

In Reply Please Refer to

No. PA10/A16-3

Serial: 009

U. S. S. HARRY LEE

December 6, 1943.

S E C R E T

From: The Commanding Officer.  
To: The Commander-in-Chief, UNITED STATES FLEET.

Via: (1) The Commander Transport Division FOUR.  
(2) The Commander FIFTH Amphibious Force.

Subject: Action Report.

References: (a) U.S. Navy Regulations, 1920, Articles 712 and 874 (6).  
(b) PacFlt ltr 24CL-42 (Revised)  
(c) PacFlt ltr 36CL-42.

1. Comments on and summary of outstanding events:

- (a) This vessel fueled at sea from the oiler U.S.S. TALLULAH while steaming at twelve (12) knots, receiving 1733 barrels of fuel in one hour and eighteen minutes.
- (b) At 2210 on Dog minus one day, observed one of the screening vessels ahead open fire on surface target on her port hand. Two of the salvos appeared to hit. Target disappeared from our radar screen.
- (c) Passed through point Item proceeding to transport area according to plan. Arrived in transport area at 0355, Dog day. At 0401, the Support Boat and two LVT's in the water and proceeding to the U.S.S. ZEILIN. The HARRY LEE shifted station from 1,000 yards abeam on the starboard hand of the ZEILIN to 3,000 yards astern of ZEILIN and commenced lowering of boats according to plan.
- (d) @ 0627 Shifted transport area to open range to the beach as enemy shell fire was falling close aboard some of the transports.  
@ 0709 Closed the beach.  
@ 0726 Commenced debarkation of troops. (reserve)  
@ 0758 Completed debarkation of troops, beach party and salvage party.  
@ 0759 All boats left the transport area for the line of departure to await orders. Arrived at line of departure @ 0940  
@ 0826 H hour changed to 0900.  
@ 1002 First wave left line of departure for the beach.  
@ 1012 Second wave left line of departure for the beach.  
@ 1022 Third wave left line of departure for the beach.  
@ 1032 Fourth wave left line of departure for the beach.  
@ 1242 Fifth wave left ship. (Consisting of shore party).

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority 968133  
By I/M NAO. Date 9/19

SECRET  
PALO/A16-3

U.S.S. HARRY LEE

December 6, 1943.

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority 968133  
By LHM NAVA DMS 969

Subject: Action Report.

-----

1. (d) cont.

It was impossible for the boats to land on the beach. The troops were transferred to LVT's at the edge of the coral reef as the LVT's became available and were landed by the LVT's as follows: Waves one, two and three on Beach Red #2 between 1030 and 1200 on Dog day.

Wave four on Beach Red #2 at 1830 on Dog day.

Twenty (20) men from wave five on Beach Red #2 at 1530 on Dog day.

The remainder of wave five landed on the pier at 1400, Dog plus one day.

2. Preliminary Operations:

- (a) No enemy ships of surface, under surface or air types were observed.
- (b) Transports with assault troops proceeded with debarkation of troops. @ 0510 screening vessels opened fire on beach.
- (c) Wind northeast, force five (5) knots; sea smooth, current westerly, slight swell; visibility 25.

3. Chronological Log of Battle:

There were no enemy forces of surface, sub surface or air types encountered. The transports were beyond the range of the enemy positions on Tarawa, consequently there was no engagement and no ammunition was expended.

4. Special Comments on Enemy Forces:

- (a) to (e) None observed.

5. Special Comments on Our Forces:

- (a) to (e) No comments.
- (f) No damage received.
- (g) SMYRL, William Maxwell, Jr., 244 55 07, F2c, USNR, received minor flesh wounds in the upper right arm while engaged in operating a boat near the beach.

6. Commendations Where Merited:

No commendations or citations made, and no dereliction of duty or lack of courage on part of any officer or man noted.

SECRET  
PALO/AL6-3

U.S.S. HARRY LEE

December 6, 1943.

Subject: Action Report.

-----

7. Lessons Learned and Recommendations:

- (a) No priority of unloading should be placed in effect that includes equipment too large to be manhandled until such time as a beach head is established. Failure to carry out this procedure resulted in the loss of the use of two (2) LCM(3)'s which were loaded with tractors (Bull Dozers) and which were sent in to the beach on Dog day with the fourth wave of troops and which could not be unloaded until Dog plus three days.
- (b) From the number of back wounds received by casualties treated on board this ship and from the statements of officers on the beach, the Commanding Officer is led to believe that a number of casualties were created by our own gunfire. It is therefore suggested that only the first and second waves of boats or LVT's be equipped with machine guns.
- (c) Another reason for the removal of .30 caliber guns from all boats other than the first and second waves was brought to the attention of the salvage boat officer during the night of Dog plus two days when an LCVP crew opened up on a Japanese BETTY which was passing overhead having failed to observe any surface targets below. When the LCVP opened fire, the BETTY returned and strafed not only that boat but other boats in the same area.
- (d) The losses in boat machine guns, rifles and .45 caliber pistols are excessive. This is the result of carelessness in misplacing the arms and a total disregard for their protection.

  
J. G. POMEROY.

Copy to:

CinCPac

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority 968133  
By LNA HNA Data 9/19