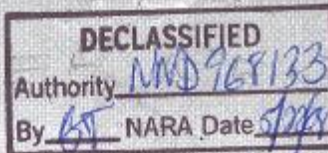


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APA49/A16-3
Serial 0032



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U.S.S. ORMSBY
(APA49)

REPORT OF OPERATIONS

AITAPE, NEW GUINEA

To: The Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet.
Via: (1) The Commander Task Unit 77.4.3 (U.S.S. CENTAURUS)
(2) The Commander Task Group 77.3 (U.S.S. LA VALLETTE)
(3) The Commander Task Force 77 (ComSeventhPhib)
(4) The Commander FIFTH Amphibious Force.
(5) The Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

DIST: ComTaskUnit 77.4.3 (U.S.S. CENTAURUS) (30)

APA49/A16-3
Serial 0032

U.S.S. ORMSBY (APA49)
c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, Calif.

(10:cs)

S-E-C-R-E-T

25 April 1944

From: The Commanding Officer.
To: The Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet.
Via: (1) The Commander Task Unit 77.4.3 (U.S.S. CENTAURUS)
(2) The Commander Task Group 77.3 (U.S.S. LA VALLETTE)
(3) The Commander Task Force 77 (ComSeventhPhib)
(4) The Commander FIFTH Amphibious Force.
(5) The Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Subject: Operations Report - AITAPE, NEW GUINEA.

Reference: (a) ComTaskForce 77 Operation Plan 3-44.
(b) ComTaskForce 76 Movement Order NG101-44.
(c) ComTask Group 77.3 Attack Order 2-44.
(d) ComTask Group 77.4 Movement Order 1-44.
(e) ComTask Unit 77.4.3 Movement Order 1-44.

Enclosures: (A) Comments and Recommendations of Commanding Officer. -p.4
(B) Comments of Beachmaster TUMLEO Blue Beach 2. -p.5
(C) Comments of Beachmaster SELEO Blue Beach 3. -p.6
(D) Comments of Communication Officer. -p.8
(E) Comments of Medical Officer. -p.9
(F) Time Study of Operations. -p.10
(G) Time Study of Cargo Loading. -p.11
(H) Time Study of Cargo Unloading. -p.12
(I) Report of Casualties. -p.14
(J) Cargo Plan and Hatch Distribution. -p.15
(K) Troops Taken on Board. -p.16

1. Operation Order No. 3-44 in effect 1200 King, 10 April 1944. ORMSBY anchored berth 16 off Point Sudest. At 1800, 15 April 1944, got underway in obedience to CTF76 Movement Order No. NG-101-44 and, in company with U.S.S. HARRY LEE and U.S.S. DICKERSON, ORMSBY, and NOA as escort, arrived off Cape Cretin at 0731, 16 April 1944, and ordered to Langemak Bay where vessel moored to dock No. 8 at 0930. At 1200, 16 April 1944, commenced loading cargo.

2. Conference of Commanding Officer with Captain A.G. NOBLE, USN, Commander Eastern Attack Group. Continued loading cargo. At 1405, 17 April 1944, finished loading cargo. Cargo on board in accordance with cargo plan, enclosure (J).

3. At 0756, 19 April 1944, commenced embarking troops, at 1015, finished embarking troops. Troops on board of 127th Regimental Combat Team listed on enclosure (K). At 1051, 19 April

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25 April 1944

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1944, unmoored and in company with U.S.S. BOOTES proceeded towards rendezvous with U.S.S. CENTAURUS. At 1250, formed column astern U.S.S. CENTAURUS, CTU77.4.3. At 1400, exercised troops and crew at all emergency drills. At 1535, formed cruising formation 6SD, CTG77.4, Captain E.M. THOMPSON, USN, U.S.S. JOHN ROGERS, Flagship, and proceeded in company with Western Unit 77.4.1 and Central Unit 77.4.2 to destination via route Able in accordance with CTG77.4 Movement Order Number 1-44 and CTF77 Operation Plan 3-44.

4. At 1400, 20 April 1944, exercised troops at debarkation stations, gave instructions to boat coxswains, and held conferences. At 1715, formed cruising disposition 3C, at 2315 formed cruising disposition 6SL. Various schools and instructions held during the day. Instructions in communications and identification of aircraft. On 21 April 1944, held instructions for boat coxswains, beach party organizations, communication and identification of aircraft, damage control during morning general quarters. At 1400, exercised all troops at debarkation stations. On 22 April 1944, held instructions in communications and identification of aircraft, boat coxswains, beach party organizations, conferences for boat officers, damage control during morning general quarters. At 1500, exercised all troops at debarkation stations. At 1600, left company of CTG77.4 and Western and Central Units and formed cruising disposition 1ER, CTU77.4.3, U.S.S. CENTAURUS, Flagship.

5. At 0500, 23 April 1944, set Condition IA and in accordance with CTG77.3 Eastern Attack Order 2-44 to CTU77.3.8, Captain LEONARD FRISCO, D-M, USNR, Commanding Officer, U.S.S. ORMSBY, called all TUMLEO and SELEO assault troops to debarkation stations for the purpose of capturing TUMLEO and SELEO Islands to establish radar stations. At 0530, arrived in Transport Area, AITAPE. At 0553, U.S.S. KANE and NOA boats reported and commenced embarking assault troops for Blue Beach 3, SELEO. At 0605, U.S.S. WARD and SCHLEY boats reported and commenced embarking assault troops for Blue Beach 2, TUMLEO. At 0620, all assault waves for SELEO Beach Blue 3 boated and away. Fire support units commenced bombardment of SELEO and TUMLEO Island. At 0623, gave command to lower all boats. At 0626, all assault waves for TUMLEO Beach Blue 2 boated and away. At 0637, all boat teams of floating reserve boated and formed rendezvous circle awaiting orders. At 0648, all boats in water. At 0705, Blue Beach 3, SELEO, reported secured. No opposition reported. At 0706, Blue Beach 2, TUMLEO, reported secured. No opposition reported. First wave landed Beach Blue 2, TUMLEO Island at 0659. First wave landed Blue Beach 3, SELEO Island at 0703. H - hour 0700. At 0650, ordered to have floating reserve rendezvous close to CTG77.3, U.S.S. LA VALLETTE. ORMSBY got underway and closed Blue Beach. At 0750, anchored off ORMSBY Beach Blue AITAPE and commenced discharging cargo and

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remainder of troops. At 0820, two LCVP's reported from U.S.S. CENTAURUS for duty. At 0830, all assault troops disembarked.

6. At 0950, SELEO Island reported secured. At 1047, floating reserve ordered and landed on Blue Beach East. At 1215, TUMLEO Beach Party secured and returned to ORMSBY. At 1224, SELEO Beach Party secured and returned to ORMSBY. At 1510, completed discharging cargo (Time Study Enclosure (H)). At 1602, ships platoon (Army) left ship. All boats in running condition sent to U.S.S. CENTAURUS and HARRY LEE for duty.

7. At 1800, word received from Beach Master that No. 11-LCVP ORMSBY boat employed by U.S.S. CENTAURUS was swamped by sea's breaking on beach and unable to recover due to rising tide. Since ORMSBY got underway and sailed from area at 2115, this boat was left for permanent beach personnel to salvage at low water. At 1830, commenced hoisting boats not used in working cargo for U.S.S. CENTAURUS and U.S.S. HARRY LEE. At 2015, Beach Blue Beach Party secured and returned to ship. At 2045, all boats returned and hoisted on board. At 2110, got underway from AITAPE Harbor Area and proceeded to rendezvous area, point WOW. At 2335 joined formation with U.S.S. CENTAURUS, flagship, echelon R2, group P, and proceeded in accordance with operation plan CTF77.3-44, to Point Sudest, via Cape Cretin.

8. At 1033, 26 April 1944, anchored in Berth 28, Point Sudest.

Leonard Frisco
LEONARD FRISCO.

Copy to:

ComTransDivFOUR
ComTransDivEIGHTEEN
ComTransGroupTHIRDphib
ComTHIRDphib.

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
OF COMMANDING OFFICER

1. In the opinion of the Commanding Officer, the entire operation was conducted in a smooth and efficient manner. The boats allotted for the assault troops from the APD's, U.S.S. WARD, SCHLEY, WOA, and KANE came alongside in a very seaman-like manner, loaded immediately and formed in waves and were ready for the control boats to lead them to their respective beaches. All hands performed their duties well and efficiently. The entire 16 boats were loaded as called for by the operation order and not one word of extra instructions had to be issued. The entire performance of these 16 boats was a credit to their ships' organization.

2. Beach conditions at Beach Blue AITAF were very poor, which slowed cargo operations to some extent. As many as 6 boats at one time were undergoing repairs to ramps, rudders, and propellers. A total of 58 boats were repaired for the entire operation. There is a definite need for a more durable, heavy duty salvage boat than the present LCP(L) in use by this vessel. As recommended on the [REDACTED]-MARSHALL Operations, more need for LCM(3)'s was again proven in this operation. The LCM's did a splendid and efficient job with only minor damages, all of which was repaired after the operation.

3. When approximately 500 tons of cargo is to be discharged in one day, and especially where poor beaches are encountered, it is respectfully suggested that some thought be given to LSD's carrying sufficient LCM(3)'s to the area for use by APA.

4. The usual difficulty was experienced in obtaining enough troops to work the cargo on the beach; although we are always assured that 180 men or over would be provided, half of the total cargo is usually discharged before the total men asked for arrive. At this operation, only 80 men were available and not until 1245 (ship finished discharging at 1510) were we able to obtain 50 more men - a total of 130, which would have been entirely inadequate with good beach condition. In spite of the lack of man power, all hands on the spot cooperated very well and with hard conscientious work made an excellent showing in cargo operations.

5. The Commanding Officer can not speak too highly of the loyal, extremely efficient, and excellent manner in which the officers and crew of the ORMSBY performed their individual duties. All hands worked together as a team, and as man o' warships are a credit to the U.S. Navy.

COMMENTS OF LT. T.M. ANDERSON, D-V(G), USNR
TUMLEO BLUE BEACH 2 BEACHMASTER

1. At 0615, 23 April 1944, embarked in U.S.S. WARD boat #16-1 and landed on Blue Beach #2, TUMLEO Island, directly east of the village on the southern end of the Island at 0659 with the 1st wave. Setup SCR610 and 300 radios and reported to CTG77.3.
2. Second wave landed at 0703. Supply boat from ORMSBY landed at approximately 0710 with supplies, 5 man working party from Co. "G", and balance of Beach Party.
3. Beach markers were placed at the extreme south end of the island on the sandy spit. From the north end of the sand spit on the southern end of TUMLEO Island, northward along the eastern shore, coral pinnacles were visible above water two hours after high water. This made it impracticable to land boats safely in this area.
4. From the sunken Jap barge, southward to the end of the island for approximately seventy-five yards, and northwestward for approximately one hundred yards to a second submerged barge, the beach was sandy and the water of sufficient depth to allow boats to beach easily at all stages of the tide.
5. No opposition was met. There were no natives or Japanese discovered on the island up until the time I secured. A bomb-proof shelter or native supply shelter was discovered 100 feet west of the demolished mission building. Most all of the buildings on the southern end of the island were leveled by bombing and gun fire.
6. There were two Japanese graves in the cemetery just south of the mission. Two Japanese identification tags and some Japanese marine papers were found toward the northern end of the island. All papers turned in to Captain Tabor, U.S. Army, Co. "G", of attacking force. These were delivered to Captain SCHWARTZ, U.S. Army and later sent to Colonel HOWE via Staff Sergeant LEE, U.S. Army.
7. At 0930, Captain TABOR said we were no longer needed on the Island; we requested permission from CTG77.3 to secure from the beach.
8. At 1145, U.S.S. WARD boat #16-1 reported to the beach, having been ordered there by the Commanding Officer of the WARD, and returned the Beach Party to the ORMSBY.

COMMENTS OF LT(JG) J.R. CARL, D-V(S), USNR
SELEO ISLAND BEACHMASTER

1. The assault troops were debarked into LCP(R)'s from APD's U.S.S. NOA and KANE. The boats rendezvous was off the port bow of APA49. When the waves were in order they proceeded to the line of departure which was marked by the SC637.

2. At 0655, the first wave of two boats was dispatched to the beach followed by the remaining three waves, of two boats each, at three minute intervals.

3. A fringing reef was encountered approximately 50-75 yards from the beach and the boats had considerable difficulty passing over it. The leading boats opened fire with their machine guns when within range and the accompanying SC fired its rockets when 1,000 yards from the beach.

4. The first wave landed at 0703 and no enemy opposition was met. The beach was approximately 30 feet in depth, rather steep and covered with considerable debris, including fallen trees, shell and bomb fragments and shell holes resulting from the bombardment. An unexploded 300 lb. bomb was on the left flank of the beach. This was reported to the commanding officer of troops.

5. A fuel dump of 50 gallon drums was located along the west side of the beach from the southern tip and extending north for approximately 500 yards. These drums had been demolished and several small fires were noticed just inland of the landing area. At 0750, this dump exploded. The only casualty was Capt. David (n) SIMON (MC), U.S.A. who dislocated his hip attempting to get away from the intense heat. He was evacuated to the ORMSEY for medical treatment.

6. Initially we were unable to contact CTF77.3 with SCR300 so communication was established with the ORMSEY and the landing relayed to CTF77.3. Radio contact was also made with the SC637 at the line of departure and the commanding officer of the assault troops on the island.

7. At 0730, the troops had reorganized, the beach head established and patrols sent out.

8. The ORMSEY supply boat arrived at 0717 with troop equipment, remainder of the Beach Party and Army five man working party. The supplies were unloaded on the beach and the boat shoved off at 0736.

9. Advanced patrols reported at 0830 they had advanced to the village, met no resistance, and found one anti-aircraft pit unoccupied. Patrols proceeded north and defensive positions established.

10. LCT 1920 arrived with radar personnel and equipment, and was directed north as the receding tide would not allow the LCT to cross the fringing reef. The LCT beached approximately 700 yards north of the original beach landing at what appeared to be the landing area previously used by the Japanese. There were four sunken Jap landing barges on the beach and equipment. The LCT was unloaded and shoved off from the beach at 0950.

11. Sgt. L. SIMENEC was evacuated to the ORMSBY for treatment of a lacerated hand resulting from accidental bayonet wound.

12. At 0950 the mission was accomplished.

13. The Commanding Officer of Troops had no further use for the Beach Party, so permission was requested to secure.

COMMENTS OF LT. A.H. DARLING, C-V(3), USNR
COMMUNICATION OFFICER

1. Ship to shore communications functioned normally throughout the operation in spite of the fact that it was necessary to maintain contact with three beaches simultaneously on joint Army-Navy circuits.
2. Traffic on tactical circuits was held to an absolute minimum which is to be commended and proves that it can be accomplished by concerted effort of all hands responsible.
3. The SCR300 radio is inferior to the SCR610 for operation, but has the advantage of being lighter and more portable. However, it should be mentioned that there was no equipment failure at any time on the SCR300 circuits so far as this ship was concerned.
4. There were too many stations on each SCR300 channel resulting in relaxation of circuit discipline and delay in clearing priority administrative traffic. Also, in some cases the channel frequency spread was too narrow causing slight interference between circuits. The following recommendations are respectfully submitted:
 - (a) The Army and Navy circuits should each be assigned separate channels. Where traffic is heavy no more than 4 stations should use one channel; if traffic is light, the number of stations may be increased to six.
 - (b) In the case of SCR300 equipment, on board ship where two channels are operating simultaneously, the minimum frequency difference should be 5 megacycles (25 channels).
5. Although no serious difficulty was encountered some confusion resulted from the number of subordinate directives, each of which promulgated a few new calls, making it necessary to re-index the call sign list at the last minute. An adequate master call list including Army calls, promulgated with the original plan would help all personnel concerned to familiarize themselves with the calls prior to the day of use.
6. For convenience it is suggested that the daily authenticator word change at the same time as the shackle scramble alphabet, namely, zero hours zebra.

CONCLUSION:

The above comments and recommendations are offered to assist in simplifying the complicated communication system necessary in an extensive operation. The obvious success at AITAFE, NEW GUINEA is a tribute to the cooperation of all hands responsible for the preparation and execution of the plan as directed.

COMMENTS OF Lt.Cdr. W.L. KELSEY, MC-V(S),
USNR - SENIOR MEDICAL OFFICER

1. Although the department was fully equipped and manned for any casualties occurring, the facilities of the sick bay were taxed by cases recurrent malaria on the way to the combat zone and during landings. These cases were of Army personnel, and were landed at a secured beach at the request of the Army Medical Officer prior to sailing from the area.

2. Several minor injuries were treated and sent to duty and only two casualties were cared for. This was an Army Medical Officer who suffered a dislocation of the hip (non-battle). He is being evacuated to an Army Hospital. The other patient had a minor laceration and was returned to duty.

3. On D plus 1 two corpsmen with equipment for first aid landed with the beach party on both SELEO and FUMLEO. Their services were minor in nature.

4. The ship's Junior Medical Officer and two corpsmen went ashore with the principle landing at AITAPE on D plus one, and here also, there services were minor in nature.

5. All members of the beach party and boat crews who left the ship were given packets containing vitamin "K" and four sulfadiazine tablets.

6. As the ship was about to depart this area, one case of severe malaria was evacuated from the YMS9 to be hospitalized.

7. One case of severe conjunctivitis occurring in Army personnel was kept on board for evacuation.