

LST FLOTILLA 24

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LSTFlot24/A16-3

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CONFIDENTIAL

From: Commander Task Unit 78.1.16.
(Commander LST Flotilla TWENTY-FOUR)

To : Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Fleet.

Subject: Action Report on LABUAN-BORNED Operation -
Submission of.

I General Narrative

1. Attack Force Commander for this operation was Vice Admiral D. E. BARNEY, Commander SEVENTH Amphibious Force. Brunei Bay Attack Group under the command of Rear Admiral F. B. ROYAL was known as Task Group 78.1. Rear Admiral R. L. HENNEY, CTG 74.3 commanded Cruiser Covering Group, and was in charge of Fire Support.
2. The BROWN Assault Unit designated as Task Unit 78.1.16 was commanded by Captain H. B. HUDSON, USN., composition as follows:

LST 640, 560, 591, 595, 619, 696, 709, 638, 941,
806, 912, 936, 937, 585, 942, 637, 1025.

HMAS MANOORA, HMAS WESTRALIA, USS CARTER HALL, USS TITANIA.

LSM 128, 50, 51, 52, 53, 63, 64, 65.

LCI 744, 745, 746, 749, 955.
3. In accordance with ComPhibGrp6 Attack Order A606-45, this Unit was to land the 24th Brigade and attack units of the Ninth Australian Division on BROWN Beach, LABUAN ISLAND at DOG hour on Zebra Day.
4. On 6 May 1945, Captain H. B. Hudson arrived at Morotai to confer with members of PhibGroup6 Staff on the coming operation at BRUNEL. Here it was decided that Captain Hudson would be Commander of the BROWN Assault Unit. Upon the arrival of his staff on 9 May, work was begun on a Landing Attack

Order. Working in close cooperation with PhilGrpSIX and using their Attack Order as a basis, ComLSTFlot24 Landing Attack Order 4-45 was written and plans completed for the HUIHEI operation.

5. On 1 June 1945, a rehearsal of the actual assault was held in Morotai Straits. The only major defect noted was the delayed departure of the BROWN 2 element of Wave 1. This was due to the fact that the LCS which was to head the unit toward the beach was late in leaving the line of departure. The first six waves were re-run, and hit the beach on time. A critique was held aboard the ROCKY MOUNT next morning for all Commanding Officers, Task Unit Commanders, Wave Guides, Boat Group Commanders, and Control Officer. Errors were discussed and questions answered on all phases of the assault.

II Chronology (All times are minus NINE (ITEM) Zone - All dates are east longitude dates)

9 June 1945 (Zebra minus ONE Day)

- 0001 - CTG 78.1 underway in U.S.S. ROCKY MOUNT (AGC3) and GCU 78.1.16 (ComLST Flot 24 in LST 640) with main assault echelon in cruising disposition 6-6S, speed seven knots.
- 0600 - Changed fleet course and axis to 223° T.
- 0805 - Fleet course and axis changed to 220° T and speed increased to 7.5 knots.
- 1400 - Fleet course and axis changed to 215° T and speed increased to 8 knots.
- 1420 - BOISE (CL47) with General Douglas MacARTHUR (CinC SWPA) aboard, escorted by the KILLEN (DD593) and GRANT (DD649) joined the formation and took position astern.
- 1630 - Signal to form the Approach Formation was executed.
- 1830 - ALBERT T. HARRIS (DE447) transferred a radar technician from the ROCKY MOUNT to the LST 640 by breeches buoy to repair the latter's radar.
- 2105 - Fleet course and axis changed to 190° T.
- 2130 - Fleet course and axis changed to 171° T.
- 2130 - CTG 74.3 reported 35 more mines had been swept at the objective, making a total of 69 up to date. Hydrographic work had continued successfully with the planting of the remainder of the navigational buoys, UDT 11 finished reconnaissance and survey of all the beaches.

10 June 1945 - ZEBRA DAY

- 0052 - Fleet course and axis changed to 128° T.
- 0115 - Speed was slowed to six knots.
- 0215 - Interval was closed to 500 yards.
- 0247 - Fleet course and axis changed to 125° T.
- 0258 - Fleet course and axis changed to 120° T.
- 0317 - Fleet course and axis changed to 090° T.
- 0425 - Signal was executed to Deploy. Assault unit commanders took charge of their units and proceeded as previously directed. LST 473 and WINOOSHI (AO 38) proceeded to assigned anchorages in area ZEBRA. Reserve Unit (TU 78.1.20) proceeded to assigned anchorages in anchorage area SUGAR. ROCKY MOUNT (AO 3), ACHILLES (ARL 41), FP 47, PCS(R) 849, LCI 635, and PINTO (ATF 90) proceeded to assigned berths in Transport area SUGAR, and LST Area FIVE. PINTO (ATF 90) reported to CTU 78.1.16 and USS ARH 61 reported to CTU 78.1.18.
- 0540 - Fleet course and axis changed to 089° T.
- 0545 - Fleet course and axis changed to 347° T.
- 0550 - Fleet course and axis changed to 332° T.
- 0638 - CTU 78.1.16 ordered BROWN Assault Unit to take assigned stations in LST Transport Area FIVE.
- 0651 - Bogey on course 350 came over transport area and dropped bomb, but no damage or casualties were observed. The bomb was dropped between a Destroyer and an LST about 500 yards from the Attack Group Flagship. Plane was a Japanese twin-engine.
- 0652 - Flash RED, Control GREEN.
- 0700 - At first light, all ships making assault landing on BROWN Beach were observed anchored on proper stations in transport area.
- 0708 - MANOIRA lowered boats, troops were boated, and boats stood by.
- 0719 - SCs 732 and 698, and PC 1120 observed moving up to Line of Departure.
- 0727 - Support craft observed moving up to Line of Departure.

0730 - CARTER HALL (LSD 3) started launching LCMs in LST Area FIVE.
 0733 - Line of Departure established for BROWN Beach.
 0736 - Support craft were observed on station, forward of line of Departure.
 0739 - LST 585 started launching LVTs.
 0742 - LVTs 640, 637, 1025 started launching LVTs.
 0745 - #6 1120 made time check.
 0750 - CARTER HALL under way from LST Transport Area FIVE off BROWN Beach for WHITE Beach to launch her remaining three (3) LCMs off that beach.
 0759 - Flash WHITE, Control GREEN.
 0800 - Support craft started first run on BROWN Beach.
 0805 - Naval gunfire commenced.
 0807 - Support craft opened fire on BROWN Beach.
 0810 - CTU 78.1.16 confirmed ability to meet DCS Hour of 0915 on BROWN Beach.
 0812 - LCMs, having completed their run, retracted from BROWN Beach.
 0815 - Fourteen B-24s approached the target area.
 0817 - Flash BLUE, Control GREEN.
 0830 - Flash WHITE, Control GREEN.
 0840 - BROWN TWO waves were ordered back from the line of Departure.
 0841 - CTU 78.1.41 reported Support Craft on station for second run on BROWN Beach.
 0845 - First wave was dispatched to BROWN Beach.
 0846 - Fourteen B-24s made a strike on BROWN Beach.
 0848 - Second wave dispatched to BROWN Beach.
 0851 - Third wave dispatched to BROWN Beach.
 0854 - Fourth wave dispatched to BROWN Beach.
 0855 - Japanese opened fire on our beachhead from the beached hull of a Japanese freighter.

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0859 - LCIs of Seventh wave closed the Line of Departure.

0904 - A Rocket barrage was laid by LCI(R)s.

0906 - Aircraft dropped white flares, signifying First wave was 500 yards from BROWN Beach.

0907 - LCIs shot red smoke signals, signifying First waves were 500 yards from BROWN Beach.

0912 - Fifth wave dispatched to BROWN Beach.

0914:30 - LVTs of first wave landed on BROWN ONE Beach.

0915:35 - LVTs of First wave landed on BROWN TWO Beach.

0917 - Second wave landed on BROWN Beach.

0917:30 - Second wave landed on BROWN TWO Beach.

0918 - Flash RED, Control GREEN.

0918 - Sixth Wave dispatched to BROWN Beach.

0919 - Third Wave landed on BROWN ONE Beach.

0920 - Third wave landed on BROWN TWO Beach.

0922 - Flash BLUE, Control GREEN.

0924 - Fourth wave landed on BROWN TWO Beach.

0926 - Fifth wave landed on BROWN TWO Beach.

0927 - Fifth wave landed on BROWN ONE Beach.

0930 - LST Beaching Officer landed on BROWN Beach and reported no incidents and that a hydrographic survey was being made.

0933 - Sixth wave landed on BROWN ONE Beach.

0933:30 - Sixth wave landed on BROWN TWO Beach.

0937 - Flash BLUE, Control GREEN.

0940 - Seventh wave dispatched to BROWN Beach.

0940 - LCI 749 beached in slot 10 on BROWN Beach TWO. LCI 955 beached in slot 1 on BROWN Beach ONE.

0946 - CTU 78.1.16 directed control officer to send eighth wave to BROWN Beach.

0950 - Eighth wave dispatched to BROWN Beach.

0953 - Seventh wave of LCI(L)s 749 and 965 landed on BROWN Beach.

1001 - First four waves on BROWN Beach directed to secure and return to ships.

1004 - LCI 749 unloaded on BROWN Beach TWO.

1004 - Eighth wave landed on BROWN Beach.

1005 - LCI 749 retracted from BROWN Beach TWO.

1028 - LCI 955 finished unloading on BROWN TWO Beach.

1043 - Ninth wave dispatched to BROWN Beach.

1048 - Eleventh Wave dispatched to BROWN Beach.

1053 - Twelfth wave dispatched to BROWN Beach.

1058 - Ninth Wave landed on BROWN ONE Beach.

1059 - Ninth wave landed on BROWN TWO Beach.

1101 - Eleventh wave landed on BROWN ONE.

1103 - Eleventh wave landed on BROWN TWO.

1106 - Twelfth wave landed on BROWN ONE and BROWN TWO.

1110 - General MacARTHUR (CINC SWPA) embarked in an LCVP with Admiral ROYAL and General KENNEDY, and went in to inspect BROWN Beach. They were escorted by three (3) PTs.

1130 - LSMs 50 and 65 observed on BROWN Beach ONE. LSMs 53 and 64 observed on Beach about on line dividing BROWN ONE and TWO Beaches.

1134 - Flash WHITE, Control GREEN.

1141 - PBM (JAN) reported that the left-hand extremity of BROWN ONE Beach was unsatisfactory for LSMs.

1200 - The following LSMs were on BROWN Beach: 52, 53, 63, and 64.

1207 - LSM 52 retracted.

1230 - CARTER HALL returned from WHITE Beach to Transport Area SUGAR.
 1231 - LSM 52 beached on BROWN Beach.
 1232 - LSM 54 retracted from BROWN Beach.
 1241 - LSM 53 retracted from BROWN Beach.
 1250 - LSM 65 beached on BROWN Beach.
 1251 - LSM 51 beached on BROWN Beach.
 1300 - MANOCORA, WESTRALIA, TITANIA, ordered to close beach in order to expedite unloading.
 1305 - LSMs 65, 52, 63, 51, retracted from BROWN Beach.
 1315 - LSM 65 beached on BROWN Beach.
 1315 - 12 DUKWs at Line of Departure, awaiting orders to go to BROWN Beach.
 1317 - LSM 51 beached on BROWN Beach.
 1334 - LSM 50 beached on BROWN Beach.
 1336 - LSM 128 beached on BROWN Beach.
 1336 - LSM 51 retracted from BROWN Beach.
 1343 - LSM 51 beached on BROWN Beach.
 1345 - First wave of 12 DUKWs dispatched.
 1400 - Line of Departure for BROWN Beach was dissolved, SCs ordered to report to close beach to control small boat traffic.
 1421 - LSM 65 retracted from BROWN Beach.
 1427 - LST 640 beached on BROWN Beach.
 1445 - The DUKW wave landed on BROWN Beach to help in u loading LSMs.
 1458 - LST 560 beached on BROWN Beach.
 1522 - LST 591 beached on BROWN Beach.
 1525 - LSTs 638 and 941 launched pontoon barges.

1530 - LST 619 beached on BROWN Beach.
 1532 - LST 595 beached on BROWN Beach.
 1606 - LST 1025 beached on BROWN Beach.
 1633 - LST 637 beached on BROWN Beach.
 1705 - LST 941 beached on BROWN Beach.
 1708 - LST 585 beached on BROWN Beach.
 1730 - The unloading situation at the Beach was as follows:

LSTs on beach at time of beaching:

LST 640 - 1427
 " 560 - 1458
 " 591 - 1522
 " 619 - 1530
 " 595 - 1532
 " 1025 - 1606
 " 637 - 1633
 " 709 - 1700
 " 941 - 1705
 " 585 - 1708
 " 638 - 1737

Remaining six (6) LSTs beached within next 45 minutes.

1804 - LSTs MANOCRA, WESTRALIA, TITANIA (AKA 13), CARTER HALL, LSTs 50, 51, 52, 53, 128, 63, 64, 65, LCI(L)s 744, 745, 746, 749, and 955, were all unloaded on the ZEIRA Day.

11 June 1945 (ZEIRA plus ONE Day)

LSTs 560, 591, 619, 640, 585, 595, 696, and 709, were unloaded on ZEIRA plus ONE Day.

12 June 1945 (ZEIRA plus TWO Day)

0815 - Ships of Reinforcement Unit (CTU 78.1.19) moved to assigned berths in Victoria Harbor and reported to CTU 78.1.16 for unloading instructions.

0953 - ROCKY MOUNT anchored in Berth 61.

1030 - CTU 78.1.16 and Staff transferred from LST 640 to ROCKY MOUNT to permit LST 640 to sail. CTU 78.1.16 was also to be 7thPhibForRep, BRUMBI, upon departure of CTC 78.1 from the area.

1225 - LST 640 launched pontoon causeways.

1425 - Two (2) LSTs requested to unload pontoon gear from LSTs 696 and 640.

1440 - LST 696 launched pontoon causeways.

1800 - ComLSTFlet 15, OTC of TV 78.1.92 (Behelon O-6-E), departed BRUNEI BAY with LSTs 560, 674, 585, 584, 591, 595, 619, 637, 638, 640, 696, 709, 751, 805, 922, 936, 937, 941, 942, 1025; LCI's 636, 701, 702, 703, 744, 745; LCI(R)s 31, 34, 338; LSMs 50, 51, 52, 53, 64, 65, 67, 68, 128, 138, 168, 203, 219, 225, 237; SCUTTLE (AM 298) screened by ALBERT T. HARRIS (DE 447), CHARLES E. BRANSON (DE 446), JOE (DE 707), DAVE (DE 225), SC 750 and SC 698.

LSTs 637, 638, 806, 912, 936, 937, 942; LCI's 544, 661, 662, 753, 960, 1060, and LSM 68 were unloaded on ZEBRA plus TWO Bay.

III Remarks on Ordnance Material and Equipment Including Ammunition Expenditure.

1. The only ordnance material and equipment used by this Task Unit was in the Support Force and it functioned properly with no casualties. Ammunition expenditure is listed in Enclosure (B) of Action Report of Commander LCI Group 45.

IV Resume of Battle Damage.

1. No battle damage was suffered by this Unit, and none inflicted on the enemy.

V Special Comments

1. The Attack Order and accompanying sketches and charts as issued by Commander Amphibious Group SIX is considered excellent, but it is recommended that consideration be given to reducing it in size where possible, and that further consideration be given to limited distribution of certain annexes as some ships are not directly concerned with them.
2. The trip from the staging area to the objective was without incident and the approach and entry plan into LAUAN HARBOR functioned smoothly.
3. The landing was effected according to plan and the first seven waves sent in on schedule with the eighth wave being called shortly thereafter. Considerable difficulty was encountered by Commander BROWN Assault Unit in obtaining permission to send in the ninth, eleventh, and twelfth waves (Brigade Reserves). The eighth wave landed on BROWN Beach at 1004 but the ninth wave was not dispatched until 1043 and the eleventh and twelfth waves at five minute intervals (Tenth wave being LSMs and LCI's and sent in at 1130). Commander BROWN Assault unit made repeated requests to send in the Brigade Reserves, but could get no satisfactory answer except to be told to wait, and permission was not granted until the time specified above which

caused considerable delay in making boats readily available for unloading the Transports. The Reserves were finally sent in when the beachmaster announced that the beach was clear and he could handle them.

4. The LCIs, LSMs, and LSTs, were all beached prior to dusk and unloading commenced. The LCIs were promptly unloaded and retracted without difficulty. The LSMs beached without difficulty and were promptly unloaded and all retracted except three (LSMs 50, 51, 64) who had to remain on the beach due to fall of tide. The others proceeded to the Transport Area to assist in unloading the Transports. The gradient of the beach was such that LSTs had to wait for fall of tide before all could unload with a dry ramp. Some delay was encountered during the night due to road becoming blocked to the dump area and one ship (LST 806) was unable to unload due to that reason although the ship carried only mobile stock and had a dry ramp for several hours. Although only one tide a day was predicted, a high tide was encountered shortly after midnight which further delayed unloading. However, unloading in general was satisfactory and all BROWN Assault shipping was completely unloaded prior to 1600 on ZEBRA plus TWO Day.
5. Communications in general were satisfactory throughout operation, except for a short period during the unloading operation in the afternoon of ZEBRA Day when considerable difficulty was encountered communicating with the principal beachmaster. During the unloading operations on ZEBRA Day and ZEBRA plus ONE Day, there was an enormous amount of both voice radio and visual traffic handled on board the Flotilla Flagship, and it is believed that an effort should be made to reduce this, and steps are being taken by this command to do so.
6. The Medical Plan is deemed adequate and the few casualties incurred were properly cared for.
7. Providing the LST 473 as supply ship lessened the difficulty in logistic services for vessels remaining in the area after the initial assault. Further attempt to provide for logistic service was made by removing dry stores, fresh provisions, and fuel and water, from ships departing from the objective area soon after the assault, and placing them aboard ships remaining in the area.
8. It is strongly recommended that consideration be given where possible to keeping amphibious craft together so a Group or Flotilla Commander may go on an operation with his own ships. If such procedure is possible, the Unit Commander could train control teams, boat group commanders and boat officers, and the whole group function more smoothly than at present. Since ships now operate under a different Unit Commander on almost every assault and as instructions vary with each individual commander, confusion sometimes results.

Special Comments, Conclusion and Recommendations made by Commander Control Unit BROWN (CTU 78.1.41).

Landing Craft Control, Beach Organization, and Ship-to-Shore Movement - BROWN Beaches.

1. Landing Craft Control.

(a) Commander Control Unit BROWN (CTU 78.1.41) in PC 1120 organized and operated in accordance with standard operating Procedure for LCCO's, Com7thFib Serial 2822 of 12 November 1944.

(b) Ships assigned were as follows:

PC 1120 - Primary Control, BROWN Beaches ONE and TWO.
SC 732 - Left Flank Guide Ship, BROWN Beach ONE.
SC 698 - Right Flank Guide Ship, BROWN Beach TWO.

(c) The Line of Departure was established at 0730 on ZEBRA Day. SC 732 and SC 698 were secured from Line of Departure at 1400. PC 1120 then took station 1200 yards off shore on right Flank of BROWN Beach TWO, to control small boat traffic.

(d) Details of operations in the assault phase are set forth in Paragraph 3 below (Ship-to-Shore Movement).

(e) Commander Control Unit BROWN secured from PC 1120 at 1400 on ZEBRA plus ONE Day, and reported on board USS ROCKY MOUNT (AGC 3).

2. Beach Organization.

(a) Beach Party No. 4, Naval Beach Commando "B", RAN, was assigned to BROWN Beaches, with the command of a Principal Beachmaster (CTU 78.1.81). U.S. Naval Beach Party No. 10 was assigned for liaison duties with the RAN Beach Party, and for offshore hydrographic surveys.

Elements of the 593 E.B. & S. Regiment, U.S. Army, and Company "B" of the 727th Amphibious Tractor Battalion, U.S. Army, were attached to the 24th Brigade, 9th Division, A.I.F., for the BROWN Beaches assault landing.

3. Ship-to-Shore Movement

(a) The assault landing was made under ideal conditions - light winds, calm sea, and unlimited visibility. Troops were boated and landing craft launched well within scheduled time limits, and all waves proceeded to their stations on the Line of Departure in orderly fashion. Fire support craft were deployed on station at Line of Departure at 0745, and proceeded on first run to beach at 0800.

- (b) Waves ONE to SEVEN, comprising the assault waves, were dispatched from the Line of Departure on schedule. All waves maintained their proper echelon formation throughout the run to the beach. Landing times for all waves were generally good, although waves TWO, THREE, and FOUR on BROWN Beach ONE anticipated their scheduled landing times somewhat. LCI 955, constituting wave SEVEN on BROWN Beach ONE, was unable to beach with sufficiently shallow water off her ramps for troops to disembark safely. They were transferred to the beach in LCMs provided for this exigency.
- (c) On order of Commander BROWN Assault Unit, Wave EIGHT, the first of the 24th Brigade Reserve waves, was dispatched from the Line of Departure at 0950. Waves NINE, ELEVEN, and TWELVE of the Brigade Reserve were dispatched at five minute intervals, commencing at 1043.
- (d) Wave TEN of the Brigade Reserve, consisting of 2 LSMs and 3 LCIs, was ordered in to the beach by Commander BROWN Assault Unit as slots became available. Likewise, beaching and unloading of LSTs was supervised directly by Commander BROWN Assault Unit in conjunction with the LST Beaching Officer and the Beach Parties.
- (e) Troops comprising the 9th Australian Division Reserve were not landed during the assault phase.

VI Personnel, performance, casualties.

- 1. Performance of personnel was highly satisfactory. The services of a Radar Technician, who was loaned to Commander BROWN Assault Unit by PhibGrpSIX, the afternoon before entering the objective area, proved of great value to the navigator in conducting the ships to proper anchorage.
- 2. No casualties were suffered by this Task Unit.

H. B. HUDSON

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