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LST658/A9/A16-3
Serial No. 103

U. S. S. LST 658
FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

28 September 1944

From: The Commanding Officer.
To: The Commander-in-Chief United States Fleet.
Via: (1) The Commander LST GROUP 40.
(2) The Commander LST FLOTILLA 14.

Subject: Action Report of the Invasion of Peleliu,
Palau Islands.

Reference: (a) Articles 712 and 874(6) U.S. Navy Regulations 1920.
(b) ALPac NR-165.

Enclosure: (A) Executive Officer's Report. -p.4
(B) Time Study of Launching of (a) LVT's and DUKW's
and (b) LCT. -p.5

1. Part 1. Narrative. This ship acted as one unit of 30 LST's operating under the command of the Commander LST Flotilla Thirteen in the invasion of Peleliu Island, Palau Islands. The flotilla operated as a part of Task Force Thirty-Two.

Our function was to carry attack vehicles, Marine attack troops, priority cargo, and an LCT to the scene of the operation. This ship had on board a total of 22 vehicles (5 LVT flame-throwers, 15 LVT's and 2 DUKW's), and a total of 419 passenger personnel (12 Marine Officers, 385 Marine enlisted, 2 Navy Officers, 13 Navy enlisted, 7 Army enlisted), and miscellaneous priority cargo including HE ammunition, gasoline, rations and equipment.

This ship was part of the attack wave and was in the forward column of two columns of LST's which launched their vehicles 1 hour, 15 minutes before H-hour, at an approximate distance of two and one-half miles from Orange Beach, Peleliu Island. Then we immediately retired to a position several miles farther from the beach and began launching our LCT. This was completed at H plus 4½ hours, D-day. On D plus 1, and subsequent days, the ship closed the beach to an approximate distance of 1500 yards and began unloading ammunition and other highest priority cargo by means of our own small boats. On D plus 9, the ship beached on Peleliu Island at Orange 3 Beach and completed unloading of all cargo. Except for two nights which to facilitate unloading were spent at Peleliu, the ship retired in company in accordance with Retirement Plan, Annex D to Attack Order, ComLSTFLOT13 No. 8-44. For reference purposes, D-day was 15 September 1944, H-hour was 0530 Item.

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2. Part 2, Chronology of Events.

0900, 4 September 1944: Underway from Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, to form invasion convoy.

0715, 15 September 1944: Arrived Peleliu, launched LVT's, DUKW's, and Marine Personnel.

1300, 15 September 1944: Launched LCT and detached all LCT personnel with gear.

1000, 24 September 1944: Beached off Orange 3 Beach, Peleliu Island, to unload cargo.

1400, 26 September 1944: Beached off Purple Beach, Peleliu Island, to unload Trackson Crane.

1700, 26 September 1944: Departed Peleliu Island.

3. Part 3, Ordnance. This ship was not under attack, either by enemy air or surface forces, during the operation and therefore no opportunity was presented for testing the performance of ordnance material and equipment. No ammunition was expended against the enemy.

4. Part 4, Battle Damage. This ship sustained no battle damage from the enemy, nor was she given the opportunity to inflict damage upon the enemy.

5. Part 5, General. Generally speaking, the ship and her equipage stood up well in all the functions required. No particular difficulties were encountered by any of the departments in the execution of their duties, and there were no defects in equipment which prevented the ship at any time during the operation from the full performance of all duties assigned. A time study of the launching of vehicles and the LCT is included as Enclosure (B) to this report in the hope that it may be of interest.

6. Part 6, Personnel. Although this was their first major operation against the enemy for a large majority of the officers and men aboard, over-all performance of duty by personnel is considered to be extremely satisfactory. Although the ship was not under actual fire, there were many instances in which panic or improper performance of duty would have retarded seriously the time schedules of the operation. These were entirely lacking and the ship was able to

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launch her vehicles in the attack wave at H minus 1 hour, 15 minutes on perfect schedule. This was also true of subsequent operations. No personnel casualties were sustained. The Executive Officer's Report is included as Enclosure (A) to this report.

R.L. CONKLING

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(ENCLOSURE A)

From: The Executive Officer.
To: The Commanding Officer.
Subject: Personnel Performance and Casualties of the Stale-
mate Operation.

1. No casualties were suffered among officers or men
in the crew.

2. Two members of Ship's Company, Swigart, C.K., COX,
and Mathews, J.R., Flc, engineer, made up the boat crew which went
in to the transfer line as LVT wave leader. These men are commended
for their performance of duty.

3. All personnel who were assigned to launch the LCT
are praised for their superb efforts in expediting the launching
under the possibility of an enemy air attack. This was the first
time any member of the crew, officers or men, had ever launched an
LCT. The LCT was launched by 1230 on D-day.

4. The performance of the crew throughout the whole
operation was excellent, especially when all hands turned to unload-
ing cargo. Forty-two percent of the cargo that was aboard was un-
loaded by Ship's Company by use of small boats before the ship was
beached.

G.V. VANDER LINDEN

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(ENCLOSURE B0)

Time Study of Launching (A) LVT's and DUKW's
and (B) LCT.

(A) LAUNCHING OF LVT's AND DUKW's.

- 0714 Commenced launching vehicles on Tank Deck. Total number of vehicles - 17. (15 LVT and 2 DUKW).
- 0724 All vehicles launched from Tank Deck. Began lowering of Truck Ramp.
- 0726 Truck Ramp lowered. Began launching vehicles stowed on LCT. Total vehicles - 5. (LVT flame throwers).
- 0732 All vehicles from LCT launched.

The 17 vehicles on the Tank Deck were launched in 10 minutes, average time of launching 37 seconds per vehicle. There was no noticeable difference between the time taken to launch an LVT and a DUKW.

Two minutes were required to lower the truck ramp. This could be done in a slightly shorter time, but not without the sacrifice of vital safety precautions.

Six minutes were required to launch the 5 LVT flame throwers stowed on the LCT. This was an average of 72 seconds per vehicle. This average was high because approximately 3½ minutes of the total 6 minutes taken were occupied in launching one LVT which had no brakes and which, therefore, had to be lowered down the incline of the Truck Ramp by use of the stern anchor cable and winch of the LCT. If this vehicle were to be disregarded in the average, it would have taken 2½ minutes to lower 4 LVT's from the LCT for an average of 38 seconds per vehicle.

Total launching operations took 18 minutes for a total of 22 vehicles, an average of 49 seconds per vehicle.

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(B) LAUNCHING OF LCT.

0800 Launching preparations begun.

1234 LCT launched.

Total time of launching - 4 hours, 34 minutes.

It is felt that one hour could have been saved in launching the LCT if 3 battering rams for each way, or a total of 15 battering rams, had been available. This was the first LCT to be launched by this command and, in preparing the launching kit, only the number suggested by the instructions had been prepared. We found the wedges extremely difficult to drive home and wasted much time due to an insufficient supply of adequate battering rams. Also, it is felt that 6" X 6" timbers are the minimum size for these rams. Our LCT had been aboard over five months. This caused considerable warping of the ways and a general stiffening of the launching structures and may have been one reason for the difficulty encountered.

We could also have saved time had we loosened our grease irons the day before the operation. We do not believe that this suggestion is incorporated in any of the written instructions.

Another suggestion which would have saved time would be to loosen the holding screws on the brackets holding the collapsible blocks the day before the launching operation. This would only be entirely safe, however, when there was good expectancy of a calm sea.

Two defects were discovered in the construction of the ways. First, some of the wedges were too long and had to be removed and shortened before they could be driven home. Second, on some of the ways, the wedge holes did not go completely through the way, which necessitated removal of the wedge and cutting the hole clear.

This ship launched with an 11-foot difference in list between the port and starboard side. It took approximately 1 hour, 5 minutes of the total time to induce this list. We were helped in getting sufficient list by three factors: First, removal of the port small boat; Second, planned arrangement of cargo so that the heaviest cargo was concentrated on the starboard side, and, Third, use of fuel, etc, during the cruise from the port tanks.

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7 A little less than two hours were spent after the launching in supplying the LCT with fuel, lube oil, water, ammunition, and other materials which could not be put aboard until after the launching. 6