

## HISTORY OF THE USS LST 172

Transporting cargo, personnel and food, the USS LST 172 was an important link in the chain of supply that kept Pacific beachheads alive.

A few months after its shakedown runs off the Florida coast, the LST 172 on September 15, 1943, arrived in the Southwest Pacific, ready for duty. The heavy amphibious vessel soon began regular cargo runs between Samoa, Funafuti, and other islands in the area. In the middle of February, 1944, the LST carried a load of torpedo-boat engines from Funafuti to supply the Motor Torpedo Boat Base at Espiritu Santo. After discharging this cargo the "172" underwent a long overhaul there to repair underwater hull damage received at Ellice Island.

In July, 1944, the LST 172 was still faithfully loading, transporting, and unloading cargo, advancing further into the chain of islands as the success of our invasions permitted. On July 6, the LST carried a load of personnel and gear to Tarawa, Gilbert Islands, without incident.

Several days later, the "172" was beached on a reef at Nanomea, maintain perpendicularity to the reef by use of engines and rudder. The ship remained in that position for 72 consecutive hours; five tanks were punctured in the ship's forward bottom due to pounding caused by unusually strong southwesterly winds.

In operations between Russel Islands and Guadalcanal during January, 1945, the LST moved some 900 personnel as well as rolling stock, barbed wire, and ammunition.

In April, two hundred and fifty tons of cargo consisting of airplane wing tanks, mail, and special gear for ships were delivered to Guam. A heavy load of cargo, mostly explosives, was taken to Saipan during the latter days of May.

The LST returned in June to Pearl Harbor and on June 21, 1945, headed eastward to San Francisco. On July 2, the vessel moved into Ferry Slip at Graham Shipyards, and commenced overhaul.

Leaving the ways at the end of September, the LST 172 assisted in salvage work at the Clipperton Islands during October and returned in November to Mare Island to await disposal.

Constructed by the Missouri Valley Bridge and Iron Company, Evansville, Indiana, the LST 172 was completed in June, 1943. The vessel was 328 feet in length, 50 feet extreme beam, and 28 feet molded depth.

A comparatively shallow draft of 11 feet enables the big ship to move close into the beach and drop its huge bow ramp on dry ground. They carry smaller craft topside, and in a tunnel-like hold can transport large capacities of tanks, vehicles, guns or cargo. Diesel engines drive twin screws to produce a speed of 11 knots.