Come in, Swanee Leader

The Thirty-Three-Month Odyssey of an LST in the 1950s

Jim Staley

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This book is dedicated to the memory of those who perished on March 3, 1952 in the LCPL of USS *LST 561*.

Thomas Brooks
Elma Chavers
P. Hamill
J.H. James
J.F. Keenan
Myung Kim
Willie Lewis
D.C. Maus
William Overman
Richard Sigg
Eugene Thome
Alton Waldrop

Full fathom five thy father lies,
Of his bones are coral made.
Those are pearls that were his eyes,
Nothing of him doth fade.
But doth suffer a sea change,
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell,
Hark! Now I hear them, ding-dong bell.

Ariel's song from *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare.

During the eighteen months Come In, Swanee Leader was being written I received valuable support, ranging from encouragement and suggestions to reading the manuscript for factual errors. Those providing this greatly appreciated assistance were: Dale Amsberry, Bob Avery, Chuck Bras, Ed Evenhoe, Jim Fagundes, Don Guisti, William Guthrie, Ron and Nancy Kelly, Don Martin, Bernie Milton, Martin McNair, Jim and Jackie Payne, Don Rowe, Carol Staley, Robert Wick, and Bob Wyly. I am especially grateful to Linda Jay Geldens as copy editor, Susan Pinkerton for the book design, and my developmental editor, *Vicki Weiland, who was the first to see the potential of the pictures.*

Contents

Introduction

Orders to Board the USS LST 561

Within weeks after the start of the Korean War all branches of the armed services were expanding as fast as the recruiting offices could get people to enlist. The Navy and Air Force offices were aided considerably by the fact that the draft had been re-instituted. Many of those lucky enough to be selected would soon be trading fire with North Koreans, who were not trying to see how close they could come without hitting you. I know that it was a strong influence in my decision to become a sailor.

The Navy was re-commissioning mothballed ships and needed sailors. Many Reservists who had been in World War II combat only a few years previously were being recalled to active duty. The training time for recruit classes at the Naval Training Centers was shortened by one or two weeks because the barracks were full and new arrivals were sleeping on cots on the parade grounds.

An enlistment in the Navy at that time was supposed to include thirty days leave per year, and in normal times the Navy usually granted some leave upon completion of "boot camp." However, I was sent directly to San Francisco, California to enter the electronics program at the Naval Base on Treasure Island.

On a Friday morning in mid-October 1951, the instructor had not as yet arrived at one of the classrooms on Treasure Island. The class of fourteen students, all wearing the type of U.S. Navy uniform described as "undress blues," was engaged in friendly bantering and conversation. This was the last day of class for these sailors, who had started in the "Class A" Electronics Technology course nine months previously. The conversations ended rather abruptly when the instructor, carrying a handful of envelopes, entered the room. Each student knew that one of the envelopes contained the orders directing him to his next duty station. The instructor finally called my name and I was handed the envelope that contained my fate.

Upon reading the contents, I learned that following a leave of ten days, I was to report to the USS LST 561. Not even knowing what an LST was, I asked the instructor, and he responded with "Landing Ship Tank" and then, after a pause, came the old knee-slapper "or Large Slow Target." I would spend the rest of my four-year enlistment aboard Large Slow Target 561.

I had been sworn into the Navy on September 28, 1950, which was the day before my 20th birthday. On this graduation day on Treasure Island, I had been in the Navy for over one year, and this was the first leave I had been granted.

I compared assignments with the other members of my class, returned to the barracks, packed my seabag, and left for my parents' home. After several days at home, and considering the twenty more days leave I had "on the books," I sent a telegram to the ship requesting an additional ten days of leave. The response was rapid, and gave me three more days of leave with instructions to meet the ship at the Oakland, California Naval Supply Center.

CHAPTER 1
Going Aboard

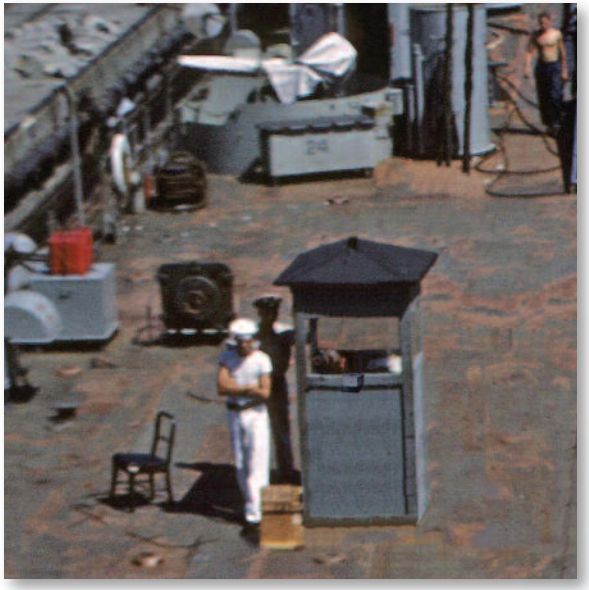
It was late dusk at the Naval Supply Center in Oakland, California, when I paid the taxi driver for my trip from the airport. After showing my ID card to the guard, I asked him if he knew where *LST 561* was moored. He looked at a list on a clipboard and replied, "Pier Four, Berth E," and gestured in what I hoped was the way to the ship. With my seabag on my shoulder, I left in that direction and soon saw the large numerals "561" on a ship's bow. The hull seemed huge. I had never been that near a ship before, let alone on one.

I hesitated at the foot of the gangboard and tried to remember the boot camp instructions on the proper procedure of going aboard a ship. My brain slowly filtered through nine months of electronics theory: "Salute smartly, and request permission to come aboard." Confident that I had the right password, but yet with a tinge of apprehension, I started the climb. At the top of the "plank," I saluted, and recited my appeal to the two sailors standing by a small booth. The one who was wearing undress blues, and a holstered Colt .45 pistol, responded, "Permission granted." So far, so good. I was aboard.

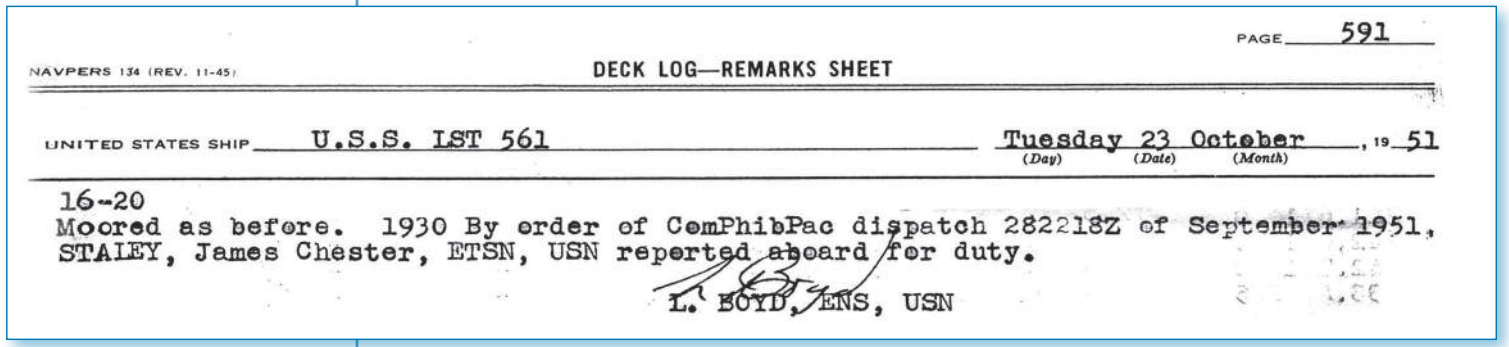
I handed him the manila envelope containing the orders that I had received at Treasure Island and as he was removing the contents, he instructed the other sailor, who was his messenger, to get the Master at Arms. After he had stepped into the booth and was recording information from my records, he remarked, "We thought we might be leaving without you." When I asked where the ship was going, he replied, "To the Far East. Tomorrow."

The picture of the quarterdeck booth was not taken the day I came aboard, but it was the same booth, and a similar gangboard was in place. The little building was not heavy and was easily shifted from one side of the deck to the other, or, when the ship was underway, moved back by the superstructure.

Salute smartly, and request permission to come aboard.



The Petty Officer of the Watch had written the details of my orders into the working deck log, which was on a shelf in the booth. A U.S. Navy ship's deck log is a daily chronology of certain events. Information such as times of arrival and departure of the commanding officer, absentees, punishments, etc. are recorded on the Remarks Sheet (the right hand page). The more statistical type of information typified by meteorological data, ship's position, and fuel on board is recorded on the left hand page. These working pages are turned over to the yeomen, who type the final copy, which is then signed by the officers and the captain.



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NAVPERS 134 (REV. 11-45) DECK LOG—REMARKS SHEET

UNITED STATES SHIP U.S.S. LST 561 Tuesday (Day) 23 (Date) October (Month), 19 51

16-20
Moored as before. 1930 By order of ComPhibPac dispatch 282218Z of September 1951, STALEY, James Chester, ETSN, USN reported aboard for duty.

L. BOYD, ENS, USN

The first numerals, 16-20, in this deck log entry are abbreviations for 1600-2000. The U.S. military operates on a 24-hour clock, so this would be the 4:00 PM-to-8:00 PM watch. The time I reported aboard, 1930, would have been 7:30 PM. I will present all times in the AM/PM form to help the reader who may not be familiar with the 24-hour system.

The messenger returned with a boatswain's mate, who was the Master at Arms (MAA). As we walked down the port side toward the stern, the MAA explained that the ship was very crowded with passengers and that the bunk he was assigning me was only temporary. The passengers were mostly U.S. Marines who would be leaving when we arrived in Hawaii. Just before we reached the fantail, we entered a door and stepped into a passageway that ran through the deckhouse to the starboard side. There was a stainless steel serving line for meals on the right side of the passageway. Across the aisle, recessed between two curved bulkheads, was a service window labeled "Ship's Office." The rounded bulkheads were actually cylinders, whose function will be described more fully in Chapter 6.

On our immediate right was a large coffee urn and shelves of handleless white china mugs. The MAA informed me that while we were underway, coffee would be available around the clock. This coffee "oasis" was also the starting point for the "chow line." Bins for silverware and stainless steel serving trays were located next to the cup shelves, which were constructed so that the cups would not fall out when the ship was underway. Adjacent to the shelves were steps, or in shipboard terms, a "ladder," that led to the deck below.

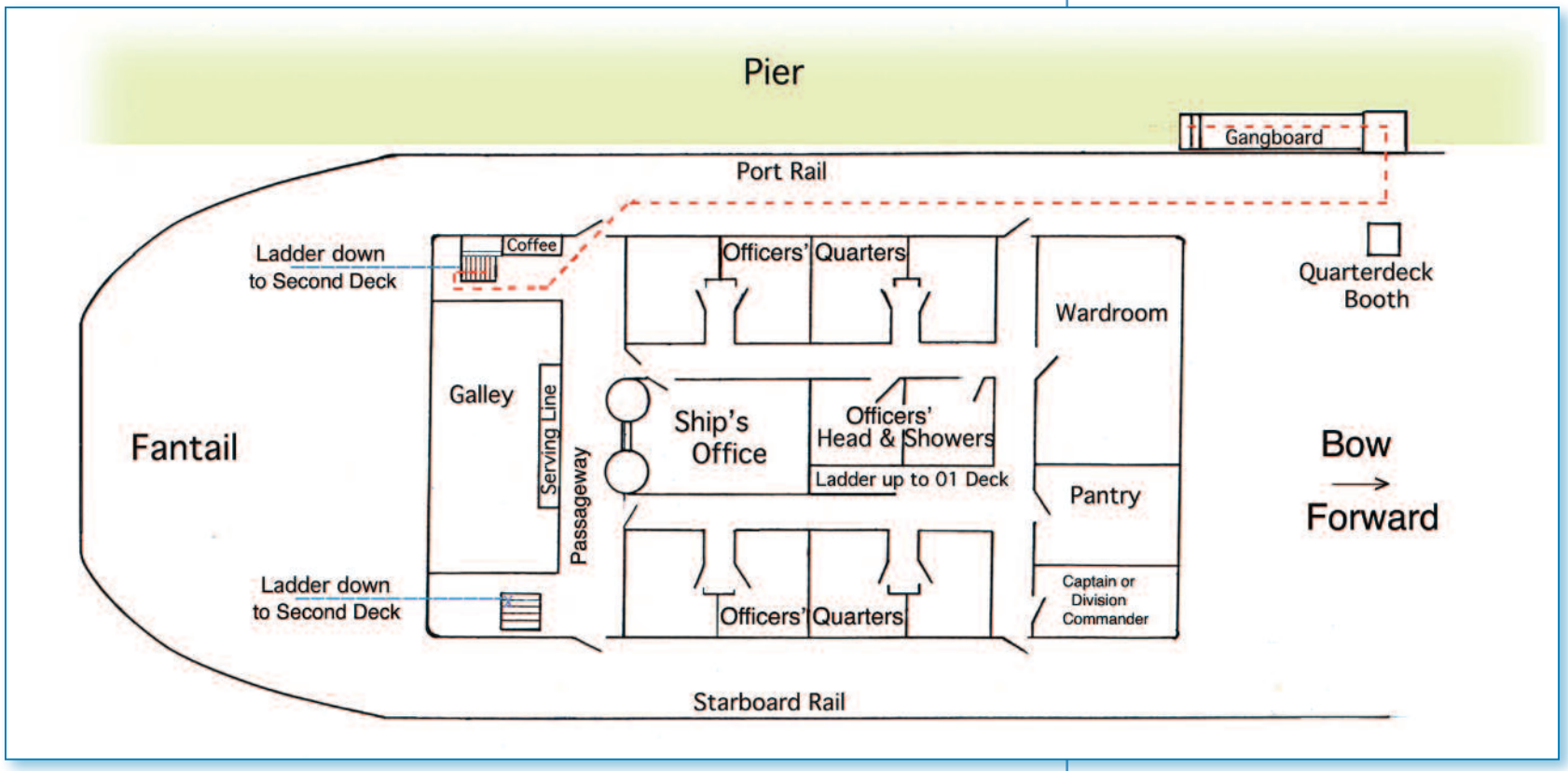


Figure 1-1 Deckhouse Plan

As we went down the steps, I thought of the *Inferno* and Dante descending into Hell, with the role of Virgil being played by a boatswain's mate named Wiley Furr.

A large berthing compartment on the right was one of the largest spaces on the ship, and would accommodate approximately 100 persons. The majority of the crew berthed here. The chief petty officers had their own compartment, and the officers were quartered as shown in Figure 1-1. At the foot of the ladder, we did not enter the large compartment but instead went through a door on the left. This location is shown in Figure 1-2, which is a drawing of this part of the second deck. The door we stepped through was the entrance to the first of a series of compartments. There were twelve of these spaces, used for personnel who were not part of the crew. Usually, these passengers were U.S. Marines and crews for vehicles that would be going ashore in an amphibious assault. On this trip, however, they were filled with personnel who were being transferred to Hawaii. With the bo'sun leading the way, I carried my seabag through the spaces until he found an empty bunk for me. These spaces were only nine feet wide, with tiers of bunks on both sides. Metal lockers in the passageway, unstowed seabags, and Marines standing by their bunks made the trip a challenge.

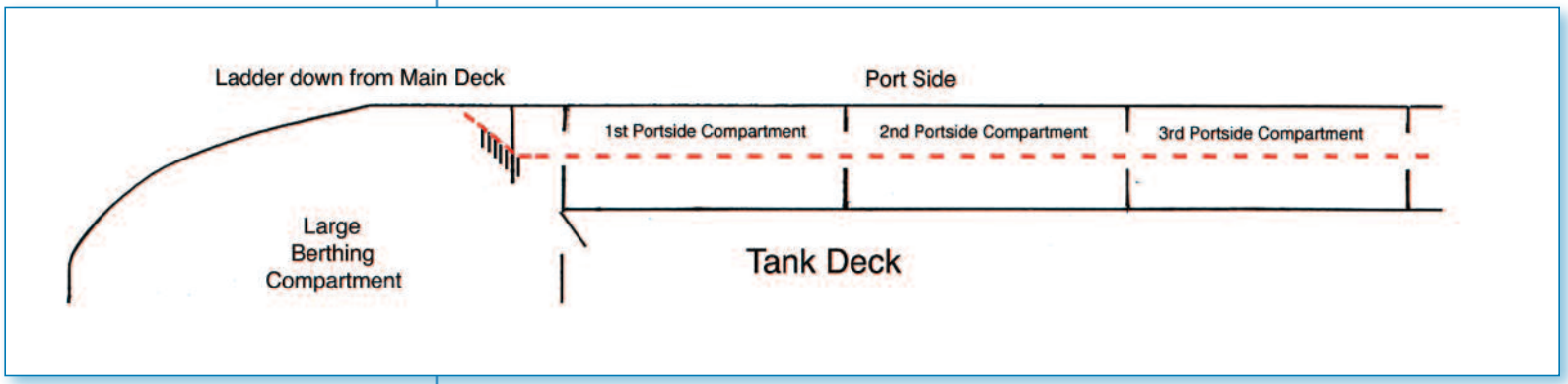


Figure 1-2 Second Deck - Stern Port Quarter

There were over 200 bunks on the ship. The majority of these "racks" consisted of a frame of steel tubing bent in the shape of a rectangle about six feet long and thirty inches wide. A piece of heavy canvas with grommets around the edge was laced in the frame and topped off with a three-inch-thick mattress filled with what was supposed to be cotton, but felt more like bread dough. In boot camp, recruits were issued mattress covers and woolen blankets, so all a sailor had to do was to stuff a bag of bread dough into a mattress cover, spread a blanket, and his bunk was complete. The officers had slightly better bunks and mattresses with springs.

The picture is of the bunks in the large compartment. The three tin cans hanging on the chains are for cigarette butts. Smoking was permitted in the sleeping compartments, except after the announcement for "lights out." The bunks were in tiers of three, could pivot in brackets, and would be "triced up" during the working day. After we left Hawaii, my bunk was the one in the middle with the pillow, the blankets neatly folded for this picture. The bottom "rack" was only six inches above the deck. This compartment was directly over the "screws" (propellers) and when the LST was underway, it was noisy. Even in moderately heavy weather, the stern would shudder when the screws dug into seas that only moments before had been below their exposed blades. In 1953 the ship's berthing arrangement was changed by moving the crew from the large stern space to the port side, where each division had its own compartment, with the larger divisions occupying two spaces.

After the MAA departed, I made up my bunk, stored a few items in a locker, and eagerly left to explore my new home.

OCEANICA
AND THE
PACIFIC OCEAN

Statute Miles
0 500 1000 1500

Dutch Possessions in E. Indn. Archo. colored Yellow
Spanish do " " " " Buff
British do " " " " Red
Portuguese do " " " " Purple
French do " " " " Green

CHAPTER 2

01 Deck Operations

Retracing the route by which we came from the main deck, I then went up an outside ladder to the first level above the main deck. This was the 01 Deck. The enclosed part of the superstructure on this level was only about fifteen feet wide and approximately twenty-five feet long. Although it was not large, it was very important in the operation of the LST.

The forward compartment was the wheelhouse, where the helmsman steered the ship.

The forward compartment was the wheelhouse, where the helmsman steered the ship. The navigation of the vessel took place in the area immediately in back of the wheelhouse. It was here in the chartroom where the navigator plotted the location and course of the ship on a chart. The radar, which was vital to navigation and collision avoidance, was also located here. The largest area, which was behind the chartroom, was filled with communication equipment and was appropriately named the radio room. Nearly all of the ship's electronic equipment was located in this area, which made it the duty station for the electronics technicians. In this chapter, I will describe the equipment and procedures unique to this part of the ship.

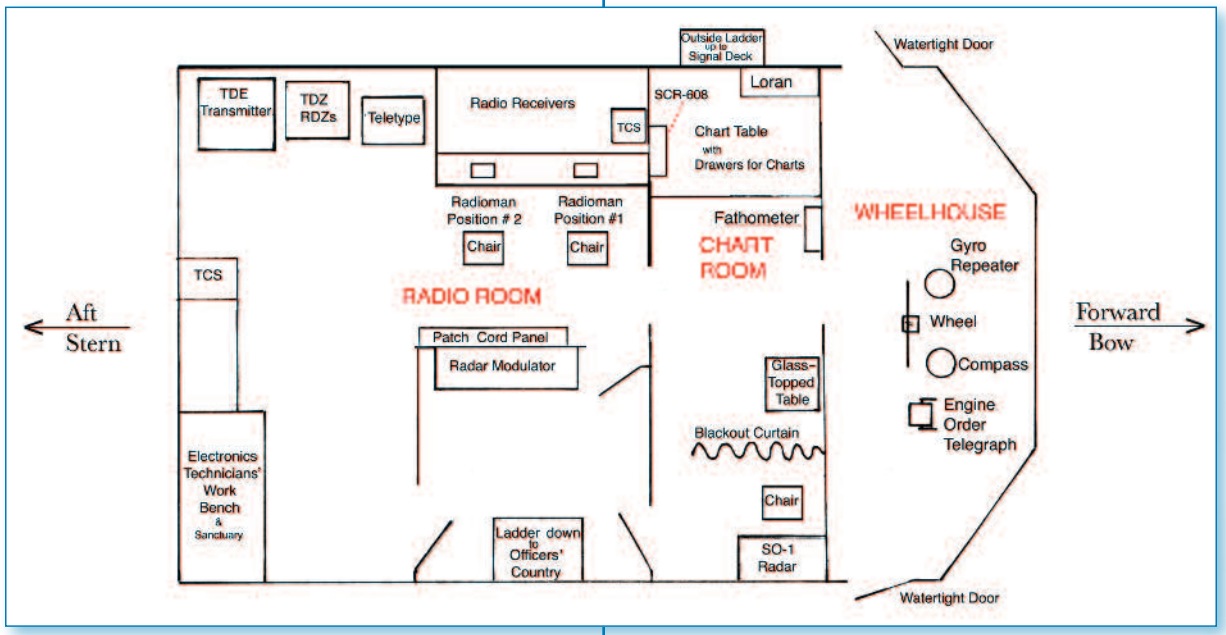


Figure 2-1 01 Deck Plan

THE WHEELHOUSE

The forward compartment on the 01 Deck was where the helmsman guided the LST by responding to commands from the conning station, the highest position of the deckhouse. The officer on the conn issued commands to the helmsman through a "speaking tube," actually just a steel pipe with a brass funnel on each end. This may sound a little primitive, but it still worked when the power failed. The commands for a course change might be "Hard right rudder" or "Steady on two seven zero." The helmsman would repeat the words to assure the officer that he had heard the command correctly; then he would turn the wheel accordingly. There were two instruments in front of the helmsman that would indicate the heading of the ship. One was a magnetic compass in a binnacle and the other one was a gyro repeater. Because the earth's magnetic North Pole is not located at the geographic North Pole, the two devices will usually differ by several degrees. The helmsman would normally use the gyro repeater, because it was based on true north. Although not as accurate, the magnetic compass would still operate, and be used, if the power went off (which was far from being unusual).

The officer in the conning station could also control the ship's two engines by giving commands through the speaking tube to the person standing to the right of the helmsman. A command of "All back full" would result in the assistant helmsman repeating the words back into the speaking tube; he would then relay this instruction to the main engine room. He sent the desired changes of engine speeds through the use of the engine order telegraph. The engineer in the engine room would "ring back" the signal for verification and then carry out the appropriate action. The engine order telegraph was mechanical and did not require electricity.

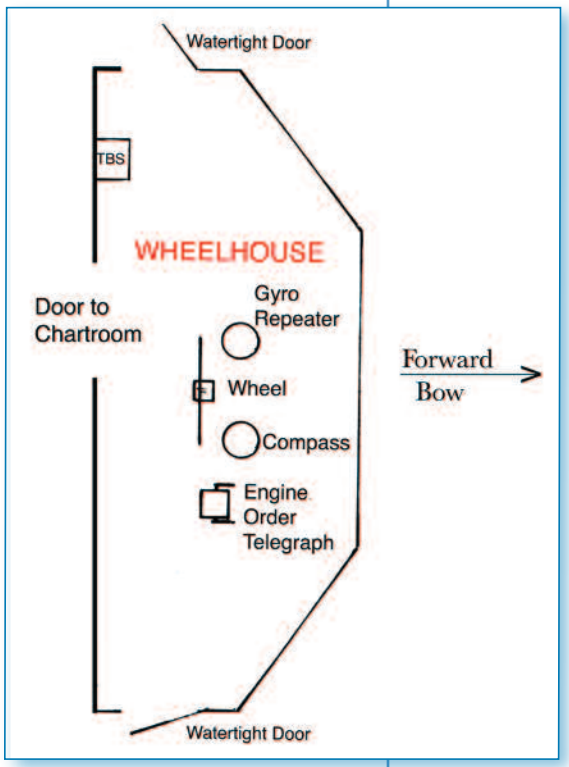


Figure 2-2 Wheelhouse Deck Plan

THE CHART ROOM

The entrance to the chart room was through a door in the back of the wheelhouse. A chart desk completely filled the port side of the room, as shown in Figures 2-1 and 2-3. A glass-topped plotting table was on the left as you entered from the wheelhouse. I never saw it used for any purpose other than that shown in the photograph.

There were three pieces of World War II vintage electronic equipment over the chart desk. Located near the door to the wheelhouse was an instrument called a fathometer. This device determined the depth of the water under the ship and then marked the value on a slowly moving paper chart. The chart would display the profile of the sea bottom for the track of the ship (Figure 2-4).

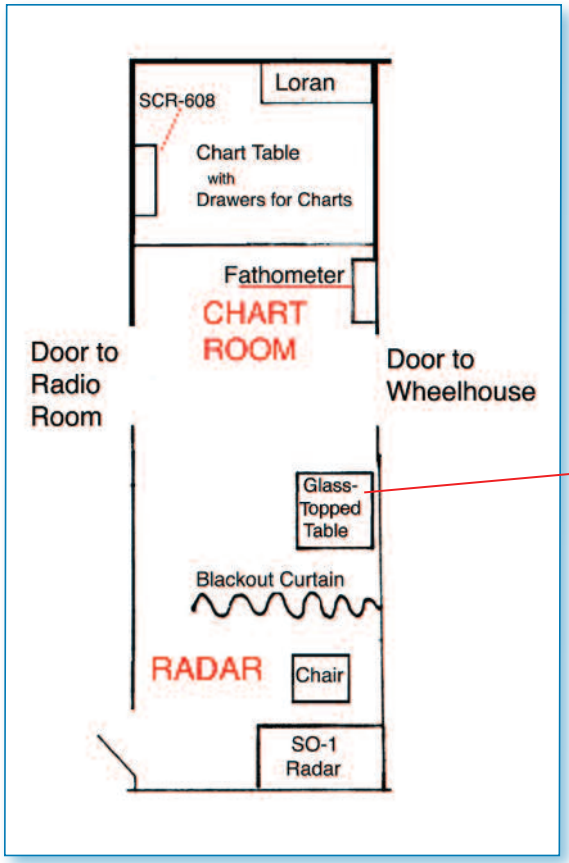
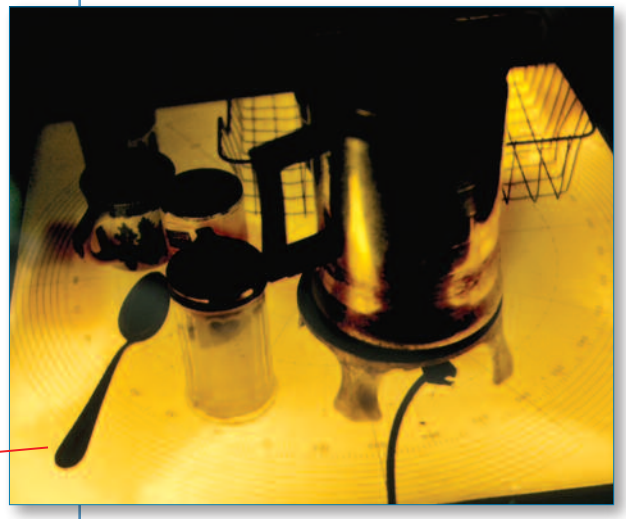


Figure 2-3 Chart Room Deck Plan

The second instrument was an SCR-608 VHF transmitter-receiver. It was used for communication with other ships or landing craft during an amphibious assault.

The last and largest device was a DAS-4 Loran receiver. Theoretically it had the capability to ascertain the ship's position, but during the time I was on board, it was only used two or three times, and then only with moderate success.



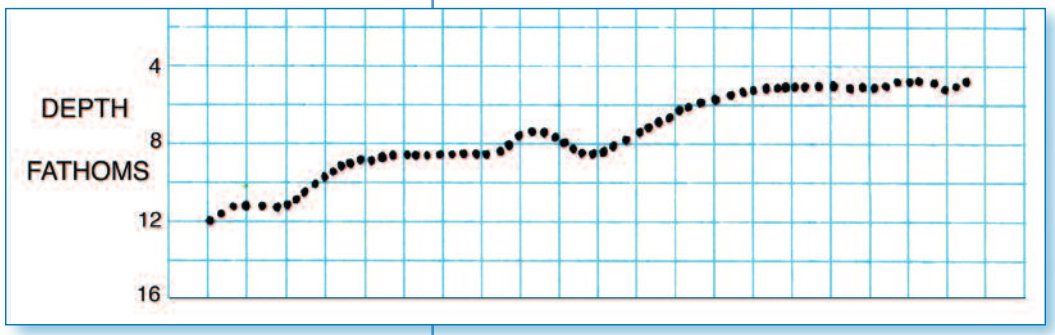


Figure 2-4 Fathometer Chart

Navigation was relatively easy when land was within range of our radar, but in the 1950s, in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, celestial navigation was the only option. Using stars to determine a location on the surface of the earth is done by measuring the angle between a principal star and the horizon, at a precisely known time. This measurement is normally done with a sextant. The angle and the time are then located in what are called "sight reduction tables." From this tabular data, the navigator is able to draw a line on the chart. The position of the ship would have been somewhere on this line. To find the exact location, the routine must be repeated for a different star. The position of the ship would be where the two lines cross. Before the second line is drawn, compensation must be made for the distance the ship has traveled between the two "star shots." This position would be correct if absolutely no errors of any type had been made (which probably has never occurred in the history of celestial navigation). What must be done now is to repeat the procedure for a third star. The odds of this third line crossing at the intersection of the first two are about the same as hitting the jackpot on a giant progressive slot machine. In nearly every case a triangle will be formed, and the ship's position would be estimated to be at the center of the triangle.

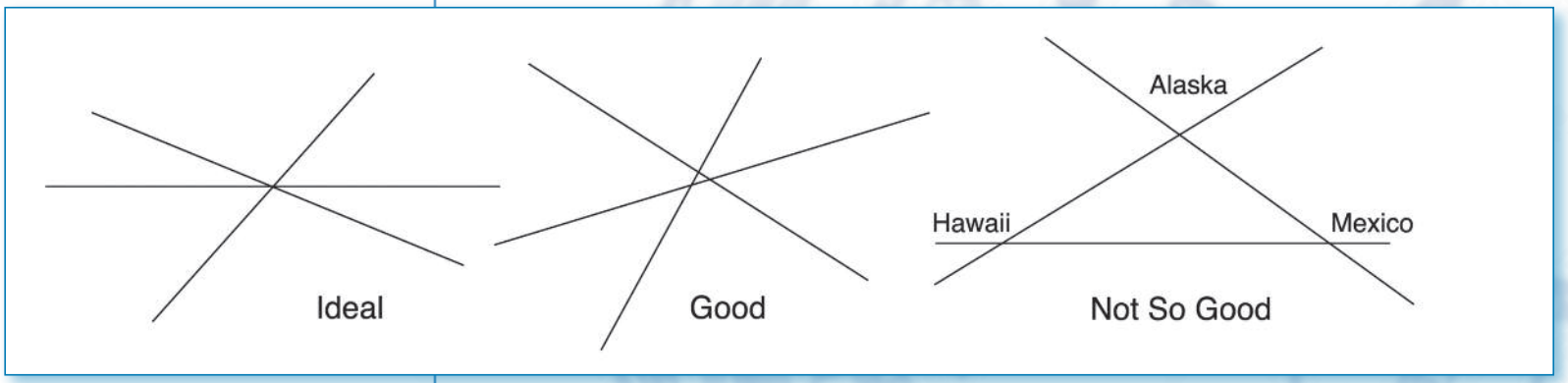


Figure 2-5 Plot Examples

The executive officer is the navigator on an LST and is responsible for the accuracy of all position reports. In some instances, however, the quartermaster with the highest rating has had more experience in taking these readings, and it falls to him to do the preliminary work.

To picture the difficulty of this process, try to imagine the quartermaster, who is a chief petty officer, wearing foul-weather gear and, with a sextant in hand, moving into the wheelhouse from the chart room. The ship is rolling to the extent that he cannot stand upright through a complete roll of the ship without leaning against a bulkhead or holding onto something. Someone in the wheelhouse opens the door for him, and he steps out into a darkness of gusting wind and intermittent sheets of rain. Clutching the sextant in his left hand and using his right hand for help in climbing the ladder to the signal deck, he waits at the top of the ladder until the ship comes out of a severe roll. Scurrying across the wet deck and bracing himself against the mast, he searches the sky for an "Alpha" star. One of these bright stars occasionally appears between racing storm clouds that cover most of the sky. A cloud would extinguish the light from the star several times before he could read the angle between it and the artificial horizon in the sextant. Finally, the star would be visible long enough for him to lock the sextant on the angle and reach for the stopwatch, which is hanging from a cord around his neck. After clicking the stopwatch to start the timer, he returns to the chart room.

Subtracting the stopwatch reading from the time on the chronometer results in the time at which the star shot was taken. Writing this time and the angle on the edge of the chart, he then pulls the top of his foul-weather gear back on and returns through the wheelhouse to repeat the process. This routine must be done as many times as necessary in order to get three readings that, when plotted, would tend to agree.

If we were to make this into a B movie, there would be a flashback about now, and our hero would be sitting in a Chief Petty Officers' Club playing bingo and nursing a twenty-five-cent drink, when he confides to a friend that he is getting bored "on the beach" and thinks he will put in for sea duty. Flashback to the ship and we hear him mutter to himself, "How in hell did I ever get in the amphibs? If I ever get off this (expletive deleted) LST, all I need is one more hitch and I can get out on twenty." Today, with satellites and the Global Positioning System (GPS), he could drink his coffee in the warm, dry chart room and watch the GPS receiver continuously display the coordinates of the receiver's antenna within an accuracy of several yards.

Clutching the sextant in his left hand and using his right hand for help in climbing the ladder to the signal deck, he waits at the top of the ladder until the ship comes out of a severe roll.

RADAR

The radar console was located across the chart room from the chart desk (Figures 2-1, 2-3). A folding blackout curtain could be drawn to darken the area so the operator could see the presentation on the cathode ray tube. All radars operated on the same principle, but some were designed to locate aircraft and others to display objects such as ships and land masses. Our SO-1 radar was of the latter type. It was a very reliable piece of equipment and only on one occasion developed a serious problem. Unfortunately for me, it happened during the eighteen months that I was the sole electronics technician on board.

Figure 2-6 illustrates the type of image displayed by the radar console. The location of the LST was always at the exact center of the circle. In this example, land with two prominent capes is on the starboard side of the ship and an island is on the port side. The ship, on its present course, will pass near the upper cape. The line from the center to the edge is the position of the antenna at that instant. The line would be rotating like a spoke in a wheel, and would refresh the image with each circular sweep. Notice the small spot on the line. The spot is the position of the "range bug" and can be moved along the line by the radar operator. The distance from the ship to the spot is displayed by a meter on the radar console. In the example, the point is 11,400 yards from the LST. This feature makes navigation easy when land is within radar range of the ship. For this display, the operator could position the range bug to determine the distance to the island and the two capes and, with this data, the navigator could mark the ship's position on the chart.

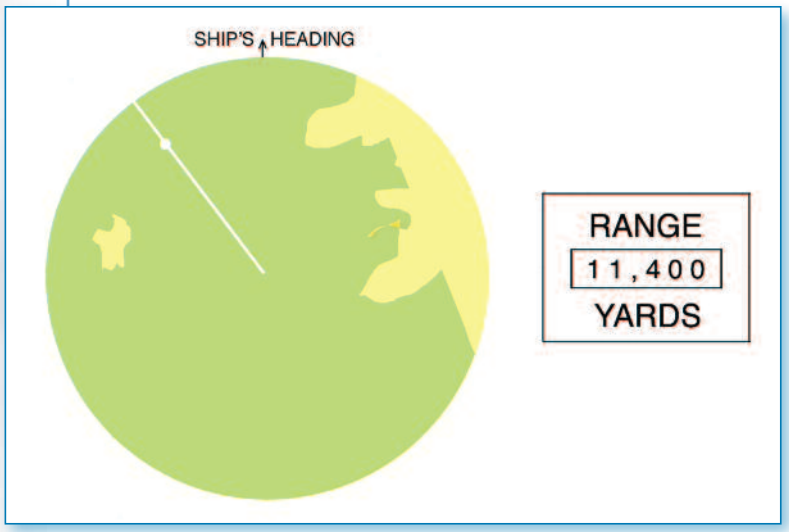
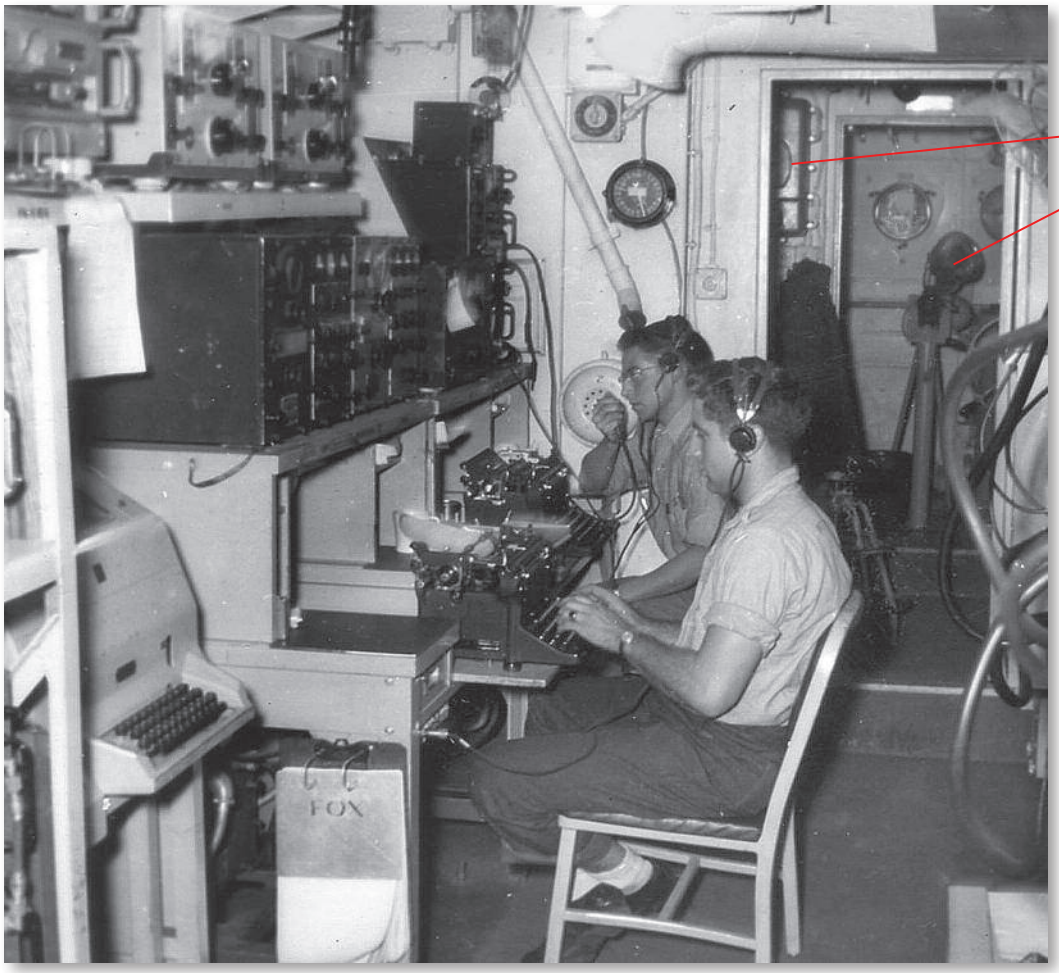


Figure 2-6 Radar Display

RADIO ROOM

Several of the items discussed previously may be seen in the photograph, which was taken from the back of the radio room. The gyro repeater and part of the ship's wheel are visible in the wheelhouse. The fathometer, or depth sounder, is on the left side of the door between the chart room and the wheelhouse.



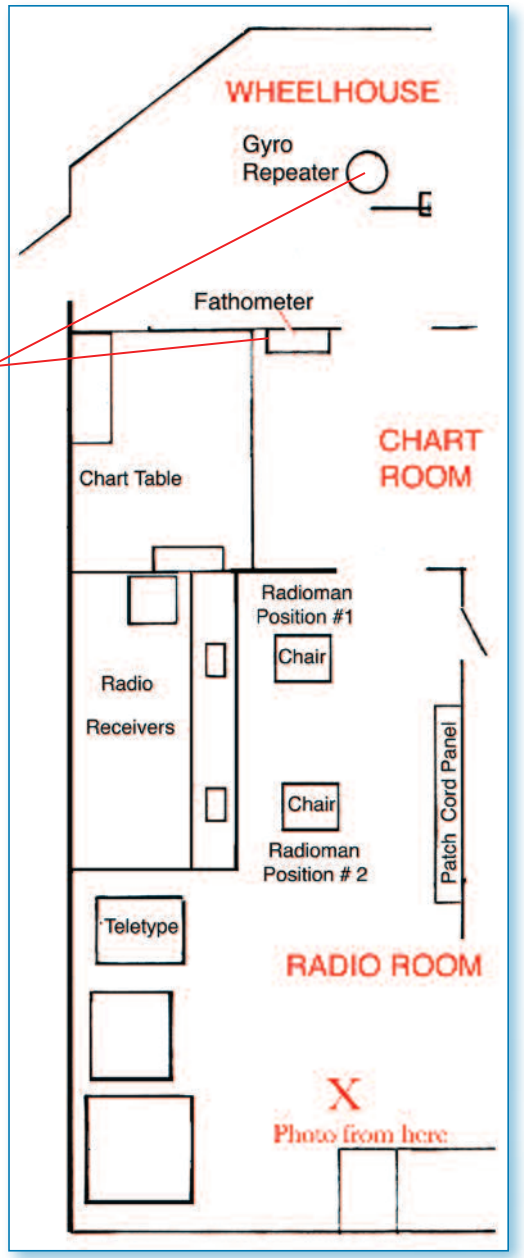


Figure 2-7 Radio Room Location and Deck Plan

Every U.S. Navy ship has a four-letter call sign; the first letter is always an "N." The identifying call letters for *LST 561* were NEUX. A phonetic alphabet is used by the U.S. military to avoid confusion and mistakes in the articulation of letters. The voice call sign for *LST 561* was Nan, Easy, Uncle, Xray until 1957, when a major change in the phonetic system resulted in November, Echo, Uniform, Xray. The identification of the ship was also visually displayed by signal flags.

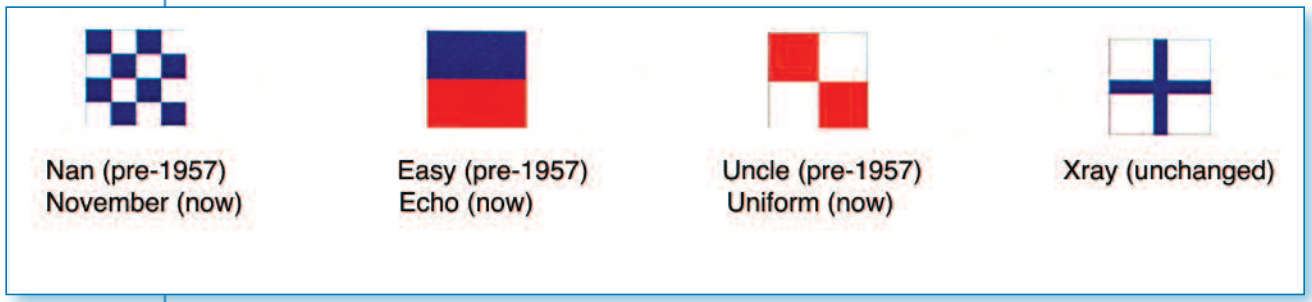


Figure 2-8 Signal Flags for NEUX

In the early 1950s, the U.S. Navy system of radio communications consisted of powerful shore-based transmitters broadcasting a continuous stream of signals twenty-four hours a day.

In the early 1950s, the U.S. Navy system of radio communications consisted of powerful shore-based transmitters broadcasting a continuous stream of signals twenty-four hours a day. This stream of signals consisted of messages addressed to recipients by their call signs. The transmitters were located at several sites around the world and operated on different frequencies. This system made it possible for messages to be sent to a ship regardless of its location. When we were in Asia, we tuned to the transmitters on Guam. In the radio room photograph (page 15), the radioman nearest the camera is listening to this signal that is being sent in Morse code. He would listen to the signal, mentally translate the Morse code into English, and using a typewriter, record the message. The messages were numbered consecutively, and, unless specifically addressed to NEUX, it was only necessary for him to copy the headings. If a radioman was unable to copy a heading due to atmospheric noise or signal fading, he would be required to contact ships or naval facilities in the area to determine if the missed messages contained NEUX in the headings. In 1953, the transmission of signals in Morse code was discontinued and the system converted to the use of teletypes. One of the teletype machines that had been installed, but is not yet in use, may be seen on the left side of the photograph. The job security of the radiomen was not threatened because, when the ship

was at sea, any messages would have to be sent in Morse code. Today, satellite communication puts all this in the same category with smoke signals.

Radioman 1st Class Pete Jacangelo, from New York, had been aboard the LST since it was re-commissioned in 1950. He was one of the Reservists who made up about one-half of the crew. On several occasions when we were at sea and he was on watch, I saw him move his chair slightly back from its usual position. As the ship rolled to starboard, the chair would tilt until the back was against the bulkhead. On the roll to port, the back would leave the bulkhead and Pete's hands would start to rise from his lap. When the front chair legs met the deck, Pete would start to type the words that had been transmitted when he was out of range of the typewriter. He would continue to record the transmission until the next roll to starboard had him out of typewriter range again.

Jacangelo is standing and Radarman 2nd Class Gordon Starr is the other sailor in this photograph taken in 1952 on the beach at Enoshima, Japan.

On this evening in 1951, after I had met and talked with several members of the Operations Division, I returned to my bunk for my first night's sleep aboard a ship.

CHAPTER 3
Oakland to Hawaii

The next morning the public address system speaker blared out the command for reveille, which was then followed by, "Now chow down for mess cooks and the oncoming watch." My sudden awakening in a compartment illuminated only by two night-lights was very confusing. It was several moments before I became conscious enough to realize I was on board the LST. Not knowing what I was supposed to do, I decided to go to the radio room where there would be other members of my division. I dressed quickly and went up to the main deck and on to the wheelhouse. It was still quite early, with dawn just breaking over the Oakland hills. The deck and exterior bulkheads were wet from the condensation of fog from the Bay. The radioman on watch was seated at the operator's position nearest the door when I entered from the chartroom. "Mac" McClure was in the back of the room talking with another member of the crew. Mac was one of the radiomen I had met the night before. He was a recalled Reservist who owned a small grocery store in Missouri. McClure introduced me to the other crewman, Bob Madge from Berkeley, California. Madge was a radioman, and also a recalled Reservist. The call for "chow down for the crew" was sounded, so the three of us went down to have breakfast. After we finished a standard Navy breakfast of chipped beef on toast (SOS to anyone who has been in the Navy) it was back to the radio room. The only work for the technicians that day was to set up the transmitters and receivers for the frequencies that were to be used on the way to Hawaii. I just observed this process to see how it was done, and spent most of the day getting acquainted with my new shipmates.

About 5 PM an announcement came over the loudspeaker to "Set the special sea and anchor detail." I wondered if this command concerned me but learned that the special sea detail was set when a ship was to leave a mooring and the electronics technicians had no special duties. The "Special Sea Detail" would also be set when the ship was returning from sea to a mooring or anchorage. Fifteen minutes later, the mooring lines were cast off and a

It was still quite early, with dawn just breaking over the Oakland hills. The deck and exterior bulkheads were wet from the condensation of fog from the Bay.

tug was easing the LST from the pier. I was taking all this momentous occasion in from the rail in front of the wheelhouse. The tug cast off shortly, and very soon we were sailing under the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. On the right was Treasure Island, my home for the past nine months. On the left, in the approaching dusk, the familiar lights of San Francisco sparkled in the water. It seemed impossible that I was standing at the rail of a ship and seeing this. My feelings could only be described as those of exaltation! I was born to be a sailor!

These lofty feelings began to fade when the slight roll of the ship became perceptibly more intense as we neared the Golden Gate Bridge. After we sailed under the bridge and entered the deep-water channel, the roll became even more intense. The exalted feelings changed to those of nausea, and I thought it would be best to go to my bunk and lie down for a while.

Basically, an LST is a large floating steel box that can be driven ashore and retracted. In order for this to be possible, a shallow draft is mandatory, so a hydrodynamic keel is out of the question. A hydrodynamic keel helps keep a vessel moving forward rather than slipping to one side, and it also provides a certain "damping effect" on the rolling motion. The flat bottom and shallow draft establish the unique motions of an LST. These motions vary depending upon the heading of the ship relative to the direction of the surface waves. (By now you know that by no means am I another Joseph Conrad or Herman Melville. However, I do not believe that either of these gifted authors would have been able to describe the motions of an LST in even moderately heavy seas. I also will not even attempt a description, but can only offer a few pictures that illustrate some of these gyrations.)

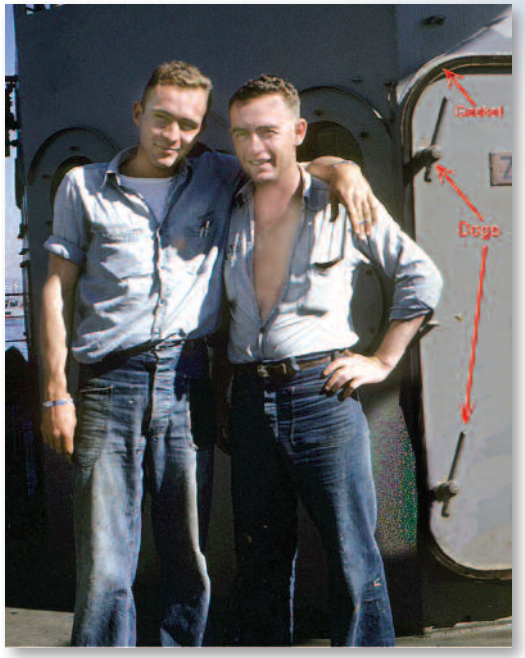
These two photographs were taken with the LST headed into a light wind and moderate swells. In the top photo on the left, the bow has crossed the crest of a swell and is over a trough. The bottom view catches the bow after it has passed over the trough and the flat bottom has met the next swell with a real crash. A ship with a more conventional hull would tend to "knife" through the wave. A person standing by the deckhouse and looking toward the bow when the LST met a wave such as this would actually see the bow flex. When I was watching, the bending appeared to be about one foot. The absence of bulkheads in the region of the tank deck is most likely responsible for the lack of rigidity and consequent flexing.

The Pacific Ocean out from the Golden Gate quite often belies its name and is anything but pacific. It was in character for my first sea voyage. Later in the afternoon of my initial day at sea, I was in the back of the radio room and the feeling really hit me. I made a mad dash

forward, and headed for the rail outside the wheelhouse. When I raced through the chart room, the executive officer, Lt. j.g. Richard Sigg, and a quartermaster were working at the chart desk. Even though I had my hand over my mouth, I think I might have nicked the XO. What an introduction to an outstanding person! This was the only time I really "lost it" in the thirty-three months I was on board, although I never got used to the motion.

It wasn't so bad when I was lying down. The technician's workbench in the back of the radio room (Figure 2-1) had a lower shelf about eight or nine inches above the deck. I am not tall and at that time weighed about 120 pounds. I found that by lying on my back, I could slide under the shelf to the back bulkhead and be completely out of sight. Unless an equipment failure had occurred, there wasn't much work for the electronics technicians, so I spent quite a few hours under that shelf (many of which were used to question my decision to join the Navy).

The second day out of the Bay Area and just when I was starting to become accustomed to this completely new life, the klaxon went off like an explosion and the PA system sounded "General quarters, man your battle stations." Although it was only a drill, a state of relaxed calm instantly became one of what appeared to be chaos. People were rushing in every direction while putting on life jackets and helmets. I had absolutely no idea where they were getting the life jackets or what I was supposed to do. The Watch, Quarter, and Station Bill lists the duties and responsibilities for each person for every situation. I remembered seeing it in the galley passageway and should have learned my duties then, but everything was so new, I thought I would do it later. I decided to run down to the galley and belatedly find out what my responsibilities were. By the time I entered the wheelhouse, the watertight doors had been dogged down.



Watertight doors are an important part in establishing the watertight integrity of a ship. A heavy rubber gasket is fitted in a channel around each door. This gasket touches a knife edge when the door is closed. Several latches called "dogs" are mounted near the edge of the door and when the door is "dogged down," it becomes watertight. One of these doors may be seen in this picture, which was taken in 1953. The two sailors are Gunner's Mate Guy Brungard on the left and on the right, missing a few of his buttons, Radarman Bill Bryan. Brungard was from Haines City, Florida, and when his enlistment was over he joined the U.S. Air Force. (He was killed in Viet Nam in March of 1967.) After opening the dogs on the door, I went to the galley passageway to learn where I should be. By now everyone was at battle stations except me.

As I was studying the bill, someone asked me over my shoulder if he could help. It was Sigg, wearing his life jacket and helmet. With a complete lack of concern, he found that the

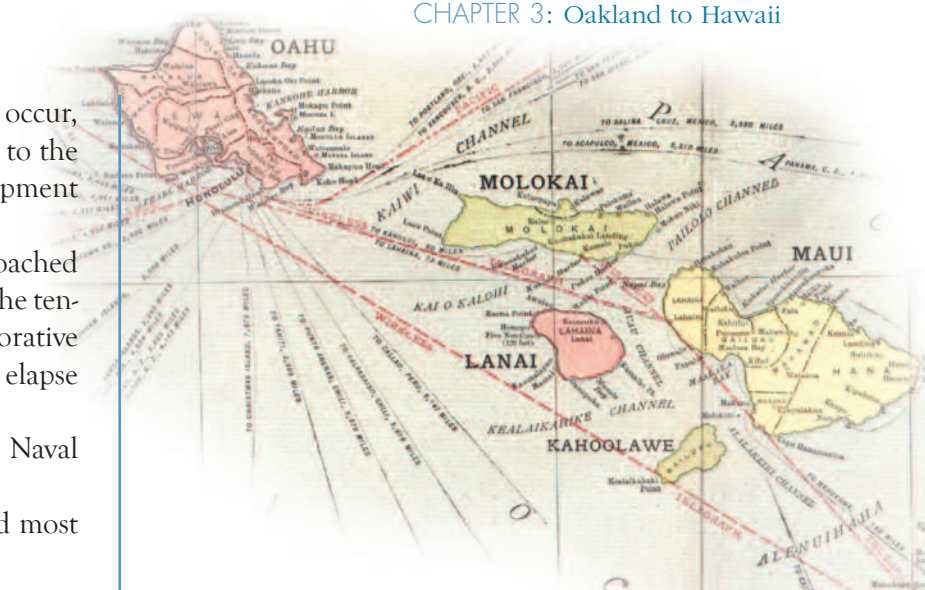
radio room was my battle station and then he located a life jacket for me. All this after I nearly barfed on him the day before. The memory of him helping me is most poignant when coupled with the knowledge that he would lose his life only four months later.

The weather improved daily after leaving Oakland, but unfortunately it only resulted in a slight decrease in the rolling of the ship.

As we neared the Territory of Hawaii, land was detected on the outer limits of the radar. The navigation had been perfect and the island of Oahu appeared off the starboard bow within hours. Nine-and-one-half days were required for *LSTs 561,1138,* and *1146* to travel the 2,100 nautical miles from Oakland to Honolulu. After rounding Koko Head, and then Diamond Head, a course change to the northwest set our approach to the channel entrance of Pearl Harbor.

As we entered the channel to Pearl Harbor, we were instructed to turn on our degaussing equipment and sail through the degaussing range. This range consisted of large coils of wire and magnetometers on the bottom of the channel. These sensors detected changes in the earth's magnetic field when a ship passed over them. Magnetic mines are designed to explode when there is a change in the earth's field. The ferrous hull of a ship will cause a concentration of these magnetic lines and will result in triggering the mine. Shipboard degaussing equipment consists of coils of wire that carry electrical current. The location of the coils and the direction of the currents create a magnetic field opposing the earth's field.

Ford Island and the stacks of USS Arizona appeared ahead as the three LSTs approached the Naval Base.



If the equipment is adjusted properly, very little change in the lines of force will occur, and the mines will not trigger. After completion of the run, adjustments to be made to the instrument were radioed to the ship from the shore monitoring station. Thus our equipment was then either adjusted correctly, or we never sailed over a magnetic mine in Korea.

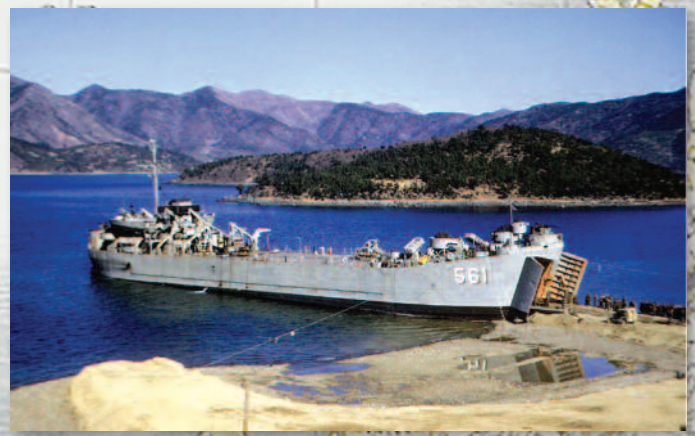
Ford Island and the stacks of USS *Arizona* appeared ahead as the three LSTs approached the Naval Base. It was a solemn thought to realize that the following month would be the ten-year anniversary of the attack that put her on the bottom. The flagpole and commemorative plaque had been placed over the hull only the year before. Another ten years would elapse before the completion of the Memorial, which stands today.

Thoughts of December 7, 1941, faded quickly as we approached the pier at the Naval Shipyard. Hula girls and a Navy band were on hand to welcome the LSTs to Hawaii.

All of the passengers we had aboard debarked with absolutely no reluctance, and most left enthusiastically. During the trip from Oakland, two of the Marines in my compartment left their bunks only long enough to go to the head. They survived by eating C-rations, which they had stored in their seabags.

The world was a far larger place then than it is today, at least it was for me. Born in Missouri, and growing up in a Nevada desert, I was enchanted by the lush greenery of this fabled land. My image of Hawaii was based on a 1940s radio program that was broadcast from the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. It featured Hilo Hattie and Harry Owens and the Royal Hawaiians. When my section was granted liberty, the first place I had to see was Waikiki Beach and the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. I had turned twenty-one two months before, so when the little grass shack of Don the Beachcomber beckoned, I went in for the ambiance and a beer. At this time, it was obvious that my decision to join the Navy was a wise one.

Operations Officer Ensign George Foreman came into the radio room the day after we made port and told me that our division was required to supply a mess cook until we arrived in Japan, and that I had been selected for this honor. I had been chosen, primarily, because I was the most recent addition to the division. He assured me that the United States Navy would never invest the amount of money required to train an electronics technician just to use him as a mess cook. It still sounded pretty scary in that I would not have my refuge under the technician's workbench. Our stay in Hawaii was only for the few days needed to supply the ship, but at least I would be able to learn my new job before we went to sea.


561

CHAPTER 4

Hawaii to Japan

The cooks were busy preparing the noon meal when I entered the galley and told them that I was their new mess cook. They informed me that my duties would be in the mess compartments and to report to the MAA there.

The port and starboard compartments on the second deck were nearly symmetrical. As discussed in Chapter 1, the port side was entirely for berthing, except for the two spaces used for the heads and showers. Likewise, there were two heads on the starboard side, but not

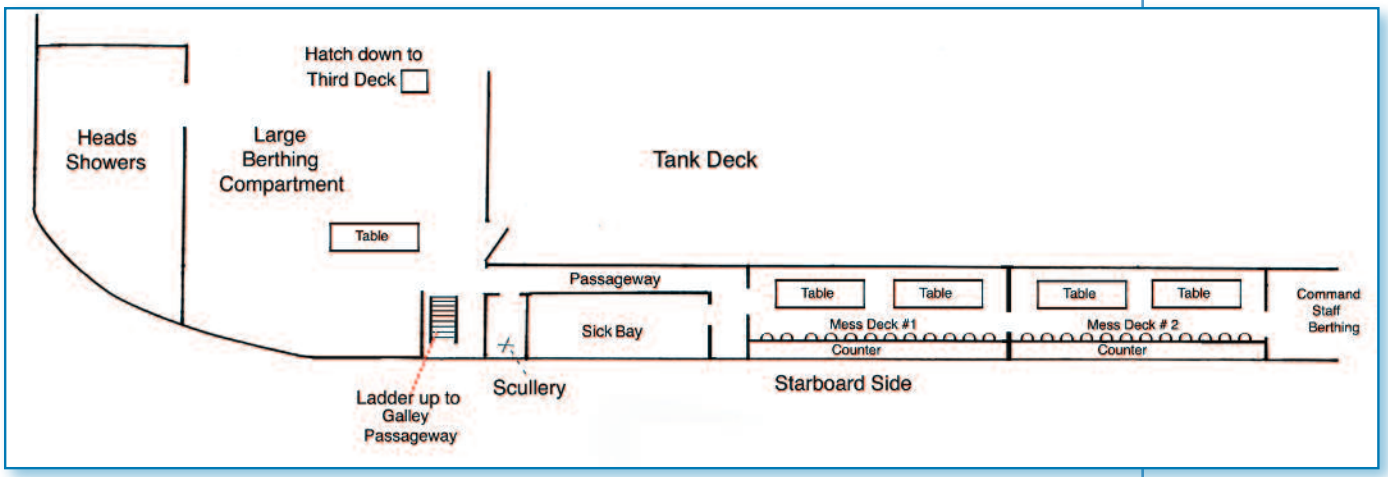


Figure 4-1 Second Deck - Stern Starboard Quarter

all of the remaining spaces were used for berthing. The first compartment from the stern was divided into three parts. A lengthwise division had resulted in a narrow passageway connecting the stern area with the remaining compartments. The greater part of the outboard

area served as the sick bay, leaving the small third space for the scullery. The scullery was entered through a door from the passageway.

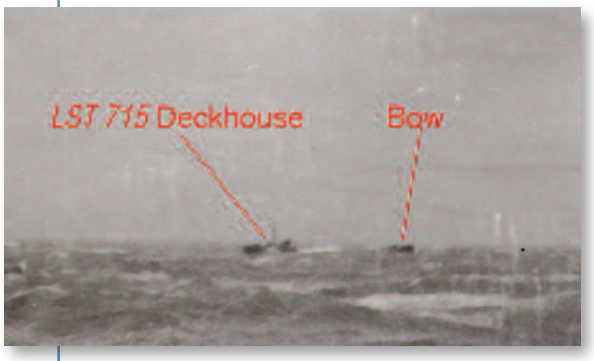
The crew ate their meals in the next two spaces. These are identified in Figure 4-1 as mess decks #1 and #2. A shelf wide enough to hold food-serving trays was welded to the outboard bulkhead (which was the hull). The seats for these shelves were round stools. A cantilever from under the shelf supported each seat. This method held the seat in place and left the deck clear for swabbing. There were two tables in each compartment. The tables were on the inboard side, which left an aisle between them and the shelf. Two sturdy legs that were welded to the deck supported the tables. The tops of the tables and the shelves were made of an easy-to-clean, green synthetic material. The perimeters of the tables and the edges of the shelves had a rim about one inch high to prevent trays and cups from sliding off when the ship rolled. On really heavy rolls, the rim didn't do much good, and a person needed to use one hand to level the tray to keep coffee and food from spilling.

Joe Miller was from New Orleans and in the deck force when additional help was needed in the galley. I have no idea why he was picked for this duty, but as may be deduced from this photograph, the selection was a natural. He is seen here with Woodard, one of his former colleagues in the deck force. The picture was taken on the starboard side, outside of the galley passageway.

Leaving the cheerful cooks in the galley, I went down the ladder on the starboard side, then past the sickbay and into the first mess compartment. A Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class with a coffee mug in one hand was sitting at the first table. I knew he was the MAA for the mess decks from his presence during the trip from Oakland. My new duties were not too complex. I was to put condiments on the tables before each meal and swab the deck once a day. What alarmed me was that the major part of the job was in the scullery. The thought of being in this small space, working in a sink full of greasy water when the rolling of the ship was still very clear in my mind, was really troubling, but it turned out better than I expected. I had not considered that the higher one is on a ship, the more severe the motion. Picture a person stepping from a dock onto a small sailboat. The side of the boat may only drop a few inches, but the top of the mast may swing several feet. The scullery, being nearer the water line of the ship, had less horizontal motion. Perhaps it wasn't much, since water would still slosh out of the deep sink if it was over half-full, but apparently it was enough that I didn't get sick, even though I didn't feel good.

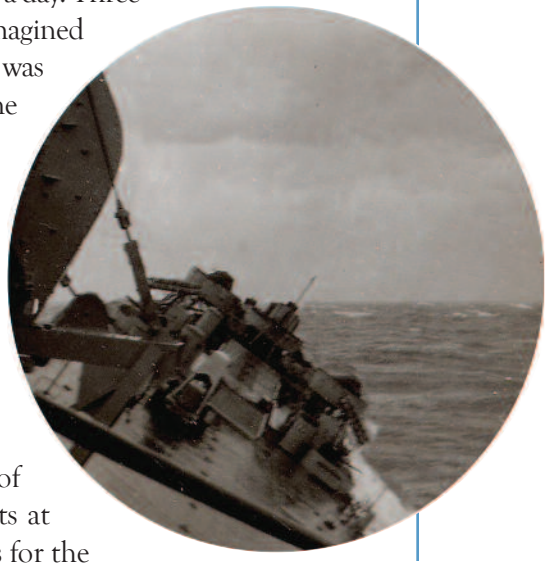
After a crewman finished his meal, he would return through the passageway, stopping at the scullery, where he would dump any food scraps into a trash can. He would then leave his tray, utensils, and cup. I would wash the implements in the deep sink and put each item in

a stainless steel basket. When a basket was full, it would go into the washer, where scalding water would finish the cleaning. All the clean items would then have to be returned to the start of the chow line at the coffee urn. Carrying them back was easy when the ship was moored, but when we were underway, it was a real adventure. I needed both hands to carry a stack of trays or a basket of cups, which made going up the ladder a serious obstacle. My "system" was to pick up a stack of about twenty-five trays and carry them to the foot of the ladder. Facing the ladder, I would lean against the bulkhead as the ship rolled to starboard. When the ship began the roll to port, I would start my run up the ladder. This worked fine, except for one time when I was late starting my run. I was about three steps from the top when the ship started the roll back to starboard. I knew I was doomed. My only option, as I started going backward, was to drop the trays and grab the handrail. The trays, rocketing down a steel ladder and onto a steel deck, brought half the crew rushing from the stern berthing compartment. After they realized we hadn't been hit by a torpedo, they helped me pick up the trays and put them in the scullery.



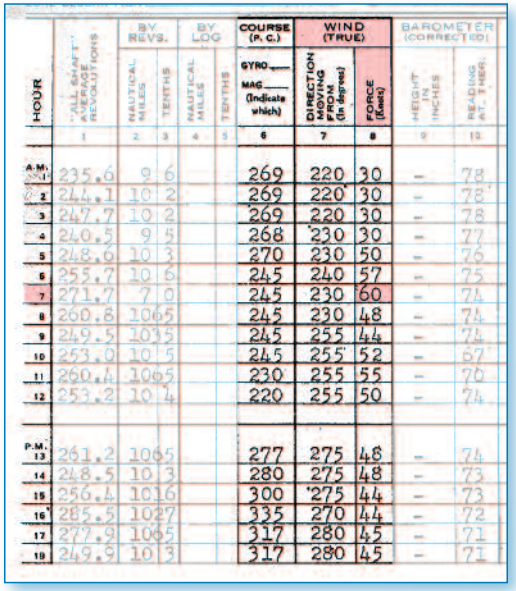
I have always done a job to the best of my ability, and I got along fine with the MAA. He always had a coffee mug in his hand, but it wasn't until months later that I learned that many times it held more than coffee.

LSTs 602, 715, and *742* joined *LSTs 561, 1138,* and *1146* in Pearl Harbor to form a task force for the 3,350-nautical-mile trip to Japan. During the interminable journey, the LSTs ground their way through the sea without pause, day and night, twenty-four hours a day. Three days went by, then a week, then ten days, then two weeks. I imagined how the sailors with Columbus must have felt, even though I was fairly certain that we were not going to sail over the edge of the world. The weather conditions deteriorated after the first week and became the worst stretch of bad weather encountered by the ship in the thirty-three months I was aboard.



November 26, 1951

In the top photo only the bow and the deckhouse of *LST 715* were visible from the wheelhouse of the *561*. The roll of the ship seen here from the wheelhouse was not unusual. Several times that day, the LST went over so far, I didn't believe it could recover. The deck log entries tell the story of the two pictures. The wind velocity increased from 30 knots at 4 AM to 60 knots at 7 AM and never dropped below 44 knots for the



HOUR	"ALL SHAFTS" AVERAGE REVOLUTIONS	BY REVS. NAUTICAL MILES	BY REVS. TENTHS	BY LOG NAUTICAL MILES	BY LOG TENTHS	COURSE (P. C.) GYRO / MAG (Indicate which)	WIND (TRUE) DIRECTION MOVING FROM (In degrees)	WIND (TRUE) FORCE (Knots)	BAROMETER (CORRECTED) HEIGHT IN INCHES	BAROMETER (CORRECTED) READING AT THER.
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A.M. 1	235.6	9	6			269	220	30	–	78
2	244.1	10	2			269	220	30	–	78
3	247.7	10	2			269	220	30	–	78
4	240.5	9	5			268	230	30	–	77
5	248.6	10	3			270	230	50	–	76
6	255.7	10	6			245	240	57	–	75
7	271.7	7	0			245	230	60	–	74
8	260.8	1065				245	230	48	–	74
9	249.5	1035				245	255	44	–	74
10	253.0	10	5			245	255	52	–	87
11	260.4	1065				230	255	55	–	70
12	253.2	10	4			220	255	50	–	74
P.M. 13	261.2	1065				277	275	48	–	74
14	248.5	10	3			280	275	48	–	73
15	256.4	1016				300	275	44	–	73
16	285.5	1027				335	270	44	–	72
17	277.9	1065				317	280	45	–	71
18	249.9	10	3			317	280	45	–	71

Figure 4-2 Left Hand Page Deck Log

rest of the day. A knot is one nautical mile per hour. Since a nautical mile is approximately 1.15 "statute miles," 60 knots would be almost 70 miles per hour.

The seas were so severe that it was necessary to change the base course twice to bring the ship more into the wind and reduce the rolling.

Other than the few days in Hawaii, which flew by, my introduction to shipboard life seemed like an eternity. The last days of the trip to Japan were really bad, and the thought that I might spend the next three years of my life in the discomfort of this constant motion was really depressing. Bill Zoller was a yeoman and one of the World War II veterans on board. We became friends and talked about many things. He tried to assure me that these days were unusually bad, and that there would be more Hawaiis in the future to balance it out. It was from Bill that I learned of the existence of 35mm photography. When I graduated from high school, I had received a camera that used 127mm film, but I had only taken a few pictures with it, and none in color. The black-and-white photographs in this book were taken with this camera.

On the seventeenth day after our departure from Pearl Harbor, the radarman reported the appearance of a land mass, which probably was the top of Mt. Fuji. More than several hours later, Yokosuka harbor was completely dark when the main engine room was called and told to stop the engines and blessed stillness enveloped the ship. The LST was surrounded by a darkness broken only by points of light along the waterfront. Just walking on the motionless, silent ship seemed strange after being conditioned to constant motion for over two weeks.

The spell was soon shattered by a command over the PA system for the duty boat crew to "Man your boat." The boat left shortly with one of the officers to pick up the ship's operational orders. Questions like, "What did you see? What's over there?" greeted the boat crew upon their return. The replies were not very satisfactory, since the boat had landed at the naval base and the setting could have been any naval shipyard in the United States. All the curiosity would have to wait until the first liberty party went ashore.

The first liberty in Yokosuka was granted the day after our arrival. Pictured here are ten members of the Operations Division ready for inspection prior to liberty. In the back row from the left: Roland, Nelson, St. George, Staley, and Keck. In the front row from the left: Milton, Miller, Peek, Madge, and Register.

When I went ashore for the first time, I was amazed to be in a place where I, less than 5' 5" in height, was as tall as everyone else! Without question, it was a different land. Nearly all of the buildings were constructed of unpainted wood and, for the most part, there was not much color. There were only a few automobiles, most of which were used as taxis. Three-wheeled motorcycles with a small truck bed were commonly used for carrying practically any type of freight. "Pedicabs," some with the pedaler in back, were prevalent, and a favored way for the sailor to travel. The fare depended on how long the trip was, and unless it was lengthy, would be only one or two hundred yen (less than one dollar).

Three-wheeled motorcycles with a small truck bed were commonly used for carrying practically any type of freight. "Pedicabs," some with the pedaler in back, were prevalent, and a favored way for the sailor to travel.

One other impression I had of Japan was the scarcity of external lighting and street lights. There were quite a few souvenir shops and beer joints near the front gate of the naval base. This area was illuminated by the lights from the shops, but night found most of Yokosuka with only an infrequent street light or store light to aid pedestrians on their journeys.

The tank deck of the LST had been laden with military supplies in Oakland and, soon after our arrival, we were directed to the naval base for off-loading. Our instructions were to enter one of the drydocks, where an adjacent gantry crane would lift the supplies through the cargo hatch. This picture was taken as we approached the area and shows several of the large cranes.

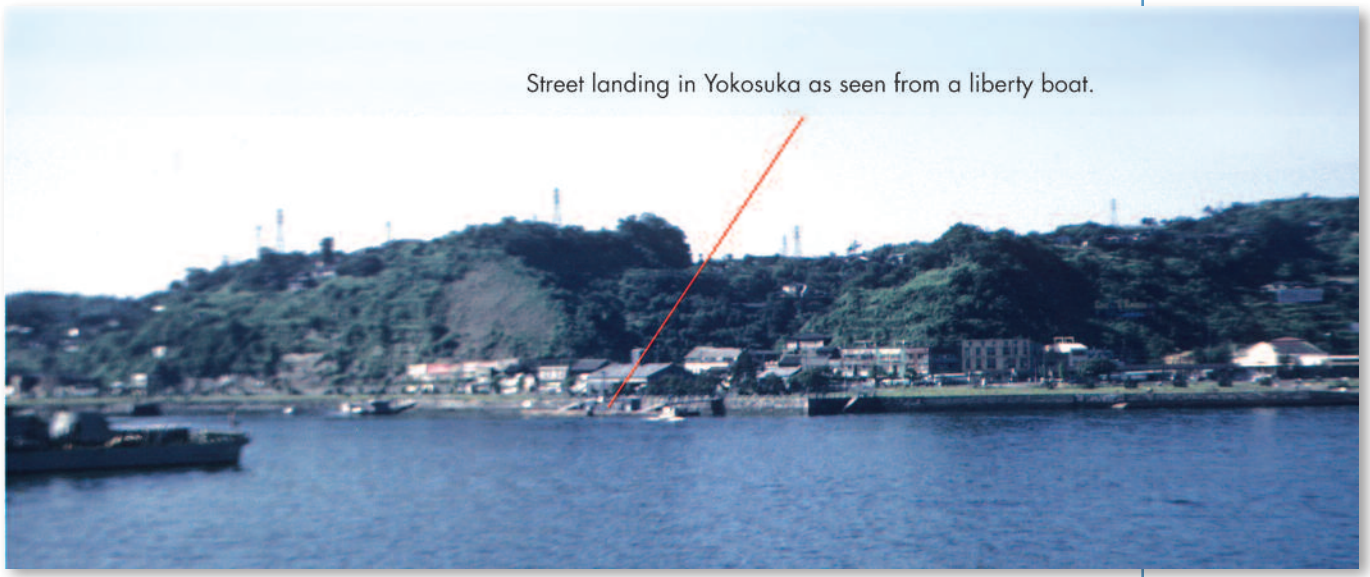
After the cargo was removed, and the captain was backing the ship out of the drydock, it hit something that opened seams in several plates and really dinged the port screw. The accident resulted in additional time in Yokosuka because now it was necessary to go into one of the drydocks for repairs.

The bottom photograph was taken from the stern of the LST after the repairs were completed and the drydock was being flooded to re-float the ship. There were three drydocks, all built before1884 with blocks of stone. This one was was enormous, over 700 feet in length. The LST did not occupy even half of the basin.

The crew was divided into Port and Starboard sections when the LST was not at sea. After a working day, one section would be off-duty and would be granted liberty. The following day the sections would be reversed. When the ship was in the U.S.A., liberty did not expire until 8:00 AM the following morning, but most of the time in Japan, it was "Cinderella Liberty" and over at midnight. A ship's liberty boat in Yokosuka would make two stops on shore. One was where the boat landed on the night of our arrival. This was the landing at the naval base and the one used for business at the base. A sailor on liberty could disembark at this landing and then continue through the front gate to go into Yokosuka. The other landing was outside the base and referred to as the "street landing." An announcement would be made over the ship's PA system before the departure of a boat. The declaration would be: "There will be a boat

leaving for Base and Street Landings in five minutes." One could not hear this without wondering if the boat was going to New Orleans (although I doubt if Basin Street even has one boat landing).

The Enlisted Men's Club was outside the naval base, between the main gate and the street landing. The building was constructed in 1902 as the Imperial Navy Petty Officers' Hall. It had a variety of facilities and entertainment, and was perhaps the best EM club in the



Street landing in Yokosuka as seen from a liberty boat.

U.S. Navy. One of the large rooms featured a 1940s type of "big band" of Japanese musicians that would rival those of the Dorseys or Benny Goodman. A bar on one side was the source of an infinite amount of Japanese beer. The only night I was there, sailors drank beer by the barrel while the tuxedo-clad band played as though they were at Carnegie Hall. As brains gradually dissolved into a beery mush, an occasional cry for "Saints" could be heard. These shouts would become more frequent until the leader would have the band play *When the Saints Go Marching In* and the place would go absolutely berserk. The crowd would be silent for a while, but before too long the calls would start again. I have no idea of how many weeks or months this routine lasted, but I would bet there are some elderly musicians in Japan today who must cringe upon hearing this song.

I understand that the building was returned to the Japanese government in 1983, and in 1994 was transformed into the world-class Yokosuka Arts Theatre.

Navy pay in Japan was in the form of Military Payment Certificates, or more familiarly, MPC or "scrip." We were required to change our "greenbacks" to this form of currency when we arrived in the Far East and then to reconvert to greenbacks when we left. This paper money was to be used for transactions on all military installations and in our small ship's store on the LST. Any purchase in Japan was supposed to be made with yen, unless the merchant had been authorized to accept MPC.

To legally convert scrip to yen, one would go to a teller window at the EM Club. The purpose of using this type of paper money was to keep United States currency (greenbacks) from being used illegally, and to combat black market activities. The days when sailors pulled nails from the planking on their ship to trade for favors from the local ladies were long gone, but commerce between ship and shore will always exist. (I must confess that in 1953, on our second trip to the Orient, I went ashore with twelve cartons of cigarettes that I had bought in the ship's store for seventy-five cents per carton and received the equivalent of twenty-four dollars for my deviousness. I used my ill-gotten gains to finance the three-day leave described in Chapter 22.) When the comptrollers felt that the amount of illegally held scrip was getting out of hand, they would issue a new series. No notice would be given, and no opportunity given for the MPC to be brought onto any ship or military facility. On this day all military personnel traded their old currency for new, and the illegal holders now had piles of worthless paper. The official rate of exchange established by the United States was 360 yen per dollar. This ratio was in effect until the early 1970s. Quite often, when ashore, someone would appear by your side and inquire, "Change money?" A shake of the head and they would disappear as rapidly as they had materialized. These money-changers usually started with a very poor rate to catch the unwary. The ratio was quite negotiable, with the lateness of the evening being a factor in establishing the rate. Some merchants would accept scrip if their desire to make a sale was greater than their fear of dealing with illegal money. I strongly suspect that one of the boatswain's mates on the ship was involved in some type of high-flying activity while we were in Japan. His locker was next to mine, and on a couple of occasions he showed me a stack of currency several inches high. He never told me, nor did I ask, how he was able to acquire this amount of cash.

In the area of the shops and bars, and far more numerous than the money-changers, were girls and young women, some alone, others in groups, all imploring in broken English for you to come to their house for entertainment. In 1951, both Kay Starr and Rosemary Clooney recorded a song titled *Come On-a My House*. Clooney's recording, which was subtitled *The Pidgin English Song*, was a major hit in the U.S. and a staple in every beer hall and any other place in Japan that owned a 78 rpm record player. The song, in which Rosemary offered *candy, plum, pomegranate, Easta-egg, and everything* was the anthem of these young ladies. The lure of these Oriental sirens was too much for some of the crew. A captain's mast on December 6 awarded one of the miscreants three days in solitary confinement, on bread and water, for being sixty-three hours over leave. The sentence was served in the brig on the naval base. When the Marine guards brought him back to the ship, we asked him if he suffered much. His reply was that it wasn't bad, the bread was good, and they gave you all you wanted, and he didn't have to do anything. (You really had to know him.)

There was a camera store in the shopping area. On the eve of our departure from Yokosuka, Zoller and I went to this store and I bought a 35mm camera. It was a Super Dan 35, for which I paid the equivalent of thirty-five dollars in a combination of yen and scrip. This represented about a third of a month's pay, so it wasn't a purchase to be taken lightly. On the way back to the LST, we went to the store in the EM Club (staying out of the room with the band) and I spent the last of my December's pay on two rolls of film. At that time, processing of the film was included in the purchase price. Each film package came with a little cloth sack and a mailing label. The exposed film was placed in the bag and mailed to a processing laboratory. The slides were usually returned within three weeks, if we were operating in a location where our mail could be picked up. I did not have access to a projector, so the only way I could view slides was by holding them up to the light. All of the color pictures in this book taken until mid-1953 were with the Super Dan 35, which unfortunately, was not a very good camera.

Later in the month, I happened to have my camera at the quarterdeck when mailman Bernie Milton and his helpers were returning with several weeks' accumulation of mail.

This card was in my small trove of souvenirs. It is from the camera shop where I bought my camera.

CHAPTER 5
Yokosuka to Pusan

The special sea and anchor detail was set at 5:30 AM on December 19, 1951, and as we cleared Yokosuka Harbor and entered Tokyo Bay, the sun was rising in the "Land of the Morning Sun." This was the first picture taken with my new camera, and for that matter, the first color photograph I ever made.

After leaving Tokyo Bay, we sailed southwest down the coast of Honshu. After reaching the southernmost tip of Shikoku, the course was changed in order to enter the Bungo Channel between Kyushu and Shikoku. From here we would navigate the waterway between Kyushu and Honshu, enter the Tsushima Straits, and sail directly to Pusan, Korea.

Incidentally, the clouds over Oshima were not created by the plume of smoke rising from the active volcano on the island.

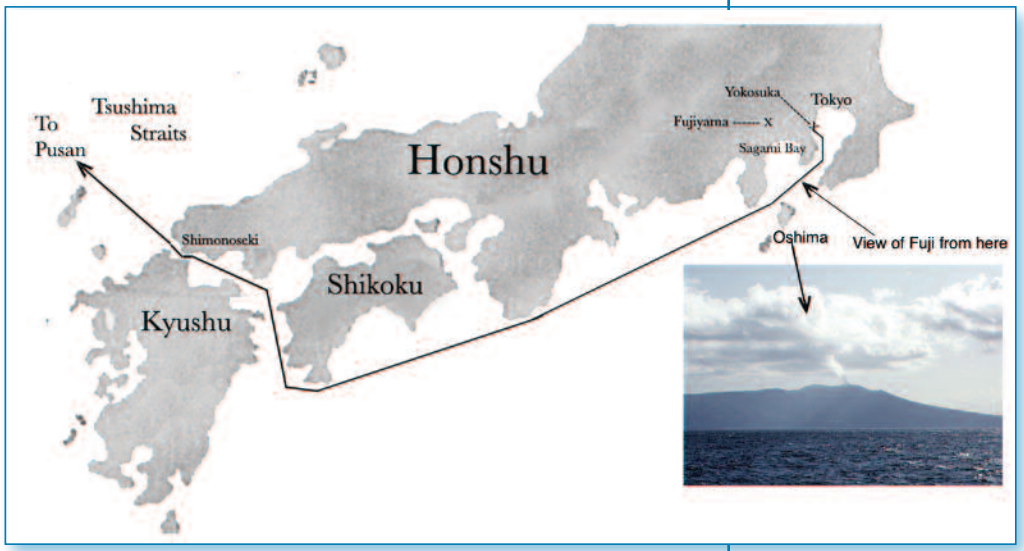


Figure 5-1 Ships' Track

The weather was cold and very clear, as evidenced by the view of Mt. Fuji. This picture was looking across Sagami Bay, with Fuji-san about fifty miles away. In the early morning, there was no wind and the sea was quite calm. This pleasant start changed when a breeze picked up from the west. The wind was not exceptionally strong, but soon the old girl was well into her hula dance, with spray coming across the deck every time the bow hit a crest.

The distance from Yokosuka to the Kanmon Straits by our route required between two and three days at full speed. Kanmon Straits is the name for a section of water between the islands of Honshu and Kyushu. The narrowest portion, with less than one mile separating the two major islands of Japan, is referred to as the Straits of Shimonoseki. In this passageway, which connects the Sea of Japan with the Inland Sea of Japan, the currents are swift and treacherous. Our departure from Yokosuka had been quite early so that we would arrive at, and traverse, the straits in daylight. By the time we passed Cape Sada on the western tip of Shikoku, the wind had abated and the water was calm, as may be noted in these photographs. As could be expected, the number of ships and boats increased considerably as we approached the straits.

The narrowest portion, with less than one mile separating the two major islands of Japan, is referred to as the Straits of Shimonoseki.

A persistent haze due to the almost complete absence of wind and a sunless sky resulted in these ethereal conditions. The lack of a breeze may have reduced the visibility, but it meant that the roll of the LST was at a minimum and we had the rarity of hours of pleasant cruising. At the western end of the Kanmon Straits the waterway narrowed rapidly, with Honshu closing on the right, as shown here.

Chart 5-1

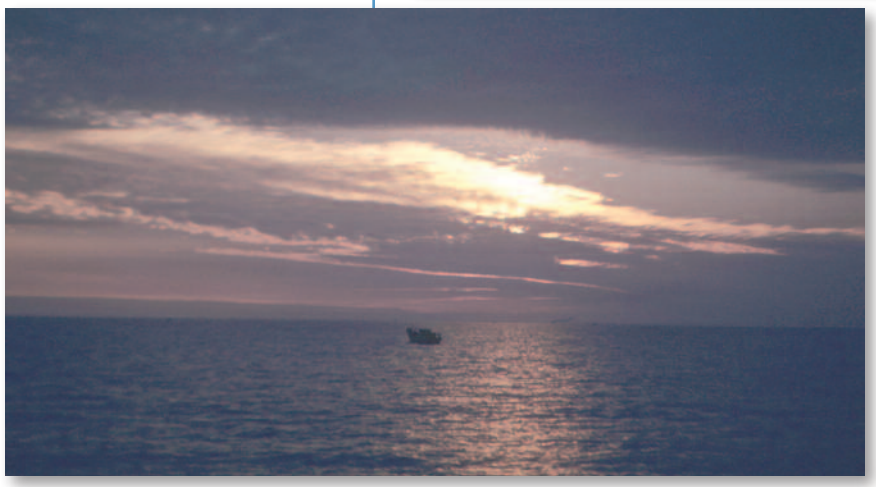
This chart displays the waterway through which passage had to be made in order to enter the Tsushima Straits between Korea and Japan. Twenty-two years after we sailed through the Straits of Shimonoseki, an automobile bridge was opened between Shimonoseki and Moji, but on this day in 1951 there was no span for us to sail under. I found the panorama of the unfolding shoreline very interesting (especially since the ship wasn't rolling). Before we arrived at the most narrow part of the channel, a small boat came out and a Japanese man came on board. I asked one of my new shipmates about him and what was happening. He told me that the man was the pilot who would take us through the straits.

One of the objects that caught my eye was a large torii on the Honshu side. This is the large white arch in the center of the photograph. Years later I learned that this was the Akama Jingu Shrine. It is three kilometers east of Shimonoseki, with the approximate location noted on the chart. The Straits of Shimonoseki have been the site of several major occurrences in Japanese history. The most dramatic was in 1185, very near the position from where this picture was taken. This was the Battle of Dannoura in which the Minamoto clan (the Genji) annihilated their hated rivals, the Taira (the Heike), and the climax of years of war between the two most powerful clans in feudal Japan. The battle was fought with bows and arrows between ships, and then with swords when warriors boarded an enemy ship. When it became obvious that they had lost, many of the Heike clan committed suicide by jumping into the water and drowning. One of the Heike who died was the seven-year-old child Emperor Anatoku. He was in the arms of his grandmother when she leapt into the sea. The Akama Jingu Shrine is dedicated to the young Anatoku.

This illustration is a reproduction of an antique post card from Japan. The card was printed in 1909, but the scene is from a much earlier woodblock print depicting the battle between the clans. The victorious Genji are in the red boat on the right. The ghostly spirits of the defeated Heike are in the wave troughs. At the bottom of the scene there are several crab bearing images on their shells. A legend that started at this time, and still exists today, is that the crab in these waters have the faces of the defeated Heike on their shells.

I had no knowledge of the historical significance of the region at this time and only learned of it when visiting the area in 1965. On this day in 1951 I was just as engrossed with the shoreline as were the two steward's mates.

After guiding our LST to the western entrance of the channel, the pilot climbed down a ladder and left to await the next ship. It was late afternoon, so our arrival at Pusan, Korea, would be in the early hours of the following day.



CHAPTER 6
Pusan, Korea

On December 22, 1951, at 8:50 AM, USS *LST 561* dropped anchor just outside the harbor breakwater of Pusan, Korea. The early morning sun gave a rosy tint to the mountains rising above the city, which stretched along the shoreline. Numerous cargo ships were seen "swinging on the hook" in the view from the bow of our anchored ship. The desperate need for military supplies during the first months of the war had been, for the most part, satisfied, and now the harbor was filled with ships. At that time, shipment in containers had not been invented, so all cargo was in bulk form. This type of lading required considerable time to load and off-load. Dock space in Pusan was limited, and it was not unusual for weeks to go by before a ship could leave this anchorage to discharge her cargo.

On December 22, 1951, at 8:50 AM, USS LST 561 dropped anchor just outside the harbor breakwater of Pusan, Korea.

Later in the morning we were directed to moor to Quay #2 in the inner harbor. This view of the harbor entrance is slightly to the southwest of the previous picture. The photograph was taken as we approached the gap between the two breakwater light beacons. A large white ship is directly beyond the left marker. The ship was the hospital ship, USS *Repose* (AH 16), which was moored to a quay adjacent to our destination.

As we approached the quay, several small boats, such as this one, came out to meet us. They were all propelled by a scull resting in an oarlock on the stern. We referred to them as "bum-boats" since they were bumming us for anything. Most of the boats had only one or two adults, but this one had a small boy. Either the man had to baby-sit that day or, more probably, he believed that having his son with him would result in more contributions.

Repose was helped from her mooring about two weeks after we arrived. The hospital ship was leaving for the United States via Yokosuka.

The Danish hospital ship *Jutlandia* is the other ship in the view.The vantage point for the photograph was our LST, as she was moored with her bow to the quay.

The type of mooring that was used in Pusan, or for that matter anywhere vehicular cargo was loaded or discharged, is illustrated in this picture. LSTs were ideally suited for this type of situation. Very little dock footage was required, and with the doors open and the bow ramp lowered, vehicles could be driven into the tank deck or, by lowering the cargo ramp, driven up the ramp onto the main deck.

Notice the chains securing the cargo through the use of padeyes welded to the deck (which is covered with a light coating of frost).

The quarterdeck was set up just inside the bow doors, and on one of the first mornings after our arrival, a male corpse was noticed floating between the ship and the quay. This unusual sighting resulted in no little excitement for the "just arrived in Korea" crew. The body was kept from floating away through the use of a boathook and a line, and the Duty Officer sent the messenger to the headquarters on the quay to inform them of our find. Upon his return, he reported that NO ONE was interested and if we wanted the corpse, it was ours. Our introduction to Pusan had been grim but clear, so the line was undone and the tide removed the symbol of the value of human life in wartime Korea.

The area in front of the ship was fenced in from the street, which was slightly beyond the large building. The fence provided security for the tons of supplies awaiting transportation to other depots and the Front. The crates seen over the starboard bow were part of this materiel. This security was effective protection from the street, but was vulnerable to "inside jobs." For the next year, a large number of the crew wore olive drab socks and other apparel that definitely was not issued by the U.S. Navy. After

my enlistment ended and I returned to college, I roomed with several other veterans, some of whom had been members of the Oklahoma National Guard, which was a part of the 45th Division in Korea. When I told them of this incident, I was rather heatedly informed that while I was on a nice, warm ship with people wearing stolen clothing, they "were freezing their butts off" because they didn't have adequate protection from the cold. Even though I was not a party to the theft, and I doubt if the small amount taken had any impact, I still felt guilty when I remembered how miserably cold it could be in Korea.

I went to the bow and took this picture after taking the other photograph, which was looking forward. This view presents the main deck and deckhouse from a not-too-common perspective.

LST 561 had four boat davits, all of which are shown in the lowered position. Our boat complement consisted of three Landing Craft Vehicle, Personnel (LCVP), and one Landing Craft Personnel, Large (LCPL). These boats, especially the LCVPs, were an essential part of amphibious invasions. More information about these craft will follow in later chapters.

The three large vertical cylinders in front of the deckhouse are exhaust vents for the tank deck. The tank deck is the very large space centered under the main deck, and is filled with vehicles prior to an amphibious operation. All of the engines in these vehicles would

be running, and creating a tremendous amount of carbon monoxide and fumes. Powerful fans in these vents expel the foul air, which is replaced with fresh air drawn through the open bow doors. Two additional vents, with canvas covers in place, are seen at the bottom of the view. The curved bulkheads mentioned in Chapter 1 are the walls of two more of these vents.

One of the vehicles in the picture (page 45) is not part of our deck cargo. This is the small crane with the steel treads in the lower center. Small cranes of this type are commonly referred to as "cherry pickers." Our cherry picker could be driven to either rail and used to lift objects from boats, or a pier, if the ship is moored alongside. The treads caused some paint chipping on the deck, but the red lead primer spots on the left appear to be routine maintenance by the deck force, and can't be blamed on the crane. I can recall at least two occasions when a crewman, while on liberty, celebrated with a little too much enthusiasm and our cherry picker was used to lift his unconscious form from the last liberty boat.

Liberty was not granted very often when we were in Pusan. I took these pictures from a busy street corner when I had my one opportunity.

Since I have never returned to Korea I have no idea what Pusan looks like today. I would imagine, however, that these scenes would be rare.

CHAPTER 7
Pusan to Koje-do

On December 29, 1951, a large quantity of fuel drums, supplies, and two fire trucks were loaded on the LST. Six hundred prisoners of war were also brought on board. This was the first of several voyages we were to make transporting POWs. Our destination was Koje-do, which is approximately thirty miles south of Pusan. Koje was an island and "do" is Korean for island, hence Koje-do is "the island Koje." Our passengers were quite docile, and the trip down the coast was uneventful.

Our passengers were quite docile, and the trip down the coast was uneventful.

This large junk was the only boat we met while sailing down the beautiful coast en route to the prisoner of war island.

Upon our arrival at Koje-do, we were directed to beach in an area where several berms had been built with sand from the beach. The berms, with sand causeways, had been created expressly for LSTs. The gradient for this landing was large and the ship was not well-grounded so, as may be seen in the picture, it was prudent to pay out cable and secure the LST by the bow. As always, the stern anchor had been dropped several hundred feet before beaching and was holding the ship perpendicular to the shore. On a later trip, time constraints made it necessary to beach at high tide and so retraction was difficult when it was time to go. It was only accomplished by pumping the bow tanks, backing down full, hauling in on the stern anchor, and having one of the Army guys push on the bow with a bulldozer.

The following day, guards brought a work party of POWs to unload the barrels of fuel. The prisoners rolled the drums down the causeway to a crane. It had rained during the night and boards were placed on the ground so that the drums would roll a little easier.

The crane then placed the barrels on trucks to be taken back to the compounds.

This view was to the southwest from the bridge of the beached LST. The dwellings near the road are of those of the local Koreans. In the center of the scene, smoke is rising from the compounds that held over 130,000 prisoners of war.

A few of the events that occurred in 1951-52 are presented here in order to provide the reader with some insight as to the situation on the island. This information is compiled from Chapter 11 "Koje-do" of *United States Army in the Korean War: Truce Tent and Fighting Front* by Walter G. Hermes.

Sept. 1950 — The landing at Inch'on, combined with the breakthrough of the Pusan Perimeter, resulted in over 130,000 prisoners of war. These were both North Koreans and former Republic of Korea (South Korea) soldiers who had been impressed into the North Korean Army. These prisoners were held in camps near Pusan.

Jan. 1951 — A decision was made by the United Nations Command to establish compounds on the island of Koje to hold these POWs, who now numbered over 137,000. By the end of the month 50,000 POWs had been moved to Koje. The South Koreans were segregated from the North Koreans.

Early 1951 — Thirty-two compounds, each designed for 700 -1,200 men, had been constructed and were packed with five times the number of men for whom they were designed.

Mid 1951 — The compounds were so crowded that they were ruled by the prisoners. Attempts by the Communists to control the compounds were met with fury by Korean anti-Communists and former Chinese Nationalist soldiers. Beatings and kangaroo courts that resulted in murders were common on both sides.

Sept. 1951 — Fifteen prisoners were murdered by a self-appointed "people's court."

Sept. 19, 1951 — A riot in one of the compounds was controlled by troops, but not before three deaths occurred.

The landing at Inch'on, combined with the breakthrough of the Pusan Perimeter, resulted in over 130,000 prisoners of war.

THE KOREA TIMES

No. 341 (DAILY) SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1951

DETAIL OF '52 BUDGET BILL

Revenue-Expenditure Estimates Excluded From Budget Bill

Police Arrest Red Official

UN Charges Reds Failed To Account For 1,000 POW's In Their Hands

Charge Based On Reds' Own Previous Statements; Ridgway Urges Top Red Leaders To Allow IRC Inspection

UN Offers To Give Up Islands; Reds May Concede On Rotation Question

Administration To Be Probed By Legislators

LEADERS VISIT MOP-UP AREAS

Tour Party Includes Rhee And Prominent American Officials

THE DEAN STORY - An Eye-Witness Account Of The General In Communist Land

Nov. 1951	Security forces were increased to 9,000 U.S. and ROK personnel, only about one-half of the number requested.
Dec. 1951	A large-scale rock fight, riots, and demonstrations resulted in fourteen more deaths.
Feb. 18, 1952	In protest of the screening of internees about their desires to be repatriated, over 1,000 Communists attacked with rocks and prison-made weapons. When the assault was not stopped with concussion grenades, the UNC forces opened fire. Seventy-seven POWs were killed immediately or died in the hospital, and 140 others were wounded. The security forces had one death and thirty-eight wounded.
Feb. 20, 1952	Brig. Gen. Francis Dodd was appointed Commandant, with orders to firm up control.
Mar. 13, 1952	Communists stoned an anti-Communist detail and its ROK guards who were passing by their compound. The guards opened fire, and before they could be stopped, killed twelve and wounded twenty-six of the rock throwers.
April 8, 1952	Repatriation screening was resumed. The Communists were aghast when only 70,000 of the more than 170,000 prisoners agreed to return voluntarily. Prior to and during this time, some of the anti-Communists prisoners were being returned to camps on the Korean mainland.
April 30, 1952	With UNC forces having only external control of the compounds and the Communists now violently against screening, the process was halted to prevent more bloodshed.
May 7, 1952	Through a well-planned and clever ruse, Gen. Dodd was seized and held captive in the compounds.
May 10, 1952	Gen. Dodd was released, but the Communists at Panmunjon reaped a propaganda harvest from the negotiations concerning his release.

Columns of POWs are being marched from the compounds to the LST beaching area in this photograph taken from *LST 561*.

With UNC forces having only external control of the compounds and the Communists now violently against screening, the process was halted to prevent more bloodshed.

KORT
OVER PROVINDSEN
Quantong eller Lyau-tong,
OG
KONGERIGET
KAU-LI eller KOREA
Tegnet efter det

CHAPTER 8
Koje-do

On one of our visits to Koje-do, Electronics Technician 3rd Class Bobby Peek, Radioman Seaman Sherman Keck, and I got permission to go ashore and look around. Peek was the only other ET on board, and was from Mars Hill, North Carolina. He was on *LSM(R) 401* before his assignment to *LST 561.* LSM(R) stands for Landing Ship Medium (Rocket), and is a launching platform for five-inch rockets. Ships of this class are only two-thirds the size of an LST and, due to the nature of the firepower, every conceivable (and inconceivable) space on board is used to store rockets. Every time someone would complain about our ship, Bobby could be counted on to say, "Boy, you think this is bad, you should be on an LSMR." He made us think we had everything except a swimming pool and a cocktail lounge.

On that day the weather was crisp, but the winter sun was brilliant in a crystal-clear sky. We had started walking on the road that ran along the shoreline in front of the ship when we met two well-dressed Korean ladies, one carrying her small child in Oriental fashion.

Another walker on the road was an elderly man wearing a traditional hat woven from horsehair.

We had started walking on the road that ran along the shoreline in front of the ship when we met two well-dressed Korean ladies, one carrying her small child in Oriental fashion.

We had been told NOT to go in the direction of the compounds, so upon leaving the ship, we had turned right on the road that ran along the shoreline. Within a few hundred feet, there was an intersection with a road descending from the hill on the left. At this junction, there was a large sign that had been made from rocks carefully stacked to form the letters "KOJE DO," with the top stones painted white.

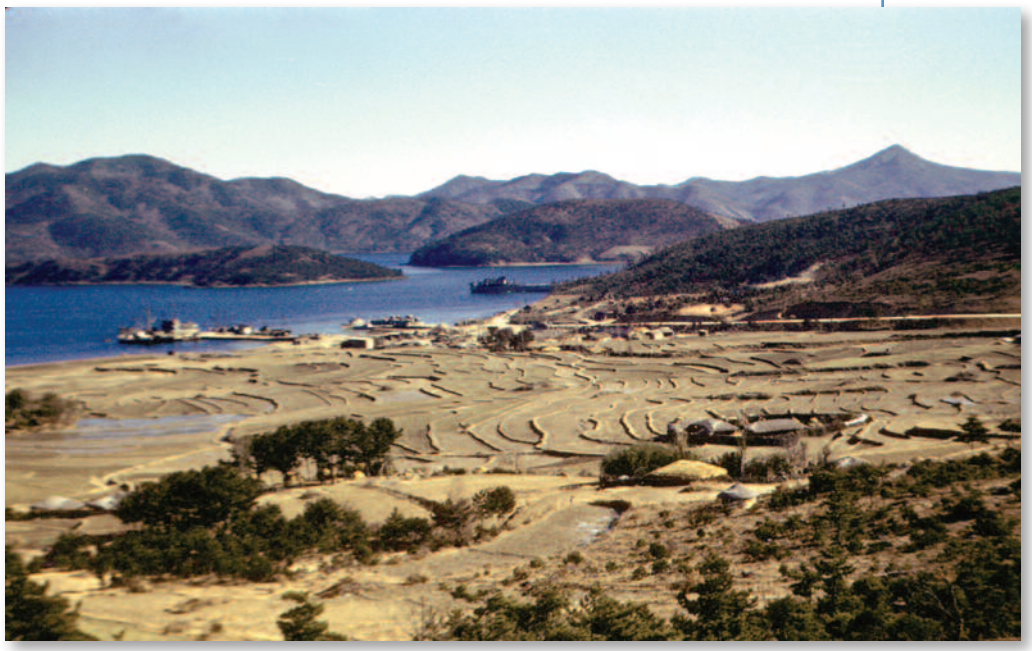
On the back of this photograph I had written, "There was another small sign here that said 'Drive slowly, you may kill your replacement.'"

On the northwest corner of the junction there was a small village. We decided to visit it later, turned left, and started up the road on the hill. After walking a short distance, we left the road and climbed the hill on the left side.

My two shipmates from the Operations Division were "Sherm" Keck on the left and Bobby Peek. We were taking a break by a burial mound after climbing the hill.

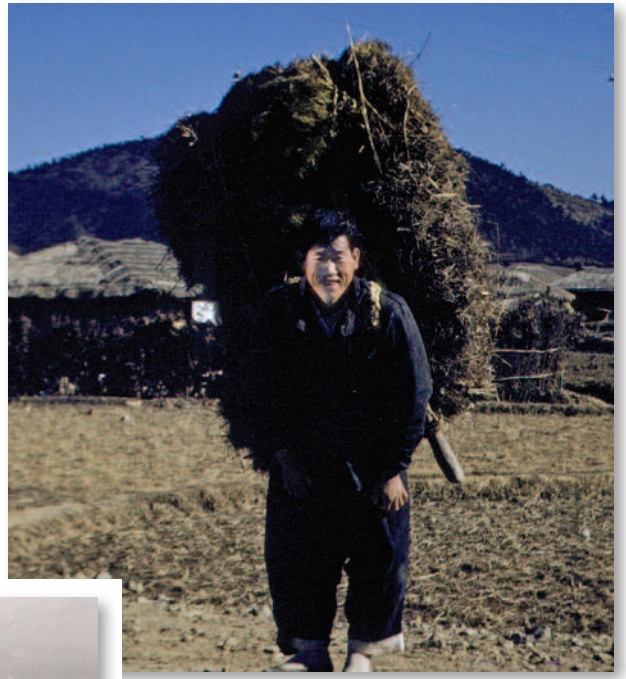
We had this great view looking north. The mountains beyond the water are on the Korean mainland. All of the lines in the open areas are the edges of rice paddies. They follow the contours of the hillside. The land between adjacent lines is level, and in the spring there will be several inches of water in the paddies.

Returning to the road, we walked on for a mile or so, and looking back, we could see the LST beyond the point. This peaceful area of rice paddies was the complete antithesis of the cauldron that was brewing on the other side of the hill.



Returning to the road, we walked on for a mile or so, and looking back, we could see the LST beyond the point.

About the only way anything was carried in Korea in this era was through the use of an A-frame backpack. The Korean word for this implement was pronounced something like "ji-gay." These are only three of the many men we saw wearing this device on Koje-do.



We returned to the village by the intersection where I photographed this dwelling. Nearby were three youngsters, probably siblings, playing in front of their home. The youngest girl was wearing traditional Korean slippers, but her sister apparently had became confused between port and starboard when putting on her Western-style shoes. I haven't a clue as to the size of big brother's boots.

This couple was preparing rice for bringing in the New Year. The man is using a wooden mallet to pound glutinous rice into sticky rice. The woman is turning the rice with a "spoon" in her left hand, and using her right hand to pound with a wooden pestle. The rice is in a stone mortar. Pounding rice for the New Year has been a tradition throughout the Far East for centuries, but is rapidly becoming rare today.

Our division officer, George Foreman, was at the bow doors when we returned and asked us how liberty was on Koje-do. Not believing our stories about the casinos and dancing girls, he insisted that we show him the village. This is Foreman wearing a "ji-gay," and yours truly riding sidesaddle as the load. The poor guy who owned the A-frame was really worried that we would break his rig, as it was probably the only way he had to make a living. Foreman got his commission through the program for Naval Reserve Officers Training (NROTC) at the University of Oklahoma. He was from Bushyhead, Oklahoma, only twenty miles from Vinita, where I went to high school. Oklahoma was a dry state at this time, and we had some serious discussions about how easy it would be to load up an LCM (Landing Craft, Mechanized) with booze and come into the state by river waters. No one would ever suspect river-going bootleggers. Alas, it is too late now, because the state is wet. (Notice the fish hanging by the door.)

Even though our story about dancing girls was not true, we did see several of the young people entertaining themselves in a very unusual way. A board was centered on a large sheaf of rice straw. The two participants, who were usually girls or young women, would stand on the ends of the board and alternately propel the other player several feet above the board. In this picture, when the player in black, who is four or five feet above the board, drops, this will propel the young lady wearing traditional Korean clothing to the same height as the first player. It doesn't require much imagination to realize that skill and a lot of practice are required to play this game.

These younger girls were in the Novice Division and still had several years to go before they would be as skilled as the ones in the other photograph.

CHAPTER 9

POW Operations

The next day it was back to work transporting prisoners of war. In this view, groups of POWs are being marched from the compounds to the LST beaching area for transport to the Korean mainland. Not all of the LSTs used in these operations were from the U.S. Navy.

There were other LSTs, belonging to the Shipping Control Administrator Japan (SCAJAP), which were manned by Japanese crews. These ships were identified by the letter "Q" followed by numerals. *LST Q007* was at a berm to our right, and most of the prisoners in this photograph would be going aboard it. The majority, if not all, of the POWs who were being taken from Koje-do at this time were anti-Communists. The display of flags of South Korea and Nationalist China left no doubt as to their sympathies.

The majority, if not all, of the POWs who were being taken from Koje-do at this time were anti-Communists.

The causeways had signs with large letters to aid the landing ships. An LST directed to beach at "Easy" would approach this berm with the two "E" signs aligned vertically. The ship would be centered on the landing, if this was done correctly.

The prisoners on the shore are going aboard the LST on our right, since there were already 1,800 POWs on board our ship; we are backing away from the berm.

All of our POW operations were between the island of Koje and the three mainland ports of Pusan, Masan, and Ulsan.

Chart 9-1

Leaving Koje-do, we sailed northeast to the mainland and the port of Ulsan. The contrast between the terrain of the mainland here and the tree-clad island we had left only hours before was amazing.

In the black and white phtograph below, POWs are leaving via the upper ramp. The guard in the foreground is a Republic of Korea soldier.

In the lower right photograph, three members of the deck force and one of the guards are standing on the upper ramp. They are waiting for all of the prisoners in the tank deck to exit. After the last POW had left the tank deck, the ramp would be lowered, and the main deck passengers would file down the ramp and through the bow doors.

Three trips were made to a rail heading near Ulsan in the month of April 1952. In every case, the POWs were transferred to boxcars for a short ride to a camp. This was part of the effort to get control of Koje-do by reducing the number of prisoners in the compounds.

Moored off our port side was the merchant ship *Massillian Victory*, and beyond her bow there was a very large pile of brass artillery shell casings.

Three trips were made to a rail heading near Ulsan in the month of April 1952.

The prisoners were being taken to a camp not far away, so they did not spend much time in the boxcars.

Several of the prisoners were carrying small, prison-made South Korean flags. I got this one from a fellow crewman who had traded cigarettes for it.

The flag was nicely made, with the hem evenly hand-stitched. Both the banner and the old guy holding it were still in pretty good shape fifty-five years after the trade.

Several of the prisoners were carrying small, prison-made South Korean flags. I got this one from a fellow crewman who had traded cigarettes for it.

Returning to Pusan from Ulsan, U.S. Army trucks brought 1,600 POWs to Quay #2.

Returning to Pusan from Ulsan, U.S. Army trucks brought 1,600 POWs to Quay #2. These photos show the sequence of loading operations.

#1 Trucks with POWs drove onto the quay to the front of the LST.
#2 The POWs are unloaded from the truck and assembled in formation.
#3 The formation, about six abreast, moved toward the bow doors of the ship.
#4 After the tank deck was full, prisoners came up the ramp to the main deck.
#5 This view is of the prisoners assembling on the main deck.
#6 Supervising the loading operations from in front of the wheelhouse were (l to r) Quartermaster "Peachy" Patrick from Wintergarden, Florida, Radarman Bernie Milton from Brookline, Massachusetts, and Quartermaster Ron Kelley from Houston, Texas.

#1

#2

#3

#4

#5

#6

There are no South Korean flags being waved, since these guys were hard-core Communists. After everyone was on board, the ship remained at the quay for some time. The problem was that a weather change had occurred with a fairly large increase in the wind velocity. The captain of *LST 561*, Lt. Bush, was reluctant to go out in the open sea with all these people on the main deck. After about one hour, the POWs became restless and started singing, and I don't believe it was the Korean version of *Anchors Aweigh*. In any event, after several choruses and some chanting, Lt. Bush had heard enough, so we cast off and left for Koje. All the passengers seemed to enjoy the voyage through the inner harbor. After we had cleared the breakwater and were in the open sea, the enthusiasm in the songfest took a real hit.

I have no idea what it was like when they were fighting, but I would guess that after a three-hour ride on the weather deck of an LST in moderately heavy seas, they would have agreed with General Sherman that "War is Hell."


802

CHAPTER 10

Sasebo, Japan

Our usual schedule was to operate in Korea for four to six weeks and then go to Japan for refueling, supplies, and any ship repairs that might be needed. The time in Japan would be from two to three weeks unless the repairs were major. The Japanese surrender that ended World War II resulted in the naval facilities at Yokosuka becoming the principal base for the U.S. Navy in the Far East. The base at Sasebo, however, had the distinct advantage of being just across the Tsushima Straits from Korea, making it a prime port during the Korean War.

On January 30, 1952, we left Pusan and arrived in Sasebo the following day. This chapter consists of photographs that were taken in Sasebo during several of these replenishment visits. More than six years had elapsed since the surrender, and considerable progress had been made in the country's recovery from a disastrous war. From the general conditions that existed, it was obvious that there was still a long way to go. The atmosphere was not one of need, no one was starving, but other than souvenirs for the sailors, practically the only items in the shops were basic necessities. The "Age of Consumerism" was still a couple of decades away.

The entrance to Sasebo Harbor is out of view on the left side of the picture. The area in which *LSTs 802* and *561* are anchored was called Ebitsu Kaiwan, or in English, Ebitsu Bay. This is where we were usually required to anchor. The boat landing was completely at the other end of the Bay, at the base of the mountain seen over the stern of the *802*.

The entrance to Sasebo Harbor is out of view on the left side of the picture.

The trip to the boat landing from the anchorage in Ebitsu Kaiwan meant at least a twenty-minute ride in an LCVP.

The Navy boat landing was below and to the left from this vantage point on Sasebo's distinct hill. An LST is one of the ships moored to the buoys, seen over the white flowers. I wondered how they rated such a great mooring.

The boat harbor for the local fishermen was near the Navy boat landing.

"Black Market Street" was the "name" of this area near the center of the city. Its identification probably was established shortly after the end of World War II, as most of the shops were now filled with housewares and souvenirs. The other end of the street was near the bridge over the river.

The infrastructure of Japan was improving, but it would still be about two decades before most of the steam locomotives would be replaced by ones using electricity.

The Miura-cho Catholic church was built in 1930. It was painted black during World War II to make it less conspicuous. It has since been repainted a light grey. The building on the corner is a restaurant. The artificial flower wreaths in front indicate that it is just opening. Wreaths such as these are placed in front of new businesses to bring good luck.

The Miura-cho Catholic church was built in 1930. It was painted black during World War II to make it less conspicuous.

To the right of the lady in the black coat, across the street, is a man with a sandwich board. By enlarging the view, the words "Enjoy Skating" may be read on the board. Two or three of our crew went to this roller skating rink rather often. Further down the street is the Store River-Side. This business, and one or two others nearby, had more of the higher-priced items that were salable to U.S. military personnel. I bought a set of Noritake™ china for my mother at one of these stores. It had eight place settings and cost about thirty dollars.

One afternoon, Bob Madge and I went on a photo walk. Most of these photographs were taken that day. This is Madge in front of one of the new buildings being constructed during the rejuvenation of Sasebo. Bob had recently married and was deeply in love. Every day he would write a multi-page letter to his wife, and when we had "mail call" he, in turn, would receive numerous letters from her.

There was rush-hour traffic control on Sasebo's major thoroughfare. One of the three-wheeled motorcycle vehicles mentioned previously was the major cause of the congestion. The sparsity of traffic is perhaps the first thing noticed in scenes of Japan in this era. Traffic in Japan is patterned after England, and cars drive on the left.

SASEBO STREET SCENES

LST 692 moored along our port side two days after our arrival. The purpose of this call was to transfer the commander of LST Division 12 (COMLSTDIV 12) and his staff from our ship to *LST 692*. A division usually consisted of six LSTs, and the commander could choose any of the ships as his command ship. The command ship for COMLSTDIV 12 could be identified by a burgee command pennant flying as shown in the picture inset. The views of the mast are from the bow. If the commander temporarily leaves the ship, his absentee pennant would be flown from the starboard cross spar as shown.

The other pennant in the picture is the commanding officer's absentee pennant, which would be flown on the port side when the captain was not aboard the ship.

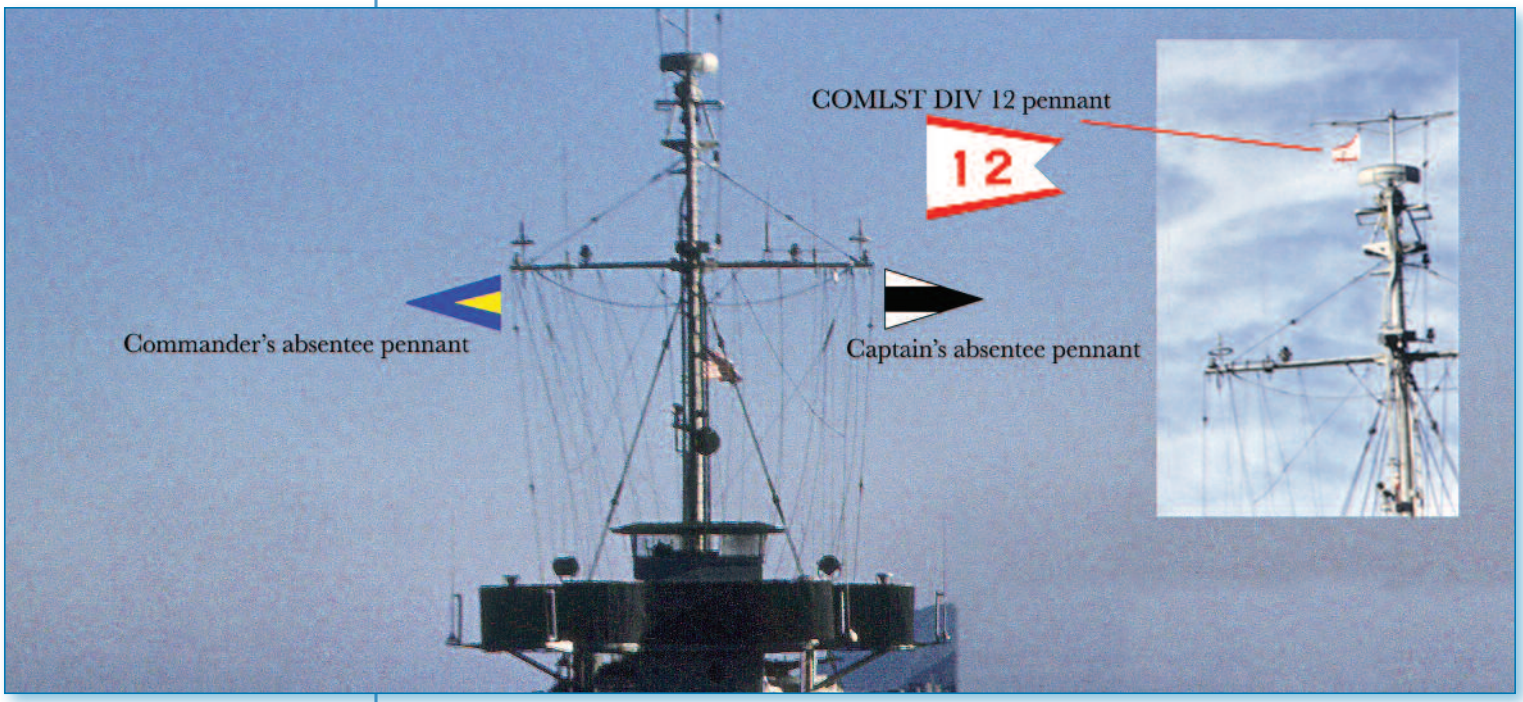


Figure 10-1 Ship Pennants

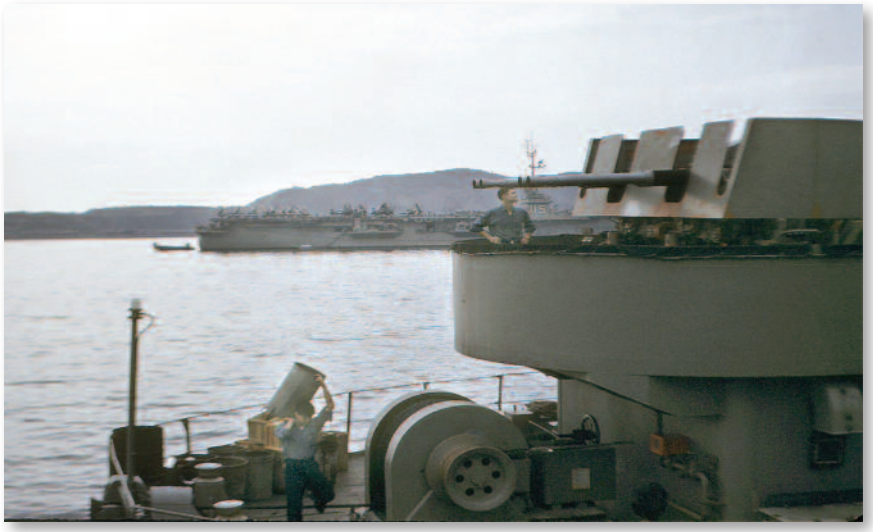
Lt. Cmdr. Thomas Brooks was COMLSTDIV 12 and during the transfer, his pennant was lowered on the *561* and raised on the *692*. As the division commander he, of course, knew the schedules of his ships and his personal preference was to embark on the one that would appear to have the most "interesting future." He was on *LST 561* when we were

transporting POWs during January, and now, instead of being in Sasebo, he wanted to go back to Korea. His association with *LST 561* actually started on September 18, 1950, when the ship was re-commissioned, with him as the commanding officer. Lt. W.H.D. Bush, now the commanding officer of the ship, was the executive officer, and Richard Sigg, the present executive officer, was the first lieutenant.

The transfer, which included his jeep, was over in less than two hours, and they were on their way to Korea. We remained anchored in Ebitsu Kaiwan for nine more days.

Any sailor who has been to Sasebo will recognize the distinct shape of the mountain on the left side of the view. My picture was taken on the starboard wing of the conning station when we were anchored in Ebitsu Kaiwan.

The ship was moved a little nearer to town on February 10, when we moored alongside the USS *Atlas* (ARL 7). An ARL is a repair ship that has been constructed using an LST hull. Numerous shops and facilities are located in the area that would have been the tank deck of a conventional LST. These repair ships were capable of handling a considerable variety of repairs, and had the added advantage of being able to go where the repairs were needed. This view is looking over the stern of the *Atlas*, with the USS *Bairoko* (CVE 115) in the background.




CHINA
NORTH KOREA
SOUTH KOREA
Korea Bay
Yellow Sea
Sŏjosŏn-man
Tongjosŏn-man
Kyŏnggi-man
38°
Unsan
Paengnyong-do
Taeyŏnp'yong-do
Dandong
Kuandian
Yalu
Sinŭiju
Pyongyang
Hamhung
Hŭngnam
Wŏnsan
Kaesŏng
Haeju
Hwanghae-do
Sariwŏn
Seoul
Inch'ŏn
Wŏnju
Kangnŭng
Ch'unch'ŏn
Ŭijŏngbu
Munsan
Kosŏng
Kimhyŏnggwŏn
Chŏnch'ŏn
Kanggye
Nangnim
Sunch'ŏn
Anju
Namp'o
Demarcation Line and Demilitarized Zone
Chart 11-1

CHAPTER 11

Prologue to 3/3/52

In 1945, the 38th Parallel in Korea was arbitrarily chosen as the line separating the responsibilities of the Soviet Union and the United States. The ideological conflict between the two Koreas erupted on June 25, 1950, when the North Korean forces of Kim Il Sung crossed the Parallel in a blitzkrieg invasion.

The United States reacted swiftly, but the defenders were driven into a small area surrounding Pusan, which became known as the Pusan Perimeter. This concentration of Republic of Korea (ROK) and U.S. forces, together with the extended supply routes of the North Korean Army, brought the initial advantage, and advance, of the North Koreans to a halt.

Less than three months after the invasion, on September 15, troops landed at Inch'on in a U.S. amphibious assault which without a doubt, was General Douglas MacArthur's crowning achievement. The edge enjoyed by North Korea immediately went to the U.S. and South Korea. After repelling a final and absolutely brutal assault, the breakout of the Pusan Perimeter occurred and the United Nations Command (UNC) forces were pursuing the retreating North Koreans back toward the 38th Parallel. The effects of the brilliant landing at Inch'on were offset by decisions made by MacArthur, who consistently ignored the intelligence that the Chinese might join the conflict. In his last book, *The Coldest Winter*, the late David Halberstam portrays the MacArthur who only believed what he wanted to believe, and was only told by his staff what he wanted to hear.

Mao Zedong attempted to warn the United States through the Indian ambassador to Beijing that if U.S. forces crossed the 38th Parallel, China would indeed become very much involved. Nevertheless, on October 7, U.S. troops crossed the Parallel and joined ROK forces in a race to the Yalu River, which was the border between North Korea and China, and into a trap of epic proportions. The first contact with the Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) occurred on October 21 at Unsan. This initial meeting turned into a massacre when, on November 1-2, two divisions of the CCF overwhelmed U.S. and ROK forces. After this battle the Chinese vanished, falling back in weather that, even for Korea, was becoming extraordinarily cold. Fueled and empowered by his success at Inch'on and dismissing the presence of the Chinese, MacArthur pressed the U.N. forces to continue the drive to the Yalu.

Many times the advancing units would find a town under control of the local anti-Communists, with the bodies of the former Communist leaders lying where they had been slain. This was very common in the western region of Hwanghae. On November 21, one U.S. Army unit did reach the banks of the Yalu, but on the night of November 25, the trap was sprung, with disastrous results for MacArthur's greatly overextended and vastly outmanned forces. The withdrawal was as rapid as the advance, and the anti-Communist North Koreans who had aided the UNC troops were now facing execution within a matter of days. Delaying actions were fought by partisans, but the retreat was so rapid that thousands were trapped in the southwestern province of Hwanghae. This was the region in which the most vicious attacks on the local Communist leaders had occurred, and where reprisals were sure to be brutal.

Along the western Korean coast, there are thousands of islands, ranging in size from tiny islets to those with heights of a thousand feet and areas of several square miles. In their attempts to escape, refugees and rear guard partisans swarmed over the larger of these islands. Paengyong-do became the main haven for the refugees. The evacuation of 20,000 of those who made it to this island was carried out in several trips by four LSTs. Even after the battle line had stabilized to the position that later became the Demarcation Line, there were still thousands of partisans on these islands and the mainland.

In February 1951, the Miscellaneous Division of the Eighth U.S. Army sent advisors to Paengyong-do to organize these civilians into guerrilla warfare groups. *Dark Moon*, by Ed Evanhoe, is an excellent source for an understanding on how these covert partisan operations developed. The islands were used by the guerrillas as points of entry to the North Korean mainland for the purpose of sabotage, information-gathering, and assassinations.

In January 1952, the partisan units in the Han River/Haeju Bay area were designated "Wolfpacks." Taeyonp'yong-do was the base for Wolfpack 5, which consisted of 180 partisans and several junks that were located at a fishing village on the southeast side of the island.

One of the Wolfpack 5 junks was underway from Taeyonp'yong-do when I photographed it from an LCVP in May 1952. Part of the fishing village on the south side of the island is visible over the small boat in the water on the left. A rather ancient machine gun was on the deck on the other side of the anchor. The partisans used junks such as this one for some of their raids.

The islands were almost always referred to by code names and not by their proper Korean names. Taeyonp'yong-do was called "Apple Pie" and the others were named after mixed drinks. Soyonp'yong-do was called "Zombie" and there was a "Gimlet," which I believe was Kaji-do. There was a "Manhattan" and a "Martini."

LST 561 was in Sasebo until February 24, when mooring lines were cast off from the Atlas *and she left for Korea.*

Chart 11-2

LST 561 was in Sasebo until February 24, when mooring lines were cast off from the *Atlas* and she left for Korea. The approximate route and position times of the ship are shown on Chart 11-2. Our orders were to proceed to area "Nan," which was the Haeju Bay region, and specifically to Taeyonp'yong-do. On the morning of the 27th, the island was sighted, and at 8:45 AM, *LST 692* came into view. The deck log entry of the noon-until-4:00 PM watch, detailing the anchoring at 1:27 PM, is shown below.

NAVPERS 134 (REV. 8-50) **DECK LOG—REMARKS SHEET**

UNITED STATES SHIP U.S.S. LST 561 Wednesday 27 February, 19 52
(Day) (Date) (Month)

12-16
Steaming as before. 1203 changed speed to all engines ahead full. 1216 changed course to 054° (T). 1228 changed speed to all engines ahead flank. 1253 changed course to 080° (T). 1314 Steering various courses and using various speeds prior to dropping bow anchor. 1327 Dropped bow anchor in forth-three (43) feet of water. Anchorage is approximately two (2) miles west of Tae'Yon'Yong Island in eight (8) fathoms of water, sand bottom, with thirty (30) fathoms of chain to the bow anchor on the following bearings: Left tangent, Tae'Yon'Yong 053° (T), right tangent Tae'Yon'Yong 090° (T), Kaji Do 144° (T).

Sherwood Hoogs

Sherwood HOOGS, ENS, USNR

The west side of Taeyonp'yong-do forms the background beyond the anchored *LST 692*. The object on the left is one of the davit arms in a lowered position. The two LSTs were the only ships in the area, and Lt. Cmdr. Thomas Brooks (COMLSTDIV12), who had embarked on *LST 692* in Sasebo, was the Senior Officer Present Afloat (SOPA). The title, or designation of SOPA, is established and acknowledged by all military ships within a harbor or anchorage area. In the event of an emergency, this person has the authority and responsibility to respond to any occurrence that may affect the ships. As an example, if for some reason, Brooks, as SOPA, thought that where we were anchored created a dangerous situation, he could order us to move to a different anchorage. The Canadian destroyer HMCS *Athabaskan* (DD 219) arrived on March 1, and her captain, Cmdr. D.G. King, who held a ranking over Brooks, became SOPA.

This photograph of *Athabaskan* at anchor was taken from one of the 40mm gun tubs on *LST 561*.

The land on the horizon is the North Korean mainland west of Haeju Bay. I took the photograph from above the west beach of Taeyonp'yong-do. This island, which was one of the largest in the region, lies about six miles south of the entrance to Haeju Bay and may be located on Charts 11-1 and 11-3.

The island of Kalli-do is noted both on the picture and on Chart 11-3 to help the reader gain a perspective of the area.

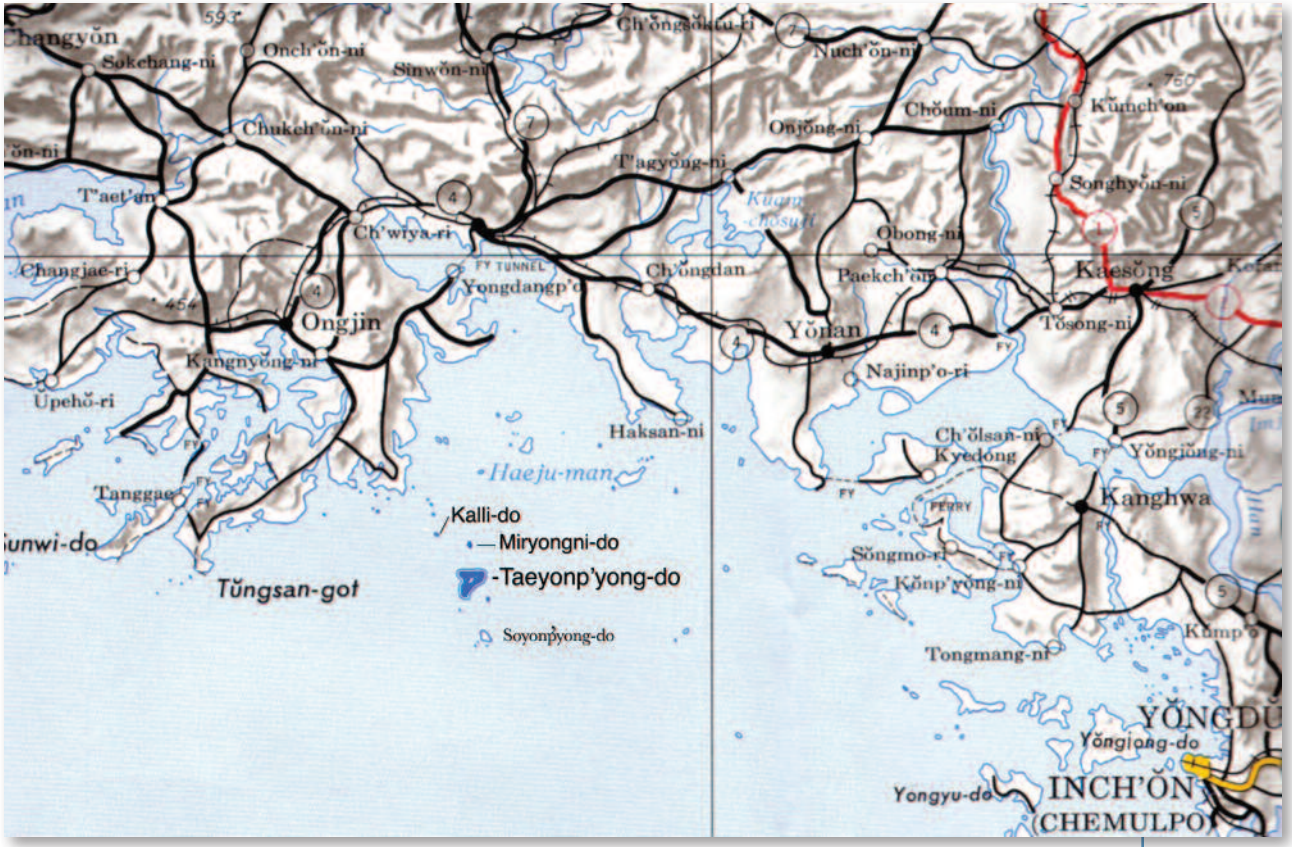


Chart 11-3

On March 1, *LST 692* moored alongside and Brooks shifted his staff and pennant to *LST 561*. Lt. Kim Myung Whan, ROKN, Lt. (Dr.) D.J. Pascoe, USN, Lt. A.G. Shermersheim, USNR, Seaman R.L. Smith, USN, and two British Royal Marines, Sgt. J.H. James and Cpl. P. Hamill, also transferred for duty to the *561*. *LST 692* left for Sasebo at 10:00 AM and moored to *Atlas* at 10:13 AM on March 3.

During that Sunday morning, Foreman came into the radio room and told Bobby Peek and me to make sure the radios were working between the #3 LCVP and the LST. He confirmed the rumor that there was going to be a raid on an enemy-controlled island that afternoon.

March 2 was a Sunday, and Catholic services were held in the mess hall at 9:00 AM, followed by Protestant services at 10:00 AM. During that Sunday morning, Foreman came into the radio room and told Bobby Peek and me to make sure the radios were working between the #3 LCVP and the LST. He confirmed the rumor that there was going to be a raid on an enemy-controlled island that afternoon. The raiding party was to be made up of volunteers; no one would be ordered to go. It sounded exciting, and when he asked me if I wanted to go along as the radioman, I nearly agreed. Suddenly realizing that those guys on the beach would be firing back, and not wanting my naval career to be ended by a lucky shot, I hastily declined.

This boat is *LST 561*'s #3 LCVP. The craft is manned by three sailors. The one in the center is the coxswain, who steers the boat with the wheel in his left hand and uses the control in his right hand to adjust the engine speed and direction of the screw rotation. The sailor in front is the bowhook; he handles the forward lines when coming alongside a pier or ship. The third member is the engineer; he is responsible for the operation of the Gray Marine diesel engine. He also acts as the sternhook and handles the mooring lines in the stern. The dark gray box on the top step of the ladder is an SCR-610 radio transmitter/receiver. This radio and the SCR-608 over the desk in the chart room on the LST were used for communication between the two vessels. The machine gun in the well in back of the coxswain was transferred from *LST 692* after our arrival at area Nan, and was not usually on the boat.

My old friend Bill Zoller was one of those who had been on *LST 692* and had transferred the day before. In "catching up" on what had happened during the past month, he told me that Brooks had conducted frequent "raids" and "investigations" during February.

[In his cover letter on the investigation of the events that occurred the next day, March 3,

Rear Admiral A. K. Scott-Moncrieff, wrote: "On February 2 at Techong-do I told Lieutenant Commander Brooks that he was not to indulge in private raiding without the consent and backing of Commander Task Unit 95.12.4." (Presently this was Cmdr. King on *Athabaskan*.) I (Jim Staley) doubt very much that Brooks would disobey a direct order. In his zeal, however, it apparently was easy for him to differentiate an "investigation" from a "raid."]

Nevertheless, authorized or not, the LCVP left the ship mid-afternoon with about ten men on board. Included were the two British Royal Marines who had transferred from *LST 692* the day before. The Marines were supplying a considerable amount of the firepower, in the form of four automatic weapons (two Bren guns and two Sten guns).

[Rear Admiral Scott-Moncrieff explained in one other section of his letter: "Originally the boats of the 'SWANNYFORCE' were manned with armed parties provided by the cruisers of Task Force 95.12. When these were replaced by parties from the LSTs, Royal Marine Weapons Instructors were provided at the request of CTE 90.30 in view of the British type weapons with which they were armed. This was the reason for the presence of Sergeant James and Corporal Hamill."]

The radio call sign for the boat was "Swanee One." A radio check was made when they left, and a call was received an hour or so later to say they were returning.

As may be seen in the deck log entry, the boat returned at 5:20 PM. When the LCVP

UNITED STATES SHIP U.S.S. LST 561 Sunday (Day) 2 (Date) March (Month), 19 52

16-20
Anchored as before. 1720 Swanee force returned to the ship. 1915 Underway proceeding on various courses and speeds to night anchorage. 1941 Anchored in area "FOX" at mouth of Haejie Hang, Korea in eleven fathoms of water, fine sandy bottom with forty (40) fathoms of chain on deck.

John Obenauer
John OBENAUER, LTJG, USNR

returned, everyone who was not on watch was there to hear what happened. As I recall the story of the raid, the boat was moving slowly along the shoreline of an island when they startled several people by the water's edge. When the people on the beach frantically dashed for cover, Swanee One opened up with all the weapons on board, but from the stories, it didn't sound as though they hit anyone.

CHAPTER 12
March 3, 1952

The position, or heading, of the LST at anchor depended upon the relative strength of the wind and the current. With little current and a wind velocity of even a few knots, the ship would point into the wind, varying only a few degrees as she swung from her anchor chain. In a condition of little wind, but with a current, the converse would be true; the heading would be into the current. With a strong current and a wind of varying intensity, the ship would occasionally behave as if she was possessed by spirits. When the wind either gained or lost control in relation to the current, the ship would suddenly swing like a crazed horizontal pendulum from the old stationary position to the new. In the early morning of Monday, March 3, 1952, slack water was still hours away, and the flooding Yellow Sea was moving into a 20-knot north by northwest wind. The occasional wild movements of the ship were decreasing as the wind gained control over the diminishing current. The dry bulb air temperature was 28°, but the wind resulted in a chill factor of 0° F (32° below freezing). The relatively shallow sea and the "wind working against water effect" were creating waves four-to-five feet in height with very short wavelengths.

At 7:00 AM, a small group of men were huddled near the starboard side of the deckhouse in an attempt to blunt the Siberian wind. Their attention was focused on the LCPL being lowered from the #1 davit. The three-man crew was aboard the boat as it was being lowered. Before the launching, Seaman W.C. Rutherford, who was the boat's coxswain, overheard Executive Officer Richard Sigg tell Brooks, "It's too rough."

It is not known if that comment received a response.

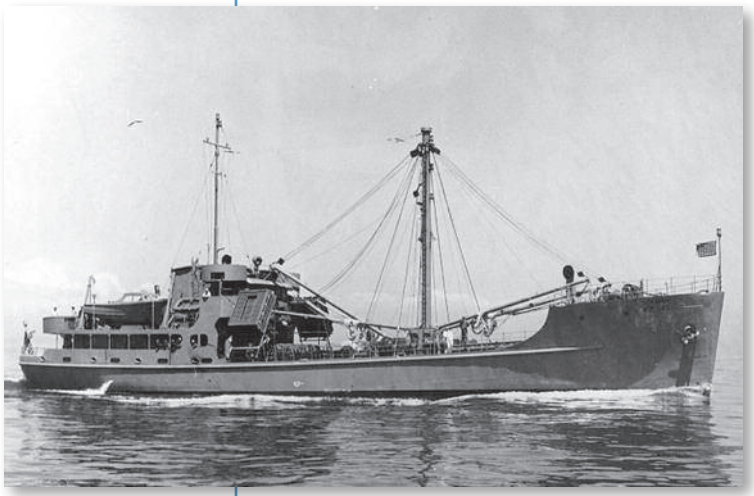
This is an LCPL suspended from a davit. It is the same length as an LCVP, but there is a considerable difference between the two designs. The bow is not in the view, but it is "conventional" and not a ramp. A small cabin, open in the rear, provides some protection from wind, rain, and spray. This picture was NOT taken on March 3. The photograph is of a different LCPL and was taken about six months later.

After the boat had been lowered into the waves, it was boarded by the men who had watched it descend, and they left at 7:10 AM. Their destination was a ship that was anchored

This is an LCPL suspended from a davit.

on the south side of Taeyonp'yong-do. To a certain extent, the eleven men in the small cabin were sheltered from the wind and not quite as cold as they were on the deck of the LST.

Usually, there was only one radioman on watch, and his primary responsibility was to listen to the transmission of messages to the fleet, as explained in Chapter 2. An off-watch radioman or one of the electronics technicians handled any voice traffic so the duty radioman would not be distracted. I had the voice radio watch that morning, but the boat had left even before I went to breakfast.



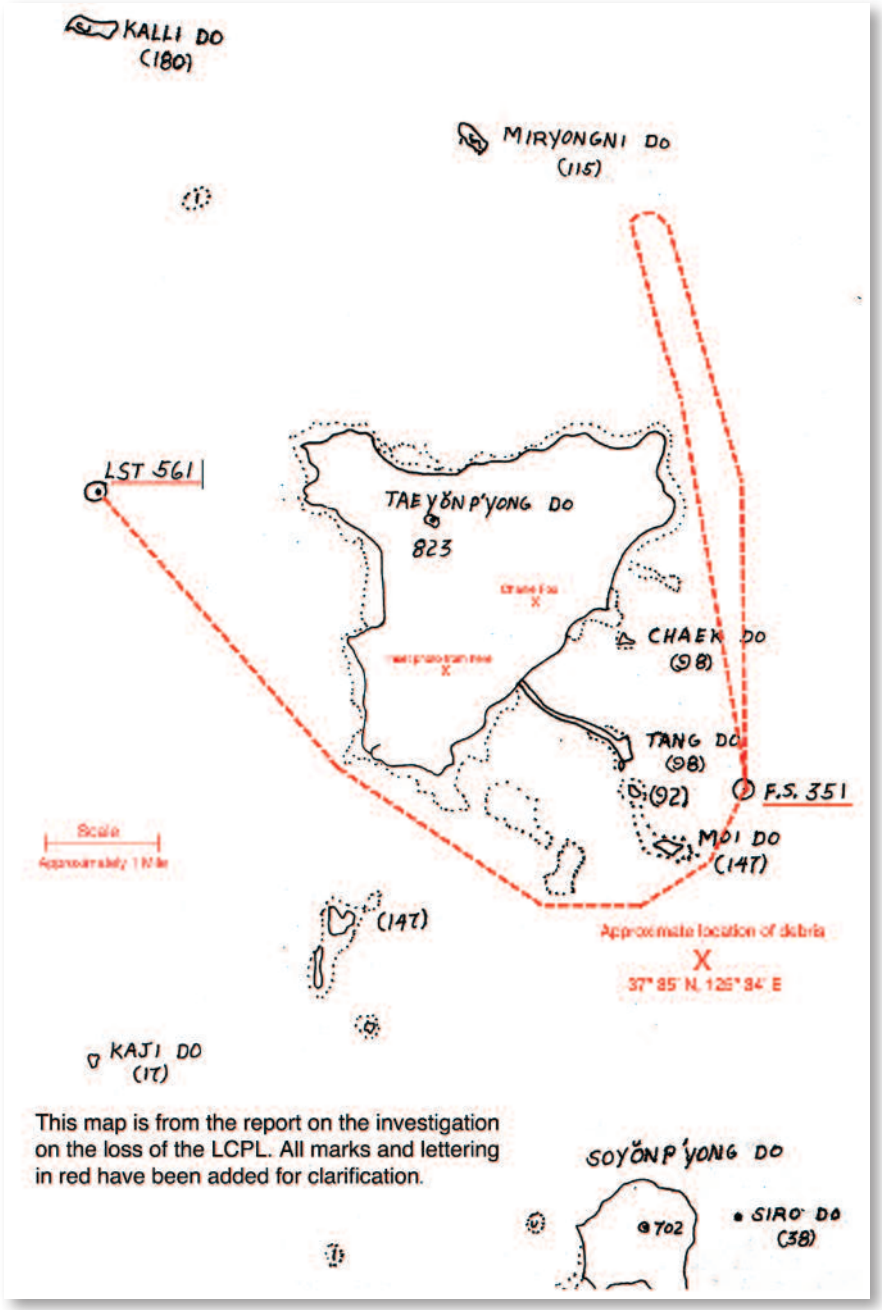
Cmdr. King turned the responsibilities of SOPA over to Lt. Cmdr. Brooks at 6:00 AM because HMCS *Athabaskan* was leaving for the day to refuel. *Athabaskan* left the area at 7:45 AM, which was about the time I arrived at the radio room. The voyage of the LCPL was followed visually from the conning station by the Duty Officer, Ensign Sherwood Hoogs, and by radar, as well as could be expected. However, due to the distance and the rough water, both visual and radar contact were essentially lost not long after the boat passed the southwest cape of Taeyonp'yong-do.

The ship that was the goal of the men from the LST was *FS 351*. It was one of the Freight-Supply ships built for the U.S. Army and manned by Coast Guard crews in World War II. These ships had a length of 176 feet and a displacement of 560 tons. I do not have, nor was I able to locate, a picture of this particular ship. This picture is of a sister ship, *FS 343*. On this day *FS 351* was anchored south of Taeyonp'yong-do at 37° 39' N, 125°45' E. The officer in tactical control of the ship was Cmdr. M.J. Perry, USN. The best information (Ed Evanhoe e-mail 6/12/07) is that both the ship, and Perry, belonged to the Joint Assistance Command, Korea (JACK), which was the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The trip by the LCPL had been at the request of Perry. A raid on the inner reaches of the So Sudo Estuary had been scheduled for the following day and today's mission was for reconnaissance purposes.

[As previously mentioned, Rear Admiral A.K. Scott-Moncrieff had admonished Brooks about conducting raids without the consent of Commander Task Unit 95.12.4. (Cmdr. King on *Athabaskan* was that person.) Later in the week the proposed raid scheduled for March 4 appeared to be an accepted fact by everyone, EXCEPT Cmdr. King, who testified: "As to the

particular raid to take place (on the 4th), I know nothing about it. I was completely bypassed on it." The operation on March 3 was clearly stated to be an investigation, and we can only trust that Lt. Cmdr. Brooks was waiting until that evening to seek King's authorization for the impending foray on the following day.]

The trip from the LST, with the boat running with the seas, was not too bad. Rutherford was a good coxswain and came alongside the FS at 7:30. Perry boarded the boat, which then departed northbound on the eastern side of Apple Pie. Leaving the FS, and especially after reaching the northeast cape of the island, the sea conditions were terrible. Now headed into, instead of running with, a fifteen-to-twenty-knot wind, solid water would crash on the deck and cabin when the boat met the steep five-foot waves. Nearing Miryongni-do it was obvious, even to Brooks, that it was too rough. Brooks had the wheel and turned the boat around to go back to the FS. Sometime near this point, Rutherford was stricken with a severe chill, which may have been the reason Brooks had the helm. Seaman Alton Waldrop had the wheel when they arrived at the ship. Waldrop only had a few months experience as a coxswain and three attempts were necessary before the plunging boat could be secured to *FS 351*.



This map is from the report on the investigation on the loss of the LCPL. All marks and lettering in red have been added for clarification.

Shortly before 9 AM, I responded to a call from Swanee Leader (which was the call sign of the LCPL) informing us that they were at the FS and telling us about Rutherford's condition. I went up to the conning station and gave the message to the Duty Officer, Lt. j.g. Obenhauer, who relayed the information to our ship's captain, Lt. W.H.D. Bush. Pharmacist's Mate Roland had been the only medical person on board our ship until Lt. (Dr.) D.J. Pascoe came aboard two days previously. After a quick conference, the decision was made to send Dr. Pascoe to the FS to attend to Rutherford. About 10 AM, Dr. Pascoe left in an LCVP, with Seaman Richard Weinheimer as the coxswain.

At 10:30 AM, Swanee Leader called again and informed us that the investigation was aborted and that they were returning to the LST. The LCPL, with twelve men aboard, was just leaving the FS as Pascoe arrived. Rutherford was left on the ship, but two U.S. Army Majors, D.J. Maus and J.E. Keenan, who belonged to United Nations Partisan Forces, Korea, 8240th Army Unit (UNPFK), had boarded for the return trip to the LST. The majors were going to remain on the *561* overnight to be on hand for the scheduled raid the following day.

With the wind astern, only about twenty-five minutes were required for a boat to go from *LST 561* to *FS 351*. Naturally, the return trip into the seas was slower. About 11 AM, Obenhauer became concerned because, thirty minutes after the call reporting that they were returning, the boat still had not even been sighted. Bill Bryan had the radar watch but had not detected any "blip" that might have been the boat. Obenhauer called down the speaking tube to the chart room for me to call the boat and find out where they were. My repeated calls of "Swanee Leader, Swanee Leader, this is Belting 561. Come in Swanee Leader, over," were met with silence.

Around 11:15 AM, a boat was sighted from the conning station and was also picked up by Bryan on the radar. With this sighting, the feelings of concern turned to relief, but then to deep anxiety when, as the boat drew closer, it was seen to be the LCVP with Dr. Pascoe, and not the LCPL.

I asked Bryan to monitor the radio, which was only a few feet from the radar console, while I went down to the boarding ladder on the main deck. When a boat came alongside the ship, the bowhook would use a boathook to pull the mooring line that was hanging from the main deck and tie it to a cleat on the bow. The sternhook would secure a similar line, and the boat would lie alongside the hull of the ship. Manila fenders hanging from the boat (as seen in the picture of the LCVP on page 88) prevent the boat from hitting the hull of the ship. To get back on the ship, the boat crew would then climb a boarding ladder that was

hanging from the main deck. The picture of the LCVP displays how vulnerable the coxswain was to water coming over the bow. When the flat bow ramp hit a crest he was covered with spray, which under these conditions, froze on contact.

When Weinheimer came up the boarding ladder, there was ice on his storm jacket and hood. Mesmerized by the sight of his ice-encrusted moustache, I started to touch it, but he quickly knocked my hand away. After I returned to the chart room/radio room, Obenhauer sent me to inform the captain that the LCPL had not returned. Bush was neither in his room nor in the wardroom. I located him watching the movie on the tank deck. We were on three-section watches and to provide some diversion for the crew, a movie was shown at noon for the off-duty watches.

[The independence of Brooks was reflected later by Obenhauer that: "Everyone seemed to be of the opinion that Lt. Cmdr. Brooks had gone off to investigate some other island, as he often did, without telling us about it."]

The commander of Task Unit 95.15.4 was stationed on Taeyonp'yong-do. His real name and rank are unknown, but his code name was "Charlie Fox." He was the pilot of the helicopter shown in these pictures, taken later in the month. He also had a "crash boat" at his disposal. It is most likely that he belonged to the 6004th Air Intelligence Support Squadron of the USAF.

At approximately 12:30 PM, with both Obenhauer (now off-watch) and Lt. Shermersheim

The picture of the LCVP displays how vulnerable the coxswain was to water coming over the bow.

present, we called Charlie Fox to find out if he knew anything about the LCPL. Charlie Fox, who could see the FS from his location on the island, informed us that the LCPL was tied up to the ship. There was a collective sigh of relief, until Dr. Pascoe told Shermersheim that a boat had been alongside the FS when he arrived. We could not call the FS because we did not have the radio frequencies on which they operated. Charlie Fox was called again and rather testily reaffirmed that the LCPL was tied up to the ship. He also stated that he was going up in his helicopter soon and would take a look.

This is the type of situation in which the SOPA in the area would be notified and would institute action to find the missing boat. In this case, it was the SOPA who was missing, so nothing was being done.

At 3:15 PM, *Athabaskan* returned to the area and King was informed of the situation. Fifteen minutes later, Charlie Fox called with the news that the boat at *FS 351* was not our LCPL. One can only imagine what was going through King's mind when he was trying to sort out what happened in the few hours after he turned SOPA over to Brooks. As a first step, he had *Athabaskan* circumnavigate Taeyonp'yong-do counterclockwise to search the beaches for any trace of the missing boat. *FS 351* got underway at 4:05 PM and headed southwest toward Soyomp'yong-do. At 4:44 PM they discovered some debris. Six items were picked up: a life jacket, a blue Navy face mask, a mitten, two fuel cans, and an engine cover.

NAVPERS 134 (REV. 8-50) **DECK LOG—REMARKS SHEET**

UNITED STATES SHIP U.S.S. LST 561 Monday 3 March (Day) (Date) (Month), 1952

20-24
Underway as before. 2107 Anchored at "FOX" in (15) fifteen fathoms of water, sand bottom, with 65 (sixty five) fathoms of chain to the bow anchor on the following bearings: Mudo 335° (T), Changjae Do 060° (T), and Kalli Do 082° (T). 2115 Received 2000 reports. 2350 With deep regret it is assumed that the LCPL of this ship is lost, and the following named men missing while investigating probable enemy held islands in the area. LCDR BROOKS, Thomas B., 118404, USNR; SIGG, Richard G., 455925, LTJG, USNR; KIM, Myung Whan 80407, LT, ROKN; WALDROP, Alton (n), 420 20 56, SA, USN; CHAVERS, Elma I., 420 20 60, SA, USN; THOME, Eugene J., 324 17 18 SA, USN; OVERMAN, William R., 423 18 42, SN, USN; LEWIS, Willis E., 365 43 02, FN, USN; MAUS, D. J. 02019486, Major, US Army; KEENAN, Major, U.S. Army, an infantry officer; JAMES, Sgt. H.M. Royal Marines; HAMUL, Cpl, H.M. Royal Marines. Cause of small boat loss unknown.

Sherwood Hoogs

Sherwood HOOGS, ENS, USNR

Athabaskan arrived at the debris scene and lowered a motor cutter. The cutter recovered three U.S. Navy watch caps (one marked "WI Chavers"), one Royal Marines cap (marked "Hamill"), one U.S. Navy foul-weather jacket marked "Ross" (and worn by Hamill), and one oil can. At 6:00 PM we got underway for the debris area and arrived twenty-five minutes later. We anchored 2,500 yards from Soyomp'yong-do and lowered two LCVPs. As darkness approached, King ordered *Athabaskan* and *LST 561* to abandon the search and to proceed to their night stations.

The men were lost, never to be seen again.

Soyonp'yong-do as seen from Taeyonp'yong-do. The "X" marks the approximate area where debris was found.

NAVPERS 134 (REV. 8-50) DECK LOG—REMARKS SHEET

UNITED STATES SHIP U.S.S. LST 561 Monday (Day) 3 (Date) March (Month), 1952

20-24
Underway as before. 2107 Anchored at "FOX" in (15) fifteen fathoms of water, sand bottom, with 65 (sixty five) fathoms of chain to the bow anchor on the following bearings: Mudo 335° (T), Changjae Do 060° (T), and Kalli Do 082° (T). 2115 Received 2000 reports. 2350 With deep regret it is assumed that the LCPL of this ship is lost, and the following named men missing while investigating probable enemy held islands in the area. LCDR BROOKS, Thomas B., 118404, USNR; SIGG, Richard G., 455925, LTJG, USNR; KIM, Myung Whan 80407, LT, ROKN; WALDROP, Alton (n), 420 20 56, SA, USN; CHAVERS, Elma I., 420 20 60, SA, USN; THOME, Eugene J., 324 17 18 SA, USN; OVERMAN, William R., 423 18 42, SN, USN; LEWIS, Willis E., 365 43 02, FN, USN; MAUS, D. J. 02019486, Major, US Army; KEENAN, Major, U.S. Army, an infantry officer; JAMES, Sgt. H.M. Royal Marines; HAMUL, Cpl, H.M. Royal Marines. Cause of small boat loss unknown.

Sherwood Hoogs

Sherwood HOOGS, ENS, USNR

EPILOGUE

The re-creation of the events that occurred on that fateful day was based slightly on my involvement, but primarily on entries in *LST 561* ship's log and the thirty-four-page document summarizing the subsequent inquiry.

Obviously, it will never be known what happened on the LCPL after it left *FS 351*. Doubt even existed as to the direction in which the boat was headed. Some observers on the FS thought it left going northeast, but the decision by Brooks to abort the investigation, and send the message that they were returning to the LST, makes this highly unlikely. It is most probable that after casting off, they started in that direction to avoid the stern of the ship and then turned to the southwest to clear Moi-do. This would have been the most dangerous part of the return trip, and most likely where the accident occurred (as evidenced by the location of the debris). With the boat headed in that direction, the wind and the seas would have been on the starboard side, placing the LCPL in trough after trough. Moving parallel to the seas, a seasoned coxswain would constantly shift the helm to keep wave crests from meeting the boat full-on the beam. The twelve men on board would have been a load of approximately 2,000 pounds, which would have been very deleterious to the stability of the craft.

[Richard Weinheimer, the coxswain of the LCVP carrying Dr. Pascoe, testified: "The sea was very rough, and if I had 15 men in the boat, I wouldn't have made it."]

With the most skilled coxswain now on *FS 351*, either Brooks, or more probably, Waldrop (who had not been qualified as a helmsman) would have been in control. A larger-than-average wave crest combined with a less experienced hand on the helm most likely resulted in the boat sliding broadside up the face of the wave and capsizing. It is agonizing to envision the instant when the men found themselves submerged in the paralyzingly icy water. Disoriented and struggling with the others trapped in the cabin of the LCPL, which was rapidly sinking stern-first due to the weight of the engine, they would have had only seconds to escape. Mute testimony for Cpl. Hamill's fight for survival was presented by the recovery of his foul-weather jacket. Freed from the boat, either at the capsizing, or through his own efforts, he unzipped and removed his jacket because it impeded swimming. The chances are that wearing a life preserver would not have saved his life, since immersion in these waters for only ten minutes would result in stage 3 hypothermia. Even if the actual foundering had been seen from *FS 351*, it is only problematic that a boat could have been launched and reached the site of the capsizing in time to save anyone.

LST 561 had a standing order that all hands in the boats had to wear life preservers. Not wearing one appeared to be a silent denial that it would be needed, and the order was never enforced. There were sufficient preservers on the LCPL and, if Brooks had put one on, the others would have followed his example. It really is of no consequence, since the end result would have been the same.

CHAPTER 13
Haiju-man Operations

On the evening of the tragedy, the atmosphere in the LST was a mixture of disbelief and sorrow. If the men had been killed as a result of the ship being fired on by a shore battery, their bodies would have been found in the area of the hit. Their deaths and the cause would have been evident by simple observation. In this case, however, in the morning the men were there and that evening, they were just gone. There were no human remains to provide stark evidence of death and only an empty davit indicated that anything was amiss with the ship.

The crew was still berthed in the large stern compartment, and that night the MAA cut open the lockers of our missing shipmates. I was there when they started removing their few pitiful personal effects. It was a little too much for me, so I went up to the radio room to get away.

In the days of sailing ships, the sequel to the loss of a man at sea was the sale of his clothing and belongings to the crew. Bernie Milton recalls that this occurred on that evening, with everything auctioned off except the very personal effects sent to next of kin. The money went into the crew fund. I have no memory of this since I was not there.

Memorial services were held on the ship on March 7. At 9:25 AM, the ensign and jack were lowered to half-mast; Captain Bush read from the Bible, while the crew wearing undress blues stood in formation with their caps in hand. The reading was short, and at 9:40 AM, the flags were run up and the officers and crew resumed their duties.

The primary task of the LSTs in the Haeju-man region was to control the movement of junks. It is obvious from the evidence that a secondary assignment must have been to provide some support for covert operations. The impossibility of knowing how much was ordered, and how much was assumed, was brought out in the investigation of the loss of the boat and men. In carrying out the principal assignment, our daily routine was well-established. At sunrise, move the ship to the day station, which was about two miles west of Taeyonp'yong-do.

Most of the inhabitants of "Apple Pie" lived in a village on the southeast side of the island.

At sunset, go to one of the night stations, which were between the island and the mainland. These stations, with the code names of "Xray," "Fox," and "Hazelnut," were chosen randomly so the North Koreans on the mainland would not be sure of our location from one night to the next. Darkened ship conditions were always in effect, to help conceal our position. The radar was in operation around the clock to watch for any suspicious movements of surface craft.

There were scattered houses and clusters of huts, but most of the inhabitants of "Apple Pie" lived in a village on the southeast side of the island. This view along the beach (page 100) was looking northeast. Notice the seines drying from the masts of the fishing boats.

The junks were moored "bow out" for ease in getting underway and to "ride out" the surf. Just the stern of the anchored LST is visible on the horizon. This was not one of our usual anchorages.

The main quarry of these fishermen were cuttlefish, so all fishing was done at night. The established rules were that the junks were to come out and anchor before sunset and then stay in that spot so they would not be considered invaders. Well, fishermen are the same all over the world. "We aren't doing any good here, so let's move to a better spot." The action that followed would result in the radarman calling up to the conning station, "Boat moving at 065°, range 1300 yards." Now the officer on the conn has several options:

(a) Crank up the LST and go after them, so Mr. Foreman could yell at them in his limited Korean. (This was only done once or twice.)

(b) Use one of the signaling lights as a searchlight. (Not good, because we are supposed to be a darkened ship.)

(c) Send out a boat crew in an LCVP to tell them to anchor.

(d) Fire a 40mm tracer over the boat to let them know, "We know you are moving."

Option (d) rapidly became the favorite, although it appeared to cause a great deal of nervousness in the other junks, especially if the shell went through their sails. These deck log entries provide several examples of our efforts.

00-04
Anchored in area "X-RAY" Yonp'Yong Yolto, Korea in twelve (12) fathoms of water on mud bottom with sixty (60) fathoms of chain to the bow anchor. SOPA is CTU 95.12.4 in H.M.S. CONCORD. Ships present are various units of the United Nations Forces. **0113 Underway to intercept contact, heading for Yonp'Yong Do, using various courses and speeds. 0145 Intercepted junk. Identified as friendly.** 0156 **Underway, returning to anchorage "X-RAY".** 210 Anchored at Yonp'Yong Yolto, Korea in seventeen (17) fathoms of water on a mud bottom with sixty (60) fathoms of chain to the bow anchor.

L. BOYD, ENS, USN

00-04
Steaming independently on various courses and using various speeds enroute to anchorage in Yonp'Yong Yolto, Korea as designated by C.T.U. 95.12.4 dispatch 071411Z dated 7 March 1952. Ship in condition readiness three. Captain is on the conn. SOPA is C.T.U. 95.12.4 in H.M.C.S. ATHABASKAN (DD 219). 0045 let go the bow anchor. Anchored in seven (7) fathoms of water, mud bottom with thirty (30) fathoms of chain on deck. **0330 LCVP #4 left ship to intercept junk on port bow. 0345 LCVP #4 intercepted junk. 0400 LCVP returned to ship safely.**

John OBENAUER, LTJG, USNR

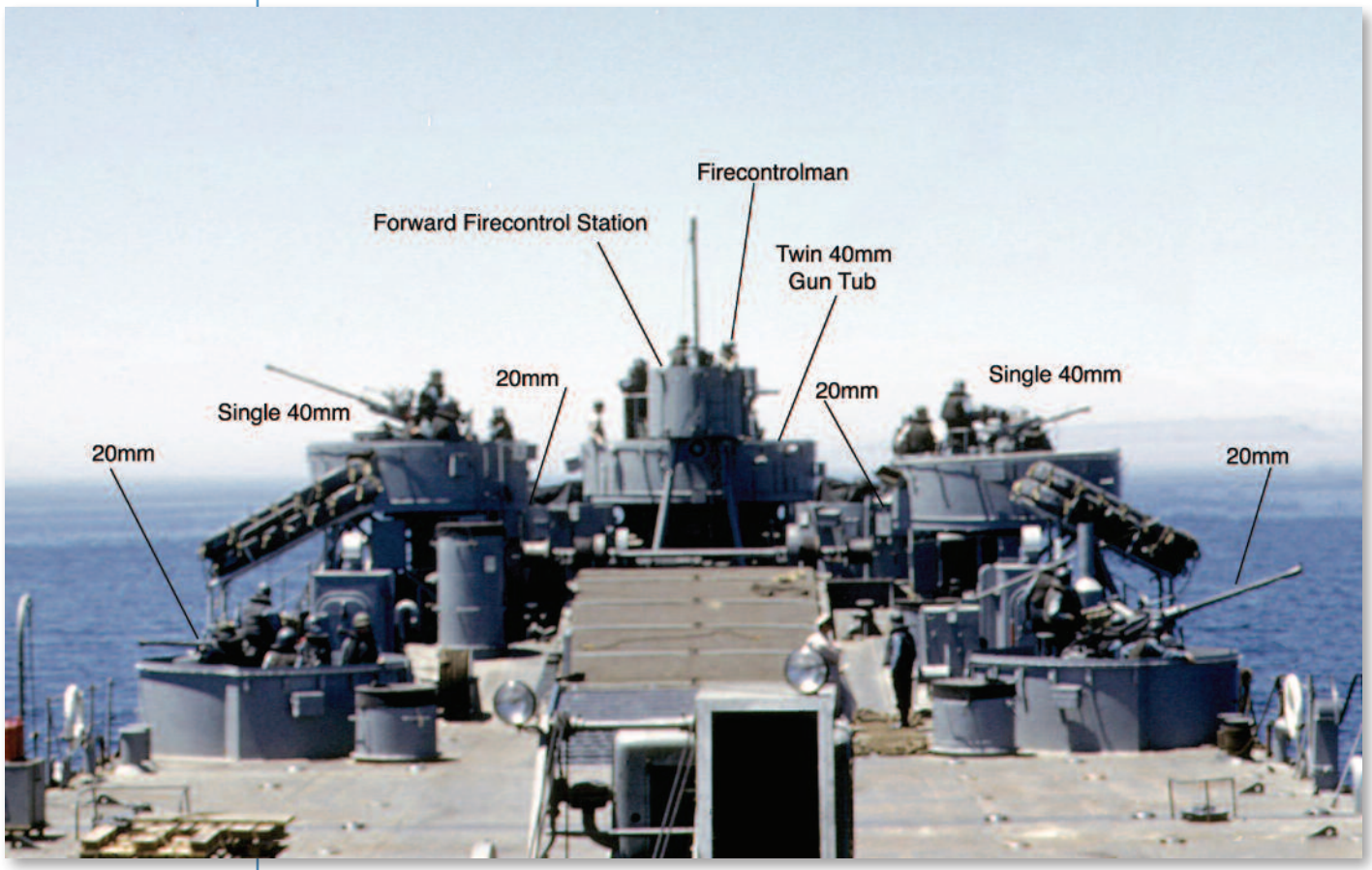
00-04
Anchored in Yonp'Yong Yolto, Korea on night station "X-RAY" in fourteen fathoms of water, mud bottom, with forty-five fathoms of chain to the bow anchor. Anchored on the following bearings: Kalli Do right tangent 019° (T), Tae Yonp'Yong Do left tangent 096° (T), right tangent 136° (T). Ship is in material condition "BAKER" modified readiness condition three. ComLSTDiv 32 (CTE 90.32) embarked in this vessel. Ships present include H.M.A.S. BATAAN U.S.S. MOCKING BIRD and U.S.S. GULL. **0030 Fired warning shots on junk, 253° and 1350 yards. 0057 Fired warning shots on junk 040°, 1400 yards.**

L. SCHERR
ENS., USN

20-24
Anchored as before. 2007 Underway from day station enroute to night station in accordance with CTU 95.12.4 dispatch 080435Z of 8 May 1952. Captain at the conn, navigator on the bridge steering various courses at various speeds. 2055 Anchored on night station, Area "X-RAY" of Yonp'Yong Yolto, Korea in thirteen (13) fathoms of water, mud bottom with forty five fathoms of chain to the bow anchor on the following anchor bearings: Kalli Do 013° (T), left tangent Tae Yonp'Yong Do 098° (T), right tangent Tae Yonp'Yong Do 141° T **2216 Away LCVP No. 3 to intercept Korean junk underway. 2219 Manned gun No. 43. 2224 During the period between 2224 and 2245 guns No. 43, 42 and 46 fired at various junks that attempted to get underway. At 2245 Gun No. 42 scored a hit on a junk off the port quarter. 2305 LCVP No. 3 returned to the ship after investigating various junks which attempted to get underway and ordering them to anchor for the night.**

John OBENAUER
LTJG USNR

LST 561 had seven gun tubs on the bow. The one in the center (overhanging the bow doors) held a twin 40mm gun mount. A second dual mount overhung the stern. These two positions were the most favored because they could fire at targets near the water, on either side of the ship. In the center of this view there is a small tub with a firecontrolman. A Navy firecontrolman has nothing to do with something burning. Fire, in this case, refers to the discharge of guns. The firecontrolman has a sighting apparatus connected to a device that would adjust the position of the guns in the forward tub. This adjustment would be to compensate for the motion of the target, which usually was an airplane. There was an identical tub for the twin mount on the stern. The six other guns in this view, two 40mm singles and



four 20mm singles, were aimed and fired by their gun crews. This photograph was taken during a practice drill.

On March 24, USS *Mockingbird* (AMS 27) moored to our starboard side. The smiling officer leaning over the rail beyond the signaling light is Ensign Sherwood Hoogs from Palo Alto, California. *Mockingbird* was alongside for three hours, during which time we supplied the ship with fuel oil and fresh water. LSTs could make their own fresh water, but ships such as this minesweeper were too small to support distillery apparatus. The real purpose of the visit was not for fuel or water, but to transfer a sick crewman. Engineman Robert Smedley was brought on board the LST on a stretcher. He had an acute ulcer and was being transferred to the U.S. Naval Hospital in Yokosuka for treatment. Later that afternoon, a rescue helicopter arrived to pick him up. The fifty-foot-wide deck of the LST made a fine landing platform for helicopters.

The empty davit on the left side of the picture was a somber reminder of the tragedy that had occurred three weeks before. This was the davit used for the LCPL.

The empty davit on the left side of the picture was a somber reminder of the tragedy that had occurred three weeks before. This was the davit used for the LCPL.

On several occasions two PT boats came alongside for water and supplies. The torpedo tubes had been removed and launchers for five-inch rockets had been installed. These boats were manned by Republic of Korea Navy (ROKN) personnel but they were, as was the *FS 351*, under the control of JACK and the CIA. The night before I took the photograph on the left, the boats had conducted a raid on the North Korean mainland. The silver-colored cylinders on the decks are empty cases for the rockets that had been fired during this raid. The non-Korean sailors on *PT 23* are from *LST 561* and were returning from a demonstration ride. I learned from them that the radar on *PT 26* was not working, and, since it was the same type as ours, I volunteered to see if I could fix it. The problem was major and unfortunately, there was not enough time for repairs. I did get a "spin around the block" (which is what I had hoped for and why I volunteered). This turned out to be the most awesome boat ride I have ever been on! The three Packard engines produced a "rooster tail" that looked 20 feet tall and the speed, after getting accustomed to that of the poor old LST, was unbelievable.

There were numerous Commonwealth ships operating off the west coast of Korea. Our visitors, seen here, were from one of these ships, but I do not recall which one.

Beyond the Australian destroyer HMAS *Bataan* (D 191), the HMS *Belfast* (C 35) was firing a salvo at the North Korean mainland.

Belfast cruised by us after ceasing her bombardment. She was so close I could not get all of the ship in the picture. The two British Royal Marines who were lost on March 3 were from *Belfast*.

The sign reads : ISLAND OF ARI-DO
CAPTURED FOR SOUTH KOREA
BY

LST 692	HMAS BATAAN
LST 561	HMS WHITESAND BAY
USS PELICAN	CAPt LAMM US ARMY
USS MOCKINGBIRD	& HIS KOREAN
USS GULL	GUERRILLA FORCE

The loss of Lt. Cmdr. Thomas Brooks resulted in renumbering LST Division 12 as Division 32. Lt. Cmdr. M.V. Harlin, USN, on the left, became COMLSTDIV 32. The other officer is Lt. W.H.D. Bush, the commanding officer of *LST 561*. The aluminum cylinders behind Harlin are empty five-inch rocket canisters from the PT boats. Bush is seated on 40mm shell holders. All these empty ammunition cases were off-loaded at Inch'on later in the month. Wolfpack 6, which was based on the island of Taesuap-do, was the "Korean Guerrilla Force" included on the "Victory Flag." Captain George Lamm belonged to the 8240th Army Unit, (UNPFK), and was in command of this Wolfpack. This unit was very active and quite successful in its operations.

On at least two occasions we fired on something other than a friendly junk seining for cuttlefish. The account of one of these assaults, which may have been during the conquest of Ari-do, was recorded in this deck log entry for May 13.

AMS 27 and AMS 16 mentioned in the deck log entry for May 13 were the minesweepers USS *Mockingbird* and USS *Gull*. They are shown here receiving fuel and fresh water from *LST 561*. The USS *LCI(L) 1091* came alongside on March 8 for water and supplies. Fifty-five years later, *LCI(L) 1091* was in the Humboldt Bay Naval Sea/Air Museum in Eureka, California.

NAVPERS 134 (REV. 8-50) DECK LOG—REMARKS SHEET

UNITED STATES SHIP U.S.S. LST 561 Tuesday 13 May (Day) (Date) (Month), 19 52

16-20
Steaming as before. Maneuvering at various courses and speeds while approaching shore. 1612 Formed column formation AMS 27 and AMS 16 to the stern. 1705 Sounded General Quarters. 1728 Anchored off Fohsun Hang, Korea. Commenced bombordment of enemy positions ashore. 1746 Ceased bombardment. Underway for night anchorage. 1810 Secured from General Quarters. Received ammunitions expenditure report: 776 rounds 40MM, 1030 rounds 20MM. 1816 Anchored on station "X-RAY", Yonp'Yong Yolto, Korea in 8 fathoms of water, sand bottom with 45 fathoms of chain to bow anchor.

Scherr
L. SCHERR
ENS., USN

The deck log entry translates in plain English to: The ship was approaching the anchorage. The stern anchor was dropped to stop the ship. The anchor did not drag, and the ship kept on moving. The anchor cable snapped.

An analogy to this incident would be to tie a car bumper to a tree with a piece of string and assume that when the car pulled away, the tree would be pulled up before the string broke.

Jim Payne is holding one end of the parted stern anchor cable.

Jim was from Weaver, Alabama, and spent his entire four-year enlistment aboard *LST 561*.

NAVPERS 134 (REV. 8-50) DECK LOG—REMARKS SHEET

UNITED STATES SHIP U.S.S. LST 561 Sunday 23 March, 1952
(Day) (Date) (Month)

04-08
Anchored as before. 0635 Underway from "X-RAY" anchorage proceeding to day anchorage using various courses and speeds, the Captain is at the conn. 0655 Let go the stern anchor. 0656 Stern anchor cable parted when the stern anchor winch brakes would not hold. The dog was thrown in to keep the stern cable from running completely out, the strain was too great and the stern anchor cable parted leosing the stern anchor in nine (9) fathoms of water at 125° -36'-58" E, 37° - 39'-32" N, latitude. 0659 Anchored by the bow anchor in nine fathoms of water, muddy bottom with seventy-five (75) fathoms of chain at the waters edge. Anchored on the following anchorage bearings; left tangent, Tae'Yonp'Yong Do 049°, right tangent Tae'Yonp'Yong Do 095° (T), right tangent Kuji Do 157° (T).

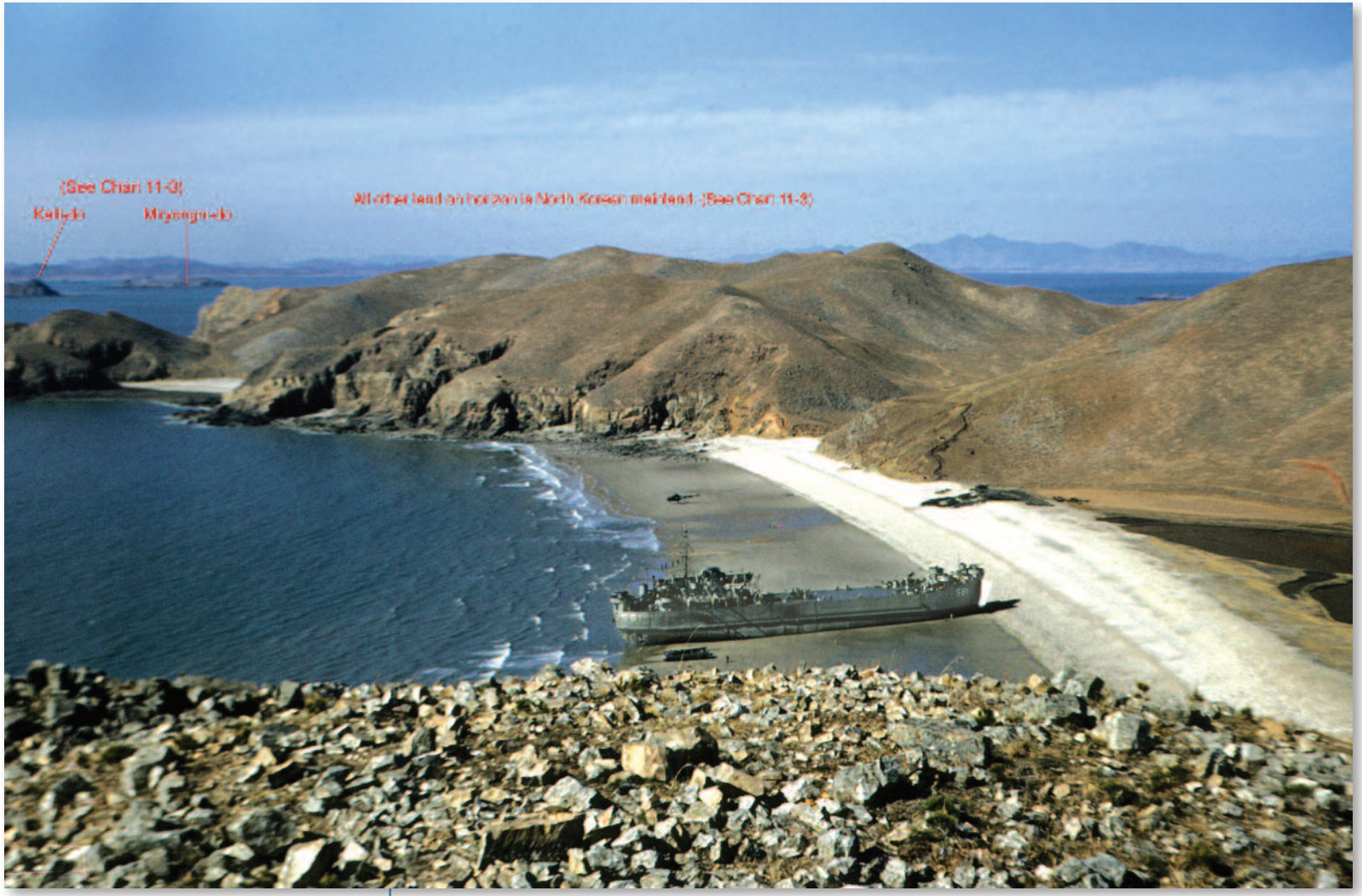
John OBENAUER, LTJG, USNR


561

CHAPTER 14
Taeyonp'yong-do

The Yellow Sea in this region has the second-largest tidal range in the world. A variation of thirty feet is not unusual. On March 16, 1952, the LST was beached not long after high tide on the west beach of Taeyonp'yong-do. Within a very short time the water had receded to the point where the ship was high and dry. The men standing near the starboard propeller provide a good reference for estimating the size of the ship. Hundreds of hours of operation of the main engines have left their mark in the form of diesel exhaust residue on the side. The old girl needs a bath.

Welded to the hull several feet above the waterline is the pontoon rail.



The low gradient made this a great beach for LSTs. The ship was not in danger from the air because United Nations aircraft had control of the skies in 1952. It did seem strange, however and made one feel uneasy to have the ship completely out of its element with the North Korean mainland only a few miles away. The photograph was taken from a rocky ledge over the south end of the beach.

The helicopter of Charlie Fox is on the beach beyond the *561*.

Bill Zoller walks toward Lt. Shermersheim as two of the young locals finish their inspection of the ship. The forward smoke mark is from the diesels in the auxiliary engine room. These auxiliary engines turned the generators that produced the ship's electricity, which was in the form of direct current and not alternating current.

The propellers had a diameter of seven feet.

In May, when we were here for the second time, two-thirds of the crew came ashore for an afternoon liberty. It featured a well-attended softball game. Bobby Peek took this one right out of Chief Fowler's catcher's mitt.

Radarman Bill Bryan had to explain some of the finer points of the game to these young locals.

The "Pride of Lowell, Massachusetts," Donald St. George, was up to take his cuts. Don was one of the original crew when the LST was re-commissioned in 1950.

Any ball landing in this yard was a home run.

Any ball landing in this yard was a home run.

The softball game was the type of event where the storekeepers would draw several cases of beer from storage and allot "two cans per man," which was the standard ration. I had half of my allotment while watching the game for two innings and then walked around and photographed scenes on the island.

I met this boy as I was walking back to the game. It probably took him several hours to find these twigs and branches on this nearly barren island.

Rows of vegetables were starting to sprout in the garden in front of this dwelling. The objects on the garden fence were drying cuttlefish.

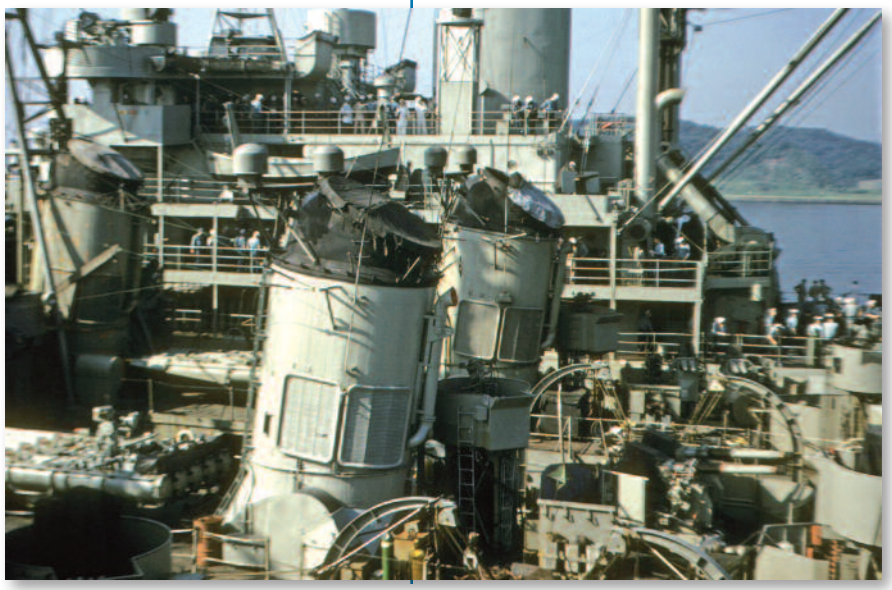
I did not see any other sources of water other than this village well. The woman on the left is carrying her sleeping baby on her back.

This photograph turned out to be ironic, because only a few days after we were ashore, the freshwater distillation system on the LST failed. Efforts to conserve water were made, but *LST 1089* came to relieve us. We left for Yokosuka on May 18.

CHAPTER 15
Apple Pie to Yokosuka

It had been a very busy three months in 1952 for *LST 561*, starting with her arrival at Taeyonp'yong-do near the end of February. A summary of the events would begin in March, with junk control in Haeju-man and the loss of the men in the LCPL. This was followed by a replenishment visit to Sasebo during the first half of April. A return to Koje-do and transporting prisoners of war filled the last two weeks of that month. Without returning to Japan, it was then back to Haeju-man, where the usual period at Taeyonp'yong-do was cut short by equipment failure. We arrived in Yokosuka for repairs on May 22.

The LST was moored with a nest of destroyers alongside USS *Hamul* (AD 20) during part of our stay in Yokosuka. At times the destroyers were USS *Lowry* (DD 770), USS *James C. Owens* (DD 776), USS *Laffey* (DD 724), and USS *Douglas H. Fox* (DD 729). One evening, as Engineman Mac Fletcher (who was wearing very non-regulation crepe-soled shoes) and I watched in fascination, two crewmen on the adjacent destroyer swept the newly painted deck of their ship. They were wearing undress blues and used a foxtail and dustpan to pick up a small amount of debris. They paused and looked at us as they were leaving. We were standing on the red lead-spotted deck of a ship sorely in need of shipyard maintenance. Nearby were two overflowing trash cans and several empty vegetable crates. Ten minutes later they returned, and put rat guards on the lines between our ships.



The LST was moored with a nest of destroyers during part of our stay in Yokosuka.

Fletcher is in the first row, fourth from the right, and has changed his crepe-soled shoes for Engineering Division inspection. After inspection we went to a train depot in Yokosuka where, for a fare of about twelve cents, we boarded a train for the short ride to Kamakura.

The island of Enoshima near Kamakura is a very popular recreational area, especially in the summer. One of the attractions was an observation tower on the highest part of the island, and it was from there that I took this photo. Kamakura is over the bridge from the island in the upper right of the photograph.

This is a true *jinricksha* and the only one I have ever seen being used. We met it as we were walking back through Kamakura. It was not a pedicab. It was being pulled by a man on foot. In bygone years *geishas* traveled by these conveyances, but if there are any *geishas* in Japan today, they probably go to their assignations in stretch limousines.

Women did a large part of the manual labor in building construction. These poles were used for scaffolding when erecting a new structure such as the one shown in the other photograph on this page.

I doubt that the 1948 Ford belonged to one of the ladies with the cart.

Even in the 1950s scenes such as this were not too common.

On our way back to the ship, we saw a mendicant monk receiving a donation from a small girl.

On our way back to the ship, we saw a mendicant monk receiving a donation from a small girl.

I chanced upon a local festival one afternoon when I was walking around Yokosuka.

A technique used by the U.S. Navy to determine how well a ship is prepared for service is the Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI). During our stay in Yokosuka, we were selected for an ORI. This evaluation consists of observers coming on board and watching the crew perform various drills. On June 10, we left Tokyo Bay for offshore Japan with the intent of displaying our proficiency. That morning, an observer walking by one of the gun tubs picked up a life preserver and threw it over the port side. This was to test our reactions for a man falling over the side. The act was seen from the conn, and the PA system instantly blared, "Man Overboard." The actions were swift. Commands to stop the port engine and for "hard left rudder" were quickly executed. A gunner's mate with a rifle ran to the rail to protect the unfortunate soul from sharks. The Fire and Rescue Party manned their LCVP, which was then lowered into the water, and raced to the sinking life preserver. (That preserver probably was there when Bob Avery sailed *LST 561* down the Mississippi in April 1944.) A steel-frame, wire-mesh basket stretcher is standard equipment for a fire and rescue boat. The boat engineer, J.D. Benoit from Louisiana, was lashed into the stretcher to simulate the rescued person and make the drill more realistic.

Returning to the LST, the two falls from the davit were secured and the lifting of the boat commenced. When the LCVP was about ten to fifteen feet above the water, the after fall jumped the sheave and parted, dropping the stern of the boat into the sea. Fortunately, it did not turn out to be "Men Overboard" for real and someone grabbed Benoit as he was sliding down the deck in his steel coffin. (Later, the joke on the ship was, that when Benoit was back aboard the LST, he disappeared into the safety of the auxiliary engine room and didn't come out for two days.) The LCPL had not been replaced as of yet, so the #1 davit was empty and was used to retrieve the LCVP. With a broken fall there was no way to lift the davit and we went sailing on, with it sticking out like a broken wing. Other drills went a little more smoothly, until that night when the instructions to anchor were given.

We were to anchor the ship at a designated spot. The chief quartermaster and the XO, Lt.j.g. William Short, were at the chart desk plotting the approach. The radarman was continuously giving them ranges and bearings as we approached the anchorage. Their calls to the conn of "1,000 yards to anchorage," "500 yards to anchorage," resulted in orders to the wheelhouse of "All ahead two," "All ahead one." At the critical time, the command to the wheelhouse of "All back full" and, to the anchor detail, of "Let go the bow anchor" were given. The stern shuddered as the screws were reversed and the anchor chain rattled down the hawsepipe. The clanking sound picked up speed and intensity until we heard the cry from the bow, "We can't hold it!" This was followed by complete silence. Later in the week the salvage vessel USS *Grapple* (ARS 7) retrieved our anchor and chain. (One positive note on this was they knew exactly where to look.)

Entering Yokosuka harbor the next morning after steaming all night, we were instructed to anchor in a certain area. We radioed back that we could not anchor because we didn't have an anchor; we were then told to moor port side to another LST. This required a second call explaining that because of the davit arm, this was not possible, either. They finally put us between two empty buoys in a remote part of the harbor. The "Fighting 561" was back.

As we entered Yokosuka harbor, the airplane in the top photo flew near the ship. The crewman in the view, who had served on aircraft carriers, gave the signals used in landing planes on a carrier. The pilot played the game and made several passes before flying off. The crewman, who will remain unnamed, is remembered by his habit of stirring his coffee with his pocket comb.

Gordon Starr and Bobby Peek (no hat) by a signaling light as we entered Yokosuka harbor.

Repairs of the damages suffered during the Operational Readiness Inspection were completed by June 28 and we sailed for Inch'on. Leaving the harbor, we had this view of the USS *Philippine Sea* (CV 47), moored at the naval base.

CHAPTER 16
Inch'on

With our source of fresh water repaired, we returned to the west coast of Korea. Independence Day 1952 found us anchored in Inch'on Hang and one of only three times that I remember seeing the LST in full dress. Under the flags, and suspended in a davit, is the LCPL that replaced the one lost in March. The white square under the portholes of the wheelhouse is the portable screen for movies.

HMS *Belfast*, USS *Logan*, and USS *Repose* were some of the other ships at Inch'on on this Fourth of July. *Repose*, now with a new helicopter landing pad, had returned from San Diego on June 24.

It appears that the storage tank in the center had been hit by an armor-piercing shell that went through the tank without exploding.

It appears that the storage tank in the center had been hit by an armor-piercing shell that went through the tank without exploding.

Nearly two years had gone by since the Inch'on Landing and yet the effects of the bombardment of Wolmi-do were still very obvious.

A sunken dredge was an appropriate subject in this harbor view.

This was Inch'on twenty-two months after the landing that completely changed the direction of the war for two months. *LST 827* appears to be loading U.S. Army vehicles and personnel.

Both of these views were taken from LST 561 as she was moored bow to the beach.

Landing Craft Utility 684 (LCU 684) is acting as a shuttle between Inch'on and a troop transport offshore. Troops from the front are waiting to board the LCU while their replacements disembark. The tide was high when this photo was taken, but within a few hours there would be only mud, not water. The sunken dredge seen in a previous picture is just over the end of the pier.

Here we had the romantic setting of the full moon rising over the mud of Inch'on harbor. Both of these views were taken from *LST 561* as she was moored bow to the beach.

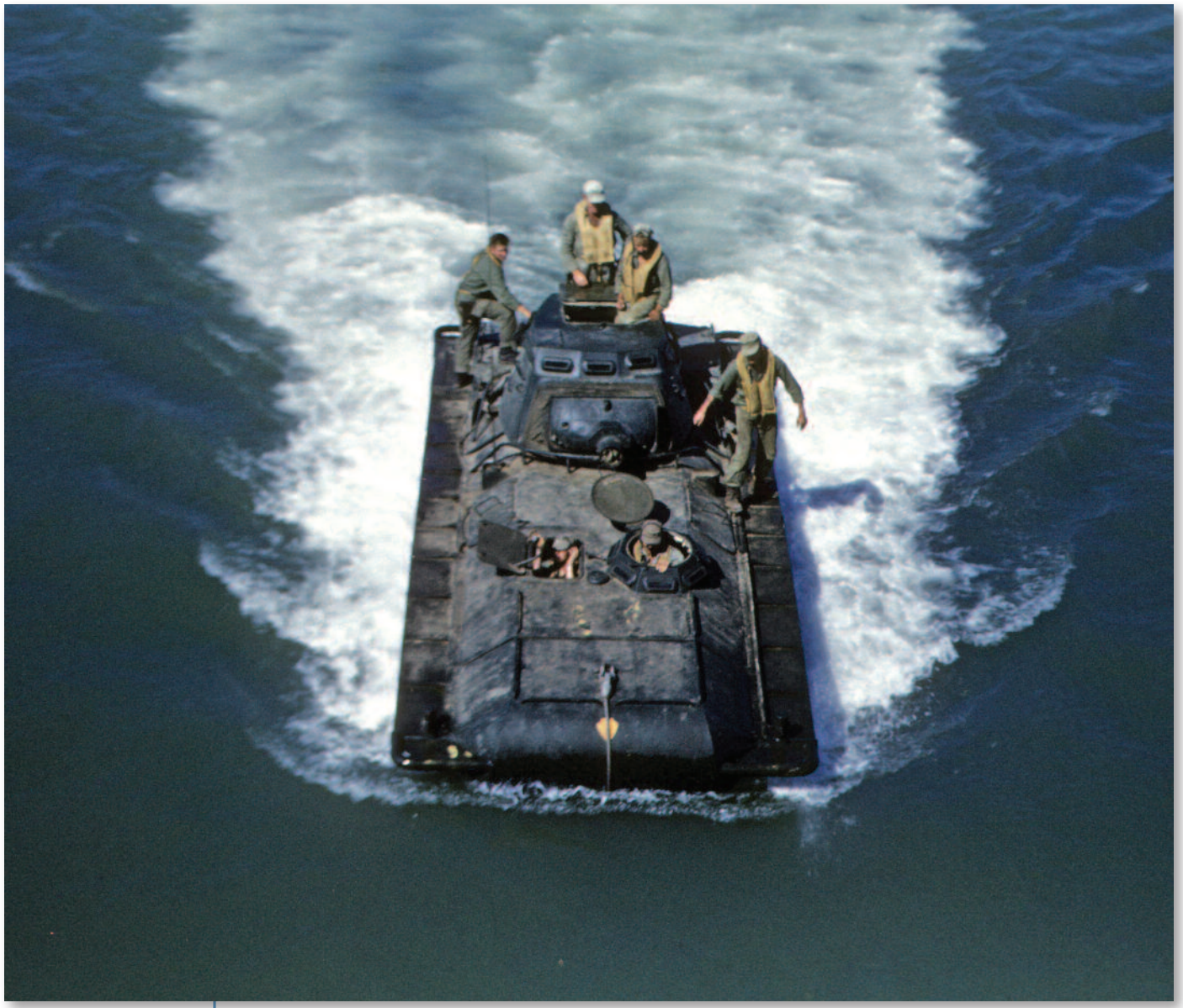
From July 6 until July 23, *LST 561* participated in amphibious exercises at Tokchok-Kundo. On July 7, we left Inch'on for Tokchok-Ri with Company "A" of the 1st Marine Amphibious Tractor Battalion. On board were twelve Landing Vehicles Tracked (LVT)s and five Landing Vehicles Tracked (Armored) (LVT(A))s. An LVT(A) is enclosed and has a turret with a gun. An LVT is open and can carry troops or materiel.

The five LVT(A)s from *LST 561* were circling while waiting for the command to form a line and head for the beach.

The splash is from an LVT that has just driven off the ramp. The photo is blurry because it was taken from a bouncing boat. I was the radioman in an LCVP, which was the guide boat for a wave of LVTs. We were waiting for the wave of amphibians to form.

This photograph is of seven landing craft heading for the beach.

USS *Logan* (APA 196) also participated in the exercises. She was an Attack Transport and could carry 1,500 troops and twenty landing craft.



This LVT(A) was approaching the bow ramp for backloading. The picture was taken from the 40mm gun tub over the bow doors.

I climbed the mast to the radar antenna to take this photograph of the LVT(A)s returning to the LST. USS *Logan* is in the background.

Accompanied by *LST 827* we left Inch'on for Sasebo on July 24, 1952. This was the final trip down the west coast of Korea for *LST 561* during this tour of duty. We did return to Inch'on once in 1953, when we were on our second tour in the Far East. The currents are very swift in this part of the Yellow Sea due to the huge variation in tides. The time of departure from Inch'on was chosen take advantage of an ebbing tide. Looking at the wake and the water, it appeared that we were chugging along at the usual ten knots. The current effectively doubled our speed, and the shoreline was racing past as if we were on one of the PT boats. The old gal had never covered so much bottom so fast before.

One reason I included this picture was to illustrate the dress code on the ship, which could be described as casual. Left to right are: Electronics Technician Staley, Engineman Hudgens, and Radioman Keck wearing various combinations of comfortable clothing as the uniform of the day.


ARCTIC OR NORTHERN OCEAN
North East Cape
NEW SIBERIAN IST
WRANGELL I.
Bering Str.
Baffin Bay
GREENLAND
SPITZBERGEN
ARCTIC CIRCLE
Yenisei R.
Lena R.
Amoor R.
Sea of Okhotsk
Davis Str.
Hudson Str.
C. Farewell
ICELAND
BRITISH ISLES
NEWFOUNDLAND
Halifax
N. York to Liverpool 10 days
London
Pekin
Japan Sea
JAPAN
Yokohama
Calcutta
FARTHER INDIA
CHINA
Canton
Shanghai
China Sea
C.VERD IS.
C.Verd
Bay of Bengal
SUMATRA
C. Comorin
BORNEO
Niger R.
Gulf of Guinea
Congo R.
C.St.Roque
50 days
TROPIC OF CAPRICORN
AUSTRALIA
Sydney
Melbourne
Valparaiso
Rio Janeiro
C. of Good Hope
NEW ZEALAND
TASMANIA
La Plata R.
Str. of Magellan
TIERRA DEL FUEGO
C.Horn
ANTARCTIC OR SOUTHERN OCEAN

CHAPTER 17

Back to the USA

The stay in Sasebo was only for ten days. We sailed for Yokosuka on August 6 and three days later moored to *LST 715*. Not long after our arrival, the word spread like wildfire. We were going home! The time here was used to get the LST ready for the eager crew's return to the United States.

As part of the preparation, one of the huge gantry cranes lowered the 1949 Chevy through the cargo hatch into the tank deck. The car probably belonged to an officer being transferred to Hawaii.

The ship had sailed from Oakland on October 24, 1951, and now, ten months later, we were returning to the USA. On August 23, our Military Payment Currency was converted into greenbacks, and at 2:05 PM, *LST 561*, accompanied by *LST 715*, got underway for Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii. The voyage from Yokosuka to Pearl Harbor only took thirteen days, a full four days less than the trip over.

Hula girls and a Navy band greeted our arrival at the U.S. Naval Base in Pearl Harbor.

Now a "salt," I returned to Waikiki with a third class "crow"on my "tailor-mades." They actually had been tailor-made for Zoller. I bought them from him when he was released from active duty. I'm not sure why I was wearing "blues" in Hawaii unless it was because my "whites" were not back from the shore laundry.

The stay in Hawaii lasted only three days. Everyone wanted to go home. *LST 561*, and our traveling companion, *LST 715*, left for San Diego on September 8, 1952.

Point Loma, the guardian to the entrance of San Diego Harbor, was on the port side at 9:20 AM on the 19th of September.

Signs reading "Welcome Home" and family members of several crewmen were on Navy Pier on our arrival.

An entry in the deck log of that day reads, "At 1055 Vice Admiral I.N. Kiland, ComPhibPac, came aboard. At 1100 Vice Admiral Kiland left ship."

It had been two years since I had enlisted and during that time I had received only thirteen days of leave. During the next few weeks a considerable number of leaves, including one for me, were granted. "Peachy" Patrick and Ron Kelley were also recipients and their starting dates coincided with mine. Peachy was from Florida and Ron lived in Houston, Texas. My parents were still in Oklahoma and,when we bought our tickets, we found we would be on the same bus to Dallas. Rudy Overman, one of our fellow crewmen who was lost in March, was from Dallas, so on our arrival in that city, we visited his parents before going our separate ways.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CHAPTER 18
Shipboard Life

In writing this book, I have tried to tell the story so that it could be understood by the reader who has never been on an LST, or, for that matter, any type of ship. I know it is difficult reading when it seems that every other word must be looked up in the Glossary at the back of the book. Why must it be a bulkhead, instead of a wall? Unfortunately, the vertical divider between two spaces on a ship has always been a bulkhead, not a wall, and probably always will be. Nevertheless, since you have made it this far, congratulations! If it was your curiosity about how the ship functioned that brought you to this point, then most likely you would like to know what it was like to live on one of these floating roller coasters.

The ship had to have the capability of providing all the supplies and services for a crew of well over 100 for more than a month. The quality of life was reasonably good, perhaps not lush, but certainly more than just survival. Here are a few of the aspects of being aboard *LST 561* during the early 1950s.

The ship had to have the capability of providing all the supplies and services for a crew of well over 100 for more than a month.

SECTIONS AND WATCHES

When the ship was in port, who was entitled to get liberty? Who had to be the bow lookout from midnight until 4 AM, when the ship was at sea? These problems were approached by dividing the crew into sections. Each sailor was a member of two distinct groups. The first plan divided the crew into halves, which were called the Port and Starboard Sections. This method would be utilized when the ship was in port and there was a possibility that it would have to leave immediately. The assignments had to be done by divisions. Obviously, having all the deck force on board and no one to run the engines would not work. The second arrangement was to divide the crew into thirds. This grouping, with the imaginative names Sections One, Two, and Three, would always be used when the ship was underway, and also

frequently when it was in port. If there were six enginemen, two would be assigned to each section. A new crewman coming on board might learn by looking at the Watch, Quarter, and Station Bill that he was in the Starboard Section and also in Section Two.

When the ship was underway, the 24-hour day would be divided into six watches of four hours each. To rotate the assignments, a system of "dogging the watches" (not to be confused with "dogging the hatches") is used. To illustrate how this works, let us start with Section One on duty from 8 AM until noon. At 11:30 AM, Section Two would have their lunch and take over at noon. At 4 PM, Section Three would relieve Section Two. Around 5:30 PM, the PA system would announce: "Chow down for mess cooks and the oncoming watch." Section Three would eat their evening meal and relieve Section Two around 6 PM. Section Three would be relieved by Section One at 8 PM. Breaking the 4 PM until 8 PM watch into two "dog watches" rotated the duty periods so that the same section would not always have to stand the midnight-until-4 AM watch. The three-section configuration was frequently used to grant liberty to the crew. With three sections, a sailor would have liberty two nights out of three, instead of every other night.

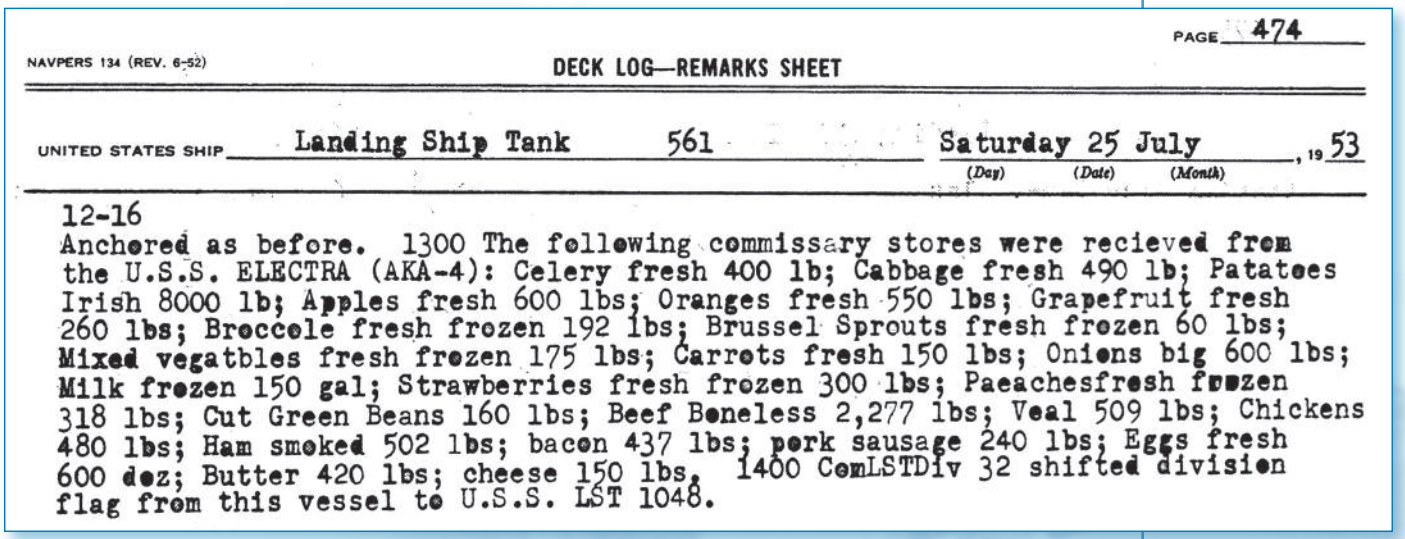
FOOD

The food budget was determined by the number of people on board the ship. It was calculated on a dollar amount per man per day. We knew that when passengers were on board, the meals would consist of pastas, and less expensive foods. The cooks would be drawing the same per diem for the passengers as they were for the crew. This would build up the amount in their budget, and then, when only the crew was aboard, we could count on steaks for several meals.

As you can well imagine, the amount of commissary supplies required to feed well over 100 people for a month is enormous. The stores are ordered and brought on board shortly before the ship leaves port. When the provisions were delivered, the PA system would intone, "All hands not actually on watch lay up to the main deck for handling commissary stores." All these (food items) were then carried to the third deck directly under the large berthing compartment. Access to this storage area was through a hatch in the berthing compartment (Figure 4-1). The storage area was divided in halves by a passageway running directly aft to a small compartment housing the ship's steering gear. Located on the starboard side of the passageway were three lockers capable of holding 21 tons of meat and perishable food. Across the aisle, on the port side, there was adequate storage space for three months of dry provisions.

All food preparation took place in the galley. The steward's mates would take food from the galley and serve the officers in the wardroom.

In one instance we drew stores from a supply ship, USS *Electra* (AKA 4), just to supplement the ones on board. If you can wade through the misspellings in the deck log entry, the types of food and quantities make interesting reading. Four tons of potatoes calculates to be over sixty pounds of potatoes per man. It does seem like we had mashed potatoes for every meal except breakfast.



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NAVPERS 134 (REV. 6-52) DECK LOG—REMARKS SHEET

UNITED STATES SHIP Landing Ship Tank 561 Saturday 25 July , 19 53
(Day) (Date) (Month)

12-16
Anchored as before. 1300 The following commissary stores were recieved from the U.S.S. ELECTRA (AKA-4): Celery fresh 400 lb; Cabbage fresh 490 lb; Patatoes Irish 8000 lb; Apples fresh 600 lbs; Oranges fresh 550 lbs; Grapefruit fresh 260 lbs; Broccole fresh frozen 192 lbs; Brussel Sprouts fresh frozen 60 lbs; Mixed vegatbles fresh frozen 175 lbs; Carrots fresh 150 lbs; Onions big 600 lbs; Milk frozen 150 gal; Strawberries fresh frozen 300 lbs; Paeachesfresh frozen 318 lbs; Cut Green Beans 160 lbs; Beef Boneless 2,277 lbs; Veal 509 lbs; Chickens 480 lbs; Ham smoked 502 lbs; bacon 437 lbs; pork sausage 240 lbs; Eggs fresh 600 doz; Butter 420 lbs; cheese 150 lbs, 1400 ComLSTDiv 32 shifted division flag from this vessel to U.S.S. LST 1048.

THE SHIP'S STORE

At the foot of the ladder to the third deck, on the dry provisions side, was a service window manned by one of the storekeepers during the noon hour. This was our ship's store. For such a small space, the storekeepers did a good job in stocking items that were needed by the crew. The profit from sales went into a crew fund. The beer at the softball game on "Apple Pie" was charged to this account. In 1953, part of this money was used to buy a 17" black and white television set. It was placed in the forward mess compartment, with the antenna rigged on one of the boat davits. Chuck Bras, who went aboard the ship after I left, informed me that in the late 1950s the stern berthing space was remade into a comfortable lounge area for the crew, and we thought it could not get any better than when a vending machine for soft drinks was brought on board!

MUSIC

I bought a record player when I was at Treasure Island that would play the standard records of the time, both 78 and 33-1/3 rpm. It was installed, with about a dozen records, over the ET workbench in the radio room. The records included *My Little Grass Shack in Kealakekua, Hawaii*, sung by the Andrews Sisters and of course, *Come On-a My House*, sung by Rosemary Clooney. Trying to play it while the ship was underway was not easy, since the tone arm would slide from one side to the other, even with a moderate roll of the ship. This problem was solved by suspending the player from the overhead using four cords. Now, the player hung perfectly level while the ship rolled. It appeared to swing back and forth like a pendulum, while actually it was the ship that was moving. In the 1950s there were several American Armed Forces Radio stations transmitting in the Far East. These low-power stations were for the entertainment of U.S. military personnel. Country and Western music at noon was the feature of the "Honshu Hayride" in central Honshu and the "Kyushu Cowboy" in Sasebo. These programs, which were favorites of the crew, were occasionally tuned in by one of the radiomen, and piped over the PA system.

LAUNDRY

There was a laundry in the after part of the tank deck. It contained a commercial-size washer and dryer, which were operated by a crewman from the deck force. Laundry days were assigned by division, for example: Operations on Mondays, Engineering on Tuesdays, officers on Wednesdays, etc. On your laundry day, you put your soiled items on the table in the large stern berthing space. This table was identical to those in the mess compartments. The laundryman would pick up the pile at 8 AM and the freshly laundered clothing would be back on the table that afternoon. The ownership of the items was established through the use of an indelible marking pen. If you put a new chambray shirt in the pile without "branding" it, and you were not there when the laundry came back, the odds were good that one of your buddies would be wearing a new chambray shirt the next day.

The laundryman would also iron the khaki uniforms of the officers and chiefs. Storekeeper Bob Phipps was the nattiest dresser of our crew. He paid the laundryman to iron his chambray shirts, while many of us looked as though we had fallen out of a rag bag.

BERTHING COMPARTMENTS

This 1953 photograph was taken after the crew had been moved from the stern compartment.

A typical three-bunk tier is on the left. Each crewman had a metal locker for his clothing and personal property. The top "rack" in this tier was mine, as was the adjacent top locker. I preferred a top bunk because there was a little more headroom with the cables and pipes rather than the canvas bottom of another bunk. There was a negative aspect to an upper rack, however, as I did wake up one morning to see the beady eyes of a rat staring at me from the cables over my head!

In this scene a penny ante poker game is in progress on the deck of the Operations Division compartment. Shuffling the cards is Radioman Jerry Langham from Atlanta, Georgia. The mustached gambler leaning against the lockers is a quartermaster from Utah who went by the nickname of "Crazy," instead of being called by his family name, as was the custom. The sailor playing from the comfort of his bunk is Larry Bean from Springfield, Mass. Radioman Charlie Pifer on the left rounds out the hand.

Notice that Bean is smoking and has a real ashtray, and not a tin can, on the deck. A very high percentage of the crew were smokers.

This was before tobacco was determined to be a health hazard, and cigarettes from our ship's store cost only seventy-five cents for a carton of ten packs. I started smoking when I was in high school, but quit in 1954 when my enlistment was over. Now, when I think about what the smoke odor must have been on that ship, I wonder how the few non-smokers could have survived. They probably started smoking as their only defense.

In the photograph, Bean and Crazy are wearing what appear to be monocles. These monocles are brass rings that were being used as chips in the poker game. Each signal flag has one of these rings in one corner and a bronze clip in an adjacent corner. The flags are connected using the clips and rings and through the use of a halyard hauled up to the cross spar on the mast where the signal is displayed. It goes without saying that the chips for the game were supplied by the quartermaster in charge of the flag locker.

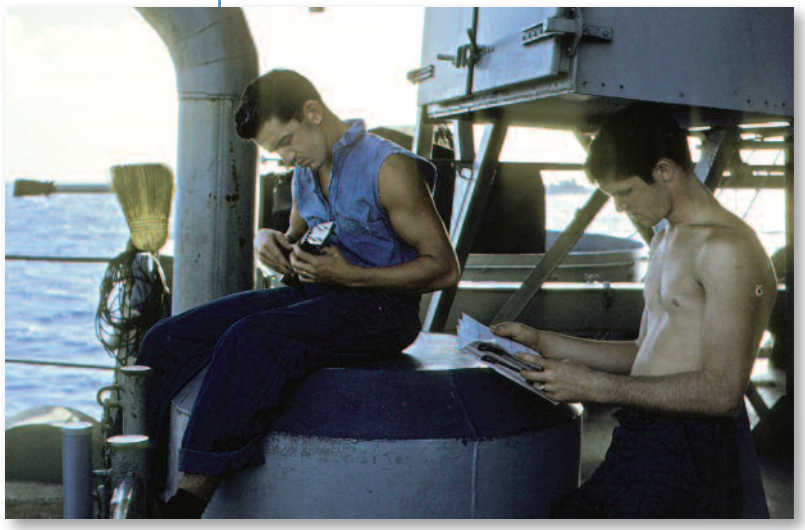
COMPARTMENT ENVIRONMENT

In cold weather the interior of the ship, except for the tank deck, was comfortable. Even in the Arctic, and the extreme cold of Korea, the heating system was quite adequate. Hot weather was another story. Eight hours of steel decks absorbing energy from a tropical sun would turn compartments into ovens. The only way to cool the interior was to open certain hatches and doors so that air would flow through the spaces. On one occasion when the stern compartment temperature must have been well into the nineties, the MAA opened the two doors to the tank deck and turned on the tank deck exhaust vents. This pulled a nice breeze through the space, but the blowers were so loud in officers' country that the duty officer made him turn them off. At night the sea would cool the ship some, but it would be morning before it was comfortable.

There were two wooden vegetable bins on the boat deck. They were for potato and onion storage and were about six feet long and three feet wide with a slanted hinged top. The week before our arrival in Hawaii the berthing space was especially hot, and I slept on the top of one of these bins. I would level the top by lifting the hinged lid and put a wooden block under the front. When I was ready to turn in for the night, I would scoop up my mattress and blanket, carry them up to the boat deck and spend a comfortable night under the stars. (I was only dampened once by a tropical shower.)

HOLIDAY ROUTINE

Catching up on sleep lost from standing night watches was the way many of the crew would spend their Sundays at sea. August 31, 1952, was the Sunday before we arrived at Pearl Harbor, and the heat in the berthing spaces brought most of the off-duty crew topsides. Seeing some of these sleepers on the hard steel decks inspired me to get my camera and record part of this "Holiday Routine."



ENTERTAINMENT

As may be surmised from the "Sunday at sea pictures," there wasn't much to choose from in the way of entertainment. Books were enjoyed by a few avid readers. Movies were the only diversion. Before the ship left port, the crewman in charge of movies would go to the shore facility and draw a number of films. Usually there was a maximum allowed and not enough for a different one each day before the ship arrived at the next port. Attendance really fell off when the same movie was shown for the third time in ten days. If you asked someone, "What's the movie tonight?" Invariably the response would be, "George Raft in Drydock." (It never got old.)

One way to get different films was to exchange them with another ship. We would give them five or six of our worst ones and could expect to get an equal number of bad movies in exchange. On the way from Japan to Hawaii we made an exchange with *LST 715*. Unfortunately these were only the two LSTs on this trip, so the movie pool was pretty shallow.

The crews of both ships wait for the *561* to overtake the *715*. When the two ships were abeam, a line-throwing gun was used to get a line between the ships. This light line was then used to pull heavier lines over to be rigged as the transfer apparatus.

The ships are abeam and the transfer gear has been rigged. The best helmsman is chosen to be at the wheel in order to maintain a steady course and a constant separation between the ships. There is a certain degree of danger when two ships are sailing abeam, as in this situation. If they are too close, the flow of water between the two ships will pull them together. Variations in the separation between the two ships is compensated for by the line-handling crew on *LST 715*. If the ships move closer, the transfer line will dip toward the water. When this starts to occur, the crew will haul in, raising the line.

In this picture the U.S. ensign (our national flag) may be seen flying from the gaff. The gaff is the small spar extending at an angle from the mast. This location is the place of honor for a flag when a ship is underway.

Variations in the separation between the two ships is compensated for by the line-handling crew on *LST 715*. If the ships move closer, the transfer line will dip toward the water. When this starts to occur, the crew will haul in, raising the line.

Where the movies were shown depended on several factors, with weather being the most important. The tank deck made a very good theater at any time of the year. It was large, easily darkened, and usually vacant. When the LST was underway, and the tank deck was filled with vehicles, there were not many suitable places available. One solution was to hang a sheet to serve as a screen over the doorway between the two mess compartments. The picture would appear on both sides of the sheet, and although one side would be a mirror image, the seating capacity was doubled. With the ship at anchor in pleasant weather, the main deck was the most desirable location. Starting time would be as soon as it became dark enough to see the projection on the screen. (Sunday matinees would have to be on the tank deck.) The wife of Electrician's Mate Noffsinger sent him one of the new 45 rpm record players in the spring of 1952. Sometimes he would play it while we were waiting for darkness. I still can hear Kay Starr singing *Wheel of Fortune* and see the sun setting over the Yellow Sea.

The wheel of fortune
Goes spinning around
Will the arrow point my way?
Will this be my day?

Oh, wheel of fortune
I'm hoping somehow
If you ever smile on me
Please let it be now.

CHAPTER 19
West Coast Operations

The month following our return to the USA was very quiet, with many of the officers and crew enjoying leaves of absence. *LST 561* spent the time between barge moorings in San Diego Harbor. She was there when this ketch leisurely sailed between her and USS *Bayfield* (APA 33) during the last week of September 1952.

Lt. Ernest L. Stewart, USN, reported aboard on September 20, and on October 4, relieved Lt. Bush as commanding officer of the USS *LST 561*.

Two weeks later, the ship left San Diego for Fort Wordon, at Port Townsend, Washington. U. S. Army troops and their equipment were loaded on the ship at Fort Flagler on October 26, and we sailed back to southern California.

She was there when this ketch leisurely sailed between her and USS Bayfield (APA 33) during the last week of September 1952.

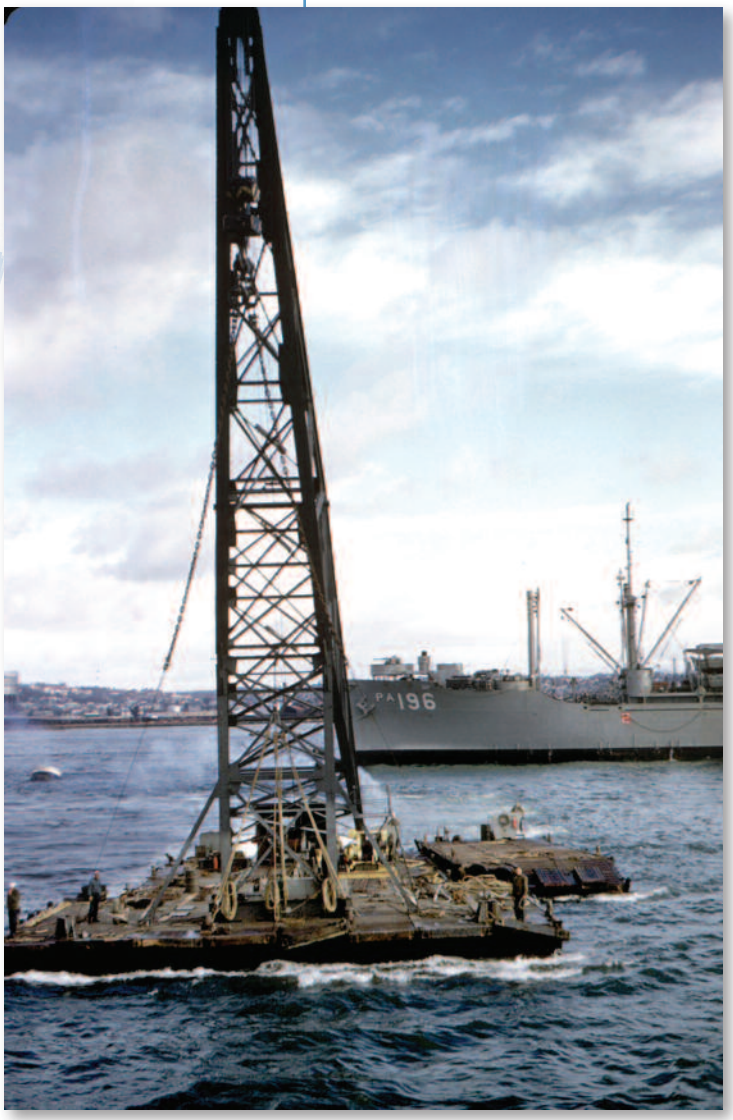
The training exercises scheduled for the troops from Washington included the use of pontoons. The following photographs show the procedure by which these large floats were loaded and used to build a causeway. The first step was to securely moor the ship. Ballast was then pumped so that the LST was listing several degrees, lowering the pontoon rail on the installation side. Refer to the pictures of the grounded LST in Chapter 14 for a good view of the pontoon rail. In the first view, the LST is moored between two buoys and has a 5 degree list to starboard. (On the right side of the photo is the antenna for our new television set.)

Sea tractors then arrived with two pontoons, one for each side of the LST.

The pontoon for the starboard side was pushed against the hull. The reason for pumping a list was to lower the rail sufficiently so that a flange on the top of the floating pontoon would fit over the rail. The ship must be moored securely to keep it from moving when the pontoon is pushed against the hull.

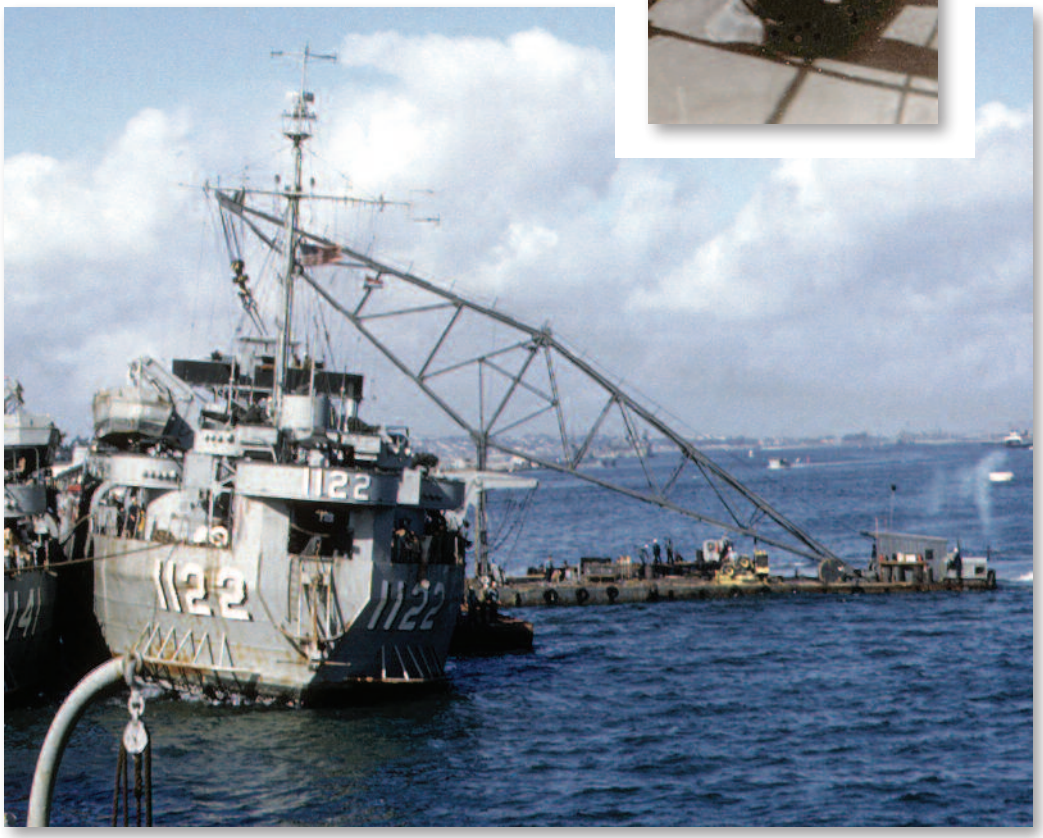
Pontoon #64 was being held to the hull by lines fore and aft. The sea tractors then moved the pontoon for the port side out of the way of the floating derrick.

The derrick approached the pontoon from the side.



The next step in the process was to get the pontoon onto the rail and to secure it to the side of the ship. In this view, the pontoon for the port side is being lifted. Notice that the boom of the derrick extends over the deck of the ship. The position of the boom is seen more clearly in the loading of a pontoon on *LST 1122*. This keeps the "flange" of the pontoon securely in the rail while it is pulled onto the side. As the derrick lifted the outer side of the pontoon, the "flange" in the rail acted as a hinge. When the pontoon was vertical, it was secured to bitts on the ship with heavy manila lines. The rail supported the weight of the float, and the two lines held it next to the hull.

These two sturdy posts are called "bitts."



During the exercise the following day, the LST slowly approached the area where the causeway was being assembled. Instructions for our speed and course were sent by radio from the beachmaster. Standing by each line was a boatswain's mate with an ax. When the motion and position of the ship was satisfactory to the beachmaster, he would radio for deployment. Upon receiving this message, the officer on the conning station called "Launch pontoon" over the PA system. Simultaneous ax swings cutting the manila lines resulted in a rather impressive splash. The "launch" was set up in such a way that the pontoon drifted toward the growing causeway and, with the aid of an LCM, was quickly moved into place. The floating bridge continued to lengthen as each LST added two pontoons to the arrangement.

At the end of the training exercises, we returned to the causeway. We approached the floating bridge with the bow doors open and the ramp partially lowered. Lines from each side of the bow held the LST so it was "married" squarely with the float. The ramp was then lowered to the causeway and vehicles began driving aboard. The stern anchor had been dropped on the approach and was holding the ship positioned correctly.

This view of vehicles on the causeway was through the open bow doors from the tank deck.

The vehicles were positioned after driving up the ramp.

All equipment was backloaded and returned to Washington, where it was off-loaded at Fort Flagler on November 26.

Amphibious exercises were conducted at Camp Pendleton and at Coronado's Silver Strand Beach, upon our return to southern California. During December and January when it was not on maneuvers, the ship was moored at barge moorings in San Diego Harbor.

We sailed past at least three LSTs in the hundreds of mothballed ships in this Southern California depot.

Cargo was loaded for the Oakland Naval Supply Center on February 6, and we left the following day for the San Francisco Bay Area.

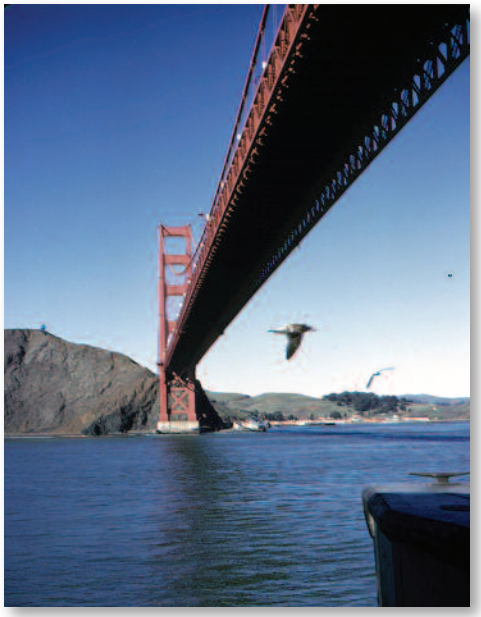
CHAPTER 20
San Francisco Bay

Fifteen months had elapsed since the outward-bound USS *LST 561* had passed under the Golden Gate Bridge. The sea was far calmer this day than it was on that evening in October so long ago. Sailing into any harbor after a long journey is exhilarating, but for me the approach to San Francisco Bay will always be something special.

"Manning the rail" by the crew of a ship as she sails by a waterfront is a naval custom showing honor to the port. The sailors seen here are at "Quarters," which is a slightly less formal way of displaying this respect.

The beautiful, white, Mediterranean-type city seen on that February day of 1953 has evolved into the San Francisco of today.

The north end of the Golden Gate Bridge rests on the Marin County shore. My home has been in Marin County since 1961.



USS LST 561 *stands into the Golden Gate and San Francisco Bay.*

We proceeded directly to the Naval Supply Center in Oakland, where our cargo was off-loaded the next day. All the materiel in the tank deck was lifted through the cargo hatch in front of the deckhouse. The LCPL seen under the load was the replacement for the one lost in Korea.

Before entering the shipyard in San Francisco, it was necessary to remove all of the ammunition on board. During World War II a munitions depot was established at Port Chicago on Suisun Bay, and this is where we transferred our 20mm and 40mm ammunition. This was the site of a disaster that occurred on July 14, 1944, when the SS *E.A. Bryan*, loaded with 4,600 tons of ammunition, exploded, vaporizing the ship and killing 320 men instantly.

Sailing under the railway bridge on the Carquinez Strait. Port Chicago is on Suisun Bay and only five miles beyond this bridge.

Sailing under the railway bridge on the Carquinez Strait. Port Chicago is on Suisun Bay and only five miles beyond this bridge.

A ship moored to the pier at Avon may be seen under the bridge at the right edge of the picture. Port Chicago is three miles beyond this pier. The Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet is under the two left spans on the other end of the bridge. The mothballed ships moored here were inactive and kept for emergencies. USS *Iowa* (BB 61) was one of the ships in this fleet in 2007. The photograph was taken after we had off-loaded ammunition and the LST was on her way to Hunters Point for a sorely needed, and well-deserved, maintenance period.

Entering the shipyard at Hunters Point.

Our new commanding officer, Lt. Ernest Stewart, had previously served on destroyers (if memory serves) and LST 561, as his first command, seemed to have caused something akin to "culture shock."

Our new commanding officer, Lt. Ernest Stewart, had previously served on destroyers (if memory serves) and *LST 561*, as his first command, seemed to have caused something akin to "culture shock." The incident I related earlier, when we were moored to a destroyer, was an example of the contrast between the Navy to which he was apparently accustomed and his new ship. Under his command, the relaxed way in which *LST 561* had operated was changed into one of "by the book." Ever since the re-commissioning, and especially in Korea, the emphasis had been to get the job done. Lt. Stewart could not be faulted for his efforts to bring more discipline to the ship, but unfortunately, this was not the way the crew had been trained and they resented these attempts. The LST was not a happy ship, which was reflected by the large increase in the violation of regulations, and the subsequent punishments. Sadly, this deck log entry of late November was typical of these times.

NAVPERS 134 (REV. 6-52) **DECK LOG—REMARKS SHEET**

UNITED STATES SHIP LST 561 Friday (Day) 28 (Date) November (Month), 19 52

08-12
Steaming as before on course 179° T. 0800 Mustered the crew at quarters; Absentees: [redacted], H. R. (Serial Nr. Deleted), SN, USN; [redacted] K. S., (Serial Nr. Deleted), FN, USN. 1015 The Commanding Officer held mast and awarded the following punishment: [redacted], R. M. (Serial Nr. Deleted), SN, USN. Overleave three (3) hours and thirty (30) minutes; awarded seven (7) days restriction to the limits of the ship and seven (7) days extra duty not to exceed two (2) hours per day; [redacted], R. (n), (Serial Nr. Deleted), SN, USN, overleave three (3) hours and thirty (30) minutes; awarded seven (7) days extra duty not to exceed two (2) hours per day. [redacted], R. (n), [redacted], SN, USN: Drunk and possessing two (2) liberty cards: awarded a warning: [redacted], F. W. (Serial Nr. Deleted), SA, USN, not maning sea detail station, shirking duty. Awarded 19 days extra duty to be performed from 0400 to 0600 daily. [redacted] (n), (Serial Nr. Deleted), TA, USN, overleave nine (9) hours. awarded fourteen (14) days extra duty not to exceed two (2) hours per day. [redacted], C. E. (Serial Nr. Deleted), SN, USN, overleave three days and twenty-three hours. Awarded a summery court martial.

Electronics Technician Bobby Peek was the only ET left of the three who were on board when I joined the crew. He was standing by the dry-docked ship not long before his discharge.

The absentee pennants indicate that neither the captain nor the commander of LST Division 32 are aboard the ship.

Two months at Hunters Point resulted in the LST looking like new. The steel decks of the crew's heads were given a terrazzo surfacing that made these areas look much cleaner.

The electronics spare parts storeroom on the third deck, below the command staff's berthing space, contained a metal box for each piece of electronic equipment on board. These were the days of vacuum tube electronics, so when a unit of electronics equipment failed, the problem would almost always be a defective vacuum tube. Each piece of gear might use two or three 12AX7s, and there could be forty of these tubes in the boxes when only two or three might be needed in a year. During our stay in the shipyard, these boxes were removed and aluminum cabinets were installed. Now, instead of forty vacuum tubes of the same type, there would only be three or four. Using the new system, when a part was needed, the technician would look up the stock number and get the part from the designated drawer. Any part removed would be ordered, and replaced, when the ship was near a supply center. (That is, it would have been, if the technician had remembered to write down the number when the part was removed from the drawer.)

Shipyard work was completed on April 14, and after lading supplies at the Supply Center in Oakland and ammunition at Port Chicago, we sailed past Alcatraz and out the Golden Gate on the way to Southern California.

CHAPTER 21

Arctic Operations

Incredible as it might seem, the ship was back in drydock only thirty days after an extensive two-month overhaul. It was not because of a problem, however, but for LST Ship Alteration # 93. This modification was made by Todd Shipyard at San Pedro, California. The major part of this revision consisted of welding thin "compartments" to the hull at the waterline. The additions to the bow were the same as those shown here on *LST 1048*. These "spaces," which were less than one foot thick, extended several feet below the waterline, and were welded on the bow doors, as well as near the stern. The purpose of these attachments was obvious when we were told that operations in the pack ice of the Arctic had been scheduled for the ship.

Fog occurred two or three times, but it was light and did not present a problem.

In the 1950s, relations with Russia had deteriorated to the possibility of actual war. A decision was made in 1952 by the United States to establish a system that would detect the advent of an attack. The most direct route between the two nations was over the North Pole, and that was the direction to be watched. A line of 63 radar detection stations stretching from Baffin Island near Greenland to the northwest coast of Alaska was designed to fulfill this requirement. Actual construction of the system, which was named the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line, was started in 1954. A large quantity of the material for the stations on the north coast of Alaska was brought by sea during the summer months when the pack

ice receded from the coast. *LST 561* was one of the ships that delivered fuel and materials in the first sealift.

The LST, clad in her new "ice sheathing," sailed for Seattle on June 12, 1953, and arrived on June 18. Several weeks were spent loading cargo, most of which consisted of 55-gallon barrels of diesel fuel.

Lt. Reginald Fogg, USN, reported aboard on June 22, and relieved Lt. Stewart as commanding officer of LST 561 on June 26. Lt. Stewart had been at the helm for only nine months, so this was somewhat of a surprise.

Task Force 9, consisting of LST Division 32, USS *Belle Grove* (LSD 2), USS *Estes* (AGC 12), USS *Electra* (AKA 4), and several other ships left for Alaska on July 8. The voyage from Seattle to the Alaskan archipelago was uneventful, just day after day of the usual motions of the ship, to which I had long since become accustomed but still found unpleasant.

Task Force 9, consisting of LST Division 32, USS Belle Grove (LSD 2), USS Estes (AGC 12), USS Electra (AKA 4), and several other ships left for Alaska on July 8.

Entering the Bering Sea through Unimak Pass was very interesting. On the Pacific Ocean side of the gap, the sun was bright, with only a few fleecy clouds in a turquoise sky. The two islands that formed the opening into the Bering Sea rose from the water and disappeared into a low grey cloud that bridged the gap between them. This dismal ceiling appeared to completely cover the sea that stretched beyond the passageway. It was eerie to sail from a world of bright sunshine into a dreary cave, but the view so impressed me that I took several pictures of this forlorn entrance. Unfortunately, the film with these pictures and all of the others taken in Seattle and until our arrival at Point Barrow, was lost. My film was mailed in Point Barrow along with hundreds of letters from the Task Force. The airplane with this mail developed engine trouble during the trip south, and all the freight, including mail, was jettisoned to lighten the plane's weight.

Once through the entrance, whale's spouts started to appear and at times more than a dozen could be counted. The second evening in the Bering Sea, I was standing by the starboard rail talking with bo'sun Peter Manooshian when the ship seemed to hit one of the animals. It was impossible to know if it was a whale we struck and, if so, how badly we had hurt it.

On the evening of July 18, I was on the fantail reading a book when the stern of the ship went into a very pronounced motion. The movement continued for a minute or so and then ceased. Lt.j.g. Sherwood Hoogs was the officer on the conning station. Trying to determine the reason for the oscillation, he ran one engine at a time and found that the problem only occurred when the starboard shaft was turning. As part of the preparation for Arctic operations, heavier screws had been placed on the ship in San Pedro. For some unknown reason, the new starboard propeller was replaced again in Seattle. A casting flaw had opened

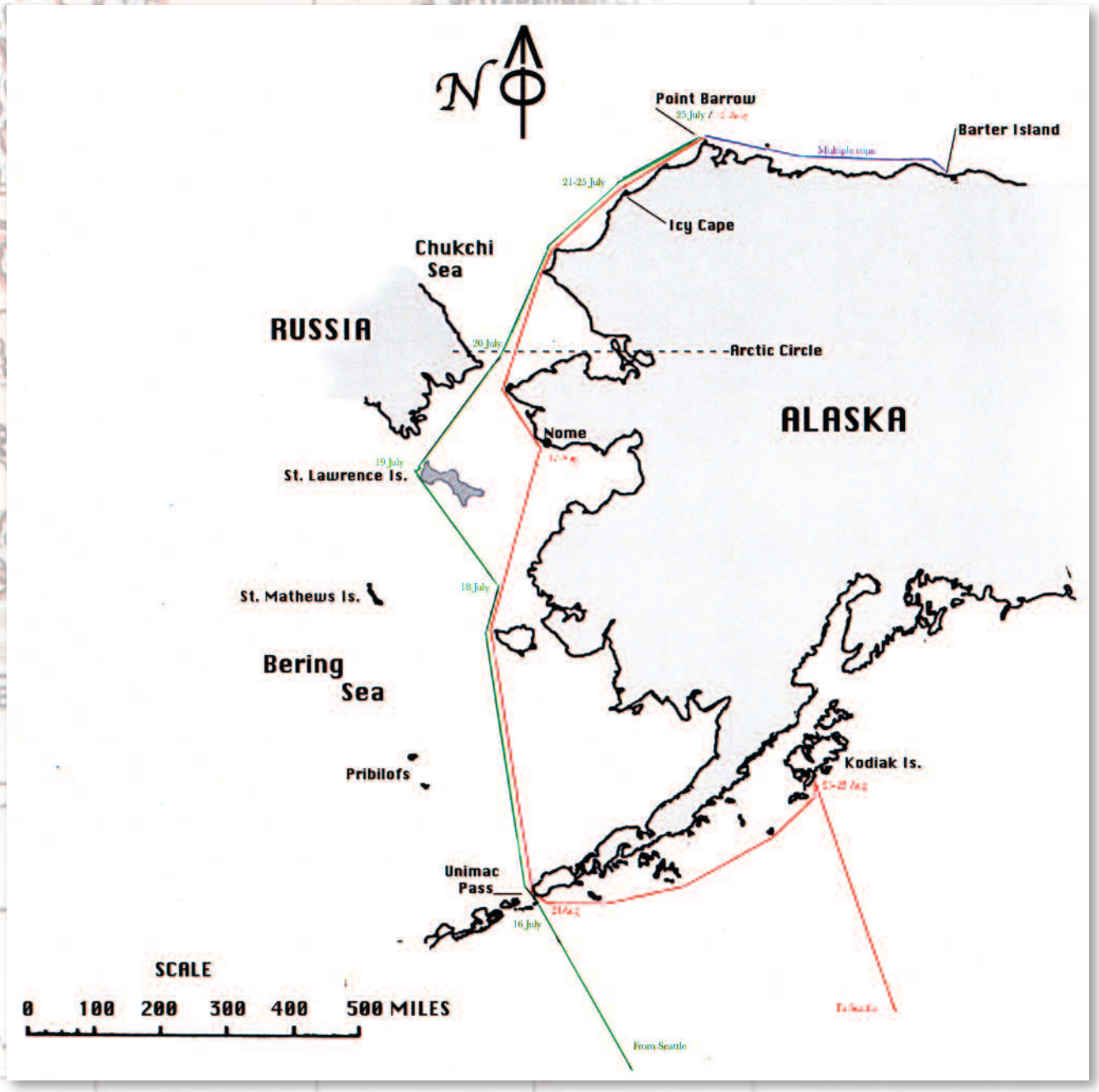
up in a blade of the newest propeller and it had spun off into the icy depths. A message was sent to the Task Force Commander (CTF) informing him of the problem, and we received a reply directing us to proceed to the northwestern side of St. Lawrence Island. Conforming to the instructions from CTF 9, we dropped out of formation, and accompanied by USS *Grapple* (ARS 7), set a course of 307° T for St. Lawrence Island. In one of the first chapters of the book, I mentioned that there was usually a difference of several degrees between true north and magnetic north. Our true course of 307° was indicated on the compass as being 271°, a variation of 36°. (Have pity on the poor mariner who must use a magnetic compass near the Arctic Circle!)

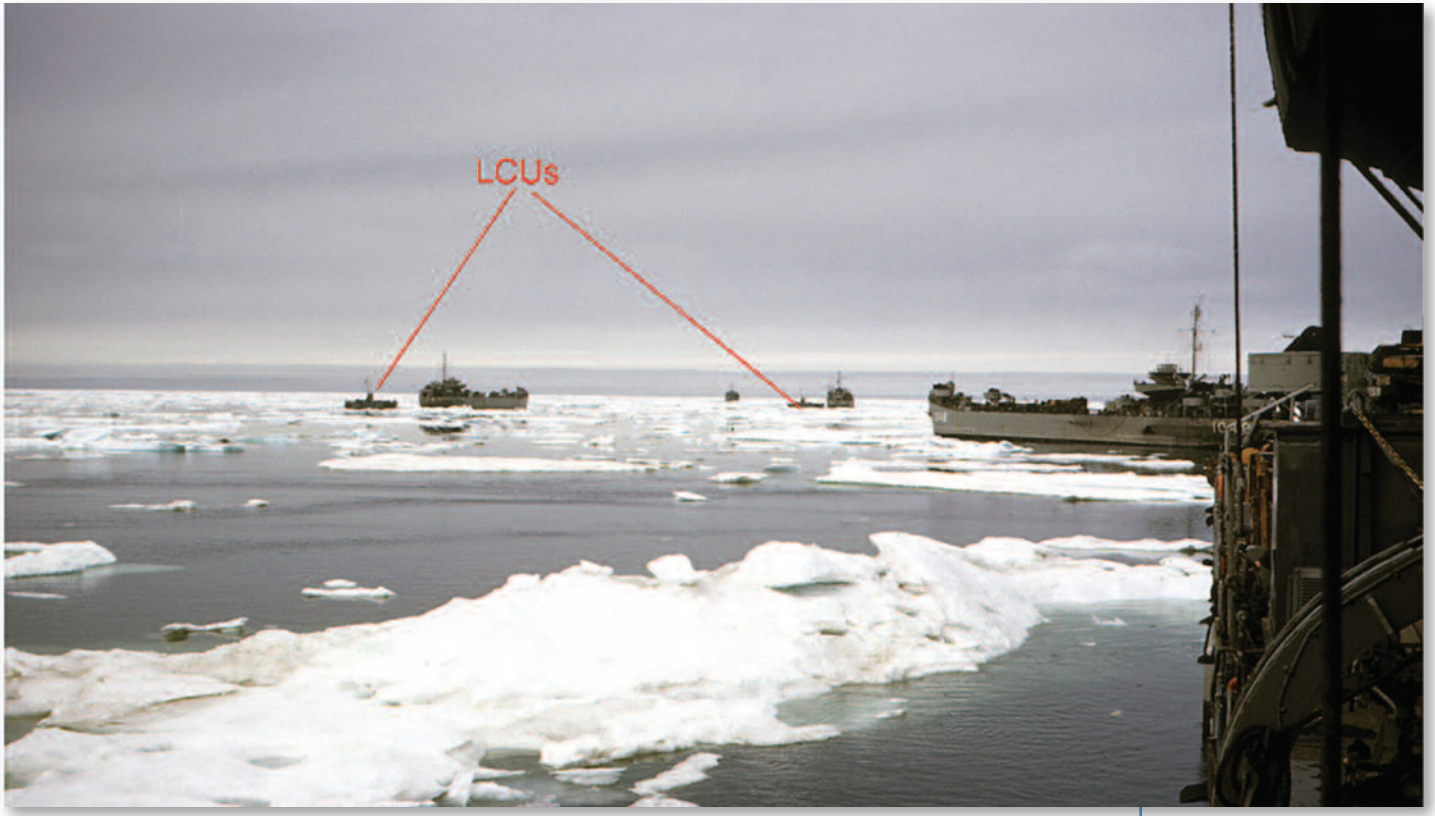
At 4:40 AM on the following day, we anchored one-and-a-half miles off the northwestern coast of St. Lawrence Island. Ballast was pumped in order to raise the stern as high as possible. *Grapple* moored on our starboard side, and at 8:10 AM, their divers started removal of the damaged screw. In just four hours and fifteen minutes, these amazing guys had replaced the propeller, and we left to rejoin the Task Force. We crossed the Arctic Circle at 5:58 AM, on July 20. On the morning of the following day, we rejoined the Task Force and anchored at Icy Cape that afternoon.

We would have crossed the Arctic Circle on the 19th except for the propeller problem. The cards were probably typed before the delay.

The occasional piece of pack ice seen in the Bering Sea had increased dramatically by the time we arrived at Point Barrow. The solid pack was visible on the horizon. From the time of our arrival at Point Barrow on July 28, until we left on August 25, the *561* was busy

We would have crossed the Arctic Circle on the 19th except for the propeller problem. The cards were probably typed before the delay.


N
Point Barrow
25 July
Barter Island
Multiple trips
21-25 July
Icy Cape
Chukchi Sea
RUSSIA
20 July
Arctic Circle
ALASKA
Nome
19 July
St. Lawrence Is.
18 July
St. Mathews Is.
Bering Sea
Pribilofs
Kodiak Is.
Unimac Pass
16 July
From Seattle
SCALE
0 100 200 300 400 500 MILES



transporting supplies, mostly in the form of 55-gallon drums of fuel, to places along the north coast of Alaska. After delivering a load, the ship would be laden from *Electra* or USS *Skagit* (AKA 105) at Point Barrow. We would then return as far east as Barter Island for off-loading, which was usually done using LVTs.

It was necessary to change an engine speed, or the heading, at least once a minute as we worked our way through leads in the ice. Two of the LSTs in this picture were towing LCUs.

Looking toward the east, all that could be seen was a vast field of broken ice stretching to the horizon.

All six of the LSTs from Division 32 participated in the sealift. We were the last in this formation on one of the trips to Barter Island.

The sun never dropped below the horizon at this time of year. This was the midnight sun.

With *LST 1048* in the lead, we are on the way to Barter Island with several thousand barrels of fuel and other cargo. On August 6, as we were receiving barrels from the *Electra*, a mooring line parted and fouled the port propeller. Volunteer divers from the *561* using a primitive breathing apparatus went down in the freezing water and cut the line free. They were resuscitated through the application of medicinal alcohol from sick bay.

The mountains in the background are part of the Brooks Range. Only three small patches of snow remain on the tundra. This site was of one of our landings between Point Barrow and Barter Island.

The off-loading and transporting of cargo to storage areas several hundred yards ashore was usually done by using amphibious tractors. Three of these LVTs are seen this view. *LST 1048* was beached to our starboard and drums of fuel were being lowered into the LVT alongside the ship. After it was loaded it went ashore, and one of the other vehicles moved in for more barrels. I don't recall how the large tanks on the main deck were unloaded. Perhaps they were just pushed over the side and floated ashore.

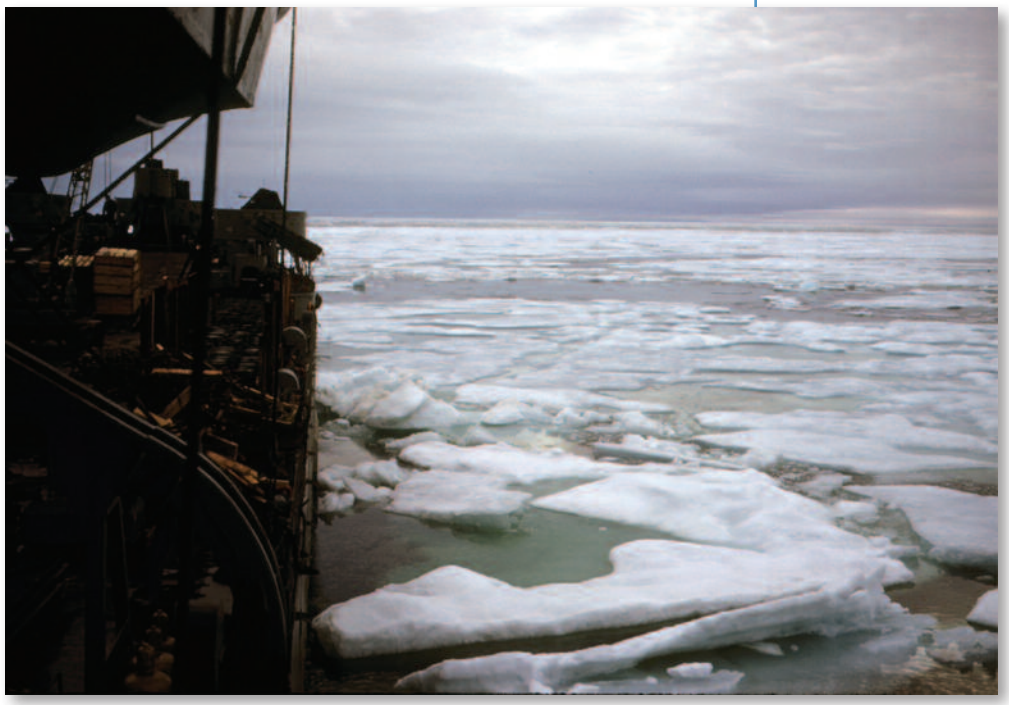
Discharge of the cargo by the U.S. Army stevedores was going smoothly until a fairly large chunk of ice threatened to capsize the LVT that was being loaded.

LST 1048 was having all sorts of problems with the LVTs. In this instance, the cargo that had been placed across the top suddenly shifted to one side and the vehicle capsized. It landed on the bottom, right side up, so a diver went down and tied a cable to the front. It was pulled out by another LVT and was just coming out of the water when I took this picture.

Notice the airplane over the forward 40mm gun tub; it flew around the area all day. I supposed it was just checking on how the unloading was going.

We had our problems also. Here we were icebound and had to have an icebreaker circle the ship to open up leads in the ice. The other ship beyond the icebreaker is the LSD *Belle Grove*.

Later in the week, ice made a forty-foot slash in the hull, but it was above the waterline so the problem was not critical. On August 9, at Barter Island, *Grapple* came to the rescue again and put a patch over the cut.



At our last landing at Point Barrow, I went ashore and took these pictures of residents watching the activity.

This is not a native Alaskan. I picked up a harpoon and had a fellow crewman take my picture.

Leave it to a sailor to find probably the only bar above the Arctic Circle on the North American Continent. At least I thought it was a bar. It was not open, so I was not sure.

Here were some of the contestants in a sanctioned "beard contest." There were to be no beards when we arrived at Seattle.

A major part of Point Barrow, Alaska, is shown here as it appeared in August, 1953.

LST Division 32 left for Nome, Alaska, on August 14 after one final look at the pack ice.

The occurrence of ice became less and less frequent as we traveled south on the way to Nome. When we anchored at Nome, the captain decided that it was too windy to launch boats, so after two hours, we left for Kodiak.

Sailing across the Bering Sea and through Unimak Pass led to our arrival at Kodiak on August 23. The empty barrels were off-loaded in Seattle.

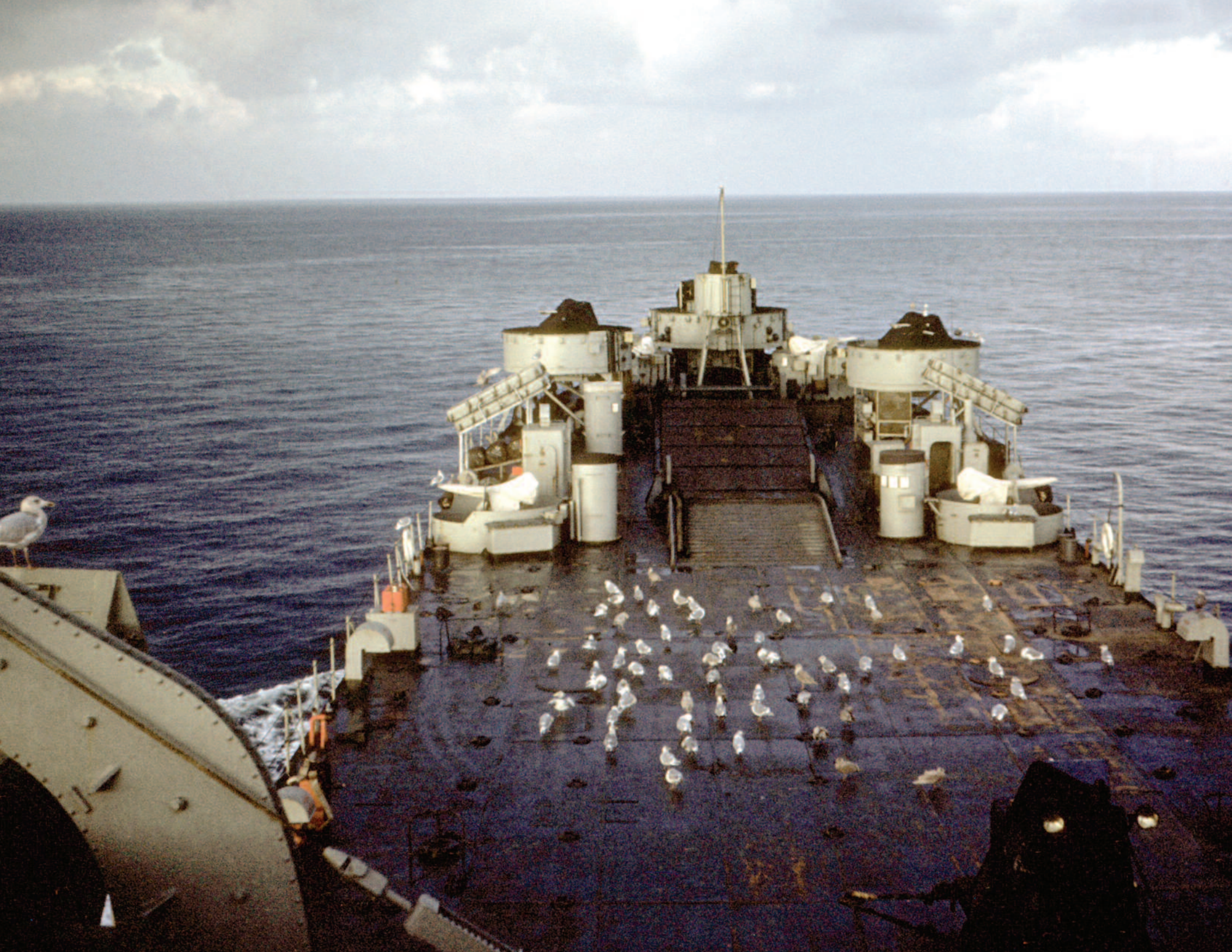
Upon arrival at Kodiak, the LSTs moored at the Coast Guard Base. Going alongside *LST 1146*, our new captain came in a little too "hot" and crunched the bow. It was at the angle seen here, so the only damage done was to the psyche of Lt. Fogg. He had only been the CO for a little over two months, which was not enough time for him to really get to know the ship. Still, it was embarrassing and one had to feel sympathy for him.Liberty was granted to half of the LST crews who had not been ashore since early July. The large Enlisted Men's Club had very cheap beer and drinks. Soldiers and members of other branches of the military were also present. This volatile mix soon came to a head with heated arguments and fights. It boiled over outside and they even wrecked half the town. A rerun of this performance was played the following night when the other half of the crews went ashore. After two nights of this, the authorities, including the base commander, made it very clear that when the sun went down, they didn't want to see any LSTs. Preliminary plans to return to Seattle via the scenic Inland Passage had to be abandoned because there were insufficient Inland Pilots available to meet the requirement of one for each LST.

Three of the LSTs were still moored when the *561* departed for Seattle on a very windy August 25.

CHRONOLOGY OF ARCTIC OPERATIONS JULY/AUGUST 1953

July 8 Left with Task Force 9 for the Arctic.
July 9 Enroute to Unimak Pass. Base course 288° T.
July 12 Enroute to Unimak Pass. Base course 274° T.
July 16 Enroute to Unimak Pass. Base course 283° T. 11:40 AM Changed course to 343°T.
July 17 Enroute to Icy Cape. Base Course 343° T.
July 18 6:40 PM Starboard screw threw blade. 9:26 PM Left for St. Lawrence Island with Grapple. Base course 307° T.
July 19 4:40 AM Anchored NW coast of St. Lawrence. 8:10 AM, divers at work. 12:25 PM job done. Underway at 1PM, 008° T.
July 20 Crossed Arctic Circle 5:58 AM, 168° 13' W. At 6:28 PM cc to 024°T. At 8:13 PM cc to 044° T.
July 21 Rejoined Task Force at 9:04 AM. Anchored at Icy Cape at 2:42 PM.
July 25 Anchored off Icy Cape. 1 PM received stores from Electra.
July 27 Left for Point Barrow.
July 28 8:07 AM Anchored at Point Barrow. 10:42 PM underway for Barter Island.
July 29 Enroute to Barter Island. *LST 1146* as guide.

July 30 Anchored off Long Island for 2 hours.
July 31 Enroute with *1048* and *1146* to Barter Island. Anchored at Brownlow Point for 4 hours. Anchored off Collinson Pt. 3 hours.
Aug 1 Beached at Barter Island. *LST 827* and *LST 1048* beached to starboard. Retracted at 10:45 PM, underway for Bullen Point.
Aug 2 Beached at Bullen Point 9:50 AM and unloaded cargo until 9:58 PM.
Aug 3 Underway for Point Barrow.
Aug 4 Arrive Point Barrow. Moored to *Skagit* at 1:05 AM to load fuel drums.
Aug 5 Loaded fuel drums from *Skagit*. Moved to *Electra* for more fuel drums. Pressure from ice parted #4 line.
Aug 6 Moved to starboard side of *Electra*. Put diver over side to free line from port screw. Left for Barter Island.
Aug Underway for Barter Island.
Aug 8 Beached at Barter Island. Unloaded fuel drums.
Aug 9 Beached at Barter Island. 9:22 PM Retracted and moored alongside *Grapple*. *Grapple* to repair hole made by ice.
Aug 10 8:02 AM Repair completed. Loaded 4 LVTs.
Aug 14 Enroute from Point Barrow to Icy Cape. Received 20,000 gallons of fuel from USS *Kennebec*. Underway for Nome.
Aug 17 Anchored off Nome for one hour and left for Kodiak.
Aug 23 Arrived at Kodiak 9:02 AM Received stores from NSD Kodiak.
Aug 24 Change of command ceremonies. Lt. Cmdr. R. A. Woodliff relieved Cmdr. W.V. Harlin as COMLSTDIV 32.
Aug 25 8:00 AM Left for Seattle.
Aug 31 Arrived Seattle. Moored at U.S. Naval Supply Depot, Pier 91, Berth "C."



CHAPTER 22

Return to the Far East

LST 561 returned to Seattle on August 31, 1953, after an absence of seven weeks and five days. The Arctic operations had been successful and the ship would make the trip again in 1955, 1956, and 1957.

On September 4 we were underway from Pier 91 in Seattle to Long Beach, California. Off the coast of Washington, on the calmest day we had ever experienced on the Pacific Ocean, a number of gulls appeared and landed on the main deck. This was the only time I saw this happen. Perhaps the lack of a breeze made them decide to ride for a while. After about thirty minutes, the gull commander on the davit apparently gave the command to "fly," and they all left.

A number of gulls appeared and landed on the main deck.

Upon arrival, ammunition was off-loaded at Seal Beach prior to dry-docking and shipyard repairs. The ice protection "shields" had not been too effective, and nearly a month was needed to get the ship back into the condition she was in when we left Hunters Point. Two sea trials were necessary to prove that the repairs were satisfactory, then on October 9, we moored to *Atlas* (ARL 9) in San Diego. Ten days later the LST was sailing past Point Loma on the way to Pearl Harbor.

Shortly before our arrival in Hawaii, firing practice was conducted. The target was a sleeve towed by an airplane (brave pilot).

Almost two years to the day had gone by since we sailed to Hawaii on that initial trip to the Orient. Many experiences, both good and bad, had seasoned the crew, so sailing past Diamond Head did not have nearly the same level of excitement that we felt in 1951.

Left to right, are (Swobota), Freddie Cordova, and Jim Payne up on the Pali. We rented a car to sightsee Oahu.

On November 2, 1953, the special sea detail was set at 7:15 AM. Ten minutes later we were standing out of Pearl Harbor bound for Yokosuka, Japan.

The mysterious aura of Japan was also gone. Entering the harbor of Yokosuka on November 19 was almost like going home.

Kamakura had become a favorite place to spend a day on liberty when the ship was in Yokosuka. It was only twenty minutes away and the various attractions made it very different from the "Navy town" of Yokosuka. The Great Buddha (Daibutsu) was, and probably still is, the most popular site for visitors in Kamakura. The Buddha was cast in 1252, and with a height of over forty feet, is an impressive sight. This picture is from an antique post card, but it has not changed for over seven centuries.

Winter arrived in November in the form of a snowfall. There were only so many sights to see in a port and after viewing them, there wasn't much left to do except to sit down and have a couple of beers. Several inches of snow on the ground and the corresponding temperatures really emphasized this indoor activity.

Finding a place to buy a beer in any seaport is not difficult and it certainly wasn't a problem in Japan. These advertising business cards were for three of the larger, more commercial establishments.

Far more places were only a room with little tables and chairs and/or booths along a wall. Music in the room would be from a 78 rpm record player playing popular songs sung by the Andrews Sisters, Rosemary Cloony, and Kay Starr intermixed with *Ginza Kan Kan Museme* and the *Tanko-bushi.*

A middle-aged woman, usually called Mama-san, would be in charge. In all of the places there would be several young ladies who were hostesses (as seen in the Statler Bar card). When you entered the room, one of the ladies would escort you to a table, take your beer order and return with a glass and a bottle of beer. The bottle was large, more than a half-liter, would either be Asahi, Kirin or Sapporo and cost the equivalent of fifty cents. The beermaid would then sit by you and refill your glass every time a sip was taken.

In the male dominated society of Japan, only men patronized drinking establishments and the owners employed hostesses to pour the drinks, light the cigarettes and dance with the customers. It was rude to pour your own drink because it implied that the hostess was not doing her job. Sometimes it seemed you couldn't get the glass away from your mouth before the eager hostess was filling it up to the brim.

A ratio of one beermaid per two customers seems to be the standard at this "hangout." I am not sure when, or where, the photo was taken but, since "whites" are the uniform, it may have been in Sasebo in the summer of 1952.

This second tour of duty in the Far East was completely different from the first. In 1951-52 we were busy in Korea, returning only for supplies and repairs. In contast, there did not seem to be any real purpose for the ship's presence in 1953-54. Other than amphibious exercises, a large part of the time was spent idling in Kobe, Kure, Nagoya, or Yokosuka.

Ensign Dale Amsberry, USNR, reported aboard on September 20, 1952, and on August 23, 1953, as Lt.j.g. Amsberry, he became the executive officer of *LST 561*. As the XO, he had gotten to know Fletcher and me, and perhaps because of the overall lack of urgency when we were in Kure, he asked us if we would like to have three days of "basket leave." It was called basket leave because when we returned to the ship, the leave papers would be thrown in the wastebasket and not count against our annual allotment of thirty days. We immediately took him up on his munificent offer. When we were ashore, we went to our usual hangout and asked the Mama-san if she knew where we might stay for three days. She directed us to a *ryokan* that was owned by friends of hers.

This was at the hangout, and from left to right; Yoko the beermaid, Mama-san, Fletcher, and me.

A *ryokan* is a traditional Japanese inn. My wife Carol and I stayed in *ryokans* every night during the seven months we spent in Japan during the 1960s. Not many were as elegant as this one, and I would guess that staying there today would cost about two hundred dollars a night. In a *ryokan* you get breakfast and dinner. Since Fletcher and I only slept there, and were friends of Mama-san, they did not charge us very much. They had one Western-style room that Fletcher took, and I went with the traditional Japanese-style.

They gave me this room when we arrived, but I had to move the next day because they were having a large party that night.

An interior balcony overlooking an elegant garden with a tree, several bonsai, and a stone lantern was outside my room. The eaves only extended over the balcony and there was no roof over the garden.

The small corner alcove shown here is calleda *tokonoma*. A *tokonoma* usually has a hanging scroll (*kakemono)* and an art object, or flower arrangement, resting on the slightly raised base.

Most *ryokans* are family-owned, and this one fit that pattern. There were three or four women who ran the place, and one man who had an outside job. There was one other male, the very elderly patriarch. When we were leaving, one of the ladies told me the old man liked coffee very much but they couldn't buy any. They had been very nice to us, so when I returned to the LST, I got a piece of light canvas about six feet long and seven inches wide. The laundryman had a sewing machine and I used it to sew the canvas into a tube, open at one end. I filled the tube with several pounds of ground coffee and closed the end with safety pins. The next time I had liberty, I hung the tube around my neck and then put my pea coat on. When I returned to the ryokan with my gift, they were astounded, and brought the old man out to thank me.

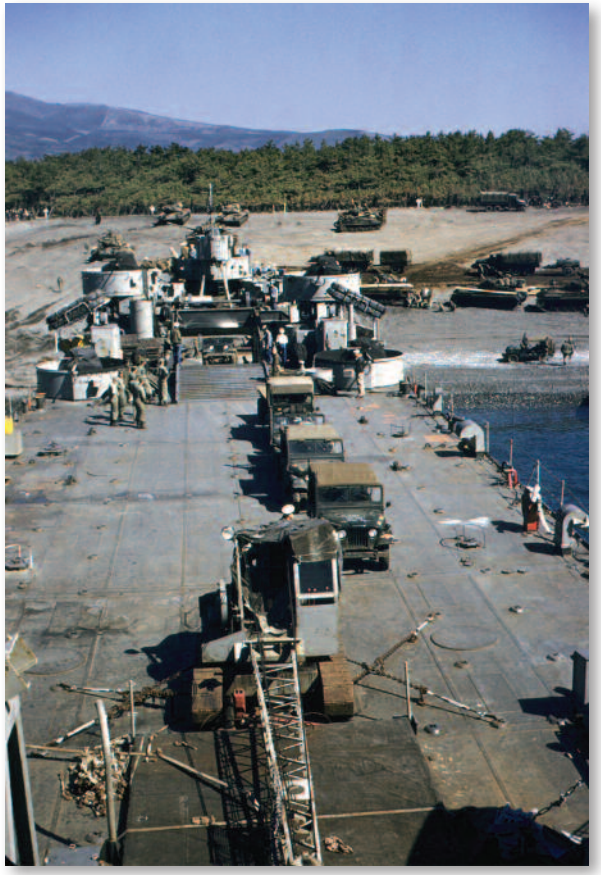
I went around and took several photographs late one morning when there were no other guests in the *ryokan*.

These elegant shoji doors were the entrance to one of the rooms.

Two trips were made to Korea during this second tour. One was a several-day excursion up the east coast. At the time, the purpose of the journey on this side of Korea was not clear. Several men who were from some type of underwater demolition group came aboard in Japan with their rubber rafts and gear. We took them to the location shown in this photograph. The site was in North Korea, well above the Demarcation Line. The scuttlebutt on the ship was that they were surveying the beaches. Dale Amsberry, the XO at the time, has recently verified that this was exactly what they were doing. He informed me that they were charting the beach for a possible landing site for LSTs. We anchored here overnight and until about noon of the next day while they went out and did their survey. After they were back on board, we sailed back to Japan.

Our amphibious exercises frequently started with the on-loading of U.S. Marines and their equipment at Camp McGill. These photographs show some of the activity that took place under the watchful eye of Mt. Fuji. The mountain was less than twenty miles north of this beach.

LCU 1446 has back-loaded two vehicles and is retracting from the beach.



The complete absence of clouds made this a rare view of Fujiyama. Twelve years after I took this picture, my wife Carol, my eleven-year-old stepson Don, and I saw the sunrise from the top of the mountain. We made the climb on June 1, 1965.

Upon completion of exercises at Chigasaki Beach, *LSTs 561, 827, 883* and *1146* departed to spend Christmas in Kobe.

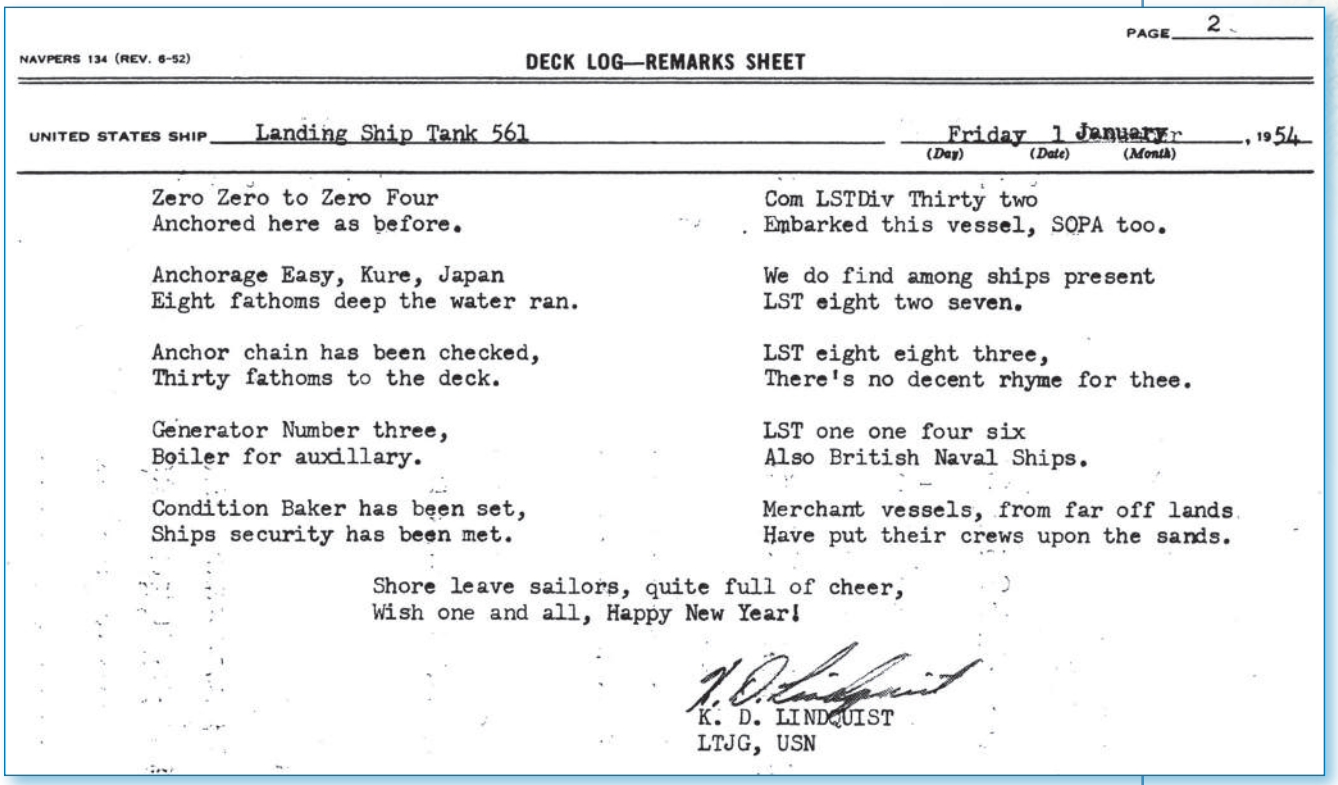
On Christmas Day, several of us took the train to Kyoto for sightseeing and returned in time for Christmas dinner.

KYOTO SCENES

This gun is being "manned" by a crew of Japanese orphans. They were our guests for Christmas dinner in 1953.

The electricians and shipfitters built this Christmas star for masthead display.

A day or so after our Christmas in Kobe, we sailed for Kure. This was where *LST 561* ushered in the New Year. It was quiet aboard the ship on the first watch of 1954, with the liberty section ashore and most of the duty section asleep. The Duty Officer for this mid-watch (from midnight until 4 AM) was Lt.j.g.Lindquist. This was his entry in the ship's deck log for the first watch of the New Year.



PAGE 2

NAVPERS 134 (REV. 6-52) DECK LOG—REMARKS SHEET

UNITED STATES SHIP Landing Ship Tank 561 Friday 1 January, 1954
(Day) (Date) (Month)

Zero Zero to Zero Four
Anchored here as before.

Anchorage Easy, Kure, Japan
Eight fathoms deep the water ran.

Anchor chain has been checked,
Thirty fathoms to the deck.

Generator Number three,
Boiler for auxillary.

Condition Baker has been set,
Ships security has been met.

Com LSTDiv Thirty two
Embarked this vessel, SOPA too.

We do find among ships present
LST eight two seven.

LST eight eight three,
There's no decent rhyme for thee.

LST one one four six
Also British Naval Ships.

Merchant vessels, from far off lands
Have put their crews upon the sands.

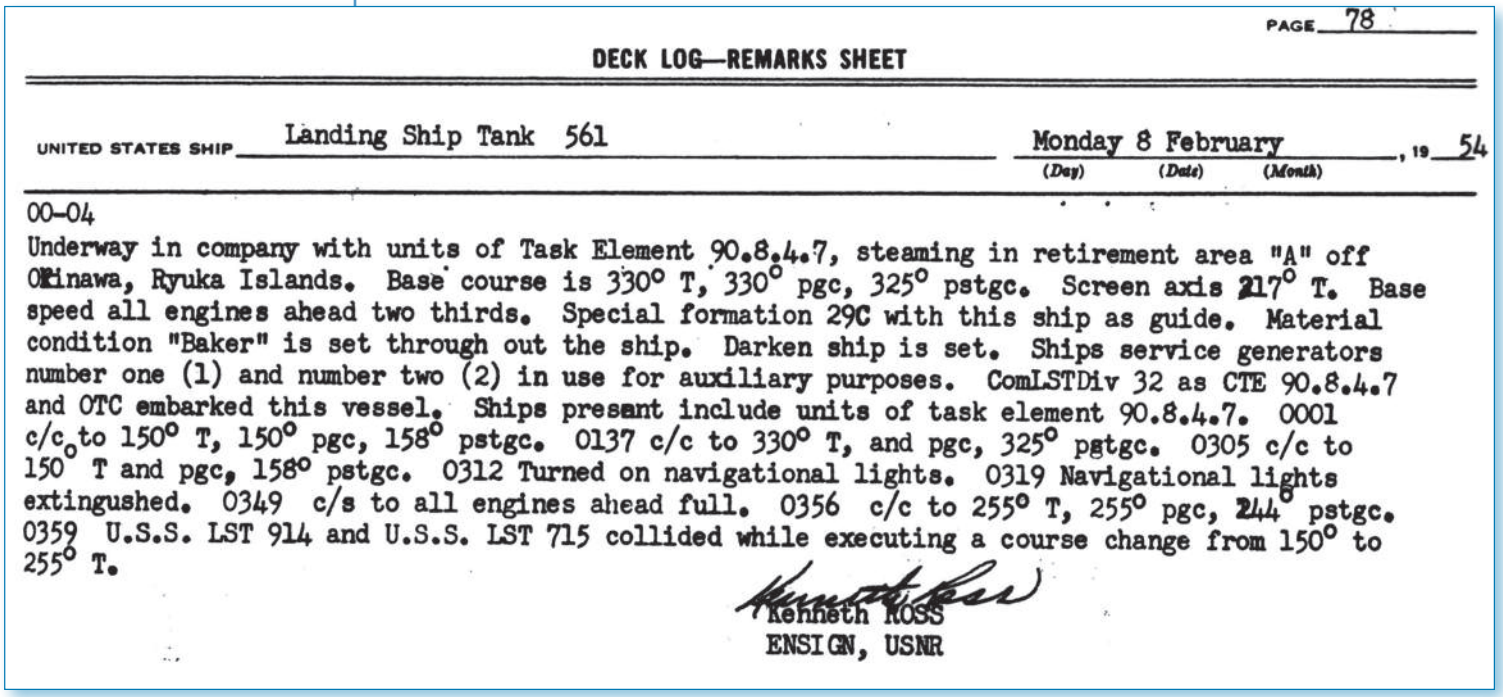
Shore leave sailors, quite full of cheer,
Wish one and all, Happy New Year!

K. D. LINDQUIST
LTJG, USN

The *561* sailed for Yokosuka on January 4, 1954, and on February 1, onloaded LVTs at Camp McGill. We left immediately for Okinawa for a very large amphibious exercise.

On the night of February 8, the LSTs were steaming in formation off the coast of Okinawa in a darkened ship condition. This condition included extinguishing the navigational lights. The moon would not be full for nine more days, and the cloud cover made it difficult to distinguish the position of a ship without the use of radar. The commander of the group of ships sent a message for the LSTs to prepare to change their headings to a new direction. This command would have been something like: "Belting Group, prepare to execute Corpin Two Five Five True" Each LST would reply that their ship was ready to turn, so the heading would be 255°T. This signal might have been: "Roger, Big Daddy, Belting 561 prepared to execute Corpin Two Five Five True." After all the LSTs had acknowledged that they were prepared to make the turn, Big Daddy transmitted: "Belting Group, Execute Corpin Two Five Five True".

Now if all the ships turned to a heading of 255° on this command, the shape of the formation would change, but there would be no problem. That night there was a problem; three minutes after the execute command, with all engines at full speed, *LST 715* and *LST 914* collided.



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DECK LOG—REMARKS SHEET

UNITED STATES SHIP Landing Ship Tank 561 Monday 8 February (Day) (Date) (Month), 19 54

00-04

Underway in company with units of Task Element 90.8.4.7, steaming in retirement area "A" off Okinawa, Ryuka Islands. Base course is 330° T, 330° pgc, 325° pstgc. Screen axis 217° T. Base speed all engines ahead two thirds. Special formation 29C with this ship as guide. Material condition "Baker" is set through out the ship. Darken ship is set. Ships service generators number one (1) and number two (2) in use for auxiliary purposes. ComLSTDiv 32 as CTE 90.8.4.7 and OTC embarked this vessel. Ships present include units of task element 90.8.4.7. 0001 c/c to 150° T, 150° pgc, 158° pstgc. 0137 c/c to 330° T, and pgc, 325° pgtgc. 0305 c/c to 150° T and pgc, 158° pstgc. 0312 Turned on navigational lights. 0319 Navigational lights extingushed. 0349 c/s to all engines ahead full. 0356 c/c to 255° T, 255° pgc, 244° pstgc. 0359 U.S.S. LST 914 and U.S.S. LST 715 collided while executing a course change from 150° to 255° T.

Kenneth ROSS
ENSIGN, USNR

On March 15, 1954, the ship was beached at Camp McGill and tanks were on-loaded. The following day a task force of more than twenty ships, including *LST 561*, left for Iwo Jima. Exactly nine years before I took this picture of Mt. Suribachi, the ferocious battle for the island was approaching closure on March 26, 1945. This view is from the west side of the island, where we beached at 5:25 AM to off-load the tanks.

H-hour was before sunrise and on our port side, with her bow doors open, *LST 914* was on the sands of Iwo Jima.

All of our operations were on the west side. This beaching was the most southerly and the nearest to Suribachi.

The tanks seen here were being back-loaded on March 27, 1954, and, after they were chained down, we departed for the return to Numazu, Japan. The trip was uneventful,and much calmer than when we returned from Okinawa. On that voyage, we caught the end of a typhoon and had winds of 45 knots. It was rough, but still didn't compare with the conditions of November 26, 1951.

The first two weeks of April were divided between Nagoya and Yokosuka, where it was back to our hangouts.

Learning to count was the first, and sometimes only, part of the vocabulary mastered by a sailor in Japan. The Japanese custom of calling non-warships by a name followed by the word Maru was started over four centuries ago. These two seemingly unrelated bits of information were combined in one instance, to respond to a beermaid's question: "What ship, sailor?" with, "The Go Roku Ichi Maru." This resulted in a knowing nod and an, "Ah so, five six one ship." After that, crewmen would often refer to *LST 561* as the "Go Roku Ichi Maru."

CHAPTER 23
The Last Months

On the 17th of April, 1954, the "Go Roku Ichi Maru" bade *sayonara* to Japan and, accompanied by *LSTs 827, 914, 975*, and *1048*, left for Hawaii.

Fifteen days later, the LSTs had this view of Oahu and Diamond Head and were soon steaming up the channel to Pearl Harbor.

As on the first trip from the Orient, only three days were needed for fuel and supplies, and on May 5, the ships left on the final leg to San Diego.

On the 17th of April, 1954, the "Go Roku Ichi Maru" bade sayonara *to Japan and, accompanied by* LSTs 827, 914, 975, *and 1048, left for Hawaii.*

Shortly after steaming by the Naval Air Station on North Island we moored to Navy Pier at the foot of Broadway. Our welcome this time was far more subdued, and consisted solely of a Navy band.

The next few weeks, which soon became two months, were spent secured between Barge Moorings 8 and 9 in San Diego Harbor. Leaves were granted and the ship was very quiet. I was intending to return to college in September, and Captain Fogg graciously had my orders cut, releasing me from my enlistment two months early. I was directed to the Destroyer Base in San Diego in the second week of July and was discharged on July 22, 1954.

Thus ended the most interesting phase of my young life, and so now, my story. I sincerely hope you have enjoyed reading this account of the events that occurred during my adventure on the USS *LST 561* so long ago.

In the fifty-plus years since then, I had not reminisced much about this period, and so it was gradually covered with the dust of daily life. However, during the year I have spent writing the book, names and incidents emerged with clarity as I looked at the photographs and read between the lines of the deck log entries.

If nothing else, it is my desire that the book will be a small door that opens into this moment in time.

Oh, Wheel of Fortune, keep spinning around.

END NOTES

Place names are spelled as they were in the 1950s in order to remain in the time frame of the book, e.g., Pusan, Koje-do, Inch'on instead of Busan, Geojedo, Incheon, etc.

Terminology has also evolved. As an example, in the 1950s only males were on board ships, so today the term "crewman" is no longer correct.

USS *LST 561* was designated USS *Chittenden County* (LST 561) on July1, 1955. This was one year after I left the ship. Therefore, I have always referred to it by its hull number designation and not the name.

Considering that the photographs were taken over fifty years ago with a very poor quality camera using low ASA film, most came through reasonably well. However, more than a few were included only because they were so unique.

The deck plan drawings are only approximations and not to be considered accurate either as to scale or layout.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

U.S. Army Freight-Supply Ship *FS 343*. Courtesy of Naval Historical Center Photo Collection, Photo # NH 74691.

Sinking of *LST 561* by torpedos. Courtesy of Leo Miller.

USS *LST 561* Crew photograph, August 20, 1954, Dewhit Studio, San Diego. Courtesy of Jim Payne.

MAPS

Courtesy of Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, University of Texas at Austin.

GLOSSARY OF WORDS AND PHRASES IN THE BOOK

A

Aboard	On, or in, a ship.
All back full	The command to run both main engines at full speed with the propellers in reverse.
Alpha star	The brightest star in a constellation.
Amphibious assault	An invasion of land through the use of ships and waterborne craft.
Amphibs	Short for amphibians or amphibious.
Anchorage	An area in which ships anchor.
Auxiliary engine	A diesel engine on an LST used in generating electricity.

B

Backloading	Loading vehicles (under their own power) on an LST.
Battle stations	The stations, or positions, of crewmen when the ship is in combat.
Berm	An embankment adjacent to a body of water.
Berthing compartment	A room on a ship used for sleeping.
Binnacle	An enclosure (usually brass) enclosing a magnetic compass.
Boatswain's Mate	A navy enlisted rating with deck and crew (not engine) responsibilities.
Bo'sun, Bosun	Short for Boatswain's Mate
Bow	The forward end of a ship.
Bow doors	The two large doors on the front of an LST.
Bowhook	A crewman positioned to handle lines in the front of a boat.
Bow ramp	The ramp that is lowered between the bow doors to provide access between the shore and the tank deck.
Bow tank	A void, or tank, below the waterline in the front of the ship.
Bulkhead	A vertical partition dividing spaces on a ship. (On shore, a wall.)
Bulkheading	A quantity, or number, of bulkheads.
Bunk	A bed on a ship.

C

Call Sign	The unique four letters identifying a ship, e.g., NEUX for the *LST 561*.
Captain's Mast	A trial for violations of minor rules and regulations.
Cargo hatch	A 20'x 40' opening in the main deck of an LST through which cargo may be loaded into the tank deck.
Cathode ray tube	An electronic vacuum tube that will display an image; for example, the picture tube in a television set.
Causeway	An elevated, or raised road (usually across water).
Chart Room	The room on a ship where the navigational charts are stored.On an LST this space is where the navigation takes place.
Cherry picker	A small crane capable of moving under its own power.
Chief Petty Officer	Until 1958, the highest enlisted rank in the U.S. Navy
Chief's Club	A recreational club for Chief Petty Officers.
Chow down for the crew	The announcement that food service has started for crew oncoming watch.members needing to be served first.
Chow down for the crew	The announcement that food service for the crew has started.
Chow line	The line formed by sailors waiting to receive food.
Chronometer	A very accurate, mechanical timepiece.
Compartment	A space on a ship; on shore it would be a room.
Conn	Short for conning station.
Conning station	The location where an officer controls the movement of the ship.
Coxswain	The person steering a boat.

D

Davit	The mechanism on a ship that is used to lower and raise boats.
Deck	The flat surface on a ship (on shore, the floor).
Deckhouse	The superstructure on the main deck of an LST.
Deck Log	A daily record of important events occurring on a ship.
Degaussing equipment	The apparatus on board a ship used to defeat magnetic mines.
Depth sounder	A device that measures the depth of water under a ship.
Division	A group of seamen with related specialties, e.g., Engineering, Communications, Gunnery, etc.
Dog/Dogged down	A latch / latched, or secure, in a closed position.
Duty section	The group of seamen responsible for tasks during a specified time.

E

Ebbing tide	A decreasing depth of water due to the tidal forces of the sun and the moon.
EM Club	Enlisted Men's Club
Engine order telegraph	A hand operated mechanical device used for communication between the engine room and the wheelhouse.
Exec, XO	Short for Executive Officer
Executive Officer	The officer directly under the Captain in the chain of command.

F

Fantail	The overhanging part of the stern of a ship.
Fathometer	See depth sounder
Fathom	A nautical measurement of length, equal to six feet.
Flag bins	The signal flag stowage place on the deck under the yardarm.
Flagstaff	Vertical spar on the stern where the ensign is displayed when the ship is moored or anchored.
Forward	In, or towards, the front of a ship.
40mm tracer	A 40-millimeter shell that leaves a fiery visible trail.
Flood tide	The rise of water due to the tidal forces of the sun and moon.

G

Gaff	A small spar on the mast from which the national ensign is flown.

Galley	The space on a ship where the food is prepared and cooked.
Galley passageway	The aisle through the deckhouse, adjacent to the galley.
Gangboard, Gangplank	The boards, or movable platform, used for transferring people between a ship and a dock.
Gantry crane	A crane mounted on a trolley running on rails.
General Quarters	The announcement to prepare the ship for battle.
Get out on twenty	Navy slang for retiring after 20 years service.
GPS receive	A receiver using satellites to indicate a position on earth.
Gunners Mate	The enlisted rating responsible for naval ordnance.
Gyro Compass	An electrical compass not dependent of the earth's magnetic field.
Gyro repeater	A slave indicator of the Gyro compass.

H

Halyards	On an LST halyards are used to hoist signal flags to the cross spar on the mast.
Hard right rudder	Maximum rudder to turn the ship to the right.
Head	This word is used the same as the word "toilet" in North American English. The general meaning is the room and the specific meaning is the fixture.
Helm	The wheel or steering gear of a ship.
Helmsman	The person steering the ship.
Hitch	A term of enlistment, normally four years.
Hull	The body of a ship.
Hydrodynamic keel	A foil on the bottom of a hull that provides greater stability.

I

Inboard	Toward the center of a ship from the sides.

K

Klaxon	An electric horn or very loud warning device.

L

Ladder	A set of steps between levels on a ship.
Lade	To load a ship or vessel.
Laden	Loaded
Landing	A dock used by small boats taking persons ashore.
LCPL	Landing Craft Personnel, Light
LCVP	Landing Craft Vehicle Personnel
LCU	Landing Craft Utility
Liberty	Free time off the ship.
Liberty boat	A boat taking sailors ashore for recreation.
Lights out	The announcement to extinguish lights.
Loran receiver	An electronic navigation device. Acronym from LOng RAnge Navigation.
LSM(R)	Landing Ship Medium (Rocket)
LST	Landing Ship Tank
LVT	Landing Vehicle Tracked
LVT(A)	Landing Vehicle Tracked (Armored)

M

Magnetic Compass	A compass that uses the earth's magnetic field.
Master at Arms (MAA)	A MAA enforces rules and oversees the operation of crew facilities aboard a ship.
Mess compartment	A space aboard a ship used for food consumption.
Mess cook	A helper in the galley or mess compartments.
Messenger	An assistant to run errands for the Officer of the Deck or the Petty Officer of the Watch.
Mooring	A ship is moored when it is fastened to a fixed object such as a pier, another ship or a buoy.
Mooring lines	Lines used to tie a ship to a fixed object.

N

Navigation	The process of locating ones position on earth and planning a route.

O

Officers' Quarters	Living spaces for officers.
Off loading	Removal of cargo. Usually vehicles under their own power.
On the beach	Navy slang for being ashore.
Outboard	On or towards the sides of a ship.

P

Passageway	An aisle
Petty Officer	A non-commissioned officer in the U.S. Navy. Pay grades E-4, E-5, and E-6
Petty Officer of the Watch	A non-commissioned officer in charge of the quarterdeck.
Pier	A structure on piles extending from shore into a body of water.
Pilot	A person with expert knowledge of local waterways and is qualified to guide a ship.
Plank	A piece of timber in the deck or hull of a wooden ship.
Plotting Table	A glass topped table illuminated from below and used in navigation.
Pontoon rai	A horizontal rail on the hull of an LST used for carrying pontoons.
Port	Shipboard term for "left". The left side when facing forward.
Port Quarter	The left side near the stern of a ship or boat.
Principal star	See Alpha star

Q

Quarterdeck	The entry location for personnel boarding, or leaving, a ship.
Quartermaster	The naval enlisted rating responsible for navigation and visual signals.
Quay	An artificial bank of stone or concrete on a waterway.

R

Radar	An acronym for Radio Detection And Ranging.
Radar console	The control and display unit for Radar.
Rack	Navy slang for bunk or bed.
Radio check	A radio transmission to determine if operation is satisfactory.
Range bug	A radar feature by which distance may be determined.
Re-commission	To place an inactive ship back in service.

Reservist	A member of the military who normally is not on active duty.
Retraction	The act of backing a landing craft off of a beach.
Reveille	The wake-up call in the military.
Ring back	Change the engine order telegraph to match the displayed command.
Ringing up	Moving the indicator of the engine order telegraph.
ROK	Republic of Korea (South Korea)

S

Screw(s)	The propeller(s) on a boat or ship.
Scull	An oar moved side to side over the stern of a boat.
Scullery	The space used for washing dishes and utensils.
Scuttlebutt	(1) A drinking fountain. (2) Shipboard rumors or gossip.
Seabag	A sailor's traveling bag.
Second (2nd) deck	The first deck below the main deck.
Sextant	An instrument used for measuring angular distance between objects.
Shaft	The rotations of a propeller shaft.
Shallow draft revolutions	Vessels with keels not far below the waterline.
Ship's company	The personnel assigned to a specific ship.
Ship's office	The space on a ship where records are maintained
Sickbay	The space set aside for treatment of the sick or injured.
Sight reduction tables	Mathematical tables used for celestial navigation.
Signal deck	The deck on a ship from which signal flags are raised.
Signal flag	A flag with an assigned meaning.
SOPA	Senior Office Present Afloat The highest-ranking officer aboard a ship in a harbor, or in a group of ships.
Space(s)	Compartment(s) on a ship.
Speaking tube	A pipe used for voice communications.
Special Sea and Anchor Detail	Stations of crewmen when anchoring, or mooring, a ship.
Star shot	Determining the angle between a star and the horizon.
Starboard	The right side of a ship when facing forward.
Starboard quarter	The right side near the stern of a ship or boat.
Stern	The rear, or back end, of a ship.
Stern anchor	An anchor dropped from the rear of a ship
Sternhook	The crewman handling mooring lines in the back of a boat.
Steward's mate	An enlisted rating serving meals in the Officers Mess.
Steady on Two Seven Zero	Change the course of the ship to 270°.
Superstructure	All of the ship above the main deck.
Surface search radar	A radar used to locate ships or land masses.
Swab, Swabbing	A mop, mopping.
Swinging on the hook	Navy vernacular for being anchored.

T

Tank Deck	The Third Deck compartment (288'x28') which opens through the bow doors.
Taps	The signal for "Lights out" aboard a ship.
Teletype	An electro-mechanical typewriter used to transmit/receive typed messages.
Tidal Currents	The currents produced by a flooding or ebbing tide.
Track of the ship	The actual path traveled by a ship.
Trice up	To store in a closed position.
Trough	The low area in the surface of water between two crests.
Turn to on ship's work	Start the normal day's work on a ship.

U

UNC	United Nations Command
Undress blues	The well-known sailor uniform, but without the piping on the cuffs and collar.
Uniform of the Day	The correct form of uniform to be worn.
Under way	A ship not moored or anchored in any fashion.

V

VHF Transmitter-receiver	A radio transmitter/receiver combination that operates in the 30 to300 Megahertz range.

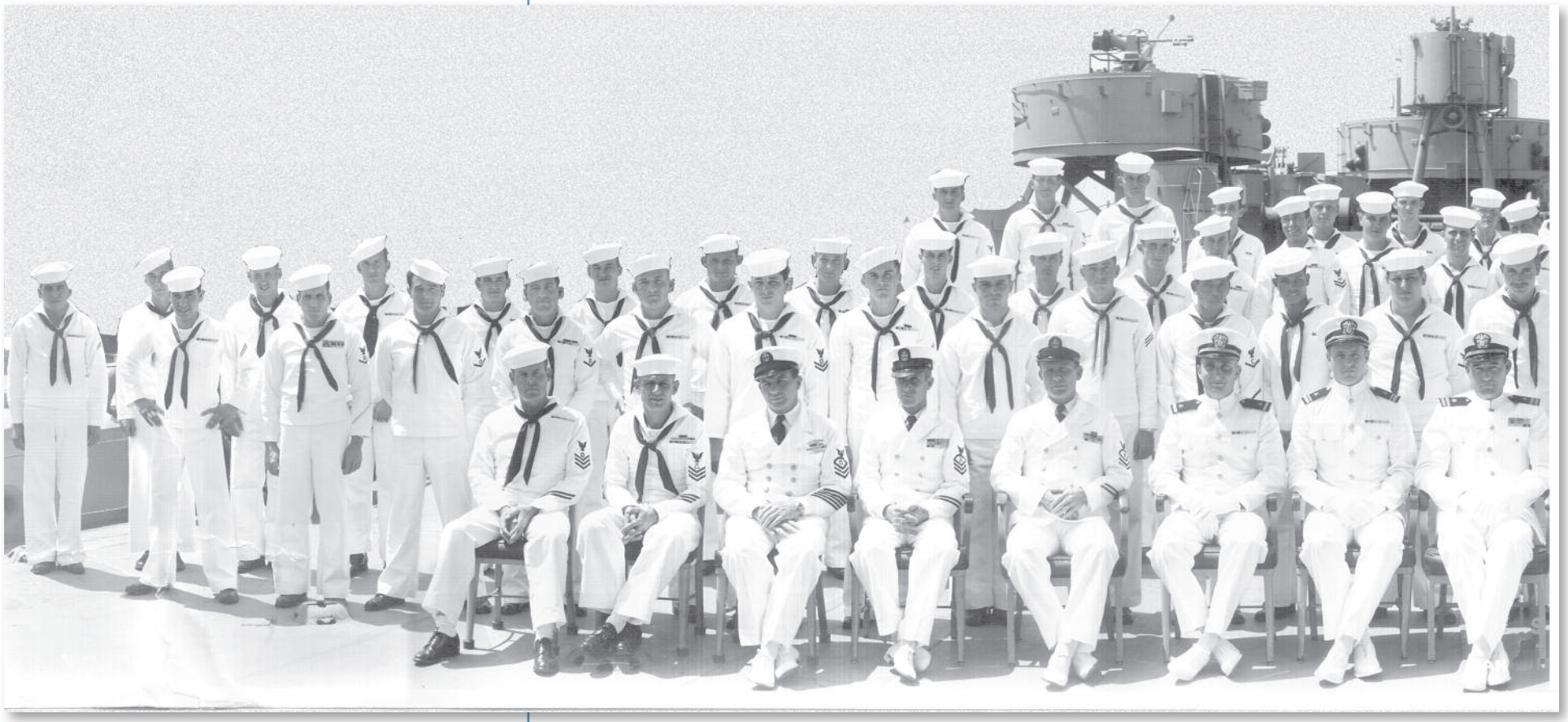
W

Watch, Quarter and Station Bill	A chart that shows the duties and responsibilities of each crew member.
Weather Deck	For an LST this is the main deck.
Wheel	The steering wheel of a ship.
Wheelhouse	The compartment that is the location of the steering wheel.
Working Deck Log	The book in which daily shipboard activities are recorded. The pages are then typed up and signed by the officers.

Y

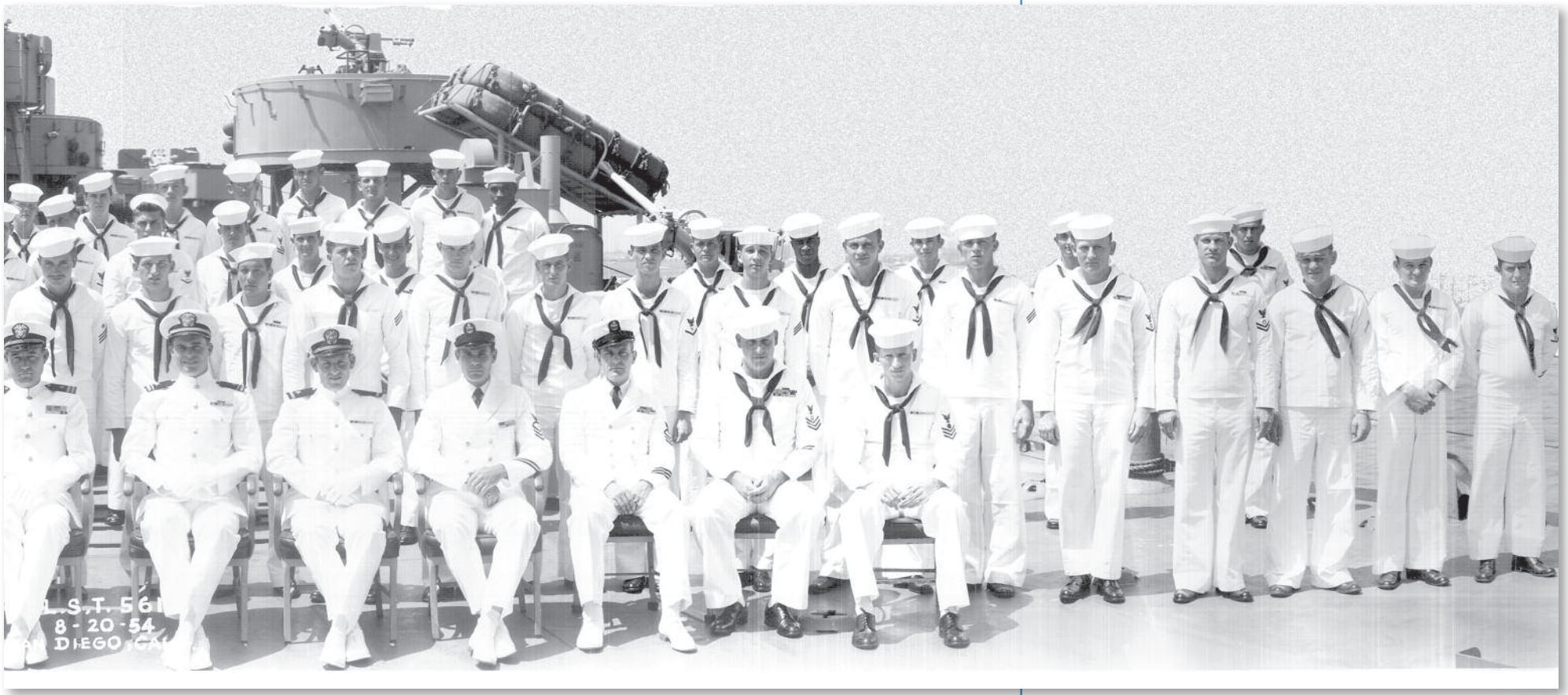
Yeoman/Yeomen	The naval enlisted rating that does clerical work.

This photograph of the officers and crew of USS *LST 561* was taken in San Diego on August 20, 1954. This was slightly over one month after I left the ship, so nearly everyone in the picture would have been on board during the events discussed in the last chapters of the book. Lt. Reginald Fogg, the commanding officer of the ship, is the middle officer. His image appears on both pages.



There are only 75 enlisted men and 5 officers in the view. Some absentees were on leave, but the ship's complement was low due to the expiration of enlistment periods, and the overall reduction in size of the U.S. military at this time.

An organized attempt is being made to identify each individual in the photograph. For information regarding this effort contact the publisher.



History of USS *LST 561*

1944	February 24	The hull was laid down at Evansville, Indiana by the Missouri Valley Bridge and Iron Company. There were 612 hulls of the LST 542 class of landing ships laid down. The *561* was the 20th of this class.
	April 25	Launching was held, with Miss Marie Meier as the Sponsor. Part of the crew went aboard. The original crew on a ship are called "plankowners." One of these plankowners was a young seaman named Bob Avery. [I chanced upon his *LST 561* web site in late 2006. That encounter, followed by a telephone call to Bob, reminded me of the photographs that I had taken during the thirty-three months I was aboard the ship during the Korean War. Upon looking at my pictures, and considering that there were no US Navy LSTs remaining in commission, I decided to use the photographs to help preserve a small part of history and how one of these wonderful ships served during that era. *Come in, Swanee Leader* is the result.]
	April 25	Later, on the day of the launching, the plankowners, accompanied by a civilian crew left in the ship for New Orleans to complete construction.
	May 15	USS *LST 561* was commissioned in New Orleans.
	May 16	Following the commissioning, training took place on Florida beaches. After provisioning in New Orleans and sailing to Norfolk, Virginia, the ship was loaded with tanks, troops and supplies. The materiel included an LCT on the main deck. A convoy of 150 ships was joined for the 21-day trip to Bizerete, Tunisia. During the following weeks the ship sailed to Salerno, Italy then to Corsica to prepare for the invasion of Southern France.
	August 16	This period was filled by shuttling troops and supplies in support of the invasion and other operations in through the Mediterranean. Three trips were made from Southern Italy to Greece.
1944	September	
1945	April	Sailed to Oran for initial preparations for operations in the Pacific.
	July 3	Arrived at New York, USA.
1946		
	April 30	*LST 561* was decommissioned at Greencove Springs, Florida.
1950	Sept. 18	*LST 561* was re-commissioned with Thomas Brooks as commanding officer, W.H.D. Bush as executive officer and Richard Sigg as 1st Lieutenant. Sailed to Gibbs Shipyard, Jacksonville, Florida.
	Nov. 18	Sailed to Little Creek, Virginia.
1951		
	Jan. 30	Sailed to Boston, Massachusetts then later to Norfolk, Virginia.
	Mar. 18	Left Norfolk, Virginia for Panama Canal. Arrived on March 29.
	Mar. 30	Left Panama for San Diego, California. Arrived on April 12.
	June 8	W.H.D.Bush relieved T.B. Brooks as commanding officer. R. Sigg became executive officer. Operations on West Coast including trip to Mare Island Naval Shipyard.
	Oct. 21	Arrived at Naval Supply Center Oakland, California.
	Oct. 24	Left for Hawaii and Far East.

Operations from October 24, 1951 until September 19, 1952 are detailed in the text.

1952	Sept. 19	Arrival at San Diego, California in return from Far East.
	Oct. 4	Ernest Stewart relieved Bush as commanding officer.

1953	Feb.	Sailed to Hunters Point Shipyard at San Francisco, California.
	April 14	Left Hunters Point Shipyard for Southern California.
	June 12	After completion of LST Shipalt #93 at San Pedro, California the ship sailed for Seattle, Washington.
	June 26	R.S. Fogg relieved Ernest Stewart as commanding officer.
	July 8	Sailed from Seattle for the Arctic in first DEW Line sealift.
	Aug. 31	Returned to Seattle from the Arctic.
	Oct. 19	Left San Diego for the Far East. During this tour of duty, two trips to Korea were made and the LST participated in amphibious exercises at Iwo Jima and Okinawa. Visits were made to Kobe, Kure, Osaka, and Nagoya.
1954	April 17	Left Yokosuka, Japan for San Diego, California via Pearl Harbor, T.H.
	May 15	Arrived at San Diego.
1955	July 1	Re-designated USS *Chittenden County* (LST 561). Chittenden County is in Vermont
	Summer	The second Arctic DEW Line run.
1956	January	
	1st week	Departed for Far East (Japan). Visits to Nagoya, Kobe, Osaka, and Sendai. Participated in large amphibious exercise at Iwo Jima.
	April 1	Departed for Long Beach
	April 30	Arrived at Long Beach.
	Summer	Sailed to Mare Island, California for additional ice-protection for bow doors. The third Arctic DEW Line run. Sailed as far east as Cambridge Bay and King Williams Island. Stuck in ice for one week.
	Winter	Refurbishing at Mare Island Naval Shipyard, Vallejo, California.
1957		
	Summer	Collided with barge in Straits of Juan de Fuca. Repairs completed in time for the fourth Arctic DEW Line run.
1958	March	Ran aground near Kawai.
	June 2	Decommissioned
	Oct. 21	Used as target and sunk by torpedos from USS *Sargo*.

Good Bye, Old Girl. Rest in Peace.

Photos courtesy Leo Miller.