage to ships of this Flotilla resulted from enemy air attacks, particularly during the support landings, the most serious casualties to personnel and material resulted from heavy enemy mortar and artillery fire during the unloading phase of the initial landings.

While at Red Beach, Leyte, P.I., during the initial landings, LSTs 171, 181, 452, and 456 received numerous direct hits from mortar and artillery batteries. Damage to LST 456 was slight, but LSTs 171, 181, and 452 received numerous shell holes in hull and superstructure with resulting damage to guns and equipment. LST 66, while on her second trip to Leyte on 17 November 1944, was struck by an enemy suicide plane. One 40 MM gun was knocked overboard and the main deck and superstructure were slightly damaged. Casualties among the crews of these ships totaled twenty-one (21) killed and fifty-eight (58) wounded in addition to heavy casualties among the troops embarked. Other ships of the Flotilla also suffered minor casualties during this operation.

All ships of the Flotilla damaged during the Leyte operation returned to Hollandia without assistance, and completed repairs during November and December 1944. The U.S.S. CULEBRA ISLAND (ARG 7) and U.S.S. LEYTE (ARG 8) were primarily responsible for the rapid repair of these and other ships damaged during this operation.

On 1 November 1944, Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN permanently shifted flag from APc 8 to LST 466.

On 5 November 1944, LST 473 departed from Brisbane, Australia to rejoin the Flotilla in New Guinea. This ship had received extensive battle damage repairs in Australia.

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After completion of repairs on 12 November 1944, LST 171 returned to Leyte in a resupply echelon and remained in the Leyte area as a casualty receiving ship. This ship remained in the Philippines throughout November and December 1944, and participated in the initial assault on Mindoro, P.I. During the Mindoro invasion LST 171 received minor material damage and a few additional casualties on 21 and 28 December 1944. This was the only ship of Flotilla SEVEN to participate in the Mindoro operation, although LSTs 460 and 472, which had previously been assigned to LST Flotilla SEVEN were lost as a result of enemy action in this operation.

Throughout the month of November 1944, most ships of the Flotilla were engaged in the resupply of Leyte in conjunction with ships of LST Flotillas THREE, SIX, EIGHT, FOURTEEN, FIFTEEN, SIXTEEN, and TWENTY-TWO.

From 4 December to 13 December 1944, LST 245 operated as a gunnery training ship in the Humboldt Bay area; from 15 December to 30 December, LST 457 served in this capacity.

During the first part of December 1944, all ships of LST Flotilla SEVEN were present or operating from Humboldt Bay, New Guinea, and preparations were commenced for the invasion of Lingayen Gulf, P.I. During this time Captain R. M. Scruggs, as Commander LST Flotillas, again supervised the staging and scheduling of LSTs operating under Commander SEVENTH Amphibious Force.

On 19 December 1944, LSTs 22, 123, 125, 245, 451, 452(GF), 454, 456, 467, 469, 470, 474(GF), and 486, under the command of Commander D. M. Baker and Commander J. E. Van Zandt, departed from Humboldt Bay to load at Aitape for the initial landings at Lingayen. LSTs 459, 468(F), and 488, under the command of Lieutenant Commander I. K. Stevenson, departed for Maffin Bay on this date to load for the same operation. LSTs 463, 466(FF), 475, and 482 loaded at Hollandia for this operation, and on 27 December 1944 this unit, under the command of Captain R. M. Scruggs, departed Humboldt Bay for Aitape. On 28 December all units rendezvoused at Aitape and departed for the assault on Lingayen Gulf, Luzon, P.I.

On 28 December 1944, Captain G. A. Sinclair, USN, in LST 452 relieved Captain R. M. Scruggs, USN in LST 466 as Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN. Captain Scruggs, as CTU 78.1.3 and Commander LST Flotillas, SEVENTH Amphibious Force, remained in command of the LST unit during the initial landings at Lingayen.

While enroute to Lingayen on 6 January 1945, two torpedoes from a midget submarine were fired at this LST unit. Both torpedoes passed very close to LSTs but did no damage. Air attacks followed on 7, 8, 9, and 10 January, but no damage to LSTs resulted.

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Landing operations were commenced on the morning of 9 January 1945. All but two ships of this Flotilla unloaded at White Beaches ONE and TWO, in the vicinity of San Fabian; LSTs 459 and 469 unloaded at Orange Beach. LSTs 463, 469, 470, and 475 all received hits from enemy mortar fire during unloading operations, but only slight damage resulted, and casualties were light.

Most of these ships were unloaded and departed Lingayen Gulf for Leyte on the afternoon of 10 January. At this time Captain G. A. Sinclair, Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN was in LST 466(PF). LSTs 245, 454, 456, and 469 were retained at Lingayen for duty as casualty receiving and service ships.

On 10 January 1945, Captain R. M. Scruggs was detached from all duty with the SEVENTH Amphibious Force to return to the United States.

A support echelon of LSTs of this Flotilla under the command of Commander N. M. Nelson, USCG, landed at Lingayen Gulf on 11 January, and other units of the Flotilla continued resupply runs to Lingayen throughout January 1945. After their first trips to Lingayen, most ships reloaded at Leyte for additional echelons to Lingayen. All ships of Flotilla SEVEN, except LST 457 which was detained at Hollandia for repairs, participated in this operation. Some of these ships received minor damage and a few casualties from air attacks during the operation, but no ship of Flotilla SEVEN was seriously damaged.

On 15 January 1945, Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN in LST 466(PF) arrived at Leyte from Lingayen, and remained in Leyte Gulf throughout January and the first part of February, directing the resupply of Lingayen and the preparations for future operations.

On 24 January 1945, LSTs 463 and 473 departed from Leyte to participate in the initial landings in the Subic Bay area of Luzon on 29 January. These ships returned to Leyte on 3 February 1945.

During January and February 1945 a number of ships of this Flotilla returned to the New Guinea area to load resupply units for the Philippines. On 15 February 1945 Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN shifted flag temporarily from LST 466 to LST 452, and LSTs 168(GF), 170, 202, 206, 245, 456, 458, 463, 466, 468, 473, and 474, under the command of Commander N. M. Nelson, USCG, departed Leyte for Finschafen and Hollandia to load for resupply echelons to Mindoro and Manila. At this time Commander D. M. Baker, Commander LST Group TWENTY, was on thirty (30) days rehabilitation leave in the United States, and Commander J. E. Van Zandt,

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Commander LST Group NINETEEN, was temporarily in Australia. During the absence of Commander Baker, Lieutenant Commander I. K. Stevenson, Commander LST Division THIRTY-SEVEN, assumed temporary command of LST Group TWENTY.

On 25 February 1945, Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN shifted flag temporarily from LST 452 to LST 459, and on 27 February departed Leyte for Mindoro with LSTs 459, 26, and 66. This unit arrived at Mindoro on 1 March 1945, discharged cargo and reloaded for initial landings at Zamboanga, Mindanao, P.I.

On 26 February 1945, LST 470 departed from Mindoro to participate in initial landings on 28 February at Palawan, P.I. LSTs 18 and 467 participated in support landings at Palawan on 1 March 1945.

Captain G. A. Sinclair in LST 459, with LSTs 26 and 66 of this Flotilla, departed Mindoro on 8 March for Zamboanga. On 9 March this unit was joined enroute by LSTs 204 and 471, which had loaded at Leyte, and on 10 March 1945 initial landings were made at Zamboanga, Mindanao, P.I. Mortar fire from the beach was encountered, but no damage to LSTs resulted.

On 11 March 1945, Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN transferred flag temporarily from LST 459 to LST 471, and with LSTs 26 and 66 departed Zamboanga for Leyte, arriving at Leyte on 13 March.

The resupply echelon of Flotilla SEVEN ships that had loaded in New Guinea under the command of Commander H. M. Nelson arrived at Mindoro and Manila on 12 and 14 March 1945.

The initial assault echelon for the invasion of Panay, P.I., loaded at Lingayen Gulf and departed on 15 March 1945. This unit, which included LSTs 67, 68, and 469 of Flotilla SEVEN, landed at Tigbauan, Panay, on 18 March 1945. LSTs 68 and 469, operating with this same unit also made initial landings on Negros, P.I. on 29 March 1945. In the later operation LST 67 was included with the support group, landing at Negros on 30 March 1945. No enemy opposition was encountered by LSTs participating in these two minor operations.

LSTs 18, 171, 161, 454, 457, and 467 departed from Leyte on 23 March 1945 for initial landing operations at Cebu, P.I. This unit landed at Cebu on 25 March 1945. Enemy opposition in the form of midget submarines, air attacks, and mortar fire was encountered, but no damage was done to any of the Flotilla SEVEN ships participating in this operation. LST 171 remained at Cebu as a casualty receiving ship until 4 April 1945.

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On 27 March 1945 LST 206 landed at Corregidor in support of the Army's occupation of this island.

All other ships of LST Flotilla SEVEN continued resupply activity between New Guinea and the Philippines and within the Philippine Islands during March 1945.

Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN departed Leyte in LST 471 on 28 March 1945, and returned to LST 466, Flotilla Flagship, in Subic Bay, on 31 March 1945.

On the first of April 1945, LST 459 departed Zamboanga for initial landings in the Sulu Archipelago, and was engaged in this operation until 14 April 1945.

Captain G. A. Sinclair in LST 466 moved from Subic to Leyte in the early part of April 1945, and from Leyte to Morotai to supervise preparations for operations to be staged from that area.

In April 1945, Lieutenant Commander W. R. Riedel, USCG, Commander LST Division FORTY-TWO, and Lieutenant Commander I. K. Stevenson, USNR, Commander LST Division THIRTY-SEVEN, were detached from duty with this Flotilla, and subsequent to that time no Division Commanders operated with LST Flotilla SEVEN.

On 14 April 1945, LSTs 168(GF), 170, 245, 458, 463, 470, 473, and 474(GF), under the command of Commander N. M. Nelson and Commander J. E. Van Zandt, departed from Mindoro for assault landings at Illana Bay, Mindanao. This unit participated in initial landings at Illana Bay under the tactical command of Commander LST Flotilla EIGHT on 17 April 1945. Support landings for this operation were made by other ships of Flotilla SEVEN on 19 April 1945. Additional resupply landings in the Illana Bay area were made on 22 April 1945 under the command of Commander LST Flotilla TWENTY-TWO. This unit, which included LSTs 204 and 456 of Flotilla SEVEN, had loaded for this echelon at Morotai, N.E.I.

During the latter part of April 1945, LSTs 181, 452(GF), 454, 456, 457, 459, and 471, under the command of Commander D. M. Baker, Commander LST Group TWENTY, departed from the Philippines for Cairns, Australia, to load Australian troops and equipment. At this time LSTs 18 and 469 proceeded to Manus for overhaul. During the following months several other ships of the Flotilla received limited overhaul at Manus.

After rehearsal and staging operations at Morotai, N.E.I., twenty-one (21) LSTs, including LSTs 67, 171, 466(PF), and 467 of this Flotilla, departed Morotai on 27 April 1945 for the initial invasion of Borneo. These ships were loaded with Australian troops and equipment, and several of the LSTs carried pontoon causeways and U.S. Army LVTs. The LST task unit and the transport task unit for this operation were commanded by Captain G. A. Sinclair, Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN.

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This echelon arrived at Tarakan Island, Dutch North Borneo, and commenced unloading operations on the morning of 1 May 1945. Due to difficult beaching conditions, most of the LSTs were unloaded at and/or by LCTs and LCMs. The LSTs that beached during this operation encountered a very muddy beach with shallow gradient and extreme tidal ranges. As a result, this was the only instance where ships of this Flotilla were high and dry on the beach at periods of low tide. Adequate precautions had been taken, however, and all ships were retracted from the beach without damage. Slight enemy opposition was encountered during this operation but no casualties among the LSTs resulted.

Several resupply echelons from Morotai to Tarakan were made under the direction of Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN during May 1945.

After stopping in New Guinea, the echelon of Flotilla SEVEN ships under the command of Commander D. M. Baker arrived at Cairns, Australia in May 1945, loaded combat troops, and departed again for New Guinea en route Morotai.

Other ships of the Flotilla were engaged in the transportation of troops and supplies throughout the Philippine Islands during the month of May 1945.

On 7 June 1945 LST 463 departed Leyte in a resupply echelon to the Okinawa area. During this mission, LST 463 was subjected to enemy air attacks but suffered no damage.

During June 1945, Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN was based at Morotai, and preparations were underway for additional landings on Borneo.

On 10 June 1945 assault landings were made in the Brunei Bay area of North Borneo under the direction of Commander LST Flotilla FIFTEEN. LST 473 of LST Flotilla SEVEN served as ammunition and logistic ship at Brunei Bay during this operation.

LSTs 181, 452(GF), 454, 456, 457, 471, and 475 arrived at Morotai from Cairns, Australia, on 12 June 1945. LST 475 had replaced LST 459 in this task unit while at Milne Bay, New Guinea.

Other units of the Flotilla joined Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN at Morotai during June 1945 to stage for the assault on Balikpapan. LST 67 was assigned as an ammunition ship for this operation, and arrived at Balikpapan on 24 June 1945 to supply ammunition for the pre-invasion bombardment. While engaged on this assignment, LST 67 assisted in downing a

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Japanese torpedo plane. This engagement brought to an end the creditable list of enemy planes that this Flotilla had destroyed or assisted in destroying during operations in the Southwest Pacific.

On 26 June 1945, Commander D. M. Baker, Commander LST Group TWENTY, in LST 452(GF), with LSTs 168, 454, and 457 of this Flotilla, departed from Morotai for initial landings at Balikpapan, Borneo. These ships operated with a task unit commanded by Commander LST Flotilla TWENTY-TWO, and landed at Balikpapan on 1 July 1945. As a result of preliminary bombardments and air assaults, little enemy opposition was encountered by the landing forces.

On 28 June 1945, LSTs 66, 171, 181, 206, 245, 456, 462, 466(FF), 470, 471, and 474(GF) departed from Morotai for Balikpapan in a task unit commanded by Captain G. A. Sinclair, Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN, assisted by Commander J. E. Van Zandt, Commander LST Group NINETEEN. This unit landed at Balikpapan on 3 July 1945 as the first support echelon for this operation.

Commander LST Group TWENTY departed from Balikpapan on 2 July as task unit commander for resupply echelons loading at Tarakan.

Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN shifted flag temporarily to LST 168 on 5 July 1945, and departed from Balikpapan in command of a task unit of LSTs that had completed unloading operations. This unit returned to Morotai on 9 July to reload for additional trips to Balikpapan. Other Flotilla SEVEN ships under the command of Commander LST Group NINETEEN returned to Morotai on 10 July, and on that date Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN returned to LST 466(FF).

Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN, with Commander LST Group NINETEEN and Commander LST Group TWENTY-ONE, completed the Balikpapan operation with one additional resupply echelon during July 1945.

The invasion of Balikpapan, the last amphibious operation of the war, concluded the combat activities of LST Flotilla SEVEN.

On 11 July 1945, Commander D. M. Baker, USNR, was detached from duty as Commander LST Group TWENTY for duty on the staff of Commander SEVENTH Amphibious Force. Lieutenant R. D. Jones, USNR, Commanding Officer of LST 452(GF), was assigned additional duties as Commander LST Group TWENTY.

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On 15 August 1945, LST Flotilla SEVEN was assigned to Commander Philippine Sea Frontier for duty, thereby ending over two years of operations under the command of Commander SEVENTH Amphibious Force. While operating under Philippine Sea Frontier, this Flotilla was under the operational control of Commander Amphibious Units, Philippine Sea Frontier.

News of the surrender of Japan was received while the ships of this Flotilla were widely dispersed throughout the South Pacific. At this time LST Flotilla SEVEN was engaged in routine movements of troops and equipment resulting from the roll-up of rear area military and naval bases and installations. LSTs of the Flotilla were operating on such assignments in the Philippine Islands, New Guinea, Moluccas Islands, Admiralty Islands, Bismarck Archipelago, and Solomon Islands.

Demobilization of personnel was begun on a small scale in the latter part of August 1945.

During the month of September 1945, a number of ships of LST Flotilla SEVEN loaded occupation forces for Japan, and China. LSTs 168(GF), 454, 457, 474(GF), and 475, under the command of Commander N. M. Nelson, USCG, and Commander J. E. Van Zandt, USNR, were the first ships of Flotilla SEVEN to arrive in Japan. This unit landed Army occupation forces at Yokohama on 15 September 1945. LST 171 joined this unit on 17 September and after discharging troops and cargo, this unit departed for Leyte, P.I. on 23 September.

Other ships of LST Flotilla SEVEN were engaged in routine movements of troops and equipment during September 1945. During this month Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN in LST 466(FF) was located at Subic Bay, P.I.

On 4 October 1945, Captain G. A. Sinclair, USN, Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN, assumed additional duties as Commander LST Group TWENTY, thereby relieving Lieutenant Commander R. D. Jones, USNR, who had temporarily served as Commander LST Group TWENTY. On 11 October 1945, Lieutenant Commander, D. W. Gardner, USCGR, in LST 170 relieved Captain N. M. Nelson, USCG, in LST 168 as Commander LST Group TWENTY-ONE.

LSTs 26 and 458 arrived at Taku, China on 3 October 1945 and discharged U. S. Marine occupation forces. LSTs 18 and 469 arrived at Taku later in October on this same assignment. LST 202 arrived at Hiro Wan, Honshu, Japan on 11 October 1945 with U. S. Navy occupation units.

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During October 1945 Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN in LST 466(FE) departed Subic Bay and on 25 October 1945 arrived at Beppu Wan on the southern coast of Kyushu, Japan, in company with two Navy minesweepers. After spending two days in this area, during which time LST 466 was maneuvering in the midst of a Japanese mine field, it was found that no suitable spot existed for the beaching of an LST, and LST 466 proceeded to Okinawa to discharge U. S. Coast Guard personnel and equipment.

Other ships of LST Flotilla SEVEN continued roll-up activities in New Guinea, Moluccas Islands, Philippine Islands, Marianas, and Okinawa during October 1945. By the end of this month all ships of the Flotilla had reduced personnel complements to seventy per cent of war-time allowances under the demobilization program.

During the first part of November 1945, Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN returned to the Philippines and the Flotilla was based at Leyte, P.I.

On 19 November 1945, Commander J. E. Van Zandt, Commander LST Group NINETEEN, assumed additional duties as Commander LST Group TWENTY-ONE.

On 20 November 1945, Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN assumed the duties of assisting Commander Amphibious Units, Philippine Sea Frontier, in the administration and operational control of all LSTs assigned to Philippine Sea Frontier.

During the early part of November 1945, the first ships of LST Flotilla SEVEN were released from duty with Philippine Sea Frontier, and departed the Philippine area for the west coast of the United States. Due to the demobilization program and the resulting shortage of Coast Guard personnel, the ships of LST Group TWENTY-ONE were the first LSTs of Flotilla SEVEN to be released from operations. All of these ships departed from the Philippines in the first part of November, to be followed later in November and December by LSTs of Groups NINETEEN and TWENTY.

Due to their length of time in operation in the forward area, all ships of Flotilla SEVEN were scheduled for decommissioning at this time. Only two or three ships of the Flotilla were scheduled for decommissioning within the Pacific area, and by the end of December 1945 most ships of LST Flotilla SEVEN had returned to the United States or were enroute to west coast ports. LST 452 was the only ship of LST Flotilla SEVEN that did not depart for decommissioning at this time, and this ship continued operating on routine roll-up assignments in the Philippines.

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On 3 December 1945, Captain G. A. Sinclair, Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN and Commander LST Group TWENTY, shifted flag to LST 641 since LST 466 was scheduled to return to the United States.

Commander J. E. Van Zandt, Commander LST Group NINETEEN and Commander LST Group TWENTY-ONE, departed from the Philippines on 7 December 1945 with LSTs 463, 466, and 474 (GF), proceeded to Pearl Harbor, then to San Diego, California, and arrived at San Diego on 10 January 1946. Other ships of the Flotilla returning to the United States departed from the Philippines independently or in small groups.

After the departure of all ships of Flotilla SEVEN, except LST 452, Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN in LST 641 remained at Leyte, supervising LSTs of other Flotillas operating under Commander Philippine Sea Frontier. During the latter part of December, Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN moved from Leyte Gulf to Subic Bay, P.I.

On 4 January 1946, LST Group TWENTY-ONE was officially dissolved, and on 18 January 1946 LST Group NINETEEN was officially dissolved.

During January and February 1946 Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN remained at Subic Bay and continued operations under Commander Philippine Sea Frontier. On 26 February 1946, Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN hauled down flag from LST 641 and established staff headquarters at Naval Operating Base, Subic Bay, P.I.

LST 452 continued operations under Commander Philippine Sea Frontier during January, February, and March and about 15 March 1946 departed from the Philippine area to proceed China and report to CTF 78 for operational and administrative control and subsequent decommissioning and disposal.

On 8 March 1946 Commander LST Flotilla SEVEN was relieved of duties as Senior LST Command under Commander Amphibious Units, Philippine Sea Frontier (CTG 93.5) and ordered, with his Staff, to the West Coast of the United States for dissolution.

On 8 April 1946 LST Flotilla SEVEN and LST Group TWENTY were officially dissolved.

During its period of operations in the Pacific, LST Flotilla SEVEN established a record for assault landings and transportation of troops and cargo that no other Flotilla could equal. During amphibious operations from Sydney to Yokohama, ships of this Flotilla were bombed, shelled and torpedoed, but the holes were plugged, the fires extinguished, and not a ship was lost. In recognition of their services during these operations, a large number of enlisted men and officers of LST Flotilla SEVEN were awarded medals and

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commendations, including one Congressional Medal of Honor, several Navy Crosses, Silver Stars, Legions of Merit, and Navy and Marine Corps Medals, and numerous Bronze Stars and Commendations Ribbons. Of all the ships of LST Flotilla SEVEN, perhaps the most recognition for services rendered should go to LST 452. This LST was the first to arrive in the Southwest Pacific, and operated in the forward area for a longer period of time than any other LST in the Pacific. During this time, LST 452, as flagship for LST Group TWENTY, participated in D-Day landings during fifteen major amphibious operations.