

Contributed by Robert Peterson  
for his uncle  
Peter Anthony Rich BKR1, USNR  
USS LST-375

1524 KC/S to 1182  
1800 COM. 18:15

DURING THE APPROACH, 8 SEPTEMBER, 1943 AT 1700, THE CREW WENT TO GENERAL QUARTERS UPON SIGNAL FROM THE U.S.S. BISCAYNE, FIRING BEING OBSERVED TO THE NORTHEAST, NEAR CAPRI. SHORTLY THEREAFTER, THE RIGHT FLANK OF THE CONVOY WAS ATTACKED UNSUCCESSFULLY BY A SINGLE ENEMY PLANE, ME-109, WHOSE BOMB MISSED A SMALL ESCORT CRAFT. THIS SHIP DID NOT FIRE.

AT 2115, FLARES WERE SEEN OVER THE CONVOY INCREASING OVER A LARGE AREA. AT 2130, FLARES APPEARED OVERHEAD, FOLLOWED BY A DIVE-BOMBING ATTACK IN THE AREA ABOUT THIS SHIP, WHICH WAS THEN FIRING HIGH AND TO PORT WITH OTHER VESSELS NEARBY. A LARGE BOMB OR STICK OF BOMBS FELL APPROXIMATELY FIFTY YARDS TO PORT, DOING NO DAMAGE TO SHIP OR PERSONNEL. THE ATTACK SUBSIDED AT 2150.

FROM 2330, REFERENCE VESSELS WILLIAM, QUEEN, AND CHARLIE, WERE PICKED UP AHEAD, AND LEFT TO PORT, AND DURING THIS LAST PART OF THE APPROACH, THE FOLLOWING SCHEDULE WAS MAINTAINED ABOARD:

0000: ASSAULT TROOPS, BOAT CREWS, BEACH PARTY, AND SCOUTS WERE FED A LIGHT SUPPER, AND RETURNED TO STATIONS, THE BOAT CREWS CHECKING LINES AND READYING CRAFT FOR LOWERING.

0100: LIGHTS EXTINGUISHED IN ALL TROOPS COMPARTMENTS.

0115: SCOUT BOAT, ENSIGN HOWE IN CHARGE, LOWERED AND AWAY.

0120: SIGNAL TO PROCEED TO BOAT STATIONS AND LOAD. THIS WAS DONE WITH FULL EQUIPMENT, IN 12 MINUTES FROM THE SIGNAL, ALL BOATS READY FOR LOWERING AT 0132.

0145: ARRIVED AT LOWERING POINT.

0205: LOWERED SMALL BOATS, ENSIGN ROTH IN CHARGE.

0211: ALL BOATS AWAY.

BETWEEN ARRIVAL AT THE LOWERING POINT AND DESPATCHING LCVP'S, THE FORMATION OF ASSAULT LST'S WAS UNDER FIRE FROM SHORE BATTERIES TO THE NORTHWARD. SHRAPNEL BURSTS EXPLODED OVER THE SHIPS IN THE VICINITY BUT THE LOWERING AND DESPATCHING OF SMALL BOATS WAS NOT IMPEDED. RETURN FIRE WAS MADE BY SUPPORTING NAVAL CRAFT TO NORTHWARD.

DURING THE HALF-HOUR 0415 TO 0445, ALL SMALL BOATS RETURNED TO THE

APPROACH, THE FOLLOWING SCHEDULE WAS MAINTAINED ABOARD:  
0000: ASSAULT TROOPS, BOAT CREWS, BEACH PARTY, AND SCOUTS WERE FED A LIGHT SUPPER, AND RETURNED TO STATIONS, THE BOAT CREWS CHECKING LINES AND READYING CRAFT FOR LOWERING.  
0100: LIGHTS EXTINGUISHED IN ALL TROOPS COMPARTMENTS.  
0115: SCOUT BOAT, ENSIGN HOWE IN CHARGE, LOWERED AND AWAY.  
0120: SIGNAL TO PROCEED TO BOAT STATIONS AND LOAD. THIS WAS DONE WITH FULL EQUIPMENT, IN 12 MINUTES FROM THE SIGNAL, ALL BOATS READY FOR LOWERING AT 0132.  
0145: ARRIVED AT LOWERING POINT.  
0205: LOWERED SMALL BOATS, ENSIGN ROTH IN CHARGE.  
0211: ALL BOATS AWAY.

BETWEEN ARRIVAL AT THE LOWERING POINT AND DESPATCHING LCVP'S, THE FORMATION OF ASSAULT LST'S WAS UNDER FIRE FROM SHORE BATTERIES TO THE NORTHWARD. SHRAPNEL BURSTS EXPLODED OVER THE SHIPS IN THE VICINITY BUT THE LOWERING AND DESPATCHING OF SMALL BOATS WAS NOT IMPEDED. RETURN FIRE WAS MADE BY SUPPORTING NAVAL CRAFT TO NORTHWARD.

DURING THE HALF-HOUR 0415 TO 0445, ALL SMALL BOATS RETURNED TO THE SHIP, THE CREWS REPORTING SUCCESSFUL BEACHINGS AND DISCHARGE OF TROOPS. AT 0508 FLARES APPEARED TO NORTHWARD, THEN OVER A WIDE AREA, AND A LARGE EXPLOSION WAS OBSERVED ON A SHIP TO SEAWARD. AT 0530 FLARES WERE DROPPED OVERHEAD, AND BOMBS MISSED 100 OR MORE YARDS AWAY. ALL VESSELS IN THE AREA PUT UP A SHORT BUT INTENSE AA BARRAGE DURING THE IMMEDIATE ATTACK. NO FURTHER HITS WERE OBSERVED AND NO CASUALTIES SUSTAINED. THE BISCAYNE PATROLLED TO NORTHWARD, LAYING AN EFFECTIVE SMOKE SCREEN. THIS SHIP GOT UNDERWAY 0630, 9 SEPT. '43, AFTER DESPATCHING A SMALL BOAT TO THE SALVAGE OFFICER AS PREVIOUSLY ORDERED, AND PROCEEDED TOWARDS RED BEACH, BOW DOORS OPEN, AND RAMP FIVE FEET ABOVE THE WATER. LST 383 THEN ON THE BEACH, REPORTED HEAVY SHELLING OF THE AREA. A BRITISH DESTROYER LAID A SMOKE SCREEN PARALLEL OF THE BEACH AND ABOUT 1 1/2 MILE OFF. AT 0705 THE SHIP PASSED THROUGH THE SMOKE SCREEN AND INCREASED SPEED TO FULL. ONE LCVP, FOR USE WITH CAUSEWAY, FOLLOWING ON THE PORT QUARTER. THIS SHIP WAS IMMEDIATELY ENGAGED BY SHORE BATTERIES. RETURN FIRE WAS INADVISABLE, SINCE NO GUN FLASHES COULD BE SEEN, AND THE LOCATION OF OUR OWN TROOPS WAS UNCERTAIN. NUMEROUS SHRAPNEL AIR BURSTS EXPLODED CLOSE ABOARD. THE COURSE WAS ALTERED SLIGHTLY, 1000 YARDS OFF TO CLOSE NORMAL TO THE BEACH. AT 0712 0714, TWO DIRECT HITS WERE RECEIVED ON THE STARBOARD SIDE, BOTH ABOVE THE WATER LINE, NEITHER OF WHICH CAUSED PERSONNEL CASUALTIES. AS STERN ANCHOR WAS LET GO, 0714, THIS SHIP WAS ATTACKED FROM ASTERN BY A SINGLE LOW FLYING PLANE, ME-109, UNDER HEAVY BARRAGE FROM THIS SHIP AND LST 383, THE PLANE RELEASED A BOMB WHICH MISSED CLOSE TO THE PORT QUARTER. 0715, THE SHIP BEACHED FIRMLY BY THE BOW, AND THE RAMP WAS DROPPED ON DRY BEACH. TANK DECK UNLOADING BEGAN IMMEDIATELY, BUT WAS IMPEDED SOMEWHAT BY VEHICLES ALREADY ON THE BEACH BEING DRAWN UP IN LINES TOO CLOSE TO THE SHIP. MEANWHILE, DIRECT HITS WERE SCORED ON DAVITS #2 AND #3. SHRAPNEL STRIKING THE TRUCK AND ELEVATOR TOPSIDE, READY FOR LOWERING, SEVERED THE ELEVATOR CABLE, AND STARTED A GASOLINE FIRE WHICH DRIPPED THROUGH TO THE TANK DECK. PROMPT ACTION ON THE PART OF EIKMEIER, GM3/C, WITH THE FIREHOSE FORWARD, DISPERSED THE FLAMING GAS SUFFICIENTLY TO PREVENT ITS SPREAD, WHILE ON THE TANK DECK BELOW (NOW PARTLY CLEARED), LIEUTENANT ZINGESSER USED ARMY BLANKETS TO PREVENT THE FURTHER SPREAD OF GASOLINE THERE. A SHRAPNEL BURST OVER THE PORT QUARTER MORTALLY WOUNDED BAILEY, SC 1/C, POINTER ON #6 20MM GUN, AND WOUNDED A SIGNALMAN ON THE BRIDGE. THREE OF THE LCVP

CREW, FOLLOWING CLOSE ABOARD, WERE ALSO WOUNDED BY THIS BURST, BUT THE BOAT WAS ABLE TO WITHDRAW TO SAFETY IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER. AT 0916 THIS SHIP RETRACTED FROM THE BEACH WITHOUT DIFFICULTY, MAIN DECK STILL LOADED, DUE TO THE SEVERED ELEVATOR CABLE, AND PROCEEDED BACK TO THE ANCHORAGE. SHORE BATTERY FIRE WAS STILL VERY INTENSE DURING THIS WITHDRAWAL. A JURY RIG WAS FITTED TO THE ELEVATOR AFTER ANCHORING, AND SOME FIFTEEN VEHICLES WERE LOWERED TO THE TANK DECK BEFORE THE RIG COLLAPSED UNDER A HEAVY TRUCK, BENDING THE ELEVATOR GUIDES AND BADLY WARPING THE PLATFORM. NO CASUALTIES TO PERSONNEL OCCURRED FROM THIS ACCIDENT.

THIS SHIP RETURNED TO THE VICINITY OF RED BEACH AT 1600, AND STOOD BY THROUGHOUT THE EVENING TO BE CALLED IN. HOWEVER, ALL AVAILABLE BEACHING AREA WAS NEEDED FOR VESSELS OF GREEN BEACH FOLLOW-UP AND RESERVE GROUPS, AND AT 2044, THIS SHIP ANCHORED FOR THE NIGHT APPROXIMATELY TWO MILES OFF THE BEACH. AT 2134 GENERAL QUARTERS WAS SOUNDED FOR FLARES SPREADING FROM WESTWARD. AT 2155 INTENSE FIRE WAS THROWN UP FROM SHIPS AT HAND UPON PLANES HEARD OVERHEAD AND TO SHOREWARD. THIS SHIP RECEIVED A DIRECT HIT, PROBABLY WITH A 500 LB. BOMB WHICH PIERCED THE MAIN DECK AFT, PORT-SIDE, AND PENETRATED THE CREW'S QUARTERS, DRY PROVISIONS, VOID SPACE C-49V EXPLODING WELL UNDER THE SHIP, AND CAUSING A VIOLENT SURGE OF THE STERN. NO SERIOUS PERSONNEL INJURIES RESULTED FROM THIS HIT. AT THE SAME TIME, CLOSE MISSES DROPPED ON EITHER SIDE OF THE SHIP. AT 0448, 10 SEPT. '43, THE SHIPS IN THE GULF WERE AGAIN ATTACKED FROM THE AIR, BUT NO FIRE WAS RETURNED FROM THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY, WHICH WAS COVERED BY MORNING HAZE. UPON RECEIVING INSTRUCTIONS TO BEACH, CONDITION 1-M WAS SET, 0600 AND A BEACHING WAS MADE AT 0640, ABOUT TWENTY YARDS TO THE LEFT OF THE BEACH DESIRED. THE TANK DECK WAS UNLOADED BY 0658, AT 0700 AN ATTEMPT WAS MADE TO RETRACT, BUT THE SHIP WAS FOUND TO BE FIRMLY HELD BY A SAND OR CLAY BAR AMIDSHIPS. ALL BALLAST WAS PUMPED OUT, AND THE VEHICLES REMAINING ON THE MAIN DECK WERE MOVED WITH THE HOPE OF CHANGING TRIM, BUT WITHOUT SUCCESS. AFTER SEVERAL ATTEMPTS BY SALVAGE LCI(L)'S AND SMALL TUGS, THE NARRAGANSSETT FINALLY TOWED THE SHIP OFF AT 1340. THE STEERING HAD FAILED, DUE TO CRACKS IN PIPING LINES FROM THE BOMB OF THE PREVIOUS NIGHT. AFTER CLEARING THE TOW LINES AND STERN ANCHOR, THE SHIP PROCEEDED TO MOOR ALONGSIDE LST 311 (WHICH WAS ANCHORED BOW AND STERN), FOR TRANSFER OF REMAINING VEHICLES TO HER MAIN DECK. THIS WAS ACCOMPLISHED SATISFACTORILY AND WITHOUT INCIDENT IN TWENTY-FIVE MINUTES. UPON COMPLETION OF THIS TRANSFER THIS SHIP RETURNED TO THE RENDEZVOUS AREA ANCHORAGE AT 1540, AND SAILED AGAIN AT 2200 IN THE BIZERTE-BOUND CONVOY.

TWENTYSEVEN CASUALTIES OCCURED DURING TIME.  
THIRTYEIGHT DIFFERENT TYPES OF DAMAGE OCCURED.

Peter Anthony Rich BKR1c USNR

