



## USS LST-785



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Builder: Dravo Corporation, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Commissioned: 4 September 1944

Decommissioned: 3 May 1946

Disposition: Sold for scrap on 3 June 1948 to Walter W. Johnson Co.

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 M. E. Nichol: 4 September 1944 - 3 May 1946

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### **History:**

#### **USS *LST-785* LST Flotilla 29, Group 85, Division 170**

The Coast Guard-manned USS *LST-785* was built at the Dravo Shipbuilding Corporation, Neville Island, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and departed 26 August 1944, via the Monongahela, Ohio and Mississippi Rivers for New Orleans, Louisiana, where she was placed in full commission on 4 September 1944, with LT Myron E. Nichol, USCG, her first and only commanding officer. After repairs and alterations she departed on 14 September for St. Andrews Bay, Florida, for shakedown until the 28th. Returning to New Orleans for post shakedown availability she took aboard 5 LCT sections (LCT (6) 891 and LCT (6) 1121) and departed for Gulfport, Mississippi on 8 October 1944 for cargo loading.

Departing Gulfport on October 11th, she reached Pearl Harbor on December 5th, via the Canal Zone, San Pedro, Port Hueneme, San Diego and again Fort Hueneme. After unloading trucks and asphalt she proceeded to Maalaea Bay, Maui, for training exercises, returning to Pearl Harbor on 3 January 1945. Departing for Hilo, on January 4th she began combat loading of 21 DUKWs, 105mm howitzers, with ammunition and 19 officers and 353 enlisted men of the 2nd Battalion, 13th Marine Regiment, 5th Marine Division for the invasion of Iwo Jima. After further training she departed Kaneohe Bay on January 22nd, and, proceeding via Eniwetok and Saipan, reached Iwo Jima on D-day, 19 February 1945, with Task Group 51.15. By 0730 all plans had been completed for launching DUKWs, bow doors and ramp undogged, hove-to in prearranged area. The battle was on but the LSTs had not been called to the Line of Departure. At 1200 the 785 eased up to the Line of Departure and commenced fueling LVTs alongside. At 1300 lowered two LCVPs to expedite landing troops since there was not room for them in the loaded DUKWs.

At 1354 LCVPs departed for beach through mortar and machine-gun fire. A minute later the first DUKWs departed and the LST continued sending DUKWs and taking LVTs and DUKWs on board for loading doing so as rapidly as possible, fueling alongside. By 1527 all troops of the 2nd Battalion, 13th Regiment, 5th Marine Division on board has disembarked with the exception of a

loading detail but the 785 continued unloading ammunition into LVTs and DUKWs throughout the night and on through the 23rd of February, with several air raid alerts and smoke making for mutual protection whenever ordered. An enemy twin engine airplane, taken under fire on the night of the 23rd, may have been shot down in the dense smoke. All DUKWs and LVTs were taken on board that night to prevent swamping in the swells and mortar and machine-gun fire came close on several occasions but no casualties resulted. While beached on the 25th the 3/4" cable fouled in the port propeller and requests for a diver with an underwater cutting torch brought no immediate results. With a heavy swell running on the 26th unloading of the USS *Thurston* (AP-77) began. After taking troops and equipment aboard alongside, arrival of tug to help beach had to be awaited as a LST under one engine could not remain beached on the volcanic ash. All fenders were lost overboard and several hawsers parted during unloading and after retracting three holes were found in two compartments four feet above the water line. The holes were patched and later a diver cut the cable from the propeller which remained badly damaged. The 785 joined a Task Unit at 1230, proceeding to Saipan.

Anchoring at Saipan on 5 March 1945, the 785 entered drydock *ARD-25* for repairs on the 9th. On the 24th, with all repairs completed, she took on 11 officers and 260 enlisted men of Company B, 1398th Engineering Construction Battalion and one officer and 21 enlisted men of the 70th Navy Construction Battalion, with their equipment, and on 25 March 1945, was underway with Task Unit 51.13.4 for the invasion of Okinawa. She arrived at Kerama Rhetto at midday, 2 April 1945, and anchored awaiting further orders. Air raids were constant and smoke made as appropriate. At 0615 on April 3rd, the 785 identified and took one Japanese Kawasaki Ki-61 "Tony" fighter aircraft under fire with other vessels in the vicinity. The *LST-599* took a suicide fighter through its main deck and almost burned and sank but was pumped out. On the 5th the 785 proceeded to the Okinawa, West Beaches and on the 6th beached at Orange Beach and commenced unloading. Damage was being done to the hull by coral heads and at low water a hole was found in Void A-401-V, but requests to dock and repair were all returned cancelled. Enemy aircraft dived on ships but no hits were seen. General Quarters was almost continuous with smoke made whenever necessary. On the 7th the LST retracted and, anchoring in vicinity, manned guns in red alerts through the 10th. On the 11th she weighed anchor and joined T. U. 51.29.13 for Saipan, anchoring there on 17 April 1945.

Two resupply echelons from Saipan to Okinawa followed in which the LST-785 joined, one departing April 23rd with eight 8 officers and 243 enlisted men with their equipment and supplies of the 79th U. S. Naval Construction Battalion, and one on May 24th, with one officer and 19 enlisted men of the 8th RCT, 2nd Marine Division, with their equipment and supplies. After unloading at Okinawa on 31 May 1945, the 785 embarked three officers and 60 enlisted men of Company B, 373rd Engineer Combat Battalion. During these trips she was at General Quarters during numerous red alerts but without enemy contact. On 9

June 1945, she weighed anchor and joined T. U. 31.25.1 en route to capture the enemy held island of Aguni Shima. Arriving at Line of Departure at 0453 she lowered 2 LCVPs, one to act as wave guide for LCMs for the assault landing and the other to act as Bowser boat. The initial landing was made without opposition and at 0833 she departed the area. She anchored off Green Beach where unloading into LCMs and LVTs alongside commenced, both LCVPs acting as Bowser boats fueling LVTs. An unidentified plane was taken under fire at twilight on approach but was driven off, later being identified as friendly. Unloaded by 1200 on 10 June 1945, she weighed anchor and joined T.U. 31.25.1 for Okinawa at 1345, anchoring there at 1700. On June 13th, she proceeded to Iheya Shima to evacuate the 8th Reinforced Combat Team, 2nd Marine Division, with equipment and supplies, anchoring at Hagushi Anchorage, Okinawa on the 14th. A trip to Naha, Okinawa and return to Hagushi anchorage followed on the 15th and on the 18th she joined T.U. 31.29.12 returning to Saipan where she anchored on June 24th. Lack of contact with enemy units marked this period as well.

Two trips, one to Iwo Jima on 4 July 1945, where equipment of the 23rd Navy CB's was loaded for Saipan, and one on July 28th, to Okinawa, followed. From August 1 to 3, 1945, she rode out a typhoon off Okinawa without damage and the unloaded and disembarked troops until the 10th during many air raid alerts and much smoke making. On August 13th, she departed Okinawa for Saipan in convoy, the war ending next day with Japan's unconditional surrender. On September 17th, she departed Saipan in convoy for Nagasaki, Japan, with 12 officers and 288 enlisted men of the 1st Battalion, 10th Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, with their equipment and an supplies. Anchoring off Nagasaki on 24 September 1945, she beached on the seawall in front of the customhouse on the 25th and commenced disembarking troops and unloading equipment. Departing Nagasaki on September 26th, she returned to Okinawa on the 28th, leaving next day to ride out another typhoon at sea until 1 October 1945, when she proceeded to Leyte where she anchored October 7th.

Here she loaded 14 officers and 32 enlisted men of the 24th Army Group for transportation to Davao Gulf and departed on October 13th, arriving on the 15th. Here she loaded more equipment and on the 16th proceeded to Matsuyama, Shikoku, Japan, with officers and men, with supplies and equipment, of the 24th Army Division, 13th Field Artillery, Third Engineers, and 19th Infantry Cannon Company. She arrived at Matsuyama on 25 October 1945, and after unloading proceeded to Okinawa. She remained at Okinawa until 18 November 1945, when she again departed for Japan with occupation troops, this time arriving at Sasebo on 22 November 1945.

The time had now come for the *LST-785* to return to the United States and she began the long trek homeward late in November 1945, stopping at Iwo Jima, Saipan, and Pearl Harbor before arriving at San Francisco on 12 January 1946. Here she was decommissioned on 3 May 1946.

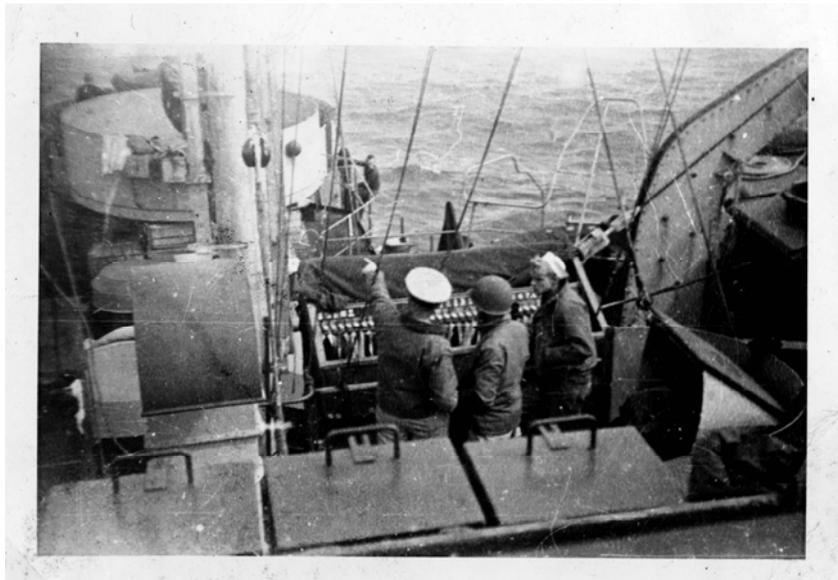
The *LST-785* was awarded two battle stars for her service during World War II.

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**Photographs:**



**Courtesy of Judy Williams, granddaughter of LST-785 officer Louis Emmette Price.**



**Courtesy of Judy Williams, granddaughter of LST-785 officer Louis Emmette Price. Price is the officer pointing.**



Courtesy of Judy Williams, granddaughter of LST-785 officer Louis Emmette Price. Price is the officer looking over his right shoulder.

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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.

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