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UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET  
COMMANDER TRANSPORT DIVISION TWENTY-FOUR  
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From: The Commander Transport Division TWENTY-FOUR,  
(Commander Task Unit 78.1.3).  
To: The Commander in Chief, United States Fleet.  
Via: (1) The Commander SEVENTH Amphibious Force,  
(Commander Task Force 78).  
(2) The Commander SEVENTH Fleet,  
(Commander Task Force 77).

Subject: Action Report, LEYTE Assault.

Enclosure: (A) Subject Report. -p.2

1. Action report of the Transport Unit Commander  
of the PALO ATTACK GROUP is forwarded herewith as enclosure (A).

T. B. BRITTAIN.

Advance copy to:  
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## PART I

### ACCOUNT OF OPERATIONS PRELIMINARY TO ASSAULT ON RED BEACH, EASTERN COAST OF LEYTE ISLAND, CENTRAL PHILIPPINE ATTACK

This command departed PELELIU, Palau Islands, on 27 September and arrived at Humbolt Bay, Hollandia, New Guinea, on 30 September. Except for the VIRGO (AKA-20), CENTAURUS (AKA-17), TRYON (APH-1) and PINKNEY (APH-2), all ships of the PELELIU Transport Group (Transport Divisions 6, 8 and 24) reported to Commander SEVENTH Fleet for duty in preparation for the CENTRAL PHILIPPINE ATTACK. Transport Division TWENTY-FOUR and SIX were reorganized as Task Unit 78.1.3 (commanded by Commander Transport Division TWENTY-FOUR) for operational control under Rear Admiral D.E. Barbey, Commander Task Force 78 (Commander Northern Attack Force, Commander PALO Attack Group, and Commander SEVENTH Amphibious Force). GUNSTON HALL (LSD-5) reported to Commander Transport Division TWENTY-FOUR and TITANIA (AKA-17) and CARTER HALL (LSD-3) reported to Commander Transport Division SIX to make the following transport units:

TASK UNIT 78.1.3 Transport Unit      Captain T.B. Brittain

Task Unit 78.1.31 TransDiv 24(Temp) Captain T.B. Brittain

APA41 DUPAGE (F)  
APA 7 FULLER  
APA42 ELMORE  
APA54 WAYNE  
AP167 JOHN LAND  
AKA16 AQUARIUS  
LSD-5 GUNSTON HALL

Task Unit 78.1.32 TransDiv 6(Temp)      Captain H.D. Baker

APA43 FAYETTE (F)  
APA49 ORMSBY  
APA56 LEEDSTOWN  
AKA17 TITANIA  
AK 41 HERCULES  
LSD-4 EPPING FOREST  
LSD-3 CARTER HALL

Immediately upon arrival in the Hollandia area, ships were granted availability until 5 October, with permission to shut down boilers for necessary repairs by own forces. HERCULES who had developed main engine difficulty departing from PELELIU, completed turbine repairs on 10 October. Tankers were directed alongside all ships for fueling to capacity. Such fresh and dry stores as were available were drawn from Naval Supply Depot, Hollandia.



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ACCOUNT OF OPERATIONS PRELIMINARY TO ASSAULT ON RED BEACH,  
EASTERN COAST OF LEYTE ISLAND, CENTRAL PHILIPPINE ATTACK (Cont'd)

Conferences were held at once with Commander SEVENTH Amphibious Force and Commanding General 24th Infantry Division for purpose of planning the ship to shore movement in the operation. Plans for this unit were distributed on 9 October.

Transport quartermasters and Army loading officers quickly drew up necessary loading plans, and ships of the unit went alongside prescribed docks for loading, commencing on 4 October and completing on 11 October. Landing force personnel were embarked in transports of the unit 8 to 11 October. Cargo totaled 6236 tons, and a total of 12,019 officers and enlisted personnel were embarked in transport types.

At 0600 on 12 October Task Unit 78.1.3 (less CARTER HALL) was underway for a rehearsal six miles east of Cape Djar, Humbolt Bay. The unit was screened by JOHN RODGERS, HARRISON, MURRAY and McKEE, and was joined in transport area by LCM, LCI, Control and Salvage units also designated as part of the training unit under this command. CTF 78 Training Order 16-44 and OTU 78.1.3 Training speedletter became effective, as supplemented by CTF 78 Operation Plan 101-44, OTC 78.1 Attack Order 1-44, and OTU 78.1.3 Landing Attack Order 18-44. Troops were disembarked at 0800 for simulated landings at H hour, 1000. Upon completion of exercises, troops were reembarked and transports returned to assigned anchorages in Humbolt Bay.

At 1430 on 13 October the task unit was underway as directed in OTU 78.1.3 sortie plan and OTC, CTF 78 in BLUE RIDGE, took charge of movement of PALO Attack Group at 1600. Until A-Day the movement to the objective was made without incident. Throughout the operation ideal weather conditions prevailed.

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NARRATIVE OF EVENTS ON A-DAY OF CENTRAL PHILIPPINE ATTACK

At 0000 Task Unit 78.1.3 was steaming in company with other units of Task Group 78.1 and 78.2 (PALO Attack Group and SAN RICARDO Attack Group) in cruising disposition C-1 on fleet course 310° proceeding at 9.5 knots. The movement group had entered LEYTE GULF according to instructions set forth in CANF, SWP Operation Plan 13-44 and CTF 78 Operation Plan 101-44. At 0004, 0023 and 0058 the units were brought left by division to course changes 295°, 280° and 273° respectively. Course changes to the right were then made to 309°, 320° and 330° at 0210, 0220 and 0245. Speed was reduced at 0258 to 7.5 knots. HMAS MANGORA, HMAS KANIMBLA and HMAS WESTRALIA, transports of the PANACON Attack Group who had made passage from Hollandia, were detached at 0300

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PART II

NARRATIVE OF EVENTS ON A-DAY OF CENTRAL PHILIPPINE ATTACK (Cont'd)

to join CTG 78.3. At 0455 course was changed left to 309° as the formation proceeded to the San Pedro Bay Area. Several drifting mines were reported by ships during this approach. HARRIS (APA-2), second ship in right flank transport column, reported a mine fast to port paravane at 0545 and hauled out of column. Unable to get speedy assistance from a DMS, the paravane and mine were finally slipped at 0635 and HARRIS rejoined formation. SC 1129 sank this mine at 0645 by gunfire. The course was changed left to 295° at 0603 and again to 309° at 0631.

At 0630 an enemy plane was sighted ahead of the formation over the area occupied by fire support ships of RED BEACH. The plane continued to fly at extreme automatic weapons range down the left flank of the transport unit. ELMORE, FULLER and JOHN LAND of this division opened fire. Enemy proceeded to dive on the firing LST Unit, where several bombs appeared to be dropped, and then flew toward the northwest through fire from the right flank transport column. The plane retired in seemingly good flying condition, having caused no damage to our forces.

On execution of the signal "Deploy" at 0645 by CTF 78, CTU 78.1.3 assumed operational control of the following units as set forth by CTG 78.1 Attack Order 1-44 for the landings on RED BEACH, eastern coast of LETTE:

TASK UNIT 78.1.3 Transport Unit

Captain T.B. Brittain

TU 78.1.31 TransDiv 24 (Temp)

Captain T.B. Brittain

DUPAGE (F)

ELMORE

WAYNE

FULLER

JOHN LAND

AQUARIUS

GUNSTON HALL

TU 78.1.32 TransDiv 6 (Temp)

Captain H.D. Baker

FAYETTE (F)

ORMSBY

LEEDSTOWN

TITANIA

HERCULES

EPPING FOREST

CARTER HALL

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TU 78.1.4 LST Unit

Commander D.M. Baker

LSTs 452 (F), 171, 181, 456,

462, 463, 465, 458,

459, 26, 168.



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NARRATIVE OF EVENTS ON A-DAY OF CENTRAL PHILIPPINE ATTACK (Cont'd)

TU 78.1.5 LSM Unit  
LSMs 19 (F), 21, 257

Lieutenant McComb

TU 78.1.7 Control Unit  
PGs 623 (F), 598, 1129  
SC 726

Captain Brantly

On execution of "Deploy" AQUARIUS, remaining ship in column six after departure of Australian transports, fell in astern of JOHN LAND. GUNSTON HALL, cruising in column three, took station astern of AQUARIUS with TransDiv 24. The EPPING FOREST and CARTER HALL, also cruising in transport column three, took stations astern of HERCULES with TransDiv 6. Transport divisions maneuvered independently in accordance with GTU 78.1.3's Attack Landing Order, with TransDiv 6 passing between MARIQUIT-DAQUIT Island and five fathom shoal southwestward thereof, and TransDiv 24 to the westward of this shoal. By 0752 TransDiv 24 had come to course 000° and the division was ordered to anchor in the prescribed transport area at 0750. DuPAGE anchored at 0805. FAYETTE and other ships of TransDiv 6 anchored about 0810. Transports commenced immediately to lower boats and disembark the 25th Infantry Division personnel carried.

In carrying out mission to buoy PALO Reef, ELMORE boat found flags already placed. DuPAGE officer also found shoals at 11-06 N., 125-03 E., and 11-03.9 N., 125-09.5E. buoyed. Original H-Hour (1000) was confirmed. Commander Control Unit for RED BEACH reported on station at 0920, with the first three waves formed and ready at 0940. Just prior to 1000 Commander Control reported receiving enemy fire reaching as far out as 4000 yards from beach. Two boats in the fourth wave were hit by mortar fire, and one AQUARIUS boat sank; nine army casualties from this boat were later brought to DuPAGE. Two of the AQUARIUS boat crew suffered injury.

The first waves on both beaches RED and WHITE landed at 1000. At 1007, after 2nd wave landed, troops on RED were reported inland 300 yards with no return fire. Shortly after, Commander Control reported conditions of beaches very good, troops having gone ashore in only two feet of water. At 1016 ELMORE boat group commander reported two mortar hits on two ELMORE boats. One boat crew member was killed, five others injured, and two army personnel were killed in these boats. Succeeding waves continued to land on schedule until designated time for LST beachings.

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PART II

NARRATIVE OF EVENTS ON A-DAY OF CENTRAL PHILIPPINE ATTACK (Cont'd)

At 1045 LSTs were given permission to proceed to beach at one third speed, but at 1113 LSTs reported receiving mortar fire off the beach. Four or five of the beached LSTs were reported hit at 1116, and LST 181 was on fire. CTG 78.1 ordered two LCI fire fighters to assist. The fire was reported under control at 1124. However, after CTG 78.1 advised all LSTs to retract at 1125, the 181 was unable to do so. LSTs 452 and 181 were only LSTs on beach unloading at 1200 and further study of the beach showed space only available for two of this type craft. Again mortar fire was experienced, and at 1201 LST 181 reported sick bay hit, with a number of casualties and no power for lights. By 1300 Commander Control advised two additional LSTs could be beached on southern flank of RED. LST 458 was aground 400 yards off beach and required tug assistance at 1333. At 1418 IST unloading conditions were relieved when WHITE Beach Commander advised they were ready to take RED Beach ISTs.

TransDivs 6 and 24 had been ordered underway at 1055 to move 6000 yards from beach as planned to facilitate unloading. FAYETTE and DuPAGE anchored at 1215 in new positions with other ships of the divisions following. By 1230 beachmasters advised conditions favorable for unloading general cargo and LSMs reported to transports to take vehicles. Commander Control reported unloading at beaches progressing satisfactorily at 1445. LSDs had discharged LCMs and equipment by 1330. At 1500 JOHN LAND reported 100 percent unloaded, and ORMSBY and FAYETTE reported completion at 1517 and 1526. By 1600 WAYNE and ELMORE had finished discharging all cargo, LEEDSTOWN finished at 1620, FULLER at 1650 and DuPAGE at 1725. This completed assignment for ships scheduled to depart. AKAs AQUARIUS and TITANIA, and AK HERCULES reported 15, 40 and 7 percent unloaded, respectively at 1700.

After transports proceeded to inshore anchorages in the morning, ships were ordered to man smoke boats as planned, keeping boats 400 yards to windward of own ships. These boats were recalled at 1700 having had no occasion to cover ships.

At 1347 CTF 78 informed all ships that a special observing party was then enroute to RED Beach. Ships were later given information that a broadcast by General McArthur and the President of the Philippines was scheduled for 1500. This news was received with great interest, and the words spoken by these leaders proved to be an inspiration to those able to listen.

Since LSTs equipped with hospital facilities experienced some difficulty at the beach in the early unloading phase, CTF 78 authorized APAs of this unit to take overflow of casualties.



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PART II

NARRATIVE OF EVENTS ON A-DAY OF CENTRAL PHILIPPINE ATTACK (Cont'd)

DuPAGE carried a total of 35 army casualties from the objective, WAYNE 13, FULLER 6, FAYETTE 11, ORMSBY 5 and LEEDSTOWN 23. Ships totaled 7 dead. Two more died on board DuPAGE enroute to Hollandia.

An air alert was given about 1545 with enemy aircraft sighted in the southern beach area. HONOLULU was reported torpedoed but under own power. No enemy air activity was observed in RED Beach area.

GUNSTON HALL, EPPING FOREST and CARTER HALL left vicinity of transports after discharging to rendezvous with APDs for return trip to Hollandia according to CTF 78 Operation Plan 101-44. BILMORE reported to CTD 32 for duty as instructed, and AQUARIUS, TITANIA and HERCULES continued to unload cargo at the objective. Remaining ships of TransDiv 6 were underway at 1750 and remaining ships of TransDiv 24 were underway at 1830 from San Pedro Bay on course 160°.

At 1825 CTF 78 reported that enemy aircraft were reported in the area. At that time a severe lightning storm had centered to seaward, of RED Beach transport area, and a few minutes later intense AA fire was directed into this cloud formation by all ships in the immediate vicinity. Two signalmen, with aid of 45-power long glasses, spotted three formations totaling ten planes; however, no planes were sighted by officers on the navigation bridge. Firing ceased before TransDiv 24 ships arrived close enough to supposed contacts to open fire.

At 1945 TransDiv 24 joined to right to TransDiv 6, and course 135° and standard speed 12 knots was set at 2015 after DuPAGE and FAYETTE streamed paravanes. The two divisions continued toward rendezvous with CTF 78.3 (Rear Admiral Struble) in HUGHES. Due to heavy covering smoke laid over the area in the air attack visibility decreased to practically zero. At 2220 speed was reduced to 6 knots to permit DuPAGE to recover port paravane on which tow line had parted. CTF 78.3 ordered TransDivs 6 and 24 to form to westward of his group of three Australian transports, and at 2326 course was changed to 180° and at 2350 to 270° with TransDiv 6 falling in astern of TransDiv 24 column. At 0029 on the twenty-first, course was brought left to 180°, and to 090° at 0054. Standard speed 12 knots was set at 0124 and base course and axis 114° at 0210. TransDivs 20 and 32, also part of the departing convoy, were delayed, and cruising disposition was finally formed at 0700 on the twenty-first. Under direction of Rear Admiral Struble the formation proceeded to route TransDivs 6 and 24 and Australian transports to Hollandia, TransDivs 20 and 32 to Kossol Passage, Palau Islands.

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PART III

PERFORMANCE OF ORDNANCE MATERIAL

No reports of malfunction of any ordnance equipment in the unit have been received.

PART IV

BATTLE DAMAGE

ELMORE and AQUARIUS each lost one LCVP to enemy mortar fire.

PART V

SPECIAL COMMENTS

LOADING

The following table shows the loading of transports of the task unit:

<u>Ship</u>	<u>Troops Embarked</u>	<u>Tons Cargo</u>
DUPAGE	1387	339
FULLER	1405	346
ELMORE	1370	410
WAYNE	1116	208
JOHN LAND	1182	86
AQUARIUS	313	272
FAYETTE	1265	350
ORMSBY	1471	324
LEEDSTOWN	1356	306
TITANIA	297	1034
HERCULES	277	1777
SPRING FOREST	290	93
GUNSTON HALL	290	91
CARTER HALL	- (pile driver floating equipment)	
Total	12,019	6,236

Advantage would have accrued if more time had been allowed for planning the loading. It is particularly noted that LVTs and DUKws loaded into the ships of transport unit would have served better purpose in LSTs from which ships they could have been discharged loaded, relieving the delay caused by LSTs' inability to beach. It is believed this would have greatly facilitated the landing of the artillery.



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### SHIP TO SHORE MOVEMENT

The assault phase of the ship to shore movement went virtually as planned. LSTs could not beach because of a shoal about 75 yards from the shore with intervening water in depths up to 10 feet. Of the six LSTs scheduled to land in Wave 12, only two found slots where they could approach close enough to the shore to discharge.

The control of LSTs and LSMs passed from the Transport Unit Commander immediately after the beaching. This caused a minor delay in the second loading of LSMs from transports as the LSM group commander was in a different task group and there had been no opportunity to brief him. Again it was demonstrated that Commander Transport Group should have control of every ship that operates in the boat lanes.

LSMs beached with a dry ramp. This is the first operation in which this command has had opportunity to observe the functioning of LSMs. They are capable of excellent service particularly in landing large vehicles. It is recommended that they be assigned to the operational control of the transport unit commander who, with full information as to loading and progress of unloading, is the only one who can intelligently assign them effectively where they are most needed.

LCM(6)'s, 56-foot tank lighters, were carried by all transport types without major alteration of skids. Their provision to replace LCM(3)s in APAs and AKAs is strongly recommended. They proved themselves to the utmost satisfaction of all hands in this operation.

To expedite discharging DuPAGE boat crews unloaded twenty of their own boats. While information is not available as to the unloading activities of other ships boat crews, the Transport Group Beachmaster has reported that this represents the general average. While commands and boat crews are anxious to do everything possible to keep the boats moving, boat unloading by boat crews is not the most expeditious manner of handling cargo and is not effective over a long period of time. Shore party personnel were not supplied in sufficient numbers to handle the flow of cargo to the beach.

The discharge rate of the APAs and the APs was on the whole gratifying. The following table is supplied as a basis for future planning:

<u>Ship</u>	<u>Time Completed Discharging</u>	<u>Tons per Hour</u>
DuPAGE	1725	57.2
WAYNE	1600	77.0
ELMORE	1600	91.2
FULLER	1650	39.0

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SHIP TO SHORE MOVEMENT (Cont'd)

<u>Ship</u>	<u>Time Completed Discharging</u>	<u>Tons per Hour</u>
JOHN LAND	1500	24.6*
FAYETTE	1526	88.8
ORMSBY	1517	85.6
LEEDSTOWN	1620	63.2

\*Lightly loaded.

While the APAs and AP were given preference in the allocation of landing craft, as the AKAs and AK were not scheduled to depart on A-Day, the latter types made good progress in discharging. At 1800 TITANIA reported an estimated completion time of 2200, 20 October.

PART VI

PERSONNEL PERFORMANCE, CASUALTIES

Officer and enlisted personnel of transports, of whom approximately eighty percent had been through at least three previous assault operations, acquitted themselves well. Landing craft crews, both army and navy, displayed courage and determination in handling their boats through fish weirs while under enemy fire in the assault waves.

Boat crews of ships suffered casualties as follows:

<u>Ship</u>	<u>KIA</u>	<u>WIA</u>
LEEDSTOWN		1
ELMORE	1	5
WAYNE		3
AQUARIUS		3