

11. LCT 380 again made an effort to retract from the beach at 1030, 17 December. Two LCM's, one alligator and one D-7 (bulldozer) attempted to pull and push the craft off the beach but with no success. At 1245, LCT 380 succeeded in retracting with the assistance of a D-7.

12. When it became evident that LCT 380 would succeed in retracting about 1230, Major Hunter, MC, U. S. Army, decided to remove all casualties to the beach. The LCT task force had left the area earlier that day, and the army medical officers were not willing to risk a run out of the area alone and unescorted with thirty five casualties aboard.

13. LCT 380 got underway alone from Arawe Harbor at 1300, 17 December; at approximately 1630, 17 December, four planes circled and dived. Failing to definitely identify these planes, LCT 380 opened fire. The planes then identified themselves by dipping their wings and making the U. S. Army Airforce insignia visible. The planes were then identified as Thunderbolts, P-47's. It is suggested that the U.S. Army Airforce be warned against diving on friendly shipping without first

identifying themselves. Arrived at Hanish Harbor, New Guinea, at 0330, 18 December.

14. The performance of the crew of LCT 380 throughout this operation is commendable. Every man on board performed his duty admirably, and they exhibited qualities in keeping with the highest traditions of the U. S. Navy.

B. W. Haseltine, Lieut.(jg) USNR,
Commanding Officer --LCT 380 Flotilla 7.
Cc: ComFlot7LCT(5).

For more reading on LCT Flotilla 7 and the Bismarcks, I would highly recommend Vol. 6 of Samuel Eliot Morison's series, "History of U.S. Naval Operations in World War 2". Vol. 6 is entitled, "The Bismarcks Barrier". This 14-volume series can be found at many libraries--and individual books can be purchased from most booksellers or on the internet.

