

AKA13/A16-3.

Serial 032.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

Advance copy

U. S. S. TITANIA

Care Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California.

27 October 1944.

From: The Commanding Officer.
To: The Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet.
Via: (1) Commander Task Unit 78.1.32.
(2) Commander Task Unit 78.1.31.
(3) Commander Task Group 78.1
(4) Commander Task Force 78.
(5) Commander Task Force 77.

Subject: Leyte Operation - Report on.

References: (a) Article 762, U.S. Navy Regulations, 1920.
(b) COM7thPHIB Conf. ltr., file FE25/A16-3(3), serial 0212.

Enclosures: ☒ (A) Report of Executive Officer, U.S.S. TITANIA. - p.9
☒ (B) Report of TITANIA's Boat Group Commander. - p.12
☒ (C) Observations of TITANIA's Salvage Boat Officer. - p.14

1. In accordance with references (a) and (b), the following report is submitted:

I. GENERAL NARRATIVE -

TITANIA sailed from Humboldt Bay, New Guinea with Task Force 78.1, operating with and under the direct orders of Commander Task Unit 78.1.32 until 1800, 20 October 1944. Upon the withdrawing of Commander Task Unit 78.1.32, at 1800 20 October 1944, the TITANIA operated directly under Commander Task Group 78.1. TITANIA withdrew from Palo Beach area at 1800, 21 October 1944, joined Task Unit 78.2.4 and remained under command of Commander Task Unit 78.2.4 until arrival at Humboldt Bay, 27 October 1944.

As this vessel operated at all times with and under the Command of a Task Unit, no narrative is submitted except for a minimum of comment.

While at anchor in the Palo Beach Transport Area, this vessel gave water to LCI 227 and provisions to PCE 850. No other requests for services were received. At sea on the return trip, this vessel fueled the U.S.S. FLETCHER (DD445) and the U.S.S. HARRISON (DD573), delivering oil at a rate of 25,000 gallons per hour. The U.S.S. FLETCHER was issued 2500 pounds of provisions. The U.S.S. HARRISON was given miscellaneous stores. No other requests were received.

The TITANIA transported from Humboldt Bay and landed on the beach at Palo, Leyte Island, fourteen (14) officers and two hundred and sixty-seven (267) enlisted personnel of the 24th Division, U.S. Army. The Cargo consisted of ninety-five (95) vehicles, weighing 499 tons; 322 tons of bulk ammunition; 200 tons of gasoline in drums; and 58 tons of miscellaneous stores.

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The TITANIA's Seven (7) LCM's and one (1) LCC were left at Humboldt Bay and in their skids were transported eight (8) LCM's belonging to the 532nd Engineering Beach Service Regiment, U.S. Army.

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II. Chronological Order of Events -
(All times are "Item")

1600 - 13 October 1944 - Sailed from Humboldt Bay with Task Unit 78.1

0604 - 20 October 1944 - Jap Float Plane on starboard quarter, out of gun range.

0604 - 20 October 1944 - U.S.S. HARRIS left position to untangle a mine from her port paravane.

0625 - 20 October 1944 - Sunrise.

0625 - 20 October 1944 - A Jap "NELL" circled the formation; many ships fired A.A. TITANIA fired four ranging shots from 3" battery but the plane was out of range. No damage observed to the plane.

0640 - 20 October 1944 - A mine floated by on starboard side. A Sub Chaser was standing by to sink it.

0645 - 20 October 1944 - Friendly planes overhead.

0814 - 20 October 1944 - Thirteen (13) LCVF's and 2 LCP(L)'s left ship to assist APA's to land assault troops.

0820 - 20 October 1944 - Anchored; Transport Area, Palo Beach.

0945 - 20 October 1944 - TITANIA's 8 LCM's loaded with personnel and equipment of Battery A, 63rd F.A. left the ship with orders to land with the 16th wave if not called to land earlier.

1102 - 20 October 1944 - Underway to move close to the beach. Unloading into boats alongside.

1159 - 20 October 1944 - LSM 257 reported; TITANIA's 8 LCM's approaching the ship. Anchored to expedite getting boats alongside and loaded.

1330 - 20 October 1944 - Underway to close the beach.

1400 - 20 October 1944 - Anchored 2 miles from beach. Continued unloading.

1634 - 20 October 1944 - Army LCM #425 reported.

1635 - 20 October 1944 - .50 caliber machine gun on Army LCM #425 "ran away" firing more than 100 shots through side into holds 4 and 5. Large volume of smoke coming out of #4 hatch. Sounded Fire Quarters and turned cooling Spray of water on 700 drums of gasoline in this hold until it was determined that smoke had come through the ship's side from the .50 caliber machine gun.

1814 - 20 October 1944 - Shifted anchorage to berth E3.

1830 - 20 October 1944 - Enemy planes reported in vicinity.

1850 - 20 October 1944 - LCI 21 reported for duty as smoke boat.

0525 - 21 October 1944 - Until 0615, 21 October-At General Quarters. Enemy planes in area.

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0700 - 21 October 1944 - LSM 20 reported to assist in unloading.
1122 - 21 October 1944 - Completed unloading.
1204 - 21 October 1944 - Gave water to LCI 227.
1429 - 21 October 1944 - Gave provisions to PCE 850.
1749 - 21 October 1944 - Got underway and joined Task Unit 78.2.4.
25 October 1944 - At sea. Fueled DD445 and DD573.
27 October 1944 - Anchored - Humboldt Bay.

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III. Ordinance Material -

Guns "silent" because of no Director Control. Could have used 3" battery and 40mm on two (2) occasions at night if battery had been equipped with modern fire control.

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IV. Battle Damage -

Enemy - None.

Own Ship - None.

No damage to landing craft.

Damage - No enemy action.

Event at 1635, 20 October 1944, .50 caliber
machine gun:

- (a) About 100 .50 caliber holes in ship's side.
- (b) Degaussing put out of commission. Complete
break in cable at two (2) points.

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V. Special Comments -

- (a) CIC - Now in Chart House; extension of Chart House authorized to make separate C-I-C.
- (b) Air Search Radar authorized but not yet installed. Essential.
- (c) Navigation Equipment - Satisfactory.
- (d) Damage Control - Satisfactory.
- (e) Communications - Satisfactory. Enlarging Radio Room necessary and authorized.
- (f) Engineering - Satisfactory, except a third generator is authorized and essential, as there is no reserve power during unloading operations. This lack of reserve electric power is dangerous to this ship's successful combat operations.

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VI. Personnel -

The officers and men performed their duties with energy, intelligence and initiative, in a most excellent manner.
No individual instance, deserving praise or censure was observed.

Casualties:

Enemy Action - None.

Non-enemy Action: One man shot in right ankle by
event at 1635, 20 October 1944.

One man injured when wooden block fell
on and smashed toes on right foot.

M. W. CALLAHAN.

U. S. S. TITANIA

Care Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, Calif.

22 October 1944.

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From: The Executive Officer.
To: The Commanding Officer.
Subject: Leyte Operation - Report on.

Reference: (a) Com7thFnb conf. ltr. serial 0212 of 2/17/44.

1. Word to lower away all debarkation nets was given at 0755. Boats were lowered at 0801. All LCVP's were water-borne in eleven (11) minutes. All boats were water-borne in fifty-eight (58) minutes. Discharging began at 0833. Priority vehicles were unloaded in accordance with priority list. All vehicles on the priority list were unloaded in one hour and fifteen minutes, at which time the tank lighters for the Sixteenth Wave were despatched to the Line of Departure. As these tank lighters were one hour early, it was necessary for them to rendezvous at the U.S.S. FAYETTE until the Fifteenth Wave was formed and left. Our tank lighters, comprising the Sixteenth Wave then followed to the Line of Departure. Discharging ceased at the time of the departure of the LCM's from this ship to await their return. Hatches #2 and #3 continued discharging LVT's and Dukws which required no boats. At 1218 the actual unloading phase of the operation commenced. Unloading continued until a signal was received from C.T.U. 24 to move inshore to facilitate discharging. Upon anchoring, LSM 257, which was detailed to assist in unloading this ship, signaled, inquiring which side we would take her on. The signal was answered for him to come in on our port side to port side of the LSM. The Commanding Officer of the LSM either did not understand, did not desire to do so, or lacked knowledge to see that this was necessary due to the fact that his conning tower was on the starboard side, which would interfere with unloading. After repeated attempts to come in in this fashion, and after striking a tank lighter tied up to the port side of #4 hatch, but causing no apparent damage, he was directed to moor to the starboard side of this ship at #1 hatch. After some difficulty the LSM was tied up at #1 hatch, starboard side, at 1330, a period of about 35 minutes. Upon signal at 1102, this ship got underway and advanced toward the beach for a distance of about three to four miles. A considerable period of time was lost due to the fact that upon getting underway at 1102 that morning, the U.S.S. LEEDSTOWN APA 56 attempted to discharge while advancing to the beach and stopped making it impossible for this ship to take proper station on the Transport Division Flag Ship. It was finally decided to drop the anchor and discharge into all available boats, after

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which it was hoped that the LEEDSTOWN would be in position and this ship could move into its assigned berth. The ship was therefore anchored at 1159. At 1330 the ship got underway and moved into the proper berth and continued discharging at 1400. The ship later received word to shift anchorage to berth "EASY 3", which was near the U.S.S. BLUE RIDGE. All discharging was stopped and preparations were again made to get underway for the new berth. No discharging was done from this time until 0730 on "A plus 1" Day. At this time, remaining hatches began discharging until the ship was completely discharged at 1122, 21 October 1944.

2. The following is the actual time it took to discharge 1,034.75 tons on board:

Hatch #3 - 4 hours, 30 minutes.
Hatch #1 - 6 hours, 10 minutes.
Hatch #5 - 5 hours, 15 minutes.
Hatch #2 - 7 hours, 54 minutes.
Hatch #4 - 7 hours, 55 minutes.

3. The above does not include the period of time lost when boats were not available for discharging. It is believed that if boats had been available at all times, the discharging could have been completed in about six (6) hours.

4. It is the opinion of the Executive Officer that if Crawler Cranes had been provided to assist in discharging boats on the beach, more ships would have been able to leave that area on "A" Day. It is to be noted also that there seemed to be some confusion as to working parties for discharging as this ship, after receiving 80 men in the morning, received an additional 80 men in the afternoon of "A" Day, who could not be used and were therefore sent to the beach.

5. At 1635 on "A" Day, Army Tank Lighter #425, reported to this ship to assist in discharging. It was not noticed at the time that the .50 caliber machine gun was lined up athwart ships instead of fore and aft and that it was on "half-load". Due to the motion of the tank lighter the stern fast caught the cocking lever and the machine gun was pulled into "full-load" and accidentally discharged into the side of the ship, cutting into and severing the "M" coil of the degaussing cable and putting over 100 holes into the ship's side. The result of this accident was one casualty in #4 hold. Upon questioning the army coxswain and boat crew it was discovered that their instructions, as outlined above, were to keep the gun at "half-load" at all times. From what happened above, it can be seen that this is a dangerous practice. Steps should be taken to eliminate accidents of this type.

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6. The original Smoke Plan was discarded in view of the absence of any wind with which to lay a smoke screen. Individual smoke boats were directed to circle parent ships at a distance of 100 yards and to lay a smoke screen to cover in case it was necessary. The original plan called for smoke boat to lie off the ship at a distance of 400 yards to the wind-ward. LCI Smoke Boat #21 reported to this vessel at 1850 on "A" Day and departed at 0947 on "A plus 1" Day.

7. All personnel conducted themselves in accordance with the best traditions of the Navy.

R. L. SORKEN,
Lieut. Commander, USNR.

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Care of Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California.

23 October 1944.

From: Boat Group Commander.
To: The Commanding Officer.
Subject: Operational Report.

1. In summary, loading, rendezvous and approach plans were well organized and briefed in advance; and boats of this ship carried out these plans in normal and routine fashion. For the first time, there were no mechanical or hull failures among the boats on the first day; and only one minor rudder failure on the second day. C&R units and engineering units working in conjunction with boat crews to prepare the boats for the operation deserve commendation.

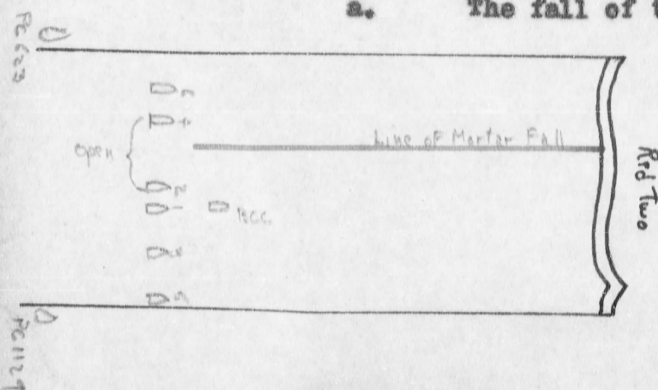
Discipline among the boat crews was good and there are no known cases of failure to carry out instructions to the letter.

Boat Group Commanders boat placed the fourth wave on Red Two on the beach at 1014-45, 15 seconds in advance of the prescribed time. Wave 16 was placed on the beach at 1131, three minutes later than the time planned due to the beachmaster's option to send this wave in three minutes after the regular time. Titania used the beach outlined in the TransDiv 6 plans on the first day; and used the combined beach set up by the army on the second day. Whereas some army LCM's started for the beach during this phase on slightly erroneous headings, all corrected their courses when landmarks became visible and arrived at the correct beaches.

2. A number of things were learned in this operation which could well be applied to the fluid doctrine of amphibious warfare. The major ones are listed below:

a. The fall of the large caliber mortar shells used by the

enemy in this operation were observed to fall in regular pattern on Red Two. An approximation of this pattern was observed during the Guam operation. Shells ordinarily land in groups of four spaced at five to seven second intervals and placed along a line either perpendicular to the beach or parallel to it. In this operation virtually all such shells landed on a line drawn out from the beach and approximately a third



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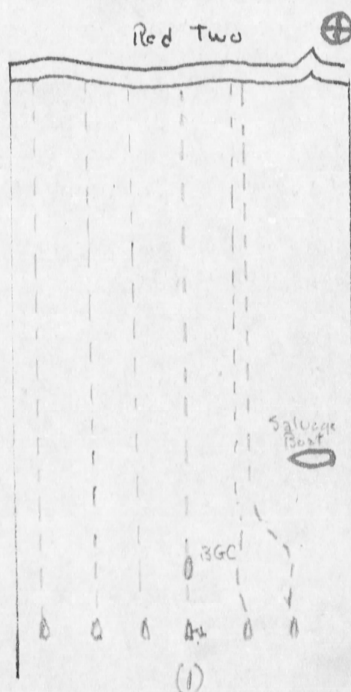
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of the way from the left of Red Two. As it turned out, boats of our fourth and sixteenth waves lined up abreast at the line of departure were in a position to straddle this area; and no changes of formation were made by Boat Group Commander's boat. However, in the future if such an observation is made, boats two and four will be instructed at the line of departure to close the guide in the case of boat two and to open to the flank in the case of boat four; and to maintain those positions until reaching a point a hundred to fifty yards from the beach. As this time they would take normal position.

- b. As the first wave hit the beach, it was discovered that a pillbox located on the right extreme of Red Two and listed earlier in beach diagrams, was still in very much operable condition. Therefore, all waves in the assault phase were directed by word of mouth by the salvage boat, lying fifty yards off the center of the beach, to swing their waves to the left to avoid placing the two boats of the right flank in a position directly in front of this gun emplacement.



This procedure could be improved upon by (1) placing the salvage boat to the right flank and distant from the beach by two hundred yards in order to close the two boats on the right flank with the guide. The system used was not as effective as it could have been because wave commanders were advised of the situation at a time too late to bring in their right flank. (2) Salvage boat could be instructed in advance to use SCR to notify BGC and Wave Commanders of the modification.

3.
well done.

In general, the performance of boat officers and boat crews was

R. D. PRINGLE.

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Care of Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California.

20 October 1944.

From: The Salvage Boat Officer.
To: The Commanding Officer.
Subject: Operational Report.

1. The Salvage Boat of the U.S.S. TITANIA left the ship with full equipment and salvage party, including one yeoman supplied for the purpose of obtaining first hand information from the scene of operation, at 0827. Machine guns were loaded, radio tuned in and all preliminary preparations taken prior to arrival at Line of Departure. This Salvage Boat reached PC 1129, marking Line of Departure, at 0902 and was directed to remain astern of Salvage Boat of the APA43, unless necessary to do otherwise. It was observed at this time that the U.S.S. IDAHO, U.S.S. PHOENIX and U.S.S. BOISE were firing on the beach. U.S. planes overhead received some antiaircraft fire from the beach. Four destroyers were observed firing batteries to the right of White Beach.

2. At 0937, the First Wave arrived at Line of Departure. This wave began moving into the beach at 0944, followed by Salvage Boats of the APA43 and of the AKA13 respectively. Dive bombers began peeling off to bomb the beach. LCI's were firing rockets all over the beach. At this time, Wave number one and the above Salvage Boats were fired upon by Jap mortar. The rocket fire from the LCI's was increased at the time the wave was about three hundred and fifty yards from the beach. As the wave neared the beach, 40MM batteries on board the LCI's opened up upon the trees on the beach to pick off snipers. The Salvage Boats stopped to lie off and await the possibility of any First Wave boats being breached. The First Wave, consisting of boats from the U.S.S. FAYETTE, hit the beach at 1000, exactly on time and retracted, at 1002. Succeeding waves hit the beach in five minute intervals, all approximately on time. It was observed that many of the invading troops stumbled and fell disembarking from the landing craft, indicating that more training in this phase of the operation is necessary.

3. The Second Wave received slight mortar fire from the beach. It was further observed that LCVP PA43-24 was delayed in hitting the beach. This boat hit the beach between the Second and Third Waves.

4. Mortar fire from the beach was increased on the Third Wave, however all boats got in safely.

5. The Fourth Wave, consisting of boats from the U.S.S. TITANIA,

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made the beach with little or no resistance. Salvage Boats were instructed to head each wave off to the left to avoid some pill boxes which were observed to the right. LCVF KA13-24 headed into the beach in the wrong direction and was corrected by this Salvage Boat. At 1017, the American Flag was raised on the beach at Leyte. At this time, it became necessary to lie down in the Salvage Boats as machine gun fire was directed at them by the enemy.

6. The Fifth Wave, composed of LCM's was then landed on the beach and the first bulldozer pulled out to begin its task.

7. The Sixth Wave made the beach with little difficulty, along with LSM number nineteen, who had much difficulty in removing its first bulldozer, which was stuck on the ramp. At this time, it was again necessary to lie down in the boat as the machine gun fire was again coming directly at the Salvage Boats.

8. The Seventh Wave was instructed by this Salvage Boat to move to the left going into the beach and to spread out as the boats were too close together, making it an easy target for the enemy.

9. The Eighth Wave then made the beach. It is to be noted that at this time, no boats had yet been broached. Dive bombers began strafing the hill just back of Red Beach and were met with heavy enemy antiaircraft fire.

10. The Ninth Wave met enemy mortar fire upon making the beach. It was observed that LCVF KA16-18 was hit by mortar and the personnel were abandoning this boat. The Salvage Boat of the APA41 began removing personnel from this craft. KA13 Salvage Boat picked up one man from the water. He was questioned as to the extent of injuries sustained by personnel and replied that some men had been injured by mortar fire. KA13 Salvage Boat went to the side of the PA41 Salvage Boat which, strangely enough carried no Pharmacist's Mate. By this time, LCVF KA16-18 had sunk. The Pharmacist's Mate from the KA13 Salvage Boat was immediately sent into the Salvage Boat of the APA41 to administer first aid and give medical attention as necessary to the injured. Enemy mortar fire again increased as a Dukw approached the beach.

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11. It was observed, at 1102, that the LST's were approaching the beach. Numeral flags were set up as markers for the LST's. Stretcher bearers could be seen carrying casualties off of the beach.

12. At this time, the Pharmacist's Mate of the KA13 Salvage Boat returned and reported that he had administered first aid to one man, who had four fingers blown off, and to another, who was injured seriously. These casualties were then removed to a Transport for proper medical attention.

13. As LST 452 approached the beach, it was hit amidships by mortar fire causing a fire to break out immediately. LST 171 and several other LST's were also hit by mortar fire. A total of four LST's were hit by one or more mortar shells. At 1114, the fire on board the LST 452 had increased considerably and it was observed that little or no pressure was obtained on the two fire hoses which were lead out. A handy-billy could have supplied a more steady stream of water. Some LST's did not hit the beach at designated spots.

14. LCM's making the beach again at 1140, were all instructed to bear to the left. At this time, some difficulty occurred with the salt water line of the KA13 Salvage Boat. Repair work on this was commenced immediately. Heavy mortar fire continued on the beach as LCVP's approached the beach in successive waves.

15. At 1147, LST's began retracting with their full load. The water at this beach was too shallow for LST's as they could get no further than about thirty yards from the beach.

16. It was noticed, at 1138, that another ramp boat had been hit and had sunk. This boat was LCVP PA42-9. Our LCM's were making the beach at this time.

17. At 1214, the Group Commander's Boat, KA13-1, came alongside to tell us that boat PA41-19 had been calling us on the radio. Our radio operator stated that he was receiving no messages by radio. At 1223, U.S. Army shore batteries were set up and began firing at the enemy. Mortar fire from the beach ceased.

18. LCVP PA49-7 attempted to make the beach with a bad load causing an exceptional starboard list. It was necessary for this boat to unload her cargo

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in the water and a bulldozer was required to drag the cargo out on to the beach. LCVP's PA49-7 and PA49-15 appeared to have their bilges full of water as they had hardly any freeboard. It was necessary for the KA13 Salvage Boat to assist LCVP49-7 as a Salvage Boat from this ship had no handy-billy in their boat. Army working parties used bulldozers to drag cargo nets on the beach out of LCVP's and LCM's.

19. At 1415, General MacArthur and Staff arrived on the beach. On stepping from the boat in which he was riding, he landed about knee deep in water. Many photographers and reporters were present to greet the Mighty General at his arrival on the Philippine Islands.

20. It was observed, at 1435, that the LCVP's from the U.S.S. TITANIA were being overloaded, making it impossible for them to beach the boats. In some LCVP's from this ship, the load was set too far forward and it was necessary to make several attempts in hitting the beach before succeeding. Some boats from other ships were observed to have lifts consisting of trucks placed in backwards, causing much difficulty in unloading at the beach. Other boats had trailers in front of trucks in the boats making it necessary to have the trailers pulled out before the truck could be removed. Much of the delay in unloading boats at the beach was due to the fact that most cargo such as ammunition and oil drums had to be unloaded by hand at a distance of about ten yards from the beach. If cranes had been supplied, they would have greatly facilitated the discharging of this type of cargo. At about 1515, it was observed that LCVP KA13-12, which had been overloaded, had her bilges full of water. Our Salvage Boat pumped the boat out. It was observed by members of this Salvage Boat that one LCM in which a truck and trailer were loaded backwards, lost the truck in the water in a futile attempt to unload. The truck was last observed with only the roof barely over the surface of the water.

21. At 1656, the chow boat KA13-17 arrived at the Salvage Boat with hot food for all hands. This was the first period in which the members of the Salvage Boat had taken a moment to relax. At 1726, permission was requested for the Salvage Boat to secure for the night. At 1730, permission was granted. The Salvage Party returned to the ship at 1750.

D. G. Richert
D. G. RICHERT.