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Authority: E.O. 13526

By: NDC NARA Date: Dec 31, 2012

LST GROUP THIRTY FIVE
c/o FLEET POST OFFICE
NEW YORK, N.Y.

Reg. No. 1041/93

R. S. No. _____

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

1 April 1945

War Diary: Month of March 1945.

A. UNIT: LST Group THIRTY FIVE.

B. ATTACHED TO: LST Flotilla TWELVE, LST Amphibious Craft, TWELFTH Fleet, Amphibious Craft TWELFTH Fleet, U.S. Naval Forces in Europe. (Task Group 123.1)

C. COMPOSED: LST Division 69, LSTs 325, 75, 262, 266, 372.
LST Division 70, LSTs 392, 7, 212, 306, 393.

D. NARRATIVE OF OPERATIONS:

1. Ships of this group continued operation in the shuttle service from the United Kingdom to various ports of France during the month of March.

2. LSTs 212 and 7 continued operations in the railroad shuttle service from the United Kingdom to France. LST 262 returned to the railroad shuttle service on 16 March 1945.

3. LST 325 remained inoperational throughout the month undergoing routine repair and maintenance.

4. During the month, ships of this group transported 1832 vehicles, 4325 personnel, over 487 railroad cars, 1634 Russian Repatriates, and 3615 prisoners of war.

J. B. Markham
J. B. MARKHAM

cc:

ComNavEu
ComPhibCraft12th
ComLSTPhibCraft12th
ComISTFlot 12

115446

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LST FLOTILLA FOUR

S E C R E T

The Commander and several Staff officers contacted the British Naval Base here and sent the necessary dispatches anent our reporting for duty after making certain that our copy would be transmitted "Buttoned" rather than "Unbuttoned" (which we later determined was British Navalese for "encrypted" and "unencrypted").

Our French passengers have departed in a rumble of tanks, and we begin to formulate plans for our entrance into the ETO. Apparently our hospitality to our Allies has paid dividends in improved American-French relations as witness the following letter received by the Flotilla Commander from the French Senior Officer:

"HONNEUR ET PATRIE
FORCES FRANCAISES COMBATTANTES

Le 3 Mai 1944

Sir

On our arrival and before leaving the ships on which my detachment was transported, I wish to express my deep appreciation for the efficiency and hospitality extended to my officers and men. On some of the ships, the U.S. crew offered spontaneously to share their own fare with my men in order to relieve them from the tediousness of sea rations. Our life was in every way made happy and comfortable.

I feel confident that, besides fostering efficiency in our cooperation for our common struggle, the days spent at sea on your ships will have been the source of better and lasting understanding between men of our two nations.

I beg to remain, Sir,

Your faithfully

Y.S. Remy Lt. Col. .
Commanding The FR.M.S.M. "

3 May 1944

A short jaunt has taken us from Swansea to Penarth in company with LST's 27, 28, 75, 262 and 540. Apparently we

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entered this country by the back door yesterday because our new location proves to be a beautiful sector of rolling hills and much evidence that " THE CORN IS GREEN ".

Instructions have been issued for the reconversion of our beasts of burden and LCT's are to be launched as soon as practicable.

4 May 1944

We have now received some definite word regarding our wayward ships, which left the States in the convoy following ours, and the program seems to follow the ensuing pattern: LST's 360, 383, 327, 359, 1, 378, 379, 212, 538, 351, 519 and 539 are enroute the United Kingdom from Oran and are expected to arrive the thirteenth of this month. Some of these ships are newly attached to the flotilla from the Mediterranean theatre and we are anxious to see them.

LST's 384, 385, 386 are enroute Plymouth and after launching their LCT will proceed to Nore. LST 377 also has Plymouth as her destination, but will then proceed to Penarth.

Group 12 ships, LST's 27, 28, 262, 266, 540 and 75 have taken over the Penarth docks wholesale and await, not a change of life, but a change of tide, for future operations.

Lt. Commander Chapin, Commanding Officer of USNAAMSB Penarth, has called on the Flotilla Commander and the Availability program is set.

5 May 1944

LST 75 has reported the death by accident of one of her crew in Swansea. Inclement weather prevented the report being made sooner. The Flotilla Commander has convened a Board of Investigation and is awaiting their report for further action.

6 May 1944

The Board of Investigation mentioned yesterday consisting of Lt. W. N. Finley, Jr. (Senior Member) and Commander of LST Division

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24), Lt. R. H. Smits (Medical Member), and Ensign S. R. Rodgers (Flotilla Legal Officer) departed by motor this morning for Swansea to conduct their first session at the Morriston Emergency Hospital.

7 May 1944

We have been harrassed by the vagaries of an unprecedented tide--- 40 feet seems to be the normal change. The locks at Penarth are a problem and have hampered our limited availability. Ships unable to enter the docks have begun the launching of their LCT's.

The Board of Investigation into the death of Henry Geddes, late coxswain of the USS LST 75, who died in Swansea this week, continues its sessions today aboard the LST 75.

8 May 1944

Communications lags behind. We have yet to reach a port where we can receive the dispatches which concern us and it is a case of cadging a message here and hearing about another one there.

Stacks of personal mail crowd our ships today, having finally reached us here from North Africa. However there are few lonely hearts aboard as our liberty parties have found the Welsh people most hospitable and their dialect no handicap at all.

9 May 1944

Proceedings of the Board of Investigation were completed today, and it was reported that Dr. H. Duncan Davis, Medical Superintendent of the Morriston Emergency Hospital, was most helpful to the visiting American officers when the Board journeyed to Swansea for their first session.

The flotilla is as follows: LST's 212, 538, 351, 519, 539, 360, 383, 327, 359, 1, 378 and 379 are now rounding the turn on their

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LST FLOTILLA FOUR

SECRET

From: Commander LST Flotilla Four
To: Commander In Chief, U.S. Fleet
Subject: War Diary, period 1 to 31 May 1944
Enclosure: (A) Composition of Flotilla - p. 14

FMR-07035
Reg. No. 1500
R.S. No.

LST Flotilla Four - Commander T.W. Greene, USN, Commanding - is now enroute from Oran, Algeria to Swansea, Glamorgan, South Wales to report to Commander 11th Amphibious Force for duty.

1 May 1944

Twelfth day at sea.

The first day of the month finds us with our mast the only Maypole in sight. LST 27 wakes us from our yawning lethargy with the report that she has seen what may very well be a stick type mine floating to her starboard. Investigation does not confirm this.

The first harbinger of approaching land, now that we are in British home waters, is the fly glimpsed buzzing through the Wardroom. We are to proceed to Swansea and have been given directions for passing through the swept channel.

Course was 085 at 0555, and changed at 2320 to 040.

0800 Position 50 10.5 N
08 37.5 W

1200 Position 50 13 N
07 42 W

2000 Position 50 25 N
06 05 W

2 May 1944

By 1152 this morning we had entered the locks at Swansea, Wales for our first look at the land of the English princes. From our vantage point at The Prince of Wales Docks, this portion of the Isles seems to be little more than a huge coal mine. Great grey piles of slag line the harbor, and coal dust colors the air and tints the eyes of the natives.

1944 JUL 6 14 02
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
FLAG OFFICE
RECEIVED

76933

-1-

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LST FLOTILLA FOUR

S E C R E T

before leaving this port. School was held at the RAF hangar at the Naval Base in Cardiff, and the hardest thing in the instruction was finding the school in the first place.

An interview with Lt. Commander Banefield, RN disclosed that the British would handle all details for inflation and deflation and this would seem to aid the problem as the new ships reporting to the flotilla have no trained balloon personnel aboard.

14 May 1944

The following organization of the Flotilla went into effect the 8th of this month:

Group 11

Div 21

LST 360
383
384
385
386
327
540

Div 22

LST 1

359
377
378
379

Group 12

Div 23

LST 27

28
212
262
266
538

Div 24

LST 539

351
16
519
75

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LST FLOTILLA FOUR

SECRET

News has been received today that LST's 540 and 75 are to be transferred to British operational control.

15 May 1944

LST's 360,540,378,379,27,28,266 (FF),262 and 75 are at Penarth completing availability and have future movements set. LST's 212,538,351,519,539,359 and 1 are at Swansea discharging passengers and vehicles. LST's 383 and 377 are at Plymouth on availability. LST's 384,385, and 386 remain at Nore. LST 16 remains alone at Milford Haven, not having been as yet introduced to her flotilla.

16 May 1944

The flotilla continues to tour the Isles. The flagship LST 266 with LST's 27,28, and 262 in her wake left Penarth this evening for Milford Haven. Other ships plod the British waters with Falmouth an eventual magnet at some not too distant date.

17 May 1944

We have arrived Milford Haven, presumably our last port of call in Wales, and find a much smaller Amphibious Base than the one we left at Penarth. The trip over was uneventful and through what might very well be called "home waters" since we have traversed them so frequently in the past.

The town itself, a series of hills brooding upon a spacious harbor, is chiefly distinguished for the fact that it was the situs selected by Lord Nelson to effect his liaison with Lady Hamilton. The natives are eager to point out all the reputed places where the late great English Admiral rested during his sojourn among them, and it reminds one of the "Washington Slept Here" tradition in our own country. //

LST 16, newest addition to our collection, waited nervously at anchor for her debut into flotilla society and was the scene of great activity upon arrival. She was tendered dispatches waiting for her in flotilla files and was carefully inspected by all staff department heads.

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LST FLOTILLA FOUR

S E C R E T

18 May 1944

Arrangements have been made with base personnel here at Milford Haven to have all ships provision to normal capacity. Water and fuel are the next two items on the supply list.

19 May 1944

We have received word from Plymouth that we are to send an officer courier to Headquarters there. Reverse Lend-Lease is set into operation, and the Travel Warrant for this assignment goes to Lt.G.H.Lowe, who leaves by train for Comlancrab 11th Phib's Headquarters to comply. The morning will find us well on our way to England.

20 May 1944

LST 266 with LST's 27, 28, 262 and 16 in company set sail this morning from Milford Haven, Wales to Falmouth, England. LST 16 is to have onward routing from there to Plymouth. Our convoy number is WP 525.

We wait patiently for the news our courier is to bring us from Plymouth. The coming chapter will undoubtedly be the most important in our history.

21 May 1944

A day as typically English as Sunday and a town as typically English as Falmouth are our introduction into the Mother country. The keynote of the morning is greenness. It is a verdancy that rolls through the hills and spills into the harbor almost tinting the water.

Lt.Lowe, operations officer for the flotilla and lately of Plymouth, awaits us on the dock with more than the proverbial "three bags full" being his haul of publications and dispatches from Comlancrab's Headquarters. The day is devoted to Communications with scores of dispatches being copied and routed for action and information to all concerned.

22 May 1944

The roll call at the beginning of the week finds LST's

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LST FLOTILLA FOUR

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266,212,27,28,262 and 538 at Falmouth for loading. LST's 351,539,377, and 383 at Plymouth; with LST 327 now enroute there from Penarth.

LST 519 is enroute West Solent from Plymouth to report to British Operational Control. Also in this force is LST 519 leaving Plymouth for West Solent. LST 75 is already at Portland. Other ships at West Solent include LST's 1,378, and 379. Nore is a harbor for LST's 384, 385, and 386. Our sole representative at Harwich will be LST 540 now enroute there.

23 May 1944

Our old friend and former commanding officer, Captain John R. Johannesen is a one-man reception committee for staff officers as we go ashore for our first time at Falmouth. He is now in command of LST Flotilla 11, and our arrival is the signal for his departure as he prepares to go aboard his flagship LST 511 which leaves in the morning for Plymouth.

The flotilla commander has contacted Commander Damon, commanding officer of USNAAB Falmouth, and arrangements have been made for the loading and also degaussing of all ships requiring it. Check has been made via long distance phone to determine details of ships that ran the range before leaving Penarth. Our web of contacts in the Isles grows in complexity, and the job is being done.

24 May 1944

The program initiated at Penarth, during our stay there, concerning barrage balloon equipment concluded this morning when ships present Falmouth were directed to turn in all their American equipment now on board. The problem now rests with the British who have assumed the responsibility to see that all our ships have inflated balloons when they need them.

Communications remains a problem in this area, as it has been in all other areas. It is still a case of snatching a dispatch one place, learning of another by word of mouth of someone who has been fortunate enough to receive it. We manage

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LST FLOTILLA FOUR

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way here from Oran to the United Kingdom.

Ships at Plymouth include LST's 384,385,386 and 377. Nestling close to the flagship LST 266 at Penarth are LST's 27,28,262,540 and 75.

10 May 1944

Ships at Penarth are to complete their availability by the 15th and then are directed to sail to Milford Haven. Our African converts are in British Home Waters and are due to arrive Swansea day after tomorrow. Their next scheduled personal appearance is at Plymouth.

11 May 1944

Staff Barrage Balloon officer has made negotiations with the British for advanced training of our balloon crews in the use of the British lethal devices which have proved effective in this Theatre.

Main decks are being put in order after the departure of the LCT's and the noise is further enhanced by the overhauling of flotilla engines.

12 May 1944

The weary travelers from Oran arrived this morning and the Prince of Wales Docks in Swansea include LST's 212,538, 351,519,539,360,327,359,1,378 and 379. This is the largest aggregation of Flot Four ships since we left the States and calls for a personal tour of inspection by the Flotilla Commander who leaves by motor for Swansea.

13 May 1944

The flotilla commander has returned to Penarth after inspecting our newly arrived ships at Swansea and conferring with Commanders Legg and McKee, our two group commanders.

The morning was taken up by British instruction of crews from our ships at Penarth in advanced Barrage Ballon technique. All ships will be fitted with British winches

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28 May 1944

LST's at Fowey were visited by staff officer, Ens. S.R. Rodgers today with details for tomorrow's briefing. There was no hint in the country-side warmth, except for the huge army truck convoys choking every road, of the tremendous behind-the-scenes activity going on. Plymouth was contacted by the amazing intricacy of scrambler phone from Commander Smeal's Headquarters at Fowey, and locations of task group ships and escorts was ascertained. Ships at Plymouth are to be briefed there on the 30th. We have been asked to include four of Flot 11's ships which are at Falmouth in our conference, and they have been invited.

The winding trip through the English country lanes shows no Naval activity. We are now in a condition of High Security. Yet there is no outward sign to indicate this. The villagers continue on their normal rounds, and the foliage creating an umbrella over the harrow paths continues to make a carpet of shadows for your jeep.

29 May 1944

All task group ships this area including four from Flot 11 are present at the Greenbank this afternoon. Staff representatives include the flotilla commander; Lt. G.H. Lowe, operations officer; Lt. C.W. Black, communications officer; and Ensign S.R. Rodgers.

All attending have been carefully checked before entrance into the briefing room, curtains have been drawn, and guards placed at all exits. The room is clothed in a thickening hush that somehow crackles of the importance of things to come.

Commodore Edgar, the Force Commander, opens the conference, and then things are carried on by his aide, Commander Stoker. The plan seems ingeniously complete, and still fluid enough to allow for necessarily unpredictable emergencies. The briefing is concluded with a discussion of communications problems by the Communications officer from the Commodore's staff, Lt. Rubin.

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LST FLOTILLA FOUR

S E C R E T

It has been directed that ships be sealed as soon as the Army comes aboard and loading is completed. The condition of High Security, we are now under, continues.

30 May 1944

The long expected attack by air came this morning at 0105. The entire south coast of England was in a state of alert as the planes flew to the West with Falmouth an especial target. Bomb blasts shivered the night as German planes flew overhead twice at very high altitudes.

Ack-ack from shore batteries sent a steady stream of glowing red pellets into the air that seemed pathetically ineffectual at the required heights. Bombing from the planes was spasmodic, but clearly felt as each new blast colored the sky a shimmering pearl gray that melted into the water.

The garishness of the attack was enhanced by the sputtering green flares that were dropped and bathed everything in the area with their ghastly luminescence.

Almost as a finale came the last crashing, crescendo as a direct hit was scored close to the West at a bearing of 220 true from the flagship. Flames spurted into the blackness and great clouds of smoke belched forth as if in indignation. It is earnestly hoped that one of the heavily loaded transports in the anchorage was not hit. But from our present vantage point at King Harry's Ferry, it is impossible to tell.

31 May 1944

Staff officer ashore on special business, armed with official passes impressed with the flotilla seal, found Falmouth heavily pock-marked from last night's bombing. Building, after building, mostly hotels, look like upturned scooped-out egg shells. Amphibious Headquarters at Hydro stands gaunt and windowless from concussion, and the plaster peels from the walls as if the building were afflicted with some sort of construction exzema. The direct hit

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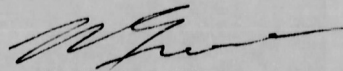
described yesterday still still smokes profusely sending forth cloud after cloud to contrast with the clear, warm day. It has been determined that the bomb landed directly on an oil dump on the outskirts of the city and still burns despite all efforts to control it.

A visit to ships at Fowey, and the topic of conversation there is also the raid at Falmouth. All officials contacted there on task group business were anxious for details including Commander Longford, RN, Resident Naval Officer in Charge.

Last administrative matter on the flotilla agenda for the month occurred today when Lt. Frank J. Oberg relieved Ensign V.F. Viehman as commanding officer of the LST 540 now at Harwich on British Operation Control.

The month has been one of constant travel. In addition to fitting the entire flotilla into the new operational program, we have found it necessary to fit the new ships which were transferred to our command before we left the Mediterranean into the Flotilla Four formula, which does not change. This has been accomplished to the large extent, but our ships are far from us and administrative problems have trebled.

The task of getting the goods and then redelivering it on sort of a flotilla lend-lease has been accomplished, and all responsible parties are now in possession of all operation plans concerning them. The month ends again with another curtain raiser to War; this is only a prelude of "the shape of things to come" . . .


T.W. GREENE

CC: CTF 122
ComLancrabl1thPhib
Com11thPhib

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LST FLOTILLA FOUR

S E C R E T

Enclosure: (A) Composition of the Flotilla

LST Flotilla Four - Commander T.W. Greene, USN, Commanding, is now attached to the European Theatre of Operations under Commander Landing Craft and Bases 11th Amphibious Force. Pennant is in the LST 266. Administration for the flotilla is aboard the flagship.

Group 11 - Commander I. C. McKee, USNR, Commanding

Div. 21

360 Lt. W. C. Hanway, Jr., USNR, Commanding
383 Lt.(jg) J. I. Lynch, USN, Commanding
384 Lt. J. H. Miller, USNR, Commanding
385 Lt. C. Stasavich, USNR, Commanding
386 Lt. D. A. Pace, USNR, Commanding
327 Lt. C. J. Gilleran, USCG, Commanding
540 Lt. F. J. Oberg, USNR, Commanding

Div. 22

1 Lt. W. L. Horton, USCGR, Commanding
359 Lt. H.V.R. Palmer, Jr., USNR, Commanding
377 Lt. J. P. Cunningham, USNR, Commanding
378 Lt. E. C. Anderson, USNR, Commanding
379 Lt. J. B. Chase, USNR, Commanding

Group 12 - Commander C. A. Legg, USN, Commanding

Div. 23

27 Lt.(jg) A. Volton, USCG, Commanding
28 Lt. B. D. Quirk, USNR, Commanding
212 Lt. M. D. Ellis, USN, Commanding
262 Lt. V. Hill, USCG, Commanding
266 Lt. L. A. Bolon, USNR, Commanding
538 Ens. H. W. Williams, Jr., USN, Commanding

Div. 24 - Lt. W. N. Finley, Jr., USNR, Commanding

539 Ens. T. J. Austin, USN, Commanding
351 Lt. R. W. Caldwell, USNR, Commanding
16 Lt. W. L. Horton, USCGR, Commanding
519 Ens. F. L. Brimmer, USN, Commanding
75 Lt. S. A. Sokulski, USN, Commanding

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to get, with alarming regularity, all messages that start "Comply my so and so", but the referents are not so easily forthcoming . . .

25 May 1944

Our first communication in the role of task group commander was received today, and the picture is now more clearly in mind. We have amassed a polyglot group of ships and the flotilla is to be of secondary importance for the while. The task group is being organized along the lines prescribed and operations receives the emphasis from this morning on.

The LCVP situation is receiving careful attention and all ships have been directed to submit reports immediately.

26 May 1944

LST 266, Flotilla Flagship, is the scene of unceasing activity these days. Every typewriter has a yeoman attached to it, every mimeograph machine achieves a state closely akin to perpetual motion, and every fountain pen has the hand of an officer guiding it in correction after correction. Practically all messages carry the new classification TOP SECRET (defined in some quarters as "something you burn before you read") and the ship's boats hum endlessly with deliveries of officer messenger traffic.

27 May 1944

Commander C.A. Legg, Com Group 12, was detached today on temporary duty to COM LST FLOT 11 as a replacement for the hospitalized commander of LST Group 31. Commander Legg has been in close contact with the flotilla commander since our arrival at Falmouth and we now have the complete story of the raid off North Africa on the convoy of our ships which followed us from the States.

Communication from Commodore Edgar reveals that the briefing conference for this task group is to be held at the Greenbank Hotel in Falmouth on the 29th. Security is in high gear and only those directly concerned have any knowledge of the events now taking place.