



USS LST-70

Builder: Jeffersonville Boat and Machine Company, Jeffersonville, Indiana

Commissioned: 28 May 1943

Assigned to: LST Flotilla 5, Group 15, Division 30

Decommissioned: 1 April 1946

Disposition: Sold for scrap on 1 July 1946 to Arctic Circle Exploration, Inc., Seattle

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:

LCDR Augustus Pollack, USCGR - 28 May 1943 -
LT Bernard P. Devins, USCGR:
LT William J. Shallow: 18 March 1945 - 1 April 1946

History:

USS *LST-70* LST Flotilla 5, Group 15, Division 30

The Coast Guard-manned USS *LST-70* was launched on 8 February 1943 from the Jeffersonville Boat and Machine Company of Jeffersonville, Indiana. She was sponsored by Mrs. George R. Bickel. She entered commissioned service on 28 May 1943 after first being brought down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. Her first commanding officer was LCDR Augustus Pollack, USCGR.

On 6 November 6, 1943, *LST-70* departed from Puruata Island at 0200 after taking part in the invasion of Bougainville at Empress Augusta Bay. At 0230 the ship was taken under fire by shore batteries at Puruata. Numerous shrapnel fragments fell on or near the ship and several near misses were observed astern. At 0240 a plane was reported overhead at 3,000 feet which five minutes later dropped two parachute flares along the course about 1,500 yards apart and 100 yards to port. At 0247 a near bomb miss was observed 100 yards astern with the plane flying along the line of flares in a glide releasing bombs at 500 feet altitude. At 0250 *LST-70* changed course as the flares burned out. At 0300 a plane passed astern firing machine guns with no hits on the ship. Five minutes later two planes passed astern, abreast, both firing on nearest ship but were still short at an altitude of 60 feet with still no hits on *LST-70*. At 0316 a plane dropped flares along the course on the port side 2000 yards ahead. The LST changed course four times in 15 minutes. At 0355 a plane was on the starboard quarter and swung right with the ship firing and then left across the deck, low, strafing. A man on the starboard 40mm gun was struck in the right leg. At 0337 a plane on the port quarter, as the ship swung left, strafed at 50 feet. At 0341 a plane on the port quarter passed astern firing, coming back twice on the starboard quarter at nine minute intervals. No hits were registered on the ship which changed course constantly.

While on a second trip to Bougainville on 17 November 1943, in convoy, *LST-70* at 0258 received a report of enemy planes in the immediate vicinity. At 0323, USS *Pringle* (DD-477) reported that an enemy plane crashed in the water along its starboard side. At 0340 a Mitsubishi G4M "Betty" crossed the stern of *LST-70* from starboard to port close to, but was out of sight before the stern guns could fire. Three minutes later, steaming 300 yards ahead, the LST engaged and shot down an enemy plane in flames. The plane fell on the port side of the columns, burning intensively for 15 minutes. Seven minutes later the LST opened fire on another "Betty" flying from astern between two port columns, but it escaped

despite heavy anti-aircraft fire from all ships in the formation. At 0355 the APD *McLean* was struck by an enemy torpedo 2,000 yards astern of LST-70 and set afire.

At 0700, five minutes after beaching on Puruata Island a bomb was dropped in the bay about 1,500 yards on the port quarter, but without observable damage to the small craft in the vicinity. The plane was not visible to lookouts on *LST-70*. At 0805, seven enemy Mitsubishi A6M7 "Zekes" and Aichi Type 99 D3A1 "Vals" appeared in broken formation over Puruata Beach. All anti-aircraft guns of the four beached LSTs there engaged these planes as long as they were within range. Four minutes later one Val flew directly into two 3"/50 bursts from *LST-70*, immediately lost altitude in a long glide and reportedly crashed several miles inland. No further enemy planes were engaged.

The *LST-70* was part of Task Force 31.4.3 which left Munda on 13 February 1944, for the for the invasion of Green Island, Nissan Islands, in the Solomon group. There were six other LSTs and a Navy tug in the Task Group, *LST-207* being the only other Coast Guard-manned vessel. Screened by six destroyers, anti-aircraft firing and flares were observed during the night of 14-15 February 1944 and at 0650 on 15 February convoy escorts were in action against enemy planes. Barrage balloons proved valuable in deflecting enemy bombers from LSTs. At 0849 the convoy passed into Nissan Island lagoon and then unloading began. The convoy was dissolved at 2033 on 17 February 1944. On 3 March 1944, *LST-70* was part of a convoy of eight LSTs and the K-25 screened by four destroyers (Task Unit 31.5.1) proceeding from Tillotson Cove, Russell Islands on a resupply mission to Nissan Islands. Another LST and an APD joined on the 4th and on the 5th four other vessels joined. On the 6th she beached at Green Island to unload. The convoy dissolved at 2325 on 8 March 1944.

On 31 May 1944, Tractor Group Three of Task Group 53.16 composed of *LST-70* and 15 other LSTs, nine LCI(L)s, six SCs, six YMs, three PCs, two ANs, and one ARL with USS *Stemmel* (DD-644) as Flag, departed Hutchinson Creek, Florida Island, for Kwajalein in a resupply convoy. It arrived at Geo Pass, Kwajalein, Marshall Islands on 6 June 1944. After unloading and loading men and supplies the convoy departed on 9 June for Guam. En route on 15 June 1944, three enemy planes identified as Nakajima B5N "Kate" enemy torpedo bombers were sighted on the starboard beam less than five miles distant. The planes separated and two attacked forward and one the after part of the convoy. A torpedo launched from one of the planes hit the *LCI(L)-468* but two of the planes were shot down. On the 26th the convoy was directed to proceed to Eniwetok and entered the South Channel, Eniwetok Atoll on the 30th.

On 15 July 1944, the Task Group departed Eniwetok for Guam, arriving on 21 July 21, D-day, disembarking troops and landing equipment under enemy fire. On the 28th the convoy was enroute returning to Eniwetok, arriving 3 August. The *LST-70* arrived at San Pedro on 21 August, and San Diego, 31 August

1944. The LST-70 remained on the West Coast until 23 November 1944, when she again left for the Pacific theatre. Proceeding via Pearl Harbor, Eniwetok, Saipan and Guam, she returned to Saipan on 11 February 1945. She was present on D-day at the invasion of Iwo Jima. Returning to Guam, she proceeded to Leyte and then to Okinawa. A series of resupply and troop transport movements took her from Okinawa on 15 April 1945, to Ulithi, Manus, Leyte, Subic Bay and back to Okinawa. She was there on VJ-day 14 August 1945.

Proceeding to Subic Bay, Leyte and Batanga, she left Lingayen Gulf on 15 October 1945 for Wakayama, Otaru, Aomori, returning to Wakayama on 17 November 1945. By 26 November 1945 she was departing Saipan on her way home, arriving at San Francisco on Christmas Day, 1945. She was decommissioned and her Coast Guard crew removed on 1 April 1946.

The USS *LST-70* earned five battle stars for her service during World War II.

Photographs:

None available.

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.

