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Authority: E.O. 13526

By: NDC NARA Date: Dec 31, 2012

LST626/A16-3
Serial: 012

U.S.S. LST 626,
c/o Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California.



CONFIDENTIAL

From: Commanding Officer, U.S.S. LST 626.
To : Commander-in-Chief, U. S. Fleet.
Via : Commander LST Flotilla 7. (Commander Task Unit 78.1.12)
Commander Amphibious Group 6. (Commander Task Group 78.1)
Commander SEVENTH Amphibious Force (Commander Task
Force 78)
Commander SEVENTH Fleet.
Commander Southwest Pacific Area.

Subject: Action Report, Tarakan, Borneo.
1 May 1945.

Reference: (a) Pacific Fleet Confidential Letter 26CN-44.
(b) Com7thPhib restr. ltr., serial 2823 of 12 Nov. 1944.

1. This ship beached at 1426, 23 April 1945 on "Blue" beach, Morotai Island, Halmahera Group, and commenced loading Australian Construction Equipment, and bulk cargo of the 1st RAAF Construction Battalion. The loading of all mobile and bulk cargo was completed at 1230, 24 April 1945. All RAAF personnel 245 enlisted men and 16 officers reported aboard at 1300 of the same day. At 1551, 24 April 1945 this ship retracted and anchored off Morotai Island.

2. On 27 April 1945, an army LCM was made fast in preparation for towing. At 1624 of the same day this ship heaved anchor and proceeded to form in Echelon O-1-F of Task Unit 78.1.12, Task Group 78.1. At 1820, 27 April 1945, Task Group 78.1 under command of Rear Admiral F. B. ROYAL, USN comprising Task Unit 78.1.12 under Captain G. A. SINCLAIR, USN was formed.

3. The mission of Task Group 78.1 was to land Australian troops and equipment over beaches on Tarakan Island, North-east Borneo. The mission of the troops was to destroy the enemy garrison, seize and occupy the Island in order to establish an air base, with Naval facilities as required to support further operations.

4. At 1729, 30 April 1945, this ship took position #6, column #1, "DOG" formation on signal from CTG. After an uneventful trip on the morning of 1 May 1945, this vessel cast off army LCM at 0544 as ordered by CTU 78.1.12. At 0617 anchored in berth #20 of LST AREA II pursuant to operational orders. At 1846, on signal from CTU, this ship got underway and anchored on LST line of departure in preparation for beaching. At 1859 filled ballast

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tanks A-410-W, A-411-W, A-404-W, A-405-W, and A-406-W., draft fwd 6' 2", draft aft 12' 2". At 2136 on signal from Commander Task Unit 78.1.4, this vessel commenced its beaching approach under extremely hazardous conditions, due to the poor visibility at night and the defective setting of the range. As ship approached beach, one of the range lights was observed to flicker and appear white instead of blue, confusing the range. Due to the uncertainty of the range, this ship was forced to circle and start another approach. At 2157, made contact with beach on a heading of 038°(T) at standard speed as ordered. The ship was perpendicular to the beach, and it was obvious that the range set up, which had a heading of 015°(T), was wrong and dangerous for a night approach. Ship was beached on "Yellow" beach, Tarakan Island, Borneo with U.S.S. LST 743 to port and U.S.S. LST 993 to starboard. At 2210, filled all ballast. At 0840 of 2 May 1945, this vessel attempted to push forward with no success. Regardless of my persistency in having ramp started at shore end of pontoons, beach party did not commence doing so till 1903 of 2 May 1945. At 2007 of the same day, commenced unloading cargo. During the unloading of the cargo, this ship fueled and watered four LCIs with a total expenditure of 32,200 gallons of fuel and 27,500 gallons of water.

5. At 0825 U.S.S. LCI 712 moored starboard side to our port side in preparation for assisting us in retracting from beach. 0831 U.S.S. LCI 1025 moored port side to our starboard side for the same reason. 0855 Pumped out ballast tanks A-404-W, A-415-W, A-416-W, and A-417-W. 0925 Commenced retracting operations. 0928 Clear of beach. 0933 U.S.S. LCI 712 and U.S.S. LCI 1025 cast off and ship proceeded to assigned anchorage. Anchored in assigned birth at 0947. On signal from CTU moored stbd., side to port side of U.S.S. LST 67 and commenced transferring fuel at 1339. At 1420, completed transfer of Diesel Oil, having transferred 20,809 gallons to U.S.S. LST 67 and cast off at 1435. Anchored by stern anchor at 1502, and commenced loading LVTs through bow doors. 1548 Completed loading 8 LVTs with 33 army enlisted men and 1 officer of the 727th Amphibian Tractor Battalion.

6. In the afternoon of 3 May 1945, at 1624 this ship took position #3 in column of Task Unit 78.1.92 enroute Tarakan Island, Borneo to Morotai Island, Halmahera Group.

7. Recommendations: I believe the speed used in beaching at Tarakan, Borneo was excessive because of the gradient of the beach, and I recommend that LSTs be beached at a slower speed. Also recommend that only one control officer be used in directing beaching operations rather than four or five.

M. J. CODONER, Jr.

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