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Authority: E.O. 13526

By: NDC NARA Date: Dec 31, 2012

Refer to
Serial:

FE25-SF1/A16-3
04

LCS (L) FLOTILLA ONE
c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, Calif.

119
Reg. No. 185
R. S. No. 3-01963

USS LCI(L) 778, Flagship,
25 February 1945.

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

From: Commander Task Unit 78.3.8.
To: Commander in Chief, U. S. Fleet.
Via: (1) Commander Task Group 78.3.
(2) Commander Task Force 78 (Commander SEVENTH Amphibious Force).

Subject: Action report - Special - Suicide Boat attack MARIVELES, P. I. -
16 February 1945.

Enclosure: (A) Diagram of MARIVELES HARBOR anchorage assignments. -p. 5

1. Task Unit 78.3.8 had participated in an amphibious landing at MARIVELES on the morning of 15 February 1945, operating with elements of Task Group 78.3 and one Regimental Combat Team from the 38th Division, U. S. Army; LSTs, with bulk supplies; LCTs, loaded in preparation for the next day's operations; LCMs, manned by Army personnel; LSM 311, which had not completed unloading; LST 667 and the LSM 169 were in the harbor. LSM 169 had been damaged during the landing by a mine and had been anchored by the Salvage Unit near LILLIPON COVE. The LSTs less the 667 were beached at MARIVELES and the LCTs and LCMs were anchored on the western side of the harbor near the former Quarantine Station. The LST 667 and LSM 311 had anchored in the center of the harbor. Two LCS(L)(3)s, the 8 and 26, were on patrol at the entrance to the harbor on a line from GORDA POINT to CO-CHINOES POINT. The other LCS(L)(3)s and the LCI(R)s were patrolling the harbor area searching for mines. The area outside of the harbor had been declared a "NO-MANS-LAND" by CTG 78.3 and patrolling LCS(L)(3)s were warned not to go outside of the line assigned. The USS CLAXTON and USS SAUFLEY were patrolling to the west of LUZON firing interdiction fire for the army. A PT patrol was to be established to the east of CORREGIDOR. The plan for the night was to anchor the LCI(R)s on the south west side of the harbor and maintain the entrance patrol by augmenting it with the LCS(L)(3) 48 which was to patrol the center inside of the two-ship line.

2. At 1700, CTG, 78.3 called the LCS(L)(3) 48 close aboard and CTU 78.3.8 went to the INGHAM, Flagship. It was suggested that the under-way patrol be secured and a tight anchored screen be established due to the restricted operating area. CTU 78.3.8 was instructed as to conditions then known and informed that TG 78.3 with supporting units would be operating at sea to the westward. After the conference CTU 78.3.8 returned to the harbor and made the following arrangement for the night:

- (a) Anchored five (5) LCS(L)(3)s across the entrance between DILAO POINT and GORDA POINT as shown in enclosure (A).
- (b) Shifted the LST 667 and LSM 311 to berths close to the north east side of the harbor.

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- (c) Anchored the LCI(R)s on the south west side of the harbor.
- (d) Directed strict blackout restriction within the harbor area (later modified at the request of the Army and by direction of CTG 78.3).
- (e) Set modified Condition of Readiness One on all ships of TU 78.3.8.
- (f) Anchored the LCS(L)(3) 48, Flagship, in a position 500 yards inside the center of the harbor entrance screen.

3. At about 1830 two PTs entered the harbor and reported that their patrol had been secured and that they had been directed to anchor in MARIVELES. They were assigned berths on the north east side in the lee.

4. At 2300 it was reported that the LSM 169 was dragging anchor and being set down on the LCS(L)(3) 48 and into the anchored LCI(R)s, LCTs and LCMs along the south west side of the harbor. The LCS(L)(3) 48 got underway and maneuvered alongside the LSM. The only personnel on the LSM were five (5) army men on board as security watch. The LCS(L)(3) 48 towed the LSM to the center of the harbor and then sent a detail of men aboard to veer the bow cable and attempt to anchor her securely. After veering to maximum scope available, the LCS(L)(3) 48 cast off and anchored close by in order to check the position of the LSM. Hence, LCS(L)(3) 48 was about 1000 yards and directly in from the LCS(L)(3) 8's position in the screen. Dim lights on shore indicated that unloading was still in progress ashore. The destroyers were firing at intervals of about fifteen (15) minutes and were now also using illuminating projectiles ever so often.

5. At about 0315 a heavy explosion occurred in the approximate location of the LCS(L)(3) 7. This was followed almost immediately by a second heavy explosion from the same locality. Heavy gunfire broke out from the right flank of the screen. At 0318 a second series of two explosions were observed to the right of the first ones. The harbor entrance was obscured by a cloud of heavy black smoke and the only thing visible was the LCS(L)(3) 7 which was burning fiercely and spreading blazing oil on the surface of the water. The gunfire was observed by the tracers to be directed to seaward and then it shifted so that the LCS(L)(3) 48 was in the line of fire and the

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projectiles were ricocheting around and over her. During this time attempts were being made to contact the screen to determine the nature of the trouble. Orders were sent to the LCI(R)s and to the other units present to get underway and be prepared to clear the harbor. CTG 78.3 was notified that the harbor was under attack. The LCS(L)(3) 48 maneuvered to windward toward the entrance so as to be clear of the smoke. During this period, other explosions were heard from the vicinity of the screen. A message was received from the LCS(L)(3) 27 that she was severely damaged and in immediate need of assistance and medical aid. The LCI(R) 341 which had reported being underway and on the south west side, was directed to go to the assistance of the LCS(L)(3) 27 and the LST 667 was directed to send medical aid. A further report from the LCS(L)(3) 27 was to the effect that the screen had been attacked by suicide motor boats and that one had gotten into the harbor. All units were directed to leave the harbor and proceed to the south, to return to the vicinity of the harbor at daylight. The LCS(L)(3) 27 reported beached near COCHINGOS POINT. The LCS(L)(3) 48 and the LCS(L)(3) 8 patrolled the harbor and harbor entrance while the units present departed. The PTs were directed to establish a patrol to the east of the harbor and to be alert for further attacks. At 0510, all units except beached LSTs were reported clear. LCTs and Army LCMs were recovering survivors off COCHINGOS POINT. Search had not disclosed the presence of any enemy craft within the harbor so the LCS(L)(3)s 8 and 48 left the harbor and proceeded to the vicinity of LST 667 in order to screen her.

6. Interrogation of survivors upon return to port seems to indicate that the screen was attacked by approximately twelve (12) small motor boats which carried heavy demolition charges. Each ship was attacked by two of these craft, one coming in from starboard at about frame 48 and the other from port at frame 64. Two struck each of the 7, 49, and 26 while the 27 sank the first two to attack her. Four more made a further attack and three of these were sunk before they inflicted damages. The fourth exploded about twenty (20) feet out on the port side and fragmentation was such as to riddle and dish-in the side for about 15 frames. Two deaths resulted and about twenty wounded.

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7. The Commanding Officer of the LCS(L)(3) 27, a casualty, stated that the attacking boats were about 15 to 18 feet in length, had an armored shield forward which 20mm fire had difficulty in piercing and ran silently. No radar warning was had and the attack came as a complete surprise. It occurred just after moonset.

8. This was the first experience under fire for the majority of the officers and men in the LCS(L)(3)s and their performance of duty, especially in the case of the LCS(L)(3) 27, was exceptional.

9. It is believed that if LCS(L)(3) type vessels are to be used extensively for anti-small craft screens they should be equipped with a more sensitive radar. Communication facilities are ample in the case of those ships equipped with two TCS, two SCR 808 sets and one SCR 610 and it is recommended that all vessels of this type be so equipped. There is no data available on ammunition expenditure. Notwithstanding the shock and damages, the main engine and auxiliary engines in the LCS(L)(3) 27 were able to operate at all times.

10. This Command has no definite information regarding personnel casualties other than that two (2) deaths were reported by the LCS(L)(3) 27. The survivors of the sunken ships were transferred from this area before this Command could ascertain their identities.

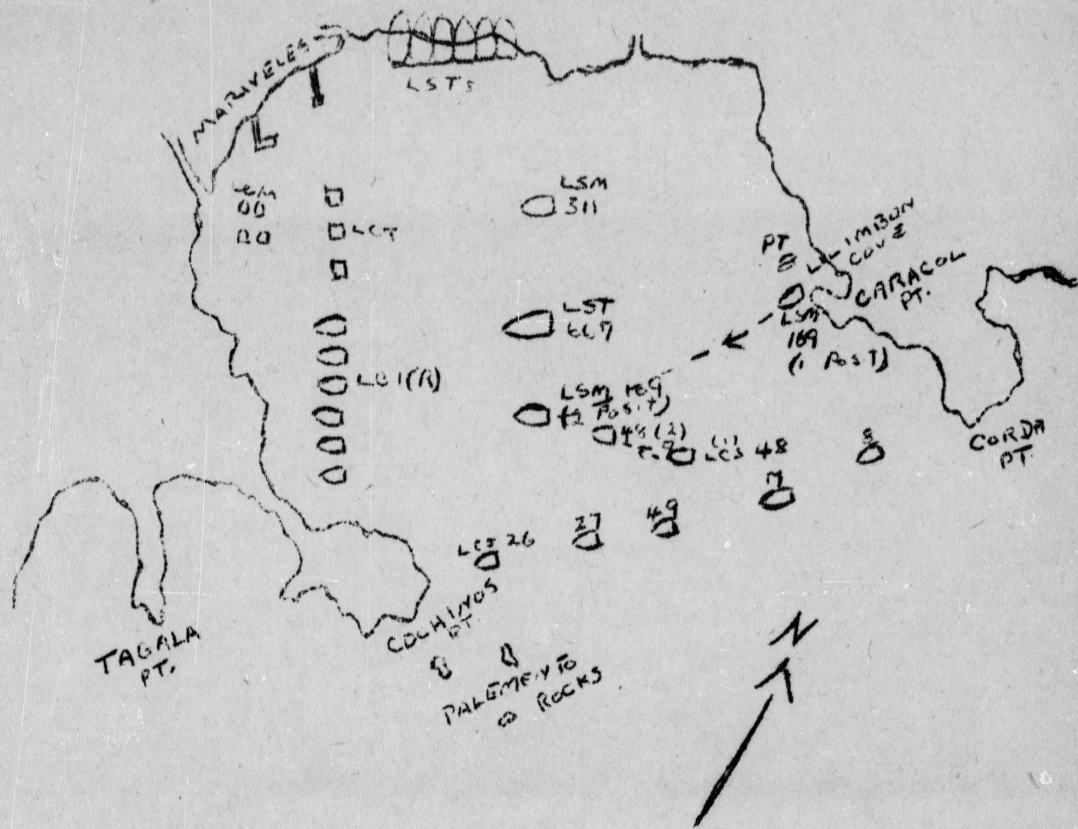
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ENCLOSURE (A)

(NOT DRAWN TO SCALE)

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Serial 0270

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COMMANDER
AMPHIBIOUS GROUP NINE
Care of Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, California

28 February 1945

FIRST ENDORSEMENT to
CTU 78.3.8 Serial 04
of 25 February 1945.

From: Commander Task Group SEVEN EIGHT Point THREE
(Commander Amphibious Group NINE).
To: Commander in Chief, United States Fleet.
Via: (1) Commander Task Force SEVEN EIGHT.
(2) Commander SEVENTH Fleet.
Subject: Action Report - Special - Suicide Boat Attack
MARIVELES, PHILIPPINE ISLANDS - 16 February 1945.

1. Forwarded.

2. The operations in MARIVELES HARBOR in the late afternoon of
D - Day presented certain problems:

- (a) The character of ORANGE BEACH was such as to create unsatisfactory beaching and unloading conditions for the LSTs, with the result that there were five LSTs on the beach only partially unloaded. Retracting conditions were bad.
- (b) Twenty-five Army manned LCMs had to load troops and equipment on the morning of D + 1 in MARIVELES HARBOR, prior to 0600, for the attack on CORREGIDOR. Sunrise was at 0720.
- (c) The reported presence of numerous "Q" boats in the MANILA BAY area indicated that MARIVELES HARBOR was open to this form of attack.

3. The available units most suited to combat this threat were the LCS(L)s arranged in a close screen across the mouth of the harbor. Due to the narrow entrance, it was considered that a close screen of anchored vessels would detect approaching "Q" boats better and be able to use their fire power better on such targets.

4. The failure to detect the approach of the "Q" boats neutralized the power and defense of the gunboats.

5. The performance of the LCS(L) 27 during this attack, in sinking five "Q" boats before the damaging attack of the sixth boat put the LCS(L) 27 out of action, indicates that the LCS(L) 27 was manned by alert and determined officers and men, who performed in a very effective manner.

CC: CTU 78.3.8

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A. D. STRUELE.

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