USS *LST-792*

Builder: Dravo Corporation, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Commissioned: 2 October 1944

Decommissioned: 29 April 1946

Disposition: Sold on 31 October 1946 to the Suwannee Fruit & SS Co., Jacksonville, Florida.

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:

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History:

USS *LST-792*
LST Flotilla 29, Group 86, Division 172

The Coast Guard-manned USS *LST-792* was commissioned at New Orleans on 2 October 1944. Her shakedown exercises at St. Andrews Bay, Florida, were completed on October 27th, after which she proceeded to Gulfport, Mississippi for loading. The *792* departed Gulfport, Mississippi for Pearl Harbor via the Canal Zone and San Diego on 7 November 1944, arriving at destination on 13 December 1944, where cargo was unloaded. On Christmas Eve, 1944, she commenced embarking personnel and loading equipment of the 70th Army and 360th Marines for the Iwo Jima invasion. After a few days of maneuvers off Maui, she entered Kaneohe, Oahu, for logistics and sortied for Iwo Jima via Eniwetok and Saipan, where she arrived 7 February 1945. On February 19th, D-day, after an uneventful trip she arrived off Iwo Jima to watch the tremendous bombardment and the landing of the first waves. On February 24th, she beached at dusk to unload cargo and shortly after dark underwent one of the first enemy air raids on the island. She opened fire and was shortly thereafter plastered with 13 mortar hits and had to retract from the beach to prevent further damage to ship and personnel. Five men were wounded and two were recommended for the Purple Heart. It was while beached at Iwo Jima that Mr. Joe Rosenthal, the AP photographer who snapped the now immortal picture of the flag raising on Mount Suribachi, and Mr. Hibble, the *Newsweek* correspondent begged and received a meal on the *792*, both of them being a little worse for wear having been on the beach since early in the landing. The *792* returned to Saipan on 4 March 1945, where her battle damage was repaired and then were readied for the invasion of Okinawa.

The *792* loaded the 1397th and 1176th Army Engineers and sortied from Saipan at the end of March for Okinawa. Arriving here on D-day, 1 April 1945, they were able to get sane revenge for the damage done at Iwo Jima by shooting down a Japanese plane at Kerama Rhetto where they were awaiting orders to unload. After unloading the Army engineers at Hagushi, Okinawa, they departed Okinawa on 15 April 1945, for Ulithi, where they arrived on the 20th. Proceeding to Leyte on the 25th they arrived on 3 May 1945, where they loaded the XXIV Corps Headquarters personnel for Okinawa. They arrived at Okinawa the second time on May 28th, and remained there on garrison duty until 28 October 1945, when they departed for Guam.

At Guam they loaded 600 Marine Corps personnel under the "Magic Carpet" operations for return to Pearl Harbor on 25 November 1945. One day out of Guam the starboard screw vibrated off and they were towed to Pearl Harbor by another LST. In the 13 months after their commissioning they had made 90 beachings, 60 on the coral beaches at Okinawa without mishap. However, on the return trip to Guam the general wear had begun to tell in excessive vibrations

at high speed due to bent screws. They reached New Orleans via San Diego and the Canal Zone on 15 January 1946, Orange, Texas on January 27th, and Lake Charles, Louisiana on 22 April 1946. Here she was decommissioned on 29 April 1946.

The *LST-792* 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.