

occasions. LCTs were ordered to anchor until the weather was better at these times. Such conditions cost the LCTs most of their mooring lines and caused a serious shortage.

On 11 April, LCTs 749, 750, 792, 1049, 1179, 1180, 1265 and 1397 were ordered to proceed and report to SCPS, Nago Wan for lighterage duties. These LCTs operated in that area for the remainder of the period. They were under the operational control of CTF 53, Nago Wan. LCTs operations in Nago Wan were comparatively simpler due to the fact that the beaches were good. Consequently in this area unloading operations progressed more rapidly.

LCT operations against the enemy consisted in the landing of assault vehicles and cargo and anti-aircraft defense. On 3 April at 0700, LCT 876 aboard LST 599 was at anchor in Kerama Retto at the time. The plane approached at low level from the starboard side, crossing the bow and diving in from the port side. The plane crashed into the LCT amidship on the port side forward of the living compartment. The wing of the plane was sheared off by the port gun tub, the remainder went through the LCT tank deck and voids, through the LST main deck to the LST tank deck causing fire but no explosion on the tank deck. During the approach of the plane, the LCT 876 could not bring its port 20mm to bear and expended 120 rounds of ammunition. Three men slightly injured were the only casualties to LCT personnel.

On 2 April at 1600 several suicide planes made attacks on ships in the transport area off Hagushi Beaches. Again on 15 April at 1855 enemy planes made [further] suicide attacks. During these attacks LCTs assisted to the best of their ability in the general defense of the area. Definite evidence is at hand that at least on two occasions LCTs scored direct hits on the attacking planes. However, because of the volume of fire, it is impossible to determine the extent of the damage inflicted, or in a broader sense, to determine which ship if any was responsible for bringing the attacking plane down short of its target.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

It is recommended that LSTs be given explicit and early orders as to the launching of LCTs. This command was ordered to expedite the tardy launching of LCTs and,

on investigation, discovered that the LSTs concerned had not received any orders to launch. The average time required to launch was ten hours, a time which could have been considerably shortened by definite orders given as early as possible.

Total Tons Carried by all the LCTs

Ammunition = 3328 tons
Vehicles (wt) = 4409 tons (882 vehicles)
Food = 1404 tons
Fuel = 2804 tons
Dunnage = 772 tons
Misc = 2772 tons
Total Tonnage = 15,489 tons
Avg tons per LCT = 1239

LCT working days = 317
Ships worked during April = 74
Trips made during April = 224
Avg # trips per LCT = 18

LCTs involved (Flot 21)

418, 449, 466, 748, 749, 750, 792, 828, 873, 875, 876, 900, 1020, 1049, 1050, 1179, 1180, 1184, 1204, 1244, 1265, 1268, 1330, 1373, 1376, 1377, 1383, 1385, 1386, 1392, 1396, 1397, 1401, 1403, 1415, 1417, 1421, 1425, 1428, 1429

Editor's Note: This Action Report was acquired by George Hackett at the National Archives. What is re-printed here is a portion of the complete report filed by the Commander of LCT Flotilla 21 for April of 1945.

Kerama Retto was another island in the Ryuku chain that once taken, provided an anchorage for the main assault on Okinawa Shima. The LCTs of Flotilla 21 were right in the thick of things for "Operation Iceberg". In addition to the incident mentioned here, another craft, LCT-447, actually took a direct hit from a Japanese Kamikaze during action at Kerama Retto (see photo in our April 2001 issue). The 447 had also been in Flotilla 4 at Utah Beach where it served as HQ for the 22nd Infantry.

Had the LSTs been launching the LCTs at Okinawa in a more timely manner from the start, it is possible that LCT 876 may have avoided its encounter with the enemy plane as the likely target was the LST. It was, in effect, a "sitting duck".

