



# USS LST-167

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Builder: Missouri Valley Bridge & Iron Company, Evansville, Indiana

Commissioned: 27 April 1943

Decommissioned: n/a

Disposition: Destroyed in action on 25 September 1943 and struck from the Naval Register on 6 December 1943.

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

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

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## **Commanding Officers:**

LT Edward C. Simons, USCG: 27 April 1943 - 25 September 1943

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## **History:**

### **USS LST-167**

The Coast Guard-manned USS *LST-167* was laid down on 19 September 1942 at the Missouri Valley Bridge and Iron Company in Evansville, Indiana. She was launched on 25 February 1943 and was placed in commission on 27 April 1943 after being ferried down the Mississippi River. She was assigned to the Asiatic-Pacific Theater and participated in the landings and occupation of Vella La Vella Island, New Georgia.

She was attacked by a Japanese dive bomber on 15 August 1943 while she was beached on Ruravai Beach at Vella La Vella. The ship caught fire and was abandoned after ammunition began exploding aboard. Two officers and five enlisted Coast Guard men were killed in action and three men died of wounds (see below). Five enlisted men were missing in action and one officer and 19 men were wounded. The LST was unbeached and towed to Rendova where she was declared beyond economical repair. She was struck from the Naval Register on 6 December 1943.

The *LST-167* earned one award of the Navy Unit Commendation and one battle star for her service in World War II.

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### **Coast Guard personnel killed in action:**

ANDERSON, Roy; Fireman First Class  
BUBECK, Sheldon T.; Coxswain  
HAMMOND, Gerald George; Water Tender First Class  
MILLER, Robert W.; Ensign  
POFI, Giovanni; Electrician's Mate First Class  
RIECKERT, Frederick; Yeoman Second Class  
SEXTON, Donald A.; Seaman First Class  
WELLS, Harry Finley; Lieutenant, Junior Grade

Additionally, one enlisted Navy man was killed in action, one enlisted Navy man died of his wounds, and five enlisted Navy men were missing in action.

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The following is the account of her loss as written in the Coast Guard's official World War II history, *The Coast Guard at War, Volume VII: Lost Cutters*. Washington, DC: Historical Section, Public Information Division, U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, July 1, 1947, pp. 18-19:

## **LST-167**

### **THE OCCUPATIONS OF VELLA LA VELLA**

The Coast Guard manned LST-167 was a unit in a convoy which departed Guadalcanal on 24 September 1943, and was ordered to beach at Ruravai, Vella La Vella, a beach not previously used by LST's. An advance group of seven APD's had arrived off Barakoma on Vella La Vella, with 6 destroyers as escorts. At dawn on 15 August, 1943 and begun an unopposed unloading of troops and equipment. These had departed within an hour and were followed at 0715 by 12 LCI's which had completely unloaded by 0900. As a third group of 3 LST's, which had arrived at 0800, were awaiting their turn to beach, they were attacked, without damage, by 15 to 20 enemy fighters. Four hours later a second attack on these LST's which were still unloading, was broken up by our Combat Air Patrol, with the lose of 10 enemy planes. On the return trip to Guadalcanal, two of the three groups had been subject to air attacks but without damage. Altogether they had landed 4,600 troops, including 700 Navy personnel with 15 days supplies. Four more echelons of from 3 to 4 LST's each, which had made the trip from Guadalcanal to Vella La Vella within the next fifteen days had been attacked by air with only slight damage. The successful occupation of Vella La Vella, at the cost of only 150 of our men killed, had been finally completed on 6 October, 1943.

### **LST-167 BURNS AFTER BEING BOMBED**

The beach at Ruravai to which the LST-167 had been ordered, not having been previously used, was without shore defenses and with a minimum of facilities for beaching and unloading. The LST had beached 0745 on the 25th of September, and all of the 77th Marine Combat Battalion's equipment had been unloaded by 1115. At 1116 the executive officer reported a possible "bogie" distant about 40 miles. Thirty seconds later a patrol plane reported "lots of bogies and about 20 angels." A few seconds later three dive bombers were picked up, coming in directly out of the sun and diving at the LST. All 20 guns on the LST immediately opened fire but before any of the planes were hit, their bombs had been released. Then the plane burst into flames and another began to smoke heavily. Two bombs struck the LST-167 and a third was a near miss. When the bombs struck, the terrific impact knocked nearly everyone off his feet. One bomb struck the main deck, port side, exploded, penetrated the deck and came out through the skin of the ship. The second struck the main deck forward and exploded in the provision room. This started a fire on the tank deck, in the gasoline and oil which had not yet been unloaded. Flames immediately leapt up through the cargo hatch and after ventilators. The electrical circuits had been damaged and power could not be kept on.

### **ORDER TO ABANDON SHIP**

Dead and wounded littered the main deck. The order was given to secure all engines and abandon ship. Between 1122 and 1135 all living casualties were removed and given first aid at an emergency casualty station in a native dwelling on the beach. In fighting the fire on the LST the CO2 extinguishers were ineffective due to the draft of air through the tank deck. There was no pressure on the fire main. The 40 MM ammunition on the main deck began exploding about 1140, so fire-fighting had to be discontinued and the order given to stay clear of the ship. At 0900 on the 26th, the 167 was still burning and exploding too heavily to permit inspection. At 1530 when the fire had subsided, a portable fire pump was rigged and water played on the fire. [ Two ] officers and 5 enlisted men were killed in action and 3 enlisted men died of wounds. Five enlisted men were missing in action.<sup>1</sup> [ One ] officer and 19 enlisted men were wounded. The LST was unbeached and towed to Rendova.

<sup>1</sup>For complete list of dead and missing see Appendix H.

## **APPENDIX H**

### PERSONNEL LOST

#### LST-167

MILLER, Robert W.;	ENS
WELLS, Harry F.;	ENS
ANDERSON, Roy;	F 1/c
BUBECK, Sheldon T.;	Cox.
HAMMOND, Gerald G.;	WT 1/c
POFI, Giovanni;	EM 3/c
RIECKERT, Frederick;	Y 2/c
SEXTON, Donald A.;	Sea 1/c

1 enlisted Navy man was killed in action.

1 enlisted Navy man died of wounds.

5 enlisted Navy men were missing in action.

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### **Photographs:**

None available.

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### **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.

U.S. Coast Guard. *The Coast Guard at War, Volume VII: Lost Cutters.* Washington, DC: Historical Section, Public Information Division, U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, July 1, 1947, pp. 18-19.

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

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