

LCT ACTION REPORT

NATIONAL ARCHIVES



FLOTILLA 21

Okinawa -- April 1945

The following is a report from LCT(6) Flotilla 21 on its participation in the landing on and occupation of Okinawa Shima for the period from Love Day, 1 April 1945 through 30 April 1945. [Love Day was the code for D-Day at Okinawa] This flotilla was designated as LCT Group Baker, Tank Unit 55.9.2 by Commander Amphibious Group Twelve Attack Order No. A1202-45, derived from the Commander Amphibious Forces, U.S. Pacific Fleet Operation Plan No. A1-45. The Commander, LCT Flotilla 21 aboard the USS LC(FF) 399 arrived off Western Beaches, Okinawa Shima 1 April, 1945.

Individual LCTs were transported to the target area aboard several LSTs and one LSD. The launching of LCTs began Love Day and in approximately one week all had been launched. Toward the end of the month another group of LCTs arrived in the area and were launched on arrival and ordered to report to Cmdr, Flotilla 21. As launched LCTs reported to Transport Squadrons 12 and 18 as directed and began unloading cargo from ships of these squadrons for transportation to the Western Beaches. Beginning on Love Day LCTs were assigned as follows:

CTG 53.1, Cmdr. Transport Squadron 18 in USS Cambria

LCTs - 418, 749, 792, 828, 875, 1020, 1265, 1268, 1392, 1397 and 1403

CTG 53.2, Cmdr. Transport Squadron 18 in USS Burleigh

LCTs - 750, 853, 1049, 1179, 1180, 1244, 1330, 1373, 1415 and 1417

LCTs 748 and 1050 were assigned to the Hagushi Ammunition Pool and transported ammunition from supply ships to ships of the screen. LCTs 748 and 1050 operated under this command until 28 April 1945 when they were ordered to report to Cmdr, Flotilla 21 for duty.

LCTs 449, 466, 900 and 1373 were launched at Kerama Retto and operated under CTU 55.9.13, LCT Group 101 on detached duty with the Western Islands Attack Group. On 26 April LCT 418 was ordered to Kerama Retto and reported Cmdr LCT Group 101 for duty. On 28 April LCT 900 was ordered to proceed and report to Cmdr, Flotilla 21 off Hagushi Beaches as replacement for LCT 418. These LCTs assisted in the provisioning and supplying of fleet units reporting to Kerama Retto for logistics. Operational control of these LCTs was held by CTU 55.9.13 for the entire period of this report.

LCT 1184 specially equipped, after being launched, reported to CTU 51.6, Service and Salvage Group and operated during this period under his command.

22 April LCT 1396 was launched and reported for duty to Commander Flotilla 21. LCTs 1204, 1376, 1377, 1383, 1385, 1386, 1401, 1421, 1425, 1428 and 1429 were launched 26-27 April and reported to CO Flotilla 21 as ordered by CTG 51.22.

Operational control of LCTs assigned to Transport Squadrons was exercised by the respective commanders during the period 1 April through 10 April. These LCTs then reported to Commander Flotilla 21 for duty and were under his operational control for the remainder of the period. From 11 April to the end of the period, LCTs were ordered to unload specific ships by CO Flotilla 21. These orders were based on an unloading schedule drawn up by the Force Beachmaster who assigned certain portions of the entire task to the various type commanders.

The use of LCTs in this operation was complicated by the presence of a barrier reef along the entire beach head. LCTs were never able to reach the beach under any tidal condition except at the mouth of the Bisha Gawa River. However, vehicular cargo could be and were unloaded over the reef flats at low tide. Most bulk cargo except for that discharged at the river mouth had to be handled by floating cranes and LVTs. Also on many occasions, LCTs were beached on the reef at high tide and ordered to remain there until the tide ran out. This procedure had to be followed because of the fact that the existing causeways were used by LSTs and LSMs.

Enclosure (A) is a general summary of the operations of LCT Flotilla 21 in the ship-to-shore movement at the Hagushi Beach area and does not include LCT operations at Nago Wan which were controlled by another command. In addition, several LCTs were employed to carry cargo from Okinawa Shima to Kerama Retto in a few instances. Also, LCTs were employed to transfer cargo from one ship to another in this area for various reasons.

Periods of bad weather and moderately heavy surf caused unloading operations at the beaches to be suspended because of the increased danger of damaging the LCTs and other landing craft and ships on the reef. Likewise, high winds and swells necessitated a temporary suspension of loading alongside ships on two