



USS LST-788

Builder: Dravo Corporation, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Commissioned: 18 September 1944

Decommissioned: 16 April 1946

Disposition: Sold on 26 September 1947 to Boston Metals Company, Baltimore, Maryland, for scrap.

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 Walter R. Benson, USCGR: 18 September 1944 - 9 November 1945

LT Bernard J. Kearns, USCGR: 9 November 1945 - 30 January 1946

LT Bradley A. Kendis, USCGR: 30 January 1946 - 8 March 1946

LT(jg) Russel D. Erickson: 8 March 1946 - 16 April 1946

History:

USS LST-788

LST Flotilla 29, Group 86, Division 171

The Coast Guard-manned USS *LST-788* was built by the Dravo Corporation, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and arrived at New Orleans, Louisiana, via the Ohio and Mississippi rivers on 18 September 1944, when she was commissioned. After five days availability for outfitting the 788 departed for St. Andrews Bay, Florida, where she underwent shakedown exercises from September 27th to October 9th. Returning to New Orleans on 11 October 1944, minor alterations were completed and five sections of LCTs were loaded on the main deck, while 800 tons of miscellaneous cargo went on the tank deck and she departed New Orleans for the Pacific on 20 October.

The 788 reached Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1944, after stops at Panama Canal, San Pedro and Port Hueneme, where pontoon causeways were loaded for side carry. The LST remained in the Hawaiian area until January 21, 1945, engaged in freight runs and training, when she departed in Task Group 51.5 for the invasion of Iwo Jima, with troops and equipment of Battalion C, 14th 155 ~L Battalion, First Provisional Field Artillery Corps, U. S. Marine Corps, aboard. Routed via Eniwetok and Guam for logistics the LST reached Iwo Jima at daybreak on 20 February 1945 (D+1 day). DUKWs were launched on the 22nd, 1,000 yards off the beaches and the ship made three beachings from February 22nd to 28th. One cargo of troops and equipment was trans-loaded from an APA. The ship suffered no battle damage though there was heavy enemy mortar fire at night on the beaches. However, a port rudder jammed by an LST attempting to retract and considerable damage was done to port side plates and frames as a result of lying alongside the APA in a heavy sea. On February 28th, the 788 departed the area and proceeded to Saipan, arriving 5 March 1945, where she was drydocked for repairs to the rudder and underwent other emergency repairs.

From March 20th to 22nd the 788 loaded troops and equipment of the Headquarters 1398 Engineer Construction Battalion, 24th Corps, U. S. Army and departed on the 22nd for Okinawa as a unit of T.U. 51.13.4. She arrived at Okinawa on 2 April 1945, and proceeded to anchor at Kerama Retto until April 5th. On that date she proceeded to the western beaches at Okinawa where she unloaded troops and equipment on April 7th and 8th. Beaching was difficult due to the coral reefs and the ship took considerable pounding but without serious damage. Due to high seas pontoon barges were not launched until the 12th. There was considerable air activity during this period, the ship manning battle stations 47 times during the 15 days in the area, the longest period at general quarters being 7 hours and 35 minutes during one 12 hour period. Hits were scored on seven enemy planes and the ship was directly responsible for the

downing of two planes, one being splashed 250 yards off the port beam and another 50 feet off the starboard quarter, missing the ship's conn by only 20 feet. Slight underwater damage was done to the ship by the latter plane. The ship remained in the transport area, for smoke-making, until April 16th, when she departed for Ulithi arriving on the 22nd. Here she was drydocked for inspection of bottom and all necessary repairs were made including repairs to port side plates and frames.

The 788 departed Ulithi for Manus on 20 May 1945, arriving on the 24th, departing next day for Russell Islands to arrive on the 31st. On the same day she departed for Noumea, stopping overnight at Tulagi and reached Noumea on 8 June 1945, where miscellaneous cargo and 25 passengers were loaded, the 788 departing 16 June 1945 for Guam. Arriving there on June 30th, the port shaft was found to be out of alignment and repairs were not effected until 20 August 1945. On the 23rd pontoon causeways were loaded and she proceeded to Saipan. On September 10th and 11th she loaded troops and equipment of Headquarters and Service Company, Second Motor Transport Battalion, Second Marine Corps and as a unit of the Southern Occupation Force departed Saipan on 17 September 1945 for Nagasaki, Japan, which was reached on September 24th. She departed Nagasaki on the 26th for Leyte but put into Hagushi, Okinawa, on the 28th due to an approaching typhoon. After executing Typhoon Plan X-ray on the 29th and 30th she detached from convoy and proceeded to Leyte, arriving there on 7 October 1945. On the 13th she proceeded to Davao, Mindanao, where elements of the 34th Infantry Division and 63rd Field Artillery of the U. S. Army were leaded and she departed October 16th for Mitsuhama where she beached October 26-27, launching pontoon causeways to unload. She departed October 29th for Manila, arriving there on 6 November 1945.

The *LST-788* departed Manila on 12 November 1945 for return to the U. S., reaching San Pedro on 18 December 1945, via Leyte, Tacloban and Pearl Harbor. She was decommissioned at San Pedro on 16 April 1946.

The *LST-788* earned two 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.

