



# USS LST-21

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Builder: Dravo Corporation, Wilmington, Delaware

Commissioned: 14 April 1943

Assigned to: LST Flotilla 17, Group 51, Division 101

Decommissioned: 25 January 1946

Disposition: sold on 12 March 1948 to Louis Feldman of Flushing, New York, for scrapping

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

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## Commanding Officers:

LT Charles M. Brookfield, USCGR: 14 April 1943 - ?

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## History:

### **USS *LST-21***

#### **LST Flotilla 17, Group 51, Division 101**

The Coast Guard-manned USS *LST-21* was laid down on 25 September 1942 by the Dravo Corporation at Wilmington, Delaware. She was launched on 18 February 1943 and was sponsored by Mrs. Lillian M. Lloyd. She entered commissioned service under the command of LT Charles M. Brookfield, USCGR on 14 April 1943. During June of 1943 she was engaged in various training exercises in the Chesapeake Bay and also loaded tanks. At the beginning of July 1943 she continued exercises in the Chesapeake Bay area when she proceeded to Portsmouth, Virginia. Between the 7th and 24th she was at Newport News, Virginia, loading tanks and supplies. On the 27th she departed Little Creek, Virginia, as the flagship of Group 10, Flotilla 4, bound for African waters as part of Convoy USG-31. Group 10 consisted of *LST-21* and nine other LSTs. She arrived at Oran in early August 1943.

The *LST-21* set sail from Oran, Algeria, on 11 September 1943, in company with nine other U.S. LSTs and seven British LSTs for rendezvous with convoy KMS-25. This group carried LCTs on their decks for delivery at their destinations. After passing Algiers the entire contingent was ordered to return to Algiers. On the 14th she entered Algiers Harbor where her LCT was removed and she set sail with six other LSTs for Syracuse, Sicily, as flagship. Off the Gulf of Tunis the group was ordered to return to Bizerte arriving there on the 16th. Proceeding to the docks, 63 British trucks were loaded on board with officers and men of a transportation unit of the British Eighth Army. On 17 September 1943, she departed Bizerte for Taranto, Italy, with four U.S. and one British LST, under British escort, arriving and discharging her cargo on the 20th.

Proceeding to Crotona, Italy, on the 21st, she sailed for Catania, Sicily, that same day, arriving with an additional LST unit on the 22nd. All units then began loading vehicles, the *LST-21* taking 11 vehicles with officers and men. At 1930 she departed for Bizerte, arriving there on the 24th and discharging her cargo. At 1230 that day she began loading 71 vehicles and 178 officers and men of the King's Royal Rifles, proceeding to Catania with *LST-214* without escort and anchoring there on the 27th, proceeding to Taranto where she arrived and unloaded on the 28th. On the 29th, 27 tanks, 18 vehicles and 184 officers and men, both British and Canadian, were taken to Barletta, Italy, arriving on the 30th, with three other LSTs under escort. Arriving on 1 October 1943, she was instructed to proceed to Manfredonia to discharge her cargo. She was the first ship to land tanks on the Adriatic coast. On 2 October 1943, she proceeded to Brindisi, to Taranto on the 3rd, and departed for Algiers that same day, arriving on 8 October 1943.

On 1 December 1943, *LST-21* was at Calcutta, India, on detached duty with the British Eastern Fleet. Embarking officers and men of the 15th Indian Corps as well as 13 M-3 General Lee medium tanks, she was underway on the 3rd, rendezvousing with *LST-25* on the 4th, under escort of two Royal Indian Navy launches, with one B-24 Liberator and four Spitfires as aerial escorts. On the 5th an air raid was reported but she beached at her destination without incident. At 2230 on the 5th she disembarked tanks at Regu Beach, Burma, and returned to Calcutta on 8 December 1943. This was the first American vessel to take the offensive in these waters in World War II. (No further reports on *LST-21* are available until April 1944).

By February 1944 *LST-21* was in England preparing for the invasion of Normandy. On 16 April 1944 she was transferred with other ships of LST Division 101, Group 51, Flotilla 17, from detached duty with the 11th Amphibious Force to British operational control. LST Division 101 consisted of *LST-21* as the flagship, along with LSTs 17, 25, 72, 73, 176, and 520, all under the tactical command of CDR William S. Blair, USNR. The Division was assigned to Force G, Group "Able." On 1 June 1944, she proceeded to Southampton, England, where she loaded 20 officers, 205 men and 73 vehicles of the British Army and after being sealed proceeded to anchorage off the Isle of Wight. Rhino ferry F-100 and a Rhino tug reported on 4 June 1944, and were secured by a stern cable to *LST-21* to be towed to Normandy. On 5 June she got underway at 1618 in company with LST Group 33, Group 51 of Division 101 and 10 craft of the Coast Guard's Rescue Flotilla One and escorts and proceeded to the Normandy coast of France near La Hamel and Arromanches. En route the Rhino tug broke loose and drifted off. At 1210 on 6 June 1944, *LST-21* arrived in the "Gold Beach" assault area and cast off the Rhino ferry. At 1350 she discharged six DUKWs from her ramp.

Considerable activity was observed on the beaches and the "Jig Green" beach area was under fire from a German 88mm gun situated west of Arromanches Les Bains. British cruisers lying about two miles off shore carried out a naval bombardment of that area. At 1146 shells from another German 88mm gun began falling near ships in the area and a British destroyer north of *LST-21* engaged the shore battery. The first load was taken into the beach at 1540 by Rhino ferry and at 1915 *LST-21* got underway toward the beach to meet the Rhino ferry which was laboring through tidal current setting due east. The seas were choppy and the wind freshening. The LST took on 13 casualties from a DUKW and the Rhino ferry returned at 2145 and departed at 2240 with the remaining vehicles disembarked from *LST-21*. The LST then got underway for her assigned anchorage. Ten minutes later ships began making smoke on a red alert, followed nine minutes later by a second red alert. Two minutes later, amidst anti-aircraft fire from the west three bombs successively hit the water on the port beam, a fourth hitting 150 feet off the starboard bow. At 2230 a stick of four bombs hit the water from broad on the port bow to dead ahead, 300 feet and at 2342 a stick of four bombs hit the water 300 yards off the port bow. No

damage to *LST-21* resulted from any of these attacks. There were intermittent alerts and anti-aircraft fire during the morning of 7 June 1944 and in the dive-bombing attack that followed, HMS *Bololo*, 1,000 yards north of *LST-21*, received a bomb hit on the forecastle. At 1120 on 7 June 1944, the LST got underway in convoy for Southampton, arriving at East Solent at 2055.

Mooring at Southampton on 8 June 1944, *LST-21* discharged casualties and loaded 40 vehicles and 146 Army personnel. At 1445 on 9 June, she was underway in convoy for the "Gold" assault area, arriving off the Normandy coast on 10 June 1944, and underway to "Jig Green" beach at 1649. Made smoke on red alert and observed considerable anti-aircraft fire and bomb bursts. At 2334 she retracted from the beach and proceeded to the outbound area awaiting anchorage. Enemy aircraft were active intermittently during the early morning of 11 June 1944, and at 0935 on that date she joined a northbound convoy for the Thames River.

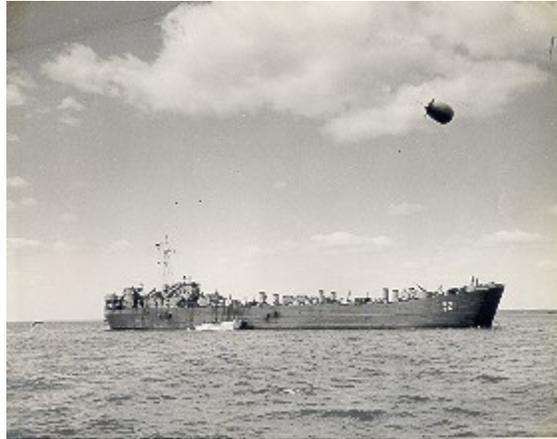
Arriving on the 12th she proceeded to the King George Fifth Docks in London and moored to take aboard 31 English ammunition trucks and 131 Army personnel. On the 13th she moved to convoy anchorage area due south of Southend, England, and at 2135 was underway in convoy EWT-8, arriving at the "Gold" assault area at 2130 on the 14th proceeding to "Jig Green" beach. At 2206 she struck a submerged wreck but passed clear and beached at 2213. The *LST-338*, however, stranded in the same wreck. Red alerts, smoke making and anti-aircraft fire, along with explosions on the beach followed, there being a large fire off the port quarter. Unloading was completed at 0037 on 15 June 1944 and the LST retracted from the beach and proceeded to the outbound sailing anchorage. A serious vibration on the starboard shaft became apparent. She took the British *LCT(K)-514* in tow at 0710 and took station in an outbound convoy but the vibration cut her speed and she was unable to keep up with the convoy. She proceeded alone at best speed and arrived off Calshot, England, reporting damage and remained anchored from 16 to 18 June awaiting availability at Southampton Repair Docks.

After being repaired, she remained in service between England and Normandy, making shuttle runs back and forth, until she departed for the U.S. She first sailed to Belfast, departing there on 11 May 1945 in Convoy ONS-50 and arrived at Norfolk, Virginia on 31 May 1945. She then proceeded to New York on 1 June 1945 for availability. Departing New York on 13 August 1945, she proceeded to Little Creek, where she remained until 23 August 1945. On the 25th she arrived at Casco Bay, Maine, and remained there until 4 October 1945, returning to Boston on the 6th. On 1 November 1945 she departed for Hampton Roads, with a load of ammunition. She returned to New York on 14 December 1945 and then sailed for Norfolk, arriving there on 7 January 1946.

She was decommissioned and her Coast Guard crew was removed on 25 January 1946. She was later struck from the Naval Register and sold on 12

March 1948 to Louis Feldman of Flushing, New York, for scrapping. The *LST-21* earned one battle star for her service during World War II.

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"Coast Guard-manned tank landing ships, like this, were among the thousands of seacraft that struck across the English Channel at the French Coast, as long-awaited D Day heralded the liberation of Europe. Engaged in final invasion maneuvers somewhere off England's coast, the Coast Guard-manned ship is packed with American invaders. Overhead rides a barrage balloon, as protection against enemy strafing planes."; no date (spring, 1944); no photo number; photographer unknown.



No caption/date/photo number; photographer unknown.

The *LST-21* unloads cargo at Normandy in June, 1944.



"Channel rendezvous. . ." no date (June, 1944?); Photo No. 2366; photographer unknown.

USS *LST-21* unloads supplies onto a Rhino ferry after D-Day. The *LST-21* supported the initial British landings off Gold Beach on 6 June 1944 and thereafter continued to supply Allied forces along the Normandy coast.



"LST in floating link. . ."; no date (June, 1944?); Photo No. 4387; photographer unknown.



No caption/date/photo number; photographer unknown.

German POWs, captured during the Battle of Normandy, await transport to Great Britain sometime during the summer of 1944. The USS LST-21 is in the background, flying a barrage balloon to discourage attacks from low-flying German aircraft.

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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.

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

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