



USS LCI(L)-319

Builder: Brown Shipbuilding Company, Galveston, Texas.

Commissioned: 3 February 1943

Decommissioned: 26 March 1946

Disposition: Transferred to the Maritime Commission on 3 May 1948 for disposal.

Length: 158' 6" oa

Beam: 23' 3"

Draft: 2' 8" (forward), 5' 3" (aft -- beaching condition)

Displacement: 216 tons (light); 234 tons (beaching condition); 389 tons (full load)

Propulsion: 8 x GM diesels; twin shafts (4 diesels per shaft); 1,600 hp; twin variable-pitch propellers

Range: 4,000 @ 12 knots

Top Speed: 15.5 knots

Complement: 3 officers, 21 enlisted

Troops: 188

Cargo capacity: 75 tons

Initial armament: 4 x 20mm (single-mount): 1 forward, 1 amidships, 2 aft; 2 x .50 caliber; 2" plastic splinter armor on gun shields, conning tower, and pilot house.

Commanding Officers:

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LTJG Francis X. Riley

LT W. A. Blum

LTJG Whitfield Connor

LTJG E. E. Eckenbeck

History:

Flotilla 4 / 10 / 35, Group 104, Division 207

The Coast Guard-manned USS *LCI(L)-319* was built at the Brown Shipyard, Galveston, Texas, and was commissioned on February 3, 1943. After a primary shakedown cruise she was ordered to Solomons Island, Maryland, for a month of training and assignment to LCI(L) Flotilla 4. On April 1, 1943, she sailed for Bermuda and then for North Africa on the 13th. She arrived in French Morocco on the 29th and sailed for Lake Bizerte Tunis, May 10, 1943, arriving on the 25th. She sailed for Sicily July 8, 1943, hitting the beach before dawn on July 10, 1943. She returned to Lake Bizerte after unloading to pick up more troops. There were no casualties in these operations. On September 6, 1943, she sailed from Lake Bizerte for Salerno, Italy, arriving on the 8th. En route in convoy the ship was twice attacked by German planes but escaped unharmed. She hit the beach at Salerno early in the morning of September 9, 1943, and after unloading proceeded to operate as salvage ship around the beach despite heavy enemy fire. On the 11th she was strafed by a German plane with five men wounded and one killed. She sailed for Palermo on September 12, 1943 and there joined a convoy for Bizerte.

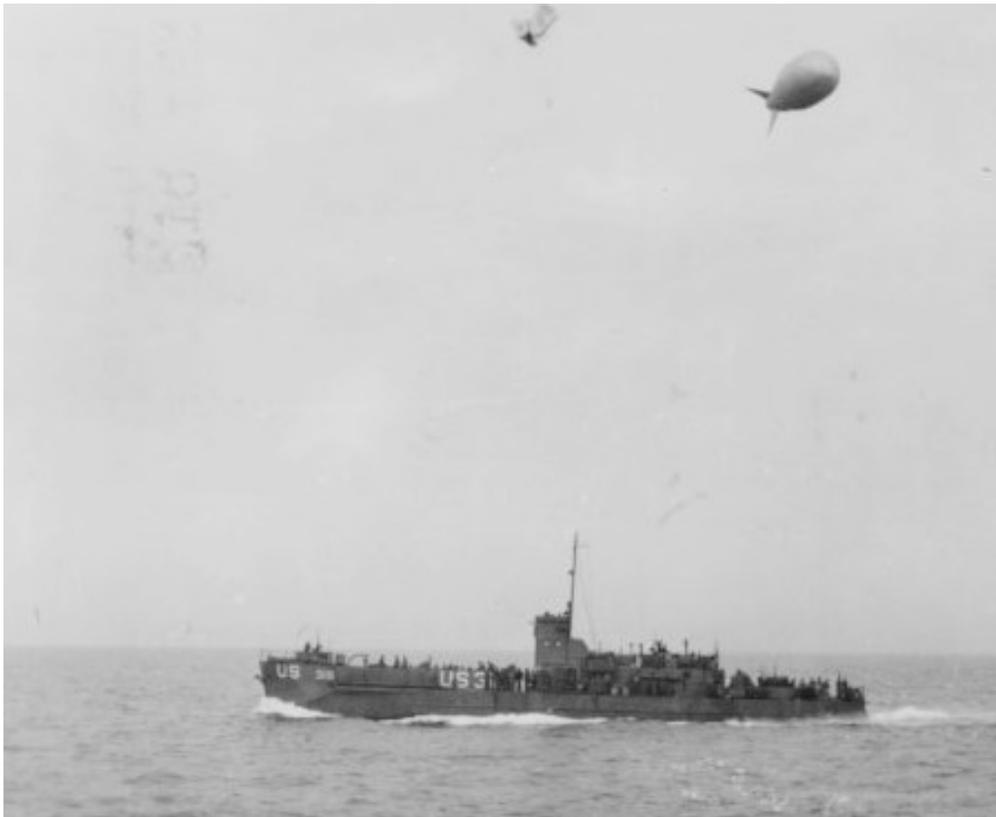
Again with Flotilla 10 (the re-designated Flotilla 4) she sailed for Falmouth, England on October 15, 1943, arriving on the 28th. The flotilla was transferred to Dartmouth for training until June 5, 1944, when she sailed from England for Utah Beach, arriving early on the morning of the 6th. The *319* was unloaded some thousand yards off the beach by an LCM, after which she anchored in the vicinity to act as salvage and fire-fighting ready ship. During the night of June 10, 1944, she towed two ammunition barges out of mined waters during a storm, a feat for which the commanding officer later received the Bronze Star. On June 20, 1944, during a heavy storm the stern anchor parted allowing the ship to drift down upon another LCI(L) and punching a hole in troop compartment number two and in the

engine room. For a time there was danger of losing the ship but officers and crew worked quickly, effectively shoring up the damage and she remained safely afloat. Later she spent 15 days in dry-dock in France leaving on the 23rd of June, 1944. From July 1 to October 1, 1944, she served as navigation guide for LCTs crossing the English Channel.

On October 5, 1944, she sailed for Charleston, South Carolina, where she was routed to Savannah, Georgia, for extensive overhaul and repair. She remained in Savannah from October 28, 1944 to December 12, 1944, and then returned to Charleston until December 21, 1944, when she sailed for Norfolk arriving on the 22nd. Here she was routed to Solomons Island for training (and assignment with the once again re-designated Flotilla 35) and on January 7, 1945, sailed from Norfolk for Key West, Coco Solo, the Canal Zone and San Diego, California, arriving on January 31, 1945. Here she underwent extensive training until April 20, 1945, when she sailed for Pearl Harbor. From May 6, 1945, to December 12, 1945, she was engaged in various transportation duties including ferrying passengers among the islands of Eniwetok Atoll.

She arrived home at Long Beach, California on February 6, 1946. Here she was decommissioned March 26, 1946.

The *LCI(L)-319* earned four battle stars for her service in World War II. All LCI(L)s of Flotilla 10 were retroactively awarded the Coast Guard Unit Commendation for their service in the invasion of Normandy.



COAST GUARD LCI PLOWS ON TO INVASION: A Coast Guard-manned infantry landing craft, towing its own barrage balloon shown on its way on the first step of the big invasion."; no date (6 June 1944?); Photo #90; Photo by "Wigle.:

Sources:

LCI(L) file, Coast Guard Historian's Office.

United States Coast Guard. *The Coast Guard At War. V. Transports and Escorts. Vol. 2.* Washington: Public Information Division, Historical Section, U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, May 1, 1949, pp. 117-130.
