

ship" about 1400. There were no casualties to the ship's crew.

LCT(L)-93

LCT(L)-93
STRANDED
UNDER FIRE

Participating in the operations off the coast of France on 6 June, 1944, the Coast Guard manned LCT(L)-93 disembarked two loads of troops, encountering little enemy action on the first trip but sustaining several direct hits on the second. The second landing was made during a rapidly falling tide on the afternoon of 6 June. As the vessel approached the beach, she had to pass over a sand bar. She accomplished this and proceeded about 20 yards further to Easy Red Beach in the Omaha area to disembark troops. While unloading she heaved around on the stern anchor slowly to prevent being stranded by the falling tide. About 25 troops remained on board when the enemy found the range and concentrated several heavy batteries on the vessel. Four troops were seriously injured and were later evacuated with the crew, one soldier being killed. The crew suffered five shrapnel casualties and two others were seriously injured. After the remaining troops had been disembarked, an attempt was made to retract. The engines and stern anchor took the 93 off the beach, but she could not pass over the bar astern of the ship. By this time the vessel had received at least 10 direct hits, two passing through the pilot house, two through the starboard bow at the forecabin and the remainder along the port side. Shrapnel from the bursts had made a sieve out of the port passageway.

EVACUATION
ORDERLY

Failing to get off the bar, and still under heavy enemy fire, the ship called for a small boat to evacuate the wounded soldiers and crewmen. Later in the afternoon two more small boats evacuated those left on board. There was no sign of panic, all hands obeying orders and no one leaving the ship until ordered to do so. Three days later an inspection of the vessel found two holes in the starboard bow, each at least a yard in diameter; a hole two feet wide and six feet long on the port side caused by several hits; while aft a mine had exploded throwing the starboard engine over against the port engine. Two troop compartments, the crew's quarters, the engine room, the boatswain's locker and the forward peak tank were all flooded.

USS SERPENS (AK-97)

USS SERPENS (AK-97)
EXPLODES

The USS SERPENS (AK-97), a cargo ship manned by Coast Guard personnel, sank after an explosion on 29 January, 1945, while anchored off Lunga Beach, Guadalcanal. The explosion was possibly due to an enemy attack. A 14,250 ton ammunition ship, the SERPENS was loading depth bombs at the time. A number of other ships nearby were damaged in the explosion, which also caused some damage ashore. Eight officers and 188 crewmen, all that were on board at the time, were killed.¹ The only survivors were 2 officers and 8 men who were ashore at the time of the explosion. In addition, 57 Army personnel, including one officer, were killed.

1. For a complete list of those killed see Appendix J.

EYE WITNESS
ACCOUNT

"As we headed our personal boat shoreward" an eye witness reported, "the sound and concussion of the explosion suddenly reached us, and as we turned, we witnessed the awe-inspiring death drama unfold before us. As the report of screeching shells filled the air and the flash of tracers continued, the water throughout the harbor splashed as the shells hit. We headed our boat in the direction of the smoke and as we came into closer view of what had once been a ship, the water was filled only with floating debris, dead fish, torn life jackets, lumber and other unidentifiable objects. The smell of death, and fire, and gasoline, and oil was evident and nauseating. This was sudden death, and horror, unwanted and unasked for, but complete."

USS SHEEPSCOT (AOG-24)

USS SHEEPSCOT
GOES AGROUND
OFF IWO JIMA

On the morning of June 6, 1945, the Coast Guard manned USS SHEEPSCOT (AOG-24), a 700 ton tanker, went aground in a storm on the eastern side of Iwo Jima. The vessel had been ordered to the pumping station there and the commanding officer, Lt. George A. Wagner, USOGR, had requested that he be furnished all weather information as soon as received, due to the dangerous conditions existing and the fact that the vessel was moored only 200 yards from shore. She had one 8" manila line to a buoy on her port bow two 8" manila lines to a buoy on her port quarter, and one 8" manila and a 2" spring line to a buoy on her starboard quarter. On the previous day a storm had been reported about 750 miles south and west of Iwo Jima but its exact location was not then definitely known. A storm somewhat north of this had dissipated but there were indications of another storm forming. The general trend of this storm, at about noon of the 5th, was northerly with advance speed of 4 knots and a wind velocity at center of 40 miles per hour. This storm was, at that time, however, expected to pass north and west of Iwo Jima. At 1800 on 5 June there was no change in this forecast. A weather plane which had started out to investigate had turned back with engine trouble. A second plane had been sent out. At 2000 on the 5th the center of the storm was reported as 26° N, 134° E, with the estimated position at 1000 on June 6th, as 29° N, 136° E. The position of the SHEEPSCOT was approximately 24° 46' N, 141° 18' E. The storm was at this time, therefore, expected to pass well to the north and west of her position. Between 0000 and 0400 on the 6th, weather messages received by the SHEEPSCOT were general, one indicating that the weather would remain unchanged during the night. Another received at 0309 was to the effect that winds might reach 25 knots by 0800.

STEPS TO
AVERT
DISASTER

At this time two starboard and three port tanks were ordered ballasted, the operation being completed about 0630. About 0430 all hands were called and SCPA was advised that the SHEEPSCOT was casting off all lines and standing out to sea. The wind was then SSW at 25 to 30 knots, in gusts, seas 6, with heavy rain squalls reducing visibility to about 1000 yards at times. After the bow lines were off at 0510 the starboard stern wire was let go. At 0530 a port line snapped and was left hanging in