



USS LST-764

Builder: American Bridge Company, Ambridge, Pennsylvania

Commissioned: 15 September 1944

Decommissioned: 30 April 1946

Disposition: Sold for scrap on 11 December 1947 to the Southern Shipwrecking Company of New Orleans.

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 R. F. Nichols, USCGR: 9 August 1944 - 17 January 1946

LT J. B. Raby, USCG: 17 January 1946 - 30 April 1946

History:

USS LST-764

LST Flotilla 29, Group 85, Division 170

The Coast Guard-manned USS *LST-764* was built by the American Bridge Company at Ambridge, Pennsylvania, and on 2 September 1944 was ferried down the inland waterways to New Orleans, where she was placed in full commission on 15 September 1944 under the command of LT R. F. Nichols, USCGR. After a shakedown period at St. Andrew Bay, Florida, she departed New Orleans for Gulfport, Mississippi to load cargo.

Arriving at San Pedro, California on 11 November 1944, via the Panama Canal, the *LST-764* loaded pontoon causeways, side carry, at Port Hueneme, California, and departed for Pearl Harbor, arriving there on 2 December 1944. Discharging cargo here she participated in combat maneuvers at Maalaca Bay, Maui, returning to Pearl Harbor just before Christmas 1944 to load cargo. Just before New Year 1945, she embarked the 14th Artillery, 4th Marine Division at Kahului, Maui, to be followed by a final invasion rehearsal at Mamlaca Bay, Maui. Departing for the forward area on 22 January 1945, she stopped briefly at Eniwetok and Saipan and at daybreak on D-Day 19 February, 1945, anchored off the eastern shore of Iwo Jima. By 0900 the invasion of Iwo Jima was on and on the afternoon of D-Day the artillery was needed to support the Marine infantry as it forced its bloody way up the sloping beaches and across the primary objective, the southern airfield on Iwo Jima. The *LST-764* was consequently moved in to the line of departure and began discharging her troops and their equipment and ammunition into amphibious tractors and DUKWs. Long grueling hours of work followed as urgently needed ammunition was loaded into the amtracks and DUKWs which were continuously being taken aboard and discharged over the bow-ramp. At the same time the crew maintained an ever alert vigil for enemy aircraft attacks. After D-Day a moderately heavy sea kicked up, greatly increasing the hazards and difficulties of the task.

On the morning of D+4 the entire crew, still engaged in unloading operations, was witness to the famous flag-raising atop Mt. Surabachi, then still shrouded in the smoke of the bloodiest amphibious assault of the entire Pacific campaign. That night the first combat beaching was made to discharge the remainder of the cargo. The beaches were strewn with scores of wrecked landing boats, DUKWs, amtracks, and tanks -- eloquent witnesses in the eerie light of star shells and mortar fired flares of deadly Japanese artillery fire. These obstacles, many of which were partially or wholly submerged, made beaching, an ever difficult operation at night, doubly hazardous. However the beaching was made and the cargo promptly discharged, a sample of the many day and night beachings to follow. On the morning of D+5, the *764* retracted from the beach and began the second phase of operation, that of lightering leads of vehicles, stores and personnel from the transports and cargo vessels offshore to the beaches. This

work was seriously hampered by high seas and winds which made both mooring alongside the larger vessels and beaching, each risky and difficult maneuvers. Even after the end of actual hostilities on Iwo, the LST continued the tedious work, completing over 30 beachings in 81 days before retiring to Guam on 10 May 1945, for much needed repairs. After dry-docking at Guam for hull painting and overall repair work she made a return visit to Iwo Jima via Saipan on 28 June 1945.

After returning to Saipan she departed for Leyte on 23 July 1945, designated to effect an aviation augmentation left from the Philippines to the newly captured island of Okinawa. Routed to Lingayen Gulf from Leyte the LST embarked the 154th Ordnance Service and Maintenance Company and the 96th Air Service Squadron, USAAF and departed early in August for Okinawa. The uneventful trip to Okinawa was destined to be the *764's* last wartime cruise. On the day of her arrival, 10 August 1945, the Japanese Government made its formal peace proposal to the Allies. Every night during the peace negotiations, however, and on the very night of the Japanese acceptance on 15 August 1945, the island was subjected to Japanese air raids, both orthodox and the kamikaze variety. The *764*, discharging cargo and personnel, departed for Subic Bay and Leyte on 22 August 1945.

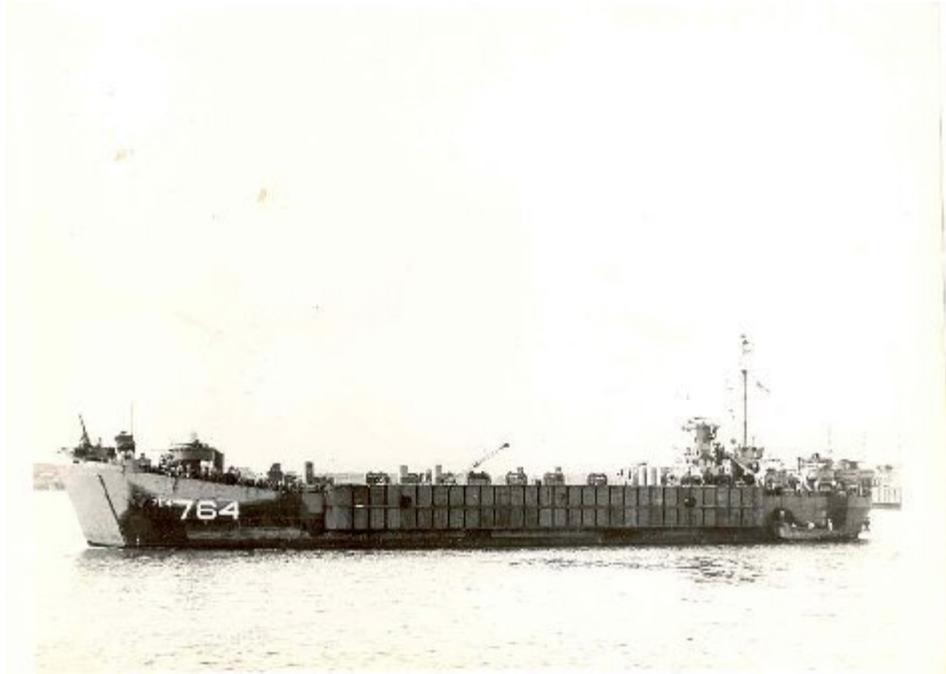
Proceeding to Iloilo, Panay, early in September 1945, the *LST-764* embarked the cannon company, 106th Infantry, and 74th Ordnance Company, 40th Division, US Army and departed for Jinsen, Korea, where she arrived on 17 September. From there she was routed to Pusan, Korea to disembark troops and cargo. Returning to Jinsen she embarked a thousand Japanese Army prisoners of war, together with their US Army guards and departed for Sasebo, Kyushu, Japan, once the site of a mighty Japanese naval base. After discharging personnel at Sasebo the LST sailed southward to Manila on 16 October 1945. Once more proceeding to Lingayen Gulf on 20 October, she embarked elements of the 56th Fighter Control Squadron and 308th Bomber Wing, USAAF, for transportation to Jinsen, Korea, and upon discharge of these occupation troops there with their cargo, departing for Tsingtao, China, on 20 November.

She arrived at Tsingtao on 22 November and reported to the Seventh Fleet representative for further orders. At this point she was granted seven days availability for minor engine and other repairs. Upon termination of this availability *LST-764* was ordered to join a task force of other vessels to carry out the Japanese repatriation program. This program was designed to carry Japanese from China to their native islands and then bring back Chinese or Koreans to their native lands. Before the *764* began loading Japanese, however, she, along with other Coast Guard-manned LSTs, was detached from repatriation duties and ordered to standby for return to the U.S. Very welcome news for her crew as demobilization orders were causing serious personnel shortages.

She departed Tsingtao on 15 December 1945 in company with two other Coast Guard-manned LSTs and a Navy LCI, enroute to New Orleans, Louisiana, via Guam, Pearl Harbor and the Panama Canal. The convoy arrived at Guam at 1000 on 26 December after a "rather rough crossing." They departed Guam at 0800 on 30 December 1945 enroute to Pearl Harbor. They arrived at Pearl Harbor on 15 January 1946 and reported to the naval authorities at ADCOMPHIBSPAC for further orders and onward routing. LT J. B. Raby, USCG, who had been on board since 26 October 1945 as relief commanding officer, relieved LT R. F. Nichols USCGR under orders issued by DCGO 14th Naval District, Honolulu on 17 January 1946. LTs R.F. Nichols, F. M. Blenkhorn, LTJG G.A. Travers and J.N. Montgomery were detached to DCGO 14ND for further transportation to the U.S. for separation. The last three named officers were relieved as Executive Officer, Supply officer, and Engineering Officer by by LT P. A. Berg, USCG, LTJG L. N. Mairs, USCGR, and LT P. E. George, USCGR, respectively. LT Raby, a veteran of 17 years of service in the Coast Guard, had seen service as commanding officer of various Coast Guard units in Atlantic, Gulf, and Caribbean areas in convoy escort work as well as serving on Army FSs and LTs. LT Berg, a 20 year veteran of the Coast Guard, had seen service in the Atlantic, Caribbean, and Pacific waters as the commanding officer of Army-type vessels. LTJG Mairs had seen service in the Pacific areas on Coast Guard and Army vessels. LT George, a graduate of Georgia Tech, had been carried on board this vessel as a supernumerary since September, 1944. He had seen service in the Pacific.

LST-764 departed Pearl Harbor at 1400 on 19 January 1946 for "an East Coast port," via the Panama Canal. She received dispatch orders at sea from CINCLANT on 20 January 1946 to proceed to New Orleans and report to the Commander, 16th Fleet for further disposal. She arrived at New Orleans on 18 February 1946 and then sailed to the Calcasieu Berthing Area at Lake Charles, Louisiana, arriving there on 24 February 1946. The *764* was decommissioned at Lake Charles on 10 April 1946.

The *LST-764* was awarded one battle star for her service during World War II.



No official caption/photo number; photographer unknown.

The LST-764 off Iwo Jima, 1945.

U.S. Navy photograph provided courtesy of LST-764 veteran Paul George.



No official caption/photo number; photographer unknown.

The LST-764 beached at Iwo Jima, 1945.

U.S. Navy photograph provided courtesy of LST-764 veteran Paul George.

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.

