



USS LST-18

Builder: Dravo Corporation, Neville Island, Pennsylvania

Commissioned: 26 April 1943

Assigned to: LST Flotilla 7, Group 21, Division 41

Decommissioned: 3 April 1946

Disposition: Sold to Suwannee Fruit & Steamship Company, Jacksonville, Florida, for conversion to merchant service.

Length: 327' 9" oa

Beam: 50'

Draft: 1' 6" bow, 7' 5" stern (unloaded); 8' 2" bow, 14' 1" stern (loaded -- at sea); 3' 1" bow, 9' 6" (loaded -- beaching)

Displacement: 1,625 (light); 4,080 (w/ full load of 2,100 tons)

Propulsion: 2 x General Motors 12-567 diesels, twin shafts/rudders

Range: 24,000 nm @ 9 knots

Top Speed: 11.6 knots

Complement: 111

Troops: 163

Initial Armament: 7 x 40mm (single mount); 6 x 20 mm (single mount); 2 x .50-caliber mgs; 4 x .30-caliber mgs

Commanding Officers:

LT John Lence: 26 April 1943 - 4 April 1944

LT Charles W. Radke: 4 April 1944 - 4 October 1944

LT F. C. Merriam, USCGR: 4 October 1944 - 14 August 1945

LT G. R. Denny, USCGR: 14 August 1945 - 12 November 1945

LT G. H. Bird, USCGR: 12 November 1945 - 3 April 1946

History:

USS *LST-18*

LST Flotilla 7, Group 21, Division 41

The USS *LST-18* was built in Pittsburgh by the Dravo Corporation and was sponsored by Miss Ruth Watt. The *LST-18* was then floated down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers from 19 to 25 April, 1943, arriving at New Orleans on the latter date. She entered commissioned service under the command of LT John Lence, USCG, on 26 April 1943. There were only 7 officers and 67 enlisted men in the original crew. After tests and maneuvers at St. Andrews, Florida, she returned to New Orleans on 14 May 1943 for post-shakedown availability. She was then assigned to LST Flotilla 7, Group 21, Division 41.

On 1 June 1943, she got underway for the Canal Zone. Arriving at Coca Sola, Canal Zone, on 14 June 1943, CDR Clarence H. Peterson, USCG, with two officers and 13 enlisted men reported aboard for duty to the staff of Group 21, LST Flotilla 7 and the *LST-18* was designated flagship for the group. Peterson was relieved on 12 March 1944 by CDR F. D. Higbee, USCG, who in turn yielded to CDR N. M. Nelson on 4 October 1944. She then proceeded to Milne Bay, New Guinea, arriving on 2 September 1944, for ten days of beaching operations and loading for the first trip in the forward areas.

During the time that the ship was in the forward areas she participated in fourteen invasions, six of which were initial invasions.

Initial Invasions:

Finschaven: 22 September 1943

Cape Gloucester: 26 December 1943

Wakde Island: 17 May 1944

Cape Sansapor: 30 July 1944

Leyte, Philippines: 20 October 1944

Cebu, Philippines: 26 March 1945

The *LST-18* also participated in eight support landings:

Lae: 21 September 1943

Manus Island: 30 March 1944

Tanah Meran, D.N.G.: 27 April 1944

Biak Island: 28 June 1944

Noemfoor Island: 4 July 1944

Morotai: 15 September 1944

Lingayen Gulf: 9 January 1945

Palawan, Philippines: 1 March 1945

After the cessation of hostilities on 14 August 1945, the LST made one support landing at Brunei Bay, Borneo on 25 August 1945, and then completed her tour of duty by taking a load of occupation troops to Taku, China.

In carrying out these invasions, *LST-18* was under attack on eight different occasions by enemy planes, shore installations and torpedo. No casualties were suffered by the ship's crew, but one Army passenger was killed aboard, the result of an enemy strafing run. The ship carried approximately 19,000 tons of equipment in all these trips and about 16,000 Army and Navy personnel. She also evacuated 617 ambulatory cases and 179 stretcher cases from the various beachheads. There were three deaths aboard; one Army enlisted who had been brought on board for treatment; one Army passenger who died of wounds during an air attack (mentioned earlier) and one prisoner of war who was brought on board for treatment. Up to the time of the ship's return to San Francisco on 16 December 1945, 291 enlisted men and 33 officers had served aboard at various intervals.

Proceeding to Galveston, Texas, via the Canal Zone, she arrived on 1 February 1946 and was decommissioned at Houston, Texas, on 3 April 1946.

The *LST-18* earned four battle stars during her service in World War II.



"Veteran of several amphibious invasions along the long road from the Solomons to the Philippines, the Coast Guard-manned LST 18 unloads its fighting men and machines on the beaches of Leyte Island. Another Coast Guard-manned LST, the 202, also rings up another invasion. . .on the beach Coast Guardsmen and troops are filling sandbags for beach gun emplacements."; no date; Photo No. 3544; photographer unknown.



"Giant sea-going freight cars. . ."; no date; Photo No. 3575; photographer unknown.

USS *LST-18* is third from the left.

Sources:

LST files, 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. 66-116.

United States Navy. *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships.* Volume VII. Washington: Naval Historical Center, 1981, pp. 574-742.

