



USS LST-829

Builder: American Bridge Company, Ambridge, Pennsylvania

Commissioned: 23 October 1944

Decommissioned: 29 April 1946

Disposition: Transferred to the Maritime Commission for disposal on 19 March 1948, ultimate fate unknown.

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 H. A. Friedenber, USCGR: 9 August 1944 - 7 March 1945

LT J. H. Judge, USCGR: 7 March 1945 - 29 April 1944

History:

USS LST-829

LST Flotilla 29, Group 87, Division 173

The Coast Guard-manned USS *LST-829* was built by the American Bridge Company at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and sailed down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers to New Orleans where on 23 October 1944, she was placed in full commission under the command of LT H. A. Friedenbergh, USCGR. Off Panama City, Florida, the ship next went through two weeks of shakedown exercises and when this was completed returned to New Orleans where *LCT-1406* was lashed to her main deck. A general cargo of telephone poles and heavy equipment for Pearl Harbor was taken aboard at Gulfport, Mississippi, from November 22nd, and on the 26th she sailed for Pearl Harbor, via the Canal Zone, San Diego and San Pedro, arriving on 5 January 1945.

Here combat preparations were completed, four warping tugs being loaded on the ship's sides at Pearl Harbor; 200 drums of gasoline and 100 tons of operational gear being taken aboard at Kewale Basin, Honolulu and off Koko Head a tank deck load of amphibious tractors manned by the 773rd Amphibious Tractor Battalion. She sailed for Leyte, Philippine Islands on January 27th, arriving 25 February 1945, via Eniwetok, Ulithi and Kossol Passage. Here on March 7th elements of Battalion 1, 306th Infantry Regiment, 77th Division, came aboard. Staging operations were concluded in mid-March and on 18 March 1945, she sailed for the invasion of Okinawa. Her mission was to capture and secure the Kerama Rhetto, a small group of islands 15 miles to the southwest of Okinawa. During the early morning of March 26th, as the islands loomed through the mist, two Japanese A6M "Zeke" fighters attacked and were promptly knocked down by escorting destroyers. At 0627, 30 minutes before H-hour, the *829* launched its LVTs, packed to the gunnels with infantry, just off Geruma Beach and under the protective fire of shells, rockets and bombs from destroyers, LSMs and Navy planes, attacked beach Yellow Tare Two, followed close astern by two gasoline "bowser" LCVPs. Thus the Coast Guard-manned LST landed the first troops in World War II to invade and secure Japanese colonial soil (Iwo Jima being a Japanese Mandate). The 306th quickly overran the island, wiping out Japanese resistance and raised the *829*'s ensign over the first Ryukyu Island to be taken in World War II. Meanwhile the Army Artillery Battery was landed from the *829* and made preparations for shelling Okinawa whose invasion was not scheduled until 1 April 1945.

The next day the troops, reloaded, were sent against Purple Zebra Two Beach on Tokashiki Shima. First 25 waves of F4U Corsairs, SB2C Helldivers and TBF Avengers from Navy carriers fired their rockets at possible machine gun and mortar emplacements on the beach and in the surrounding cliffs and strafed the hills. Simultaneously, three destroyers threw hundreds of rounds of five-inch/38 into the beach and back country, and LSM rocket ships and LCI mortar ships added their punch. As the waves of LVTs slowly rumbled toward the beach, LCIs, LCSs, and LSTs opened up with 40mm to cover their approach. Though only a few hundred yards from the scene, it became increasingly difficult to see what was going on ashore due to the clouds of thick, black and gray smoke lying over the assault area. Once ashore the 77th met stubborn opposition on the

hills. Fanatic Japanese civilians, frightened by Japanese soldiers' stories of American torture and rape, killed their families and committed suicide. Troops from the 829 uncovered and destroyed scores of Japanese suicide boats, hidden in caves and underbrush all over the island, and captured charts and intelligence papers which showed the proposed use of these craft to combat the invasion of Okinawa. The attack route to the probable American anchorages had been carefully planned. During the first night of the invasion the LSTs retired to sea in convoy to avoid possible Japanese suicide boat or midget submarine attacks in the confined waters of the Rhetto. A major Japanese air raid on shipping occurred on March 31st.

On 2 April 1945, the *LCT-1400* was launched. That night the 829 joined a retirement convoy that steamed for 11 days about 250 miles southeast of Okinawa as a reserve force. Arriving at Hagushi on April 14th, the 829 experienced her first air raid that night in eleven days. On the 15th she rated an assist in downing one Japanese Zeke. On April 16th, she upped anchor to take part in the initial assault on Ie Shima, a small island near the tip of Okinawa and of importance for its fine air field. The 773 amtracks and Battalion 1, 306th Infantry were landed on Blue Beach One and though swiftly overrunning the western slopes and capturing the field were soon up against tough opposition around the base of "sugar loaf" hill where the Japanese had constructed a strong line and were holding out in tombs and caves. It was here that Ernie Pyle, beloved Scripps-Howard columnist, met his death by Japanese machine gun fire. The Japanese attacked shipping lying off Ie Shima that morning with a force of 35 planes most of which were unable to pierce the destroyer and cruiser ring protecting the transports and landing operations. It appeared, however, that 12 got through, five being splashed within a mile or so of the 829 by 5-inch/38 fire from cruisers and destroyers.

For a week after this the 829 went to Ie Shima early each morning and retired to Naga Wan or off Hagushi every evening. On April 26th the troops were reloaded from Ie Shima and landed for the fighting on the southern tip of Okinawa. Two nights, the 27th and 28th of April, were spent at Okinawa subject to almost constant red air alerts, making smoke and arriving on May 5th and remaining there until 7 June 1945, for repairs. Then proceeding to Saipan she loaded elements of the 101st Sea Bees and on June 26th, again arrived at Okinawa. Here on July 10th, having loaded elements of the 6th Marines she departed for Ulithi arriving on the 16th. Here she took Army airborne squadrons, Marine truck and tractor companies and Sea Bee units to Saipan and Tinian returning to Guam 30 August 1945.

Proceeding to Tinian on the 31st and loading occupation troops the 829 proceeded to Nagasaki on 17 September 1945, arriving on September 28th. En route several floating mines were narrowly missed. Unloaded she departed the same day but returned when 100 miles out at sea to avoid an approaching typhoon. She set out again on 1 October 1945, playing tag with three separate typhoons on her way to Manila which was reached on October 14th. On October 17th she left for Lingayen Gulf to load service elements of the 6th Army Division for Nagoya which she reached October 28th.

Leaving Nagoya on 14 November 1945, she proceeded on the long journey home via Saipan and Pearl Harbor. She reached San Francisco 16 December 1945, and then proceeded through the Canal to New Orleans, Sabine Pass and Orange, Texas, which was reached on 27 January 1946. She was decommissioned at Lake Charles, Louisiana on 29 April 1946.

The *LST-829* earned one battle star for her service during World War II.



"At Anchor - Nagasaki, Japan."; October, 1945; no photo number; photographer unknown.

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.
