

21

IST884/OG-601
Serial: 03

U. S. S. LST 884
c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, Calif.

4 March, 1945

CONFIDENTIAL

From: Commanding Officer, U.S.S. LST-884.
To: Commander in Chief, United States Fleet.

Via: 1. Commander, LST Flotilla 13
2. Commander, Amphibious Forces, U. S. Pacific Fleet
3. Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet--Commander in Chief, Pacific Ocean Area

Subject: U.S.S. LST-884 - Action report, covering Iwo Jima Operation for period 22 January to 28 February, 1945.

Reference: (a) Pacific Fleet Confidential Letter ICL-45 of 1 January 1945.

Enclosures: (A) Action Report covering Iwo Jima operation for period 22 January to 28 February, 1945, including annex (a), Cargo Manifest; annex (b), Report of A.A. Action (21 Feb. 1945; and annex (c), Report of A.A. Action (23 Feb. 1945.

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (A) is submitted herewith.

C. C. Pearson
C. C. PEARSON

CC:
Adv. copy (1) direct to Cominch
Adv. copy (3) direct to Cincpac
Info. copy ComLSTGroup 87
Info. copy ComLSTFlot. 29

B-02915

May 17 1945
JUN 26 1945

ACTION REPORTCONFIDENTIALU.S.S. IST-884 - Covering Iwo Jima operation for period 22 Jan. to 28 Feb. 1945.PART I (COMBINED WITH PART II)PART II

- (A) IST 884 was assigned to operate as a unit of the defense group in the Iwo Jima Operation, replacing IST 766. Composition of group is as indicated in ComISTFlot 13 Operation Order No. 1-45.
- (B) Departed Pearl Harbor at about 1720 Jan. 24 for Eniwetok. Conducted anti-aircraft gunnery practice twice enroute. Arrived Eniwetok Feb. 6 at 1048L. Took on provisions and water to capacity. Feb. 8, at 0836 L, departed for Guam. Feb. 13 at 1500 K arrived Guam and discharged four 3X12 self propelled pontoon barges at Apra Harbor. Feb. 16, at 1500 K departed for Iwo Jima. Feb. 20, at 1800 K, arrived off Iwo Jima.
- (C) Mission of this ship was to transport heavy grading and roadbuilding equipment and a bomb disposal unit to objective. C.B. and bomb disposal detachment consisted of 8 officers and 222 men.
- (D) Enemy forces encountered were aircraft, as indicated on annex (b) and (c), and unknown forces which kept ship under mortar and artillery fire when on or near beach.

PART III

On 22 Jan. 1945 at 0900 HWT the C.O. was notified by officer messenger to report to ComISTFlot 13 for important orders of an emergent nature. At the same time he was directed to report to AdComPac for orders. At this time IST 884 was at Navy Yard, Pearl Harbor undergoing preparations for receipt of an LST and 3X12 pontoons. Orders had been received on the previous day to proceed to Leyte with an amphibious tractor unit aboard. The C.B. pontoon causeway detachment for this operation had reported aboard on 21 January. ComISTFlot 13 ordered this vessel to prepare for participation in the Iwo Jima operation as replacement for IST 766 which was then aground on Maui Island. The cargo shown on annex (a) was assembled and loaded, and the C.B. and Marine detachment of 8 officers and 222 men were transferred by APD from IST 766 at Maui, to this vessel. Lashing of heavy equipment on main deck was difficult because clover leaf fasteners had been burned off in preparation for LST skids. Loading was completed at 1650 and vessel was underway at 1705 HWT on January 24th.

25 Jan. - Joined T.G. 51.5, under command of ComISTFlot 13, at 0115 HWT on base course 239° T, enroute Eniwetok. Composition of Task Group 51.5 is as indicated in ComISTFlot 13 Operation Order No. 1-45. Voyage to Eniwetok was uneventful, except for normal routine training exercises. Weather excellent, no rain, and very little wind. Wind from South and Southwest, and West.

6 Feb. - Arrived Eniwetok at 1048 L. Took aboard provisions and water to capacity.

8 Feb. - Departed Eniwetok in company with other ships of T.G. 51.5 at 0836 L, for Guam. Weather - excellent. Light winds from NW to NE.

13 Feb. - Arrived Apra Harbor, Guam, at 1500 K. Unloaded pontoons and re-

Reg # JUN 26 1945
17632 8 02910

U.S.S. LST-884ACTION REPORT (CONTINUED)CONFIDENTIAL

arranged main deck cargo while at Guam.

16 Feb. - Departed Guam at 1500 K for Iwo Jima. Wind now holding steady from NNE to NE at about 12 knots.

20 Feb. - Arrived off Iwo Jima at 0800 K. In accordance with orders made all preparations for beaching. Retired on southeasterly course at slow speed in company with remainder of T.G. 51.5. Vessel's station in formation, number 32, 500 yds. astern of LST 944, section guide. Remained in area "██████" shown in ComPhibsPac Operation Order A-25-44, awaiting orders to beach and unload. Weather overcast, low ceiling.

21 Feb. - At 1718 K, condition II being maintained, formation was attacked by five enemy aircraft (Zekes). Annex (b) shows action taken by this ship. Position in which attack occurred: $141^{\circ} 47' E$, $24^{\circ} 13' N$, distance 41 miles and bearing $140^{\circ} T$ from Iwo Jima, speed 7, course $081^{\circ} T$. LST 477, last ship in column 3, was struck by suicide plane and set afire forward. Keckuk, section guide for column 1, was also struck and set afire. Due to excellent damage control, neither ship was lost. This ship, LST 884, was attacked from the port quarter in what appeared to be an attempt to crash dive into the conn. The Zeke making the attack approached over the stern of LST 809 which was in column 2, and was taken under fire by her guns. The plane passed over the stern of LST 809 and crashed before reaching this ship. The accurate fire of LST 809 undoubtedly saved this vessel from serious damage or loss. The plane's angle of approach over the LST 809 made it unsafe for this vessel to open fire with all port guns. Only one gun, 40MM #4, opened fire, and it was stopped after only three shots because of danger of hitting LST 809. It is not known whether any hits were scored by this one gun, as the volume of fire from the 809 was too great for careful observation. The plane began to fall apart before striking the water between the two ships. The pilot's chute opened and floated away. Two other planes of the same enemy raid were hovering about astern of the formation, just under the clouds, elevation about 800 ft., and out of gun range. These two planes passed to eastward of formation and started a dive from about 350° relative. They were taken under terrific fire by the leading ships of each column and were driven off. They did not return. The planes flew in pairs when approaching for attack, hovering in the clouds over the formation, then dove through the clouds and leveled off just above the water (about 15 ft.) at a distance of about 1500 yds. from the ship. The plane attacking LST 477 leveled off and approached from her port quarter, then swung around to her starboard side and winged over to crash into ship's side. No warning was received that enemy planes were in area. All clear was sounded at 1956 K and condition II was resumed.

22 Feb. - At 0318 K while cruising in area about 90 miles southeast of Iwo Jima, enemy planes were reported in area. However, no attack was made on formation at this time. On the afternoon of 22 Feb, we approached Iwo Jima from S.E., arriving at a point about 3 miles S.E. of the island, we stopped to await orders.

JUN 26 1945

U.S.S. IST-884ACTION REPORTCONFIDENTIAL

- 23 Feb. - At 1225 K ship received orders to rendezvous 3500 yds., 150° T, from Suribachi Mountain, in order to discharge deck load of 5-inch ammunition. Made rendezvous with L.C.I. 644 and found that it was impossible to discharge ammunition due to lack of boats. At 1810 K received orders to rendezvous at 1900 K with remainder of T.G. 51.5 for night retirement. C.T.G. 51.5 was advised that we could not reach rendezvous point by 1900 and rendezvous time was extended to 2000 K. Got underway at full speed to make contact with retirement formation. At 1920 K enemy planes were reported in area and anti-aircraft fire was observed near Iwo Jima. A destroyer was sighted off port bow at this time, and ship was maneuvered close aboard in order to take advantage of her AA fire in case of attack. At 1925 K five planes were observed in moonlight approaching ship from port beam. (See annex (c)). Fire was withheld until it appeared certain that ships had been observed, then port guns were ordered to fire. The fire from both ships apparently prevented the attack from being pressed home at this time. At 1935 K, when ship was again underway for rendezvous point, fire was opened by port guns on what appeared to be aircraft. In this instance, no order to open fire was given, and firing stopped when cease firing was sounded. A short time later, a stick of four (4) bombs was observed to drop near rendezvous point. Made rendezvous at 2130 K and proceeded to retire to eastward for the night.
- 24 Feb. - T.G. 51.5 was dissolved this date and we reported to C.T.G. 53.3 for duty. At 0830 K returned to a point 3500 yds. S.E. of Mt. Suribachi and started taking aboard empty 5" shell and powder cases and discharging ammunition into LCW's. Stopped unloading at 1155 K due to moderate seas caused by 12 knot N.E. wind. At 1414 K Moved inshore and anchored off Red Beach Two awaiting orders to beach, resumed unloading ammunition. At 1900 K, finished unloading ammunition, and having received permission to land on "Green Beach", weighed anchor at 1950 K and made preparations to beach. At 2033 K, when vessel was standing in to beach, enemy planes were reported over the island and the order was given to make smoke. The ship was stopped and anchored with stern anchor. Due to close proximity of other vessels, and the zero visibility caused by the smoke screen, only a sufficient amount of cable was paid out to hold ship temporarily. The anchor dragged, and as more cable was veered out, the ship came into contact with IST 477 along her port side. Ship was swung clear and bow anchor dropped to prevent further dragging. Ship was eventually swung around and alongside IST (K) 676, where she was moored until all clear was sounded, and smoke screen lifted. At 2250 K got underway and headed for beach. Hit Green Beach at 2304 K and started unloading equipment at 2330 K. Sporadic mortar fire landing near ship slowed unloading at times.
- 25 Feb. - At 0345 K cargo was completely unloaded. At 0415 ramp was raised for safety precautions, as enemy outposts were within a few hundred yards of ship. At 0740 K all G.B. and Marine Corps passengers were landed. At 0910 K cleared beach in accordance with orders and dropped bow anchor off Yellow Beach to await further orders.

JUN 26 1945 8 02910

26 Feb. - At 0941 K underway with orders to go alongside KA-12. 1050 Moored port side to KA 12 and started receiving cargo of mixed ammunition, and water in drums. Weather clear, wind from south at about 12 knots, moderate swell from S.E. Ships rode comfortably alongside despite swell until wind shifted suddenly to northward at about 1300 K. When ships swung with wind and became broadside to swells, unloading became difficult and considerable damage was done to port LCVP. As unloading of KA-12 continued, she developed considerable port list and this, coupled with action of swells, parted all forward lines except one. New lines were provided by KA-12 and loading continued. As KA-12 continued to list to port, the wind increased and shifted to N.E., causing moderate swell. As list became greater and seas higher, the unloading became extremely difficult, as the booms would not reach the side of the ship. At times, the only way to place net loads of ammunition aboard was to swing it violently out from the side of the KA-12 and drop it on deck of the IST 884. At 2150 a net loaded with mortar shells was dropped about 20 feet onto the number 4 20MM gun and ready box. We now had about 250 tons of ammunition on the main deck. It was decided that continuance of unloading under such hazardous circumstances was unwarranted. Accordingly, lines were cast off at 2217 K and we headed for the beach. At 2355 K, beached on Yellow Beach Two. Beach was obstructed by wreckage at this point. Retracted and beached 15 yds. to left. Beach was again not suitable for unloading. Made partial retraction at 2355 K and hit beach 10 yds. to left, where suitable unloading conditions were found.

27 Feb. - Proceeded with unloading, both engines ahead at standard speed to hold ship on beach. Considerable mortar fire hitting in vicinity of ship. At 0215 K ship received shell hit from medium caliber shell in compartment 0-417-W. Shell pierced ship's side and exploded in compartment with slight damage to bulkheads, hole at waterline about 4 or 5 inches in diameter. At 0237 K retracted from beach in accordance with orders, mortar and artillery fire too dangerous and accurate to continue operations at "yellow two". 0245 Stbd engine reported stalling. At 0305 K, beached at Yellow Beach One and started unloading ammunition. Starboard engine unable to turn more than 1/3 speed. 0324 Starboard engine nearly stalled, by apparent binding of shaft, cause undetermined. Secured engine to prevent damage. Called all hands and moved entire tank deck cargo forward in attempt to hold on beach. Rigged lines from starboard bow to heavy equipment on beach. Unloading continued, with ship being driven slowly southward by wind and swells. Port engine being run at 280 RPM to hold on beach. All unloading had to be accomplished with LVT's, as no other vehicles could negotiate beach. Completed unloading main deck at 1430 and started unloading water drums from tank deck. Plugged shell hole in stbd side, and emptied tank to survey damage. At 1643 stern cable parted, 20 feet from anchor, apparently chafed on rock or wreckage near bottom. Stern of ship swung into LSM on beach 20 feet to port. Ship started dragging wrecked LVT to which bow lines were attached, and bow moved down beach opposite another wrecked LVT which blocked off ramp and stopped

U.S.S. IST-884

ACTION REPORT (CON'T)

CONFIDENTIAL

operations. Request was made to salvage tug for assistance to re-tract in order to prevent breaching of both ships, but tug refused on grounds that she had no authority to help us. Retraction was made with assistance of two small craft, and ship was anchored off Yellow Beach, to await assistance and effect repairs if possible, one LVT and 240 drums of water remaining aboard. The LSM was damaged slightly on stbd. side by pontoon cleats on the side of this vessel. Immediate action was started toward replacing stern anchor cable and bending on spare stern anchor. It was presumed that a diver would assist in clearing starboard shaft and propeller on the following day, as one had been requested. The emergency ramp gear was rigged while on beach and was operating satisfactorily, the starboard ramp cable having been cut by an LVT. At 2130 K, mortar fire became so intense that it became necessary to clear the main deck. At 2210 ship sustained a direct hit from mortar fire on port side amidships. No serious damage to ship and no casualties.

28 Feb. - At 0335 K received orders to report to GTU 53.3.1 in LCI 995 for further orders and to assemble in area S.E. of Iwo Jima prior to 1500 K for purpose of departing objective. Assembled with other partially disabled ships in area as directed and departed objective for Saipan at 1700 K running on port engine at 280 RPM, and acting as formation guide.

PART IV

Performance of ordnance equipment was excellent. ~~XXXX~~ 1154 rounds of 40MM and 20MM AA were fired without stoppage or casualty.

PART V

Battle damage was slight, and was caused by one 75MM artillery shell which pierced compartment C-417-W at the water line, and exploded inside, causing bulkheads to bulge slightly.

Damage control consisted of plugging hole in plating and emptying tank in preparation for welding from inside. The direct hit from a mortar caused only a slight dent in side plating.

PART VI (OMITTED)

C. C. Pearson
 C. C. PEARSON
 Lieutenant, U.S.C.G.
 Commanding, U.S.S. IST-884.

JUN 26 1945

Reg. # 17632