

The U.S. Navy at Normandy

Fleet Organization and
Operations in the D-Day Invasion



GREG H. WILLIAMS

LST-496

The 496 was commissioned on December 19, 1943, and left for France with LCT-708 as deck cargo. At Normandy, the Commanding Officer was Lt. Stanley H. Koch, USNR, and Lt. Frederick A. Hartung, USNR, was XO.

The 496 was carrying an LCVP Landing Boat Crew, LST Medical Group 35, Foxy 29, and war correspondent Albert Q. Maisel from *Cosmopolitan* magazine. Lt. Ozell A. Atkins, USNR, the senior surviving officer, reported in August:

On 11 June 1944, the USS LST-496 was in convoy proceeding to Dog Red, Omaha Beach, France. At about 0600, 11 June 1944, the ship had departed from Portland, England, with full cargo consisting mainly of light and medium tanks, but also containing a few half-tracks, jeeps, and two and one-half ton trucks.

The ship carried a complement of 142 enlisted men, 13 officers plus one Army medical officer assigned to the ship. In addition there were approximately 241 Army enlisted men and 17 Army officers on board as passengers.

At 2215, 11 June 1944, the ship was approximately six miles from its destination (Commanding Officer and Executive Officer on conn), at least two mines were hit. There were two blasts almost simultaneously, but with enough delay to indicate there were two mines instead of one. These mines may have been of three types, contact, magnetic or acoustic. The center of the blast was approximately at frame 43 about 13 feet inboard from port side of ship. The damage to the ship was tremendous. A hole, approximately 35 or 40 feet in diameter was blown through the bottom of the ship; the blast extended upward actually blowing off a large part of the super-conn, boat davit number 6, its motor and etc.

Since the blast was under Officer's Country, tremendous damage was done to most of this area. The main deck was blown open as far as athwartship as the starboard bulkhead, forward into the wardroom, and aft on the port side to Compartment 108. Upon hitting the mines, the auxiliary engine room was knocked out leaving the ship in complete darkness immediately. The main engine room was also completely flooded in less than one minute.

All officers of the ship's complement were either killed or injured. The number of casualties among

the enlisted men was approximately 75%. Most of the officers and a high percentage of the men were incapacitated and therefore, because of injuries received, unable to take part in the actions following the blast. The Commanding Officer and Executive Officer were immediately killed when mines were hit. Although water-tight integrity had been carefully set, it was immediately obvious, due to the tremendous damage to the ship, that it was only a matter of a short time before it would sink.

The immediate problem was to get all men including those injured and dead off the ship as soon as possible. The cooperation received from other ships nearby was excellent. At least one corvette, two patrol craft and a destroyer escort came alongside to remove the injured before the ship sank. In addition, a large number of small boats were sent to the scene by various ships. With this excellent assistance, all men were removed from the ship before sinking. This included all injured and dead that could be located after several complete searches. It is believed, however, that a few men were trapped, particularly in the main engine room, since they are missing.

All officers and men performed efficiently and bravely in carrying out their duties in caring for the injured, removing them from the ship, and in abandoning ship. There was no hysteria and not a single individual abandoned the ship until he was ordered to do so. Immediately upon a ship coming alongside, the injured were started to be removed and at the same time the Army was requested to begin abandoning ship. This process continued until all injured and dead and the Army were off the ship.

Several men risked their lives after the ship was in a critical sinking condition to carefully check compartments and other areas to make certain that no injured men were left behind. Injured men were therefore removed from areas that normally would not be entered under the dangerous conditions existing. The Senior Surviving Officer noted a number of instances of men who performed action above the line of duty including one man severely injured assisting in evacuating other men also injured.

The last men to leave the ship were members of the ship's complement who were uninjured. The last officers and uninjured men left the ship approximately five minutes before it sank. The ship remained afloat approximately forty minutes. Due to the tremendous damage done to the ship, the fact that the officers and men primarily responsible for the ship's records were either killed or incapacitated and due to the large number of injured and dead it was impossible to save the ship's records. Therefore this report is written without complete information.

... from ... England, on April 20, 1950, of the ... reported injured to some degree. The 496 reported the following casualties:

- ATKINS, Lt. Ozell Allan, USNR. Wounded. Wife, Sarah, 307 S. 6th St., Opelika, Alabama.
- BOOTH, Ens. Russell, USNR. Wounded. Wife, Valentine, 927 San Pedro, San Antonio, Texas.
- DAVIS, Lt. Frank, MC, USA. Herniated disk in spine.
- HARTUNG, Lt. Frederick Abram, II, USNR. Died. Wife, Eloise, 68 Harrow St. #48, Forest Hills, New York.
- HENDERSON, Lt. (jg) Charles Herbert, Jr., MC, USNR. Died. Father, Dr. Herbert, Sr., Bonny Blue, Virginia.
- KOCH, Lt. Stanley Heiberg, USNR. Died. Wife, Dorothy, 420 E. Beckwith Ave., Missoula, Montana.
- MAXWELL, Ens. Herman Mitchell, USNR. Wounded. Wife, Anna, 3654 Midvalle Ave., Oakland, California.
- McARTHUR, Ens. Farish Doff, USNR. Died. Mother, Emma Dell McArthur, Cartecay, Georgia.
- McKEON, Ens. Thomas Becker, Jr., USNR. Wounded. Father, Thomas, Sr., 92 Sterett St., Crafton, Pennsylvania.
- MERCIER, Ens. Emmett John, USNR. Wounded. Wife, Vera, 6111 W. End Blvd., New Orleans.
- RICHARDSON, Ens. Arleigh Dygert, III. Wounded, taken off by PC-568. Father, Arleigh, Jr., 195 S. Parkview Ave., Bexley, Ohio.
- SCOTT, Ens. Rex Harold, USNR. Wounded. Wife, Virginia, 2905 Paseo, Kansas City, Missouri.
- SCHNAPP, Ens. J. B., USNR. Wounded. Father, O.B. Schnapp, 227 Main St., Slater, Missouri.
- SZYLEJKO, Lt. (jg) Henrik Wladyslaw, USNR. Wounded. Father, Anton Szylejko,

ANDREWS, Russell Everett, Signalman 3c. Wounded. Father, Harry Andrews, 93 Union St., Rockville, Connecticut.

BAKER, James Earle, Pharmacist's Mate 3c. Wounded. Wife, Elizabeth, % Jack Lowery, Thorsby, Alabama.

BARSHAY, Bernard, Hospital Apprentice 1c. LST Medical Group 35, Foxy 29. Wounded. Father, David Barshay, 127 State St., Perth Amboy, New Jersey.

BARTASI, George Joseph, Motor Machinist's Mate 2c. LCVP Landing Boat Crew. Wounded, taken off by PC-568. Father, Joseph Bartasi, 103 W. 105th St., New York.

BEINLICH, Honorius August, Gunner's Mate 3c. Wounded. Wife, Virginia, 1004 Sunset Ridge Rd., Northbrook, Illinois.

BERRY, John Russell, Boatswain's Mate 2c. Wounded. Wife, Betty Jane, 915½ Cottage Grove, South Bend, Indiana.

BIRDSONG, Emmett Bendall, Jr., Motor Machinist's Mate 2c. Wounded. Father, Emmett, Sr., 2525 Park Ave., Richmond, Virginia.

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After D-Day: June 7-24

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BONCHACK, Fred Philip, Motor Machinist's Mate 3c. Reported missing; declared lost on June 12, 1945. Mother, Mary Madranski Bonchack, Bellfonte,

BONCHACK, Fred Philip, Motor Machinist's Mate 3c. Reported missing; declared lost on June 12, 1945. Mother, Mary Madranski Bonchack, Bellfonte, Pennsylvania.

BOSICK, Peter Charles, Electrician's Mate 3c. Wounded. Father, William Bosick, 417 Manchester Ave., Media, Pennsylvania.

BOYETTE, Robert Dunn, Seaman 1c. LCVP Landing Boat Crew. Died. Sister, Maude Boyette, Fayetteville, New York.

BRASSE, Harvey Francis, Seaman 2c, LCVP Landing Boat Crew. Wounded. Mother, Mary Feddon, 1810 N. Charles St., Baltimore.

BREJNAK, Walter Joseph, Electrician's Mate 3c. Wounded. Wife, Virginia, 1452 E. Forest Ave., Detroit.

BREWSTER, Philip James, Seaman 1c, LCVP Landing Boat Crew. Wounded. Father, Frank Brewster, Whallonsburg, New York.

BURCHETT, Gailard Lee, Seaman 1c, LCVP Landing Boat Crew. Wounded. Father, Henry Millard Burchett, 803 Oakley Ave., Lynchburg, Virginia.

CARROLL, Nelson Lawrence, Hospital Apprentice 1c, LST Medical Group 35, Foxy 29. Wounded. Sister, Mariann Hale, 3116 Drexel Ave., Detroit.

CASSEDY, James William, III, Pharmacist's Mate 3c, LST Medical Group 35, Foxy 29. Wounded, taken off by PC-568. Father, James, II, 3421 Valley Dr., Alexandria, Virginia.

CHEW, Albert John, Seaman 1c. Wounded, taken off by PC-568. John's birth name was John Albert Chew and he apparently was raised by his grandparents. His next of kin was listed as an unnamed person at 17 Holly Place, Bellmawr Park, New Jersey.

CLIPPARD, James Benton, Seaman 1c. LCVP Landing Boat Crew. Died. Sister, Gertie Clippard, 120 Company St., Lenoir, North Carolina.

DAVIS, George Gordon, Gunner's Mate 3c. Reported missing; declared lost on

DAVIS, Walter Morris, Motor Machinist's Mate 2c, LCVP Landing Boat Crew. Wounded. Mother, Clara Davis, 45 E. River St., Orange, Massachusetts.

DERBY, Frank Dabney, Gunner's Mate 3c. Wounded. Guardian, Alma Talley Carter, 3015 Floyd Ave., Richmond, Virginia.

DeVILLE, Arnold Anthony, Gunner's Mate 3c. Wounded. Wife, Ruby, 1821 Fenner St., Alexandria, Louisiana.

DOMANSKI, Walter, Gunner's Mate 3c. Wounded. Father, Michael Domanski, 625 Lambertson St., Trenton, New Jersey.

DOUGHTIE, Mack, Electrician's Mate 3c. Wounded, taken off by PC-568. Mother, Dessie Mae Doughtie, 705 6th Ave., Portsmouth, Virginia.

EBERT, William John, Jr., Seaman 1c. Wounded. Father, William, Sr., 1430 Alton St., Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

ELLIOT, Lester Lloyd, Hospital Apprentice 1c, LST Medical Group 35, Foxy 29. Wounded. Mother, Grace Elliot, 240 W. 73rd St., New York.

EVANS, Lenard Lester, Ship's Cook 3c. Reported missing; declared lost on June 12, 1945. Father, Arthur Evans, Grand Portage, Minnesota.

EVANS, Tom Curtis, Steward's Mate 2c. Wounded. Wife, Louise, Prairie, Mississippi.

EZELL, Ocamus, Steward's Mate 2c. Reported missing; declared lost on June 12, 1945. Father, Eugene Ezell, Hamilton, Mississippi.

- FAILLA, Emanuel John, Hospital Apprentice 1c, LST Medical Group 35, Foxy 29. Wounded. Father, Vincent Failla, 2023 W. 7th St., Brooklyn.**
- FEWELL, John Richard, Jr., Electrician's Mate 3c. Wounded. Father, John, Sr., 510 1st St., Cairo, Georgia.**
- FRELUND, Roy Walter, Motor Machinist's Mate 2c. Wounded. Father, Peter Frelund, 326 25th St. SW, Mason City, Iowa.**
- FROST, Francis Nolan, Motor Machinist's Mate 2c. Wounded, taken off by PC-568. Father, Robert Martin Frost, Thayer, Kansas.**
- GASIOROWSK, Clarence Frank, Motor Machinist's Mate 3c. Wounded. Father, Frank Gasiorowski, 5121 W. 31st Place, Cicero, Chicago.**
- GAUL, Albert Michael, Motor Machinist's Mate 2c. Wounded. Father, Louis Gaul, 2166 E. Letterly St., Philadelphia.**
- GERMAIN, Owen E., Motor Machinist's Mate 3c. Wounded. Father, Lloyd Germain, Valley Falls, New York.**
- GIBLIN, John Joseph, Motor Machinist's Mate 2c. Wounded. Father, Joseph Giblin, 437 East Ave., Pawtucket, Rhode Island.**
- GOODMAN, Douglas Donald, Seaman 1c. Reported missing; declared lost on June 12, 1945. Mother, Ethel Goodman, 1010 Newell Court, Orange, Texas.**
- GOULD, William Francis, Coxswain. Wounded. Mother, Anna McCue Gould, Duncan Ave., Cornwall on the Hudson, New York.**
- HAGER, Charles Henry, Seaman 1c, LCVP Landing Boat Crew. Wounded. Mother, Rose Fiedler, 3109 W. Garrison Ave., Baltimore.**
- HANSEN, Stansel H., Motor Machinist's Mate 3c. Reported missing; declared lost on June 12, 1945. Father, Fred George Hansen, 418 W. Court St., Weiser, Idaho.**
- HANSON, Donald Murdock, Seaman 1c, LCVP Landing Boat Crew. Wounded,**

HENKELMAN, Richard Gordon, Seaman 1c, LCVF Landing Boat Crew. Ashore in hospital. Mother, Rose Sutton Henkelman, 1312 S. St. SE, Washington, D.C.

HERSTEIN, Edward, Fireman 1c. Wounded. Mother, Anna Barbara Herstein, 712 Charleston, Lincoln, Nebraska.

JOHNSON, Herman Commodore, Ship's Cook 3c. Mother, Mamie Gary, 2115 N. St. NW, Washington, D.C.

JOYCE, Edward David, Gunner's Mate 3c. Wounded, taken off by PC-568. Father, Martin Joyce, 384 Boulevard, Bayonne, New Jersey.

KEAST, Bert Francis, Hospital Apprentice 1c, LST Medical Group 35, Foxy 29. Wounded. Wife, Jean, 623 Arlington St., Tamaqua, Pennsylvania.

KELLY, Francis James, Hospital Apprentice 1c, LST Medical Group 35, Foxy 29. Wounded. Father, Daniel Kelly, 45 Newbury St., Somerville, Boston.

KING, Thomas William, Motor Machinist's Mate 2c. Wounded. Father, Stanley King, 250 Percival Ave., Kensington, Connecticut.

KRETZSCHMAR, Theodore Richard, Motor Machinist's Mate 2c. Wounded. Mother, Ina Kretzschmar, 7902 12th Ave., Brooklyn.

LANIGAN, John Joseph, Motor Machinist's Mate 1c. Wounded. Wife, Anita, 2728 Henry Hudson Parkway, New York.

LATON, Hoyle Mabon, Motor Machinist's Mate 1c. Wounded. Father, Walter Allen Laton, Albemarle, North Carolina.

SARDILL, Angelo Peter, Hospital Apprentice 1c, LST Medical Group 35, Foxy 29. Wounded. Father, Ausustine Sardill, 345 High St., New Britain, Connecticut.

SCHIFF, Irvin James, Seaman 1c. Wounded. Father, Herman Schiff, 1234 Columbia Ave., Chicago.

SCOTT, Sammie William, Ship's Cook 2c. Wounded. Wife, Mable, Brinkley, Arkansas.

SICKER, Leonard John, Seaman 1c. Wounded. Father, George Sicker, 146 Main St., Northampton, Pennsylvania.

SILER, Anthony John, Seaman 1c. Wounded. Wife, Margaret, 4511 S. Washtenaw Ave., Chicago.

SIMPSON, Eli Wilse, Seaman 2c. Wounded. Father, Henry Simpson, Twila, Kentucky.

STAMPFLER, Frank E., Quartermaster 3c. Wounded. Father, Frank W. Stampfler, 450 S. 5th Ave., Ann Arbor, Michigan.

STRIPLING, Charles, Steward's Mate 2c. Reported missing; declared lost on June 12, 1945. Father, Isam Stripling, 608 NW 6th St., Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

STROWGER, Kenneth MacKonachie, Radioman 3c. Wounded. Mother, Nora Strowger, 1225 Vinal St., Toledo, Ohio.

SWANK, Harold Floyd, Chief Pharmacist's Mate, LST Medical Group 35, Foxy 29. Wounded. Mother, Myrtle Swank, Ashley, Indiana.

TASCHNER, Earl James, Radioman 3c. Wounded. Father, Michael John Taschner, 608 3rd Ave., Laurel Gardens, Pennsylvania.

TASSINO, Gaetano Louis, Seaman 2c. Wounded. Father, John Ferrarese, 311 Kossuth Ave., Utica, New York.

TIERNEY, Joseph Augustus, Seaman 1c. Wounded. Father, John Patrick Tierney, 410 Rockaway Rd., Rockaway, New Jersey.

410 Rockaway Rd., Rockaway, New Jersey.

TRAWIKI, Joseph, Seaman 2c. Wounded. Mother, Martha Trawicki, 1822 N. Pulaski St., Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

ULLMER, Walter Eugene, Seaman 1c. Wounded. Father, Chester Ullmer, 1626 Gondert Ave., Dayton, Ohio.

UPTAGRAFFT, Jackson, Jr., Seaman 1c. Wounded. Father, Jackson, Sr., 913 River Falls St., Andalusia, Alabama.

VAN DUSEN, Harold Gordon, Seaman 2c. Wounded. Mother, Laura Gant, 627 N. Niles Ave., South Bend, Indiana.

VELLACICH, John Thomas, Coxswain. Wounded. Wife, Mary Ann, 1024 E. Knapp St., Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

VLAHOS, Tassos Lukas, Coxswain. Wounded, taken off by PC-568. Wife, Beulah Vlahos, Black Road, Joliet, Illinois.

VUKOVICH, Joe Michael, Seaman 2c. Wounded. Father, Joseph Vukovich, 37 S. Blaine Ave., Youngstown, Ohio.

WADDINGHAM, John Melvin, Seaman 1c. Wounded. Wife, Dorothy, Monaca, Pennsylvania.

WAHLRAB, Edward Leo, Seaman 1c. Wounded. Father, Albert Wahlrab, 1201 Holly Ave., Dayton, Ohio.

WALDRON, George Franklin, Coxswain. Wounded. Wife, Hazel, 217 2nd Ave., Big Rapids, Michigan.

WALKER, Joseph Hamilton, Seaman 1c. Wounded. Father, Joel Falcon Walker, Raleigh, Tennessee.

WALSH, James Raymond, Seaman 2c. Wounded. Mother, Virginia Ramsberger, 3901 Walnut St., Philadelphia.

WARDINSKI, Norbert, Seaman 1c. Wounded. Wife, Marjorie, 4504 S. Quincy Ave., Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

WARNER, Joseph Russell, Seaman 2c. Wounded. Mother, Rose Warner, 275 DeVoe St., Brooklyn.

WATERMAN, James Vernon, Seaman 1c. Wounded. Father, Frank Waterman, 1034 4th St. N, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

WATERS, Roy Thomas, Seaman 2c. Wounded. Father, Ernest Van Waters, Farmington, Kentucky.

WATTA, Henry Harry, Jr., Seaman 2c. Died. Father, Henry Watts, 255 Broad St., Valley Falls-Lonsdale, Rhode Island.

WEAVER, James Ellis, Seaman 1c. Wounded. Sister, Jerry Ruth Weaver, Brooksville, Alabama.

WEBER, Harold Allen, Seaman 2c. Wounded. Mother, Mable Bosserman, 515 Melish Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio.

WEBER, Louis Joseph, Seaman 2c. Reported missing; declared lost on June 12, 1945. Father, Theo Albert Weber, 3040 Steele Lane, Santa Rosa, California.

WELCH, William Richard, Seaman 2c, LCVP Landing Boat Crew. Wounded. Father, Thomas Welch, 136 N. 3rd St., Mechanicsville, New York.

WHALEY, Robert Lawrence, Seaman 1c. Wounded, taken off by PC-568. Father, Lawrence Whaley, 713 7th St., Chester, Pennsylvania.

WHITCOMB, Harry Milton, Seaman 1c. Wounded. Father, Charles Whitcomb, Barry Rd., New Braintree, Massachusetts.

Thirty-nine survivors were taken to Vicarage Barracks. The Army casualties were es-

Thirty-nine survivors were taken to Vicarage Barracks. The Army casualties were estimated at eight officers lost and four wounded. Five were reported uninjured. Among the troops, six were known lost and ten injured. PC-568 took aboard 21 non-injured crew and 129 non-injured Army personnel from Co. C and Co. G, Service, Headquarters, Transportation Service, Maintenance, and 3rd Battery of the 67th A.R. On the afternoon of June 11 LST-283 began taking aboard 156 casualties and 31 survivors from the 496 and the *Nelson* and at 4 p.m. on the 12th got underway for Portland. At 3:50 on the morning of June 12 LCI-490 brought 25 casualties from the 496 to LST-511 for treatment. At 7:30 p.m. on the 13th the 31 uninjured survivors were transferred to the Royal Navy's trawler/minesweeper *Overfall* in Weymouth Roads. Some seriously wounded remained aboard.

Monday, June 12

ATR-13 was towing Whale Unit 630. Just before 1 a.m. lookouts on the tug heard cries for help and it was quickly determined the Whale unit was sinking. One minute later it went under. The tug stopped engines and went to Man Overboard stations but the Whale Unit acted as an anchor preventing the tug from maneuvering to pick up survivors.

As reported:

Dropped life rings, turned searchlights on men and followed their movements as long as possible, meanwhile cutting towing pendant with acetylene torch. Unable to lower boats as sea and wind very strong.