



USS LST-202

Builder: Chicago Bridge & Iron Company, Seneca, Illinois

Commissioned: 9 April 1943

Decommissioned: 11 April 1946

Disposition: Sold 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

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 Benjamin Ayesa, USCGR: 9 April 1943

LT R. R. Edge, USCGR

LCDR Thomas N. Kelley, USCGR

LT H. H. Gaillard, USCGR

LT R. B. Elliot, USCGR

History:

USS *LST-202*

LST Flotilla 7, Group 21, Division 42

The Coast Guard-manned USS *LST-202* was laid down by the Chicago Bridge & Iron Company of Seneca, Illinois on 15 July 1942. She was completed in March of 1943. Brought down the Mississippi by a U.S. Navy ferry crew to Algiers, Louisiana, where she was placed in full commission on 9 April 1943 under the command of LT Benjamin Ayesa, USCGR. During the end of April and early May, 1943, she underwent shakedown exercises at St. Andrews and St. Joseph Bay areas, Florida.

On 13 May 1943, she was underway for the Pinkenba, Queensland, Australia via the Panama Canal, Bora Bora, Tutuila, Samoa, Suva, Fiji Islands and Noumea, New Caledonia. She arrived at Pinkenba on 16 August 1943, and reported to Commanding 7th Amphibious Force. After a brief stay in Australia she proceeded to Milne Bay, New Guinea, where she reported to Commander LST, Flotilla 7. From then on throughout her career in the Pacific she was in Group 21, Flotilla 7 under the 7th Fleet. As a member of Task Force 76 she took part in the various landings that finally carried MacArthur to the Philippines on 20 October 1944.

Altogether *LST-202* made nine invasion landings in the Pacific area. These were as follows:

Cape Gloucester: 25 December 1943.

Saidor: 16 January 1944.

The Admiralties: 2 March 1944.

Humboldt Bay: 19 April 1944.

Noemfoor: 9 July 1944

Sansapor: 27 July 1944.

Morotai: 16 September 1944.

Leyte: 20 October 1944

Lingayen Gulf: 9 January 1945.

Between invasions the LST was engaged in resupply runs. At Cape Gloucester she was standing off the beach in company with two other LSTs when nine enemy dive bombers attacked from dead ahead. The *LST-202* was strafed with machine gun fire and several bombs landed within 20 to 40 feet from the ship. Although the gun crews were showered with water from the explosions, and the ship was spattered with bomb fragments, no damage or casualties were sustained. In this and other attacks that day the gun crew shot down two enemy planes and got one "possible" for which the ship was later commended.

On 2 March 1944, while beached at Hyane Harbor, Los Negros Island, she underwent heavy mortar and machine gun fire from the Japanese-held peninsula on the right hand side of the entrance. Her gun crews returned the fire during the afternoon with 3"/50 and 40mm gunfire and finally silenced the enemy positions. She was credited with knocking out several gun emplacements, with no damage to the ship.

The Leyte trip proved uneventful until the convoy entered Leyte Gulf on the morning of D-day, 20 October 1944. The task unit which *LST-202* was attached was attacked by enemy bombers and she was straddled by bombs. They landed close aboard but she suffered no damage and went to the beach, unloaded and retracted without further incident. The next run to Leyte proved more eventful than the invasion trip, however. Leaving Owi Island on November 19th, torpedo planes attacked on the evening of the 24th. One plane loosed its torpedoes just outside the convoy columns and one of these passed directly across the bow of the *202* and right across the middle of the convoy without hitting a ship. The plane was shot down by a frigate before it could penetrate the screen.

On 7 January 1945, while at San Jose, Mindoro Island, en route Lingayen Gulf, red alert was in effect but was secured as all planes in the area were announced to be friendly. With the *202* secured from general quarters, a plane suddenly came out of the sun on the starboard beam, flying at about a 50-degree angle over the ships in the columns to starboard. General quarters was sounded and as the men ran to their battle stations, the plane identified as a Kawasaki Ki-45 Toryu "Nick" passed across the conn and tilted her left wing to avoid hitting the mast of *LST-202*. It happened so fast that no crew had a chance to fire a shot but why the "Nick" never strafed, bombed or crashed into the *202* will remain an enigma. Again on a resupply run to Lingayen Gulf area on 27 January 1945, Japanese planes circled the convoy but made no direct attacks.

After picking up partial loads at Samar and Mactan Islands, Cebu, *LST-202* loaded an "acorn" group at Puerto Princessa, Palawan, Philippine Islands, and departed thence for Kure, Japan on 30 September 1945. With almost 1,000 tons of cargo and a full main deck load of 193 passengers, the route to Japan lay across the long stretch of water particularly subject to typhoons at that season of the year. After turning back for one day to avoid one typhoon, the LST went ahead at her best speed trying to outrun a second one of great intensity coming

northwest from Guam. Had this storm continued west the :ST would have cleared, but it recurved on 7 October 1945, and headed for Okinawa and Kyushu at a speed which indicated that it would catch the 202 at the entrance to the Inland Sea of Japan. Reaching the entrance to Bungo Suido on the 9th, the 202 managed to anchor in a narrow rockbound cove off Shikoko, in 145 fathoms, on a 105-fathom chain. It was none too soon. The next morning the typhoon set and reached its full force at midnight. The anchor was in more or less of a lee, but even so the 100-knot winds and tremendous swells made it seem doubtful that the anchor would hold on such a small scope of chain. However, she rode it out well with the aid of 1/3 to 2/3 ahead on the main engines. By daylight of October 11th the typhoon had spent its force and the ship proceeded to Hiro Wan anchorage through the Inland Sea swept channel.

Proceeding to Truk via Guam on November 3rd she arrived on the 25th and landed the initial occupation force. On the 30th she started for the U.S.A. via Eniwetok and Pearl Harbor, arriving at San Francisco on 9 January 1946. She was decommissioned and her Coast Guard crew removed on 11 April 1946 in San Francisco. She was struck from the Naval Register on 28 August 1946 and sold for scrap on 16 August 1948 to the Bethlehem Steel Company of Seattle, Washington.

The *LST-202* was awarded five battle stars for her service during World War II.



No caption/date/photo number; photographer unknown.

The officers and crew of Coast Guard-manned *LST-202* somewhere in the Pacific.



"Debarking in New Britain. . ."; no date (December, 1943/January, 1944?); Photo No. 3058; photographer unknown.



"Giant sea-going freight cars. . ."; no date; Photo No. 3575; photographer unknown.

USS *LST-202* is fifth from the left.



"Veteran of several amphibious invasions along the long road from the Solomons to the Philippines, the Coast Guard-manned LST 18 unloads its fighting men and machines on the beaches of Leyte Island. Another Coast Guard-manned LST, the 202, also rings up another invasion. . . on the beach Coast Guardsmen and troops are filling sandbags for beach gun emplacements."; no date; Photo No. 3544; photographer unknown



No caption/date/photo number; photographer unknown.

The USS *LST-202* under attack somewhere in the South Pacific.

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.
