

LST637/A16
Serial: 096

U.S.S. LST 637
Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, Calif.

214
Reg. No. 95
5 03648
R. S. No.
7 May 1945

CONFIDENTIAL

From: Commanding Officer
To : Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet

Via: (1) Commander Task Unit 78.1.12 (ComLSTFlot 7)
(2) Commander Task Unit 78.1.1 (ComLSTFlot 7)
(3) Commander Task Group 78.1 (ComPhibGR SIX)
(4) Commander Task Force 78 (Com7thPhib)
(5) Commander SEVENTH U.S. Fleet

Subject: Action Report - TARAKAN ISLAND, Borneo, Netherlands
East Indies Operation

Reference: (a) Article 874(6) U.S. Navy Regs. 1920
(b) Com7thPhib conf. ltr. FE25/A16-3(3); Serial 0212,
dated 17 Feb. 1944.

1. In compliance with reference (a) and (b), the following
is submitted as report of action.

PART I - This ship staged at Morotai Island, NEI and loaded
the following:

Elements of the Royal Australian Army
Elements of the Royal Australian Navy (Beachmaster)
Elements of the U.S. Army (operating LVTs)
Total vehicles - 38
Total cargo - 424 tons
Total personnel- 421

One of this ship's LCVP's with crew was transferred
to USS LST 562 for transportation, and one Beachmaster LCVP with
crew was carried by this ship. A beaching rehearsal was held at
staging area and tactical rehearsal was held enroute to objective
area. The purpose of this ship's participation was the carrying of
assault troops and supporting elements and equipment to the objective
area and place them ashore to wrest control from the Japanese forces
estimated at 3,000 to 4,000. One officer of this ship was assigned
as first wave guide at Green Beach One; and one officer was assigned
as second wave guide at Green Beach Two.

Assault was carried out according to plan. This ship
was under only very minor fire during the entire operation. One
small submarine was reported during early phase of beaching operation
preparations, and sporadic fire was encountered on two occasions
during unloading. The first fire was encountered on the morning of
May 3rd at about 0900 when several small calibre (estimated at 40MM
from the explosion at contact with the water) shells landed within
a 100 yard radius of the ship. Five separate splashes were observed.

X
121411

LST637/A16
Ser: 096

U.S.S. LST 637

7 May 1945

C ONFIDENTIAL

Subject: Action Report - TARAKAN ISLAND, Borneo, Netherlands
East Indies Operation

On the other occasion, about 1900 the same day, there were observed about three explosions, the nearest falling about forty yards of the ship. They were believed to have been from shells of about 75MM calibre, judging from the splash and concussion. No answering fire was elicited from this ship. During the operation, special security watches were posted as protection against Q-boats and limpheteers.

PART II

The following is a chronological statement of the events in which this ship participated.

12 April 1945

Departed Leyte, PI. Following departure, engaged in AA practice.

16 April 1945

Arrived Morotai Island, NEI

20 April 1945.

Beached at Blue Beach, Morotai Island, and began loading of cargo of rations, petrol, ammunition, bridge equipment and girders, and gneral stores. Also loaded various trucks, jeeps, trailers, and 10 LVTs to carry assault troops.

21 April 1945.

Continued loading operations. Took on troops. Completed loading, retracted from beach and returned to LST anchorage.

23 April 1945.

Beachmaster LGVP for transportation to objective area boat crew reported aboard. Changed anchorage to position off White Beach.

24 April 1945.

Took part in beaching rehearsal. During rehearsal, one of LVTs was damaged off beach and sunk. No personnel casualties involved. Picked up LVTs upon completion of rehearsal and new LVT was supplied by U.S. Army.

27 April 1945.

One of ship's LGVPs transferred to LST 562 for transportation. This ship's small boat crew was transferred with boat.
Underway to objective.

29 April 1945.

Practiced forming approach cruising disposition.

30 April 1945.

Approaching objective - formed into approach formation.

5 03648

2

LST637/A16
Serial: 096
CONFIDENTIAL

U.S.S. LST 637

7 May 1945

Subject: Action Report - TARAKAN ISLAND, Borneo, Netherlands
East Indies Operation

1 May 1945.

0445 - Ship at General Quarters (Condition I-Mike)
0600 - Anchored off Green Beach in position 8.
Opened bow doors and lowered ramp.
0630 - Lowered small boats.
0643 - Commenced launching LVTs with assault troops.
0650 - Completed launching LVTs
0720 - Got underway to orange anchorage.
0730 - Anchored in last column to make way for
pontoon carrying LSTs.
1307 - LCVF returned from temporary duty with LST 562.

2 May 1945.

At anchor

3 May 1945.

Commenced unloading cargo by LCMS.

4 May 1945.

Continued unloading cargo by LCMS. Began unloading
vehicles by LCTs.

5 May 1945.

Completed unloading operations

PART III

The only firing that this ship engaged in was during
target practice. Total 40MM expended - 978 rounds;
total 20MM expended - 2958 rounds. Gun casualty on
#7 20MM was occasioned by wear on trigger parallelogram
which was replaced by spares on board. Gun casualty on
#6 40MM occasioned by split seam in water cooling jacket
which was repaired on board.

PART IV

Battle damage was suffered only by ships two LCVFs. No. 1
boat began to take water just before reaching beach -
damage consisted of seams in bottom planking opening.
Cause unknown, but believed that it may have been caused
by striking submerged object, or possibly by an under-
water explosion. However, no explosion of any violence
was felt by boats crew. No. 2 boat suffered broken
propeller when it struck submerged beaching obstacles.
Bottom planking was scored and there are two gouges
therein of 1/2 to 1 inch depth. This boat was also
used in unloading operations, and there appears to be
some damage to boat's frame as two horizontal members
are cracked.

No. 1 boat has not been and cannot be repaired by ship's
force. It is not in serviceable condition at present
and it is doubtful that it can be repaired because of
the number of seams opened and the extent of leakage.

5 03648

3

LST637/A16
Ser: 096
CONFIDENTIAL

U.S.S. LST 637

7 May 1945

Subject: Action Report - TARAKAN ISLAND, Borneo, Netherlands
East Indies Operation

The broken propeller on No. 2 boat has been replaced
and the boat can be used for limited service.

PART V

No special comments.

PART VI

Personnel aboard performed their duties in a satisfactory manner. The various division officers appeared ready for emergencies. The crew generally were very cooperative with the troops to expedite unloading operations, and did all of the last fifteen percent (15%) or more of the cargo unloading, after the troops had been put ashore.

R. A. Vielhaber
R. A. VIELHABER

CC: CominCh (direct) ✓

5 03648

4