

NAVY
DOCUMENTS:
LANDING THE
191ST TANK
BATTALION AT
SALERNO,
SEPTEMBER,
1943



Loading Sherman Tanks on a Landing Craft Tank (LTC), 1943. Illustrates the landing of the 191st at Salerno in 1943.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority: E.O. 13526

By: NDC NARA Date: Dec 31, 2012

Page 4

CONFIDENTIAL

- 0500 Moored bow to in Berth #13, Nisida, Italy, with two three-quarter inch wire ropes, two six inch manila lines and 400 feet of cable out on the stern anchor. Truck ramp winch damaged while warping into berth.
- 0530 Began loading combat equipment and personnel of 45th Division as follows: 15 officers and 221 men of the 191st Tank Battalion, the 158th and 160th Field Artillery Battalions, the 645th Tank Destroyer Battalion, the 157th Headquarters Infantry, Company A of the 120th Engineers, Construction Company of the 157th Infantry, Service Company of the 157th Infantry, Company A of the 40th Engineers, Headquarters Company of the 45th Division, and Battery A of the 106th AA.; four 2½ ton Dukws, ten ¼ ton truck trailers, 24 ¼ ton trucks, five 2½ ton LWB, five 2½ ton trucks, two ¾ ton trucks, two 2½ ton trailers, two 1 ton trailers, 1 16 ton trailer, one 10 ton PM, one ¾ ton WC, two 10 ton wreckers, one 4 ton wrecker, and one 4 ton truck, one 8 ton trailer, one D-7, two m-15, two H. T. M-13, and one D-4 bulldozer.
- 1055 Fifteen smoke floats brought aboard.
- 1915 Completed loading of army personnel and cargo.
- 1950 Detached two seamen to LST 656 for temporary duty.
- 2050 Underway to anchorage in Pozzuoli Bay, Gulf of Naples, Italy, pursuant to orders from Operations Officer LST Flot One.
- 2118 Anchored in Pozzuoli Bay by bow anchor in 15 fathoms of water with 75 fathoms of chain out to the water's edge on the following bearings: Nisida Light 108°(T); Bagnoli breakwater 055° (T).
- 10 August
- 0200 Began repairing truck ramp winch. Work being done by crew from U.S.S. Delta.
- 2050 Sent two army enlisted men ashore for hospitalization.
- 2334 Truck ramp winch replaced.
- 11 August
- 0833 Underway to anchorage in Castellamare Bay, Gulf of Naples, Italy, pursuant to orders from ComLSTFlot 20.
- 0940 Enlisted man of Battery A-106 received injury to left hand as a 50 cal. AA machine gun was accidentally discharged while being cleaned.

32

Report from Commander of Landing Ship Tank (LST) 277 on the Salerno Landings

DECLASSIFIED

Authority: E.O. 13526

By: NDC NARA Date: Dec 31, 2012

LCT (5) FLOTILLA NINE
NAVY 93

From: Officer in Charge LCT (5) #277.
To : Commander Amphibious Force 8th Fleet.
Subject: Action Report - Italian Invasion.

During that time the Commanding Officer of the 191st. Tank Battalion, who was aboard, attempted to contact his tanks on other vessels and failed. He could not reach any other LCT. At 0930 the LCT 244 appeared out of the smoke and signaled that no LCT had beached and retracted safely, adding that it had numerous dead and wounded aboard from direct hits. At this time the Commander of the 191st. Tank Battalion requested that he be taken to the U.S.S. Samuel Chase to receive further orders. This was concurred in by the Officer-in-Charge LCT 277. While underway to that ship the LCT 15 was sighted and it reported that one tank and tank crew had been knocked out by the direct hit it had suffered. At 1230 LCT 277 tied up to the U.S.S. Samuel Chase, and the Tank Commander, and the Officer-in-Charge LCT 277 went aboard to report to the Commander Southern Attack Force. LCT 277 was then directed to proceed to Red Beach and to take other LCT's also. A PC was furnished as guide. LCT 277 completed its original mission by beaching at 1420 D day while the beaches were still under enemy fire. No hits were suffered and no personnel were injured. Immediately afterward, LCT 277 began unloading ships, continuing until D plus 18, when major repairs became necessary.

Edmund H. Volkart

Edmund H. Volkart
Officer-in-Charge LCT #277.

FIRST ENDORSEMENT LCT (5) FLOTILLA NINE
LCT5/F9.

26 October 1943.

From: The Commander
To : Commander LCB 8th. Fleet.
Subject: Action Report - Italian Invasion.
1. Forwarded.

A. P. Flynn
A. P. FLYNN
By direction.

3 774

24

22

From: The Italian Campaign Western Naval Task Force Action Report of the
Salerno Landings September October 1943 COMWESTNAVAL TASKFOR

DECLASSIFIED

Authority: E.O. 13526

By: NDC NARA Date: Dec 31, 2012

acting as Traffic Control Boat.

12. Task Unit 81.3.6, consisting of the six LCTs carrying the 191 Tank Battalion (30 tanks), started for Blue beach at 0445. These were the first and only tanks expected ashore until the LSTs could be brought in and beached. Heavy fire prevented a landing on Blue beach and the LCTs proceeded up the shore to Green beach. The LCT 15 received a shell hit enroute. At Green beach heavy enemy fire again repelled the landing and at 0620 the LCT 244 received four 88mm hits which killed the special beach scout officer attached to this group. Mines also severely hampered the movements of the LCTs in this area.

13. At 0715 LCT 219 received a direct shell hit and at 0720 LCTs 195, 219, 364 which had become separated in the smoke from the remaining three craft were ordered to Red beach where for the third time enemy 88mm fire repelled the landing. These craft retired out of range until approximately 1000 when destroyer support fire rendered the beach tenable and the landing was made. At 0745 LCTs 15, 244, 277 returned to the transport area at the request of the Commanding Officer of the 191st Tank Battalion in order that he might obtain further instructions. These three craft were immediately instructed to carry out their mission and finally discharged their tanks at 1330 on Red beach.

14. It is felt that such a group, regardless of its small size, bearing such an important relation to the main attack, should be placed under the command of a senior naval officer to preclude the indirection that attended this expedition.

15. At H plus 180 minutes the first elements of the reserve Regimental Combat Team began to land from the USS FUNSTON and USS STANTON over Red beach.

Green beach:

16. DICKMAN, carrying the initial assault troops for Green beach, at 0020 launched her scout boat which subsequently located and marked the beach on time. Despite two davit failures the DICKMAN had her boats in the water at 0115. As in the case of Red beach, the primary control vessel was held up by mines as well as by the minesweepers which resulted in a 10 minute delay in the first wave's arrival at the beach. Heavy machine gun fire broke out along this beach front as the first assault wave landed. The scout boat for this beach immediately fired 34 rockets against enemy positions, caused a lull, and drew most of the remaining enemy fire. The second and third waves maintained the proper time intervals and were correctly 10 minutes late. The fourth wave, which included the first wave of the support battalion from the LYON, was held up for one hour and fifty minutes by the Primary Control Vessel, PC 624, which had received a report that the channel was not clear of mines. At 0558 this wave was finally despatched, followed by subsequent waves at the proper time intervals. Thirty DUKWs landed at H plus 115 minutes with 34 more beaching at 0900. Advance over the beach and inland was slow for our troops because of the heavy enemy fire.

17. When the third wave was landed it was observed that there was some enemy fire over the water that was heavier than machine gun but not as heavy as artillery. This fire, all directed against incoming landing craft, was believed to be 37mm or 40mm guns on enemy tanks. This was later confirmed as coming from enemy tanks behind Yellow beach.

Yellow beach:

18. At 0035 the scout boat from the USS CARROLL shoved off and at 0140 accurately located Yellow beach. While lying off this beach the scout boat heard clatter and clanking noises (it is presumed that these noises came from enemy tanks and armored vehicles) and observed vehicle lights coming down the hill from Agropoli to