

# TRANSCRIPTION of ACTION REPORT

for

U.S.S. SHERIDAN - APA51

BATTLE of TARAWA

20 - 24 November 1943

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Transcribed by John Clingman

# ACTION REPORT

DECLASSIFIED  
(previously CONFIDENTIAL)

USS SHERIDAN

APA 51

SERIAL 0106      2 DECEMBER 1943

GILBERT ISLAND OPERATIONS – BATTLE OF TARAUA –  
REPORT ON.

IN TRANSPORT DIVISION 18 AND TASK  
UNIT 53.1.2 AT INITIAL LANDING ON  
BETIO ISLAND, TARAUA ATOLL. REPORT  
COVERS 20-24 NOVEMBER 1943.

62071

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# U.S.S. SHERIDAN

28 November 1943

## Report on Gilbert Islands Operations, D-Day, 20 November 1943.

U.S.S. Sheridan participated in the capture of Tarawa Atoll, Gilbert Islands, in accordance with Operations Order A-104-43 as a unit of Task Force 53, Task Group 53.1, Task Group Section 53.1.1 in company with Task Group Sections 53.1.2 and 53.1.3, of U.S. Pacific Fleet, Fifth Amphibious Force. The First Battalion, Eight Regiment, of the Second Division, U.S.M.C., consisting of 1553 officers and men together with attached units, formed the landing team aboard this ship. Major L.C. Hayes, Jr. USMC commanded the landing teams. Various other vessels of the U.S. Pacific Fleet consisting of fire support, submarine screen, and air support units were present. U.S.S. MARYLAND (SOPA). Commodore Knowles in tactical command of the transport group on the U.S.S. MONROVIA.

The transport group arrived in transport area "ABLE" 6 miles northwest of Bititu Island, Tarawa Atoll at 0350. APA and AKA units of the group were disposed in the following formation on final approach course 090: Column 1- HARRIS, BELL, ORMSBY, FELAND, and BELLATRIX; Column 2- MONROVIA (guide), SHERIDAN, VIRGO, LA SALLE, and DOYEN; Column 3- HEYWOOD, ZEILIN, MIDDLETON; Column 4- BIDDLE, LEE, and THUBAN. The approach to transport area was uneventful. Condition I-A was set at 0216. Light east to south-east winds prevailed and continued during the period of the operation. Swell was from the same direction and was very light.

The landing craft carried aboard the SHERIDAN and participating in the assault on the Tarawa Atoll consisted of two LCM(3)s, twenty-two LCVP's, and two L.C.P.'s. At 0357, lowering of all boats was commenced and the last boat was put in the water at 0426. Two amphibious tractors attached to the landing team were put in the water, and were dispatched to the U.S.S. HEYWOOD and formed part of the initial assault waves. They did not return to this ship. At 0421, nine LCVP's were sent to the HEYWOOD to join part of the waves landing in assault on Red Beach No.2 carrying troops and equipment debarked from the HEYWOOD. Vessel maintained position in transport area "ABLE" awaiting orders for debarkation of Marine personnel. At 1125, November 20, 1943, four more LCVP's were sent to the HEYWOOD pursuant to orders. These boats operated thereafter subject to orders issued by the control vessel, the U.S.S. PURSUIT, or returned to the SHERIDAN and were available for duty as needed by that vessel or as needed elsewhere and dispatched on orders of the officer-in-charge of landing operations.

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D-Day (cont'd).

Naval bombardment commenced at about 0400 and continued until H-5. Aerial bombardment and strafing of the beach commenced at dawn, about 0600 and continued until H-5.

Condition One was set at 0606. At about 0630 a number of shells from shore batteries, presumed to be about 5 inch, were observed to fall in the vicinity of the SHERIDAN. Two salvos landed within 100 yards of our port quarter and near some LCVP's moving to various ships. Though falling close aboard, no hits were observed.

We retired from the transport area on orders, in a north-westerly direction. Various courses and speeds were used for a distance of about five miles. We secured from Condition One at 0744 and returned to the transport area at about 0800.

The H hour for first landing of assault waves was retarded from 0830 to 0900. It was reported that the first waves from the HEYWOOD, MIDDLETON and ZEILIN landed at 0913.

At 1114, this vessel commenced debarking landing teams 1-8, less detachments. These landing teams were debarked in 4 waves, each composed of 2 boat divisions. The waves were in charge of ship's officers as follows:

No. 1 Wave - Lieutenant (jg) H.N. Stephens, Wave Commander.	
Ensign J.J. Borgensen	Boat Division Comdr.
No. 2 Wave - Ensign D.G. Arter	Wave Commander.
Ensign D. Green	Boat Division Comdr.
No. 3 Wave - Ensign E.C. Fenton	Wave Commander.
Ensign E.T. Thomassen	Boat Division Comdr.
No. 4 Wave - Ensign N.S. Norburg	Wave Commander.
APC G. Broaddus	Boat Division Comdr.

Boat Group Commander - Lieutenant J. Fletcher.

Salvage Boat Commander - Lieutenant (jg) E.A. Heimberger.

This vessel had available nine LCVP's and two LCM(3)'s for debarking its' landing teams and it was necessary to obtain additional LCM(3)'s and LCVP's from other APA's and AKA's. Also available for duty in connection with this operation were the SHERIDAN's two LCP's. Boat No. 13 acted as salvage boat and Boat No. 14 acted as control boat.

D-Day (cont'd.).

When the four waves had been formed they were led to the PURSUIT by the SHERIDAN control boat. There they were ordered to stand by for further orders. The waves circled until about dusk when word came from the PURSUIT that an air attack was imminent. The boats scattered and firing was observed from the transport area. The waves then attempted to re-form but some of the boats were separated from their waves in the darkness. All remained in the vicinity of the PURSUIT, however, and at daybreak the waves began to form again.

L.S.T. 243 tied up along starboard side at 1500. Commenced transferring Marine Corps stores and equipment. 1815, set Condition One. Transport Group making preparations for leaving transport area "A", Radar contact with unidentified aircraft reported by screening vessels. At 1830, the L.S.T. 243 cast off. Transport Group got underway on Westerly course at speed 14 knots. U.S.S. MONROVIA was guide, (O.T.C.) was on the MARYLAND. At 1840 aircraft reported approaching. Some ships in transport and screen groups commenced firing toward a point north of the formation. No targets were observed, and this ship did not fire. Other ships ceased firing at 1842. Formation returned to transport area "ABLE" at 2342 and continued lying to in the general vicinity of the area.

At 1211 four Marines, wounded in action were received aboard and treated by ship's medical department.

#### **Report on Gilbert Islands Operations - D plus 1 day - 21 Nov.1943.**

Aboard the ship at 0525, set Condition I, Radar contact on unidentified aircraft reported in vicinity by screening vessels. Vessel remained in or near transport area. 0615, secured Condition I and re-set Condition I-A. L.S.T. 243 tied up along starboard side at 0630. Started discharging Marine Corps supplies and equipment.

Naval gunfire and aerial bombardment continued intermittently throughout the day on assigned targets on Bititu Island.

Shortly after daybreak the SHERIDAN control boat carrying Lieutenant Fletcher and Major Hays, Commanding Officer of the Marines aboard, came alongside the Wave Commander's boats and the various Wave Commanders were ordered to leave immediately and land on Red Beach No. 2, Bititu Island.

The wave commanders were informed that the beach was secured and the Marine Officers in the boats were ordered to advance as far as their own advance lines and dig in.

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D-Day Plus 1 (cont'd.).

The waves were hurriedly formed and left for the beach, the first wave landing at 0615, the second wave landing five minutes later, and the third wave landing 15 minutes after first wave. Contrary to what was expected heavy machine gun and sniper fire was encountered by each wave. The landing was made on a coral reef 500-700 yards from the shore which prevented the boats from reaching the shore. The night before a small Japanese ship had been struck and set afire by naval gunfire and had been beached at about the right hand or western limit of Red Beach No. 2. A pier extending seaward from the shore formed the left hand or eastern bounds of Red Beach No. 2. The troops disembarked from the boats into a withering fire from Jap snipers and machine guns which had apparently been set up on the pier and in the beached ship. Fire was also apparently coming from several points on the beach and snipers were also firing from several boats overturned or stuck on the reef. The only other fire which was observed was one mortar or artillery shell which struck amidst the boats of the second boat division of the third wave.

The fourth wave carried jeeps and other heavier equipment and was ordered at the control boat to lie off and not attempt to land. However, APC Broaddus in command of the second boat division of the fourth wave was orderd to land his troops. This boat was taken in until stopped by the coral reef and encountered heavy machine gun and sniper fire. The troops disembarked but the fire was so heavy that Major Otty, in charge of the Marines, ordered them back in the boat and they withdrew out of range of the gunfire.

Casualties to Naval personnel were as follows: Coxswain Mc Hale of the KA19 was killed while acting as coxswain of the boat carrying APC Broaddus in the fourth wave. H.R. Noblitt, Coxswain of a boat in the first wave sustained a fractured right arm.

The boats in the three waves which landed, backed off the reef and returned to the SHERIDAN or to their parent ship. The boats of the fourth wave became separated from the Wave Commander but it is believed that they delivered their troops and equipment at the pier at the east boundary of Red Beach No. 2 after the beach head had been established. The boat carrying Ensign Norburg remained in the area in accordance with his orders and was not able to unload until approximately 1530 on 22 November at this pier.

D-Day Plus 1 (cont'd).

The L.S.T. cast off at 1440 after embarking various of the LT 1-8 attached units. At 1858 L.S.T. 243 tied up along the starboard side again. During the day 53 wounded Marine casualties were received on board. Nine dead Marine casualties were buried at sea with Ship's Chaplain officiating.

About 1600, Ensign J.J. Borgenson left the ship with one LCVP to deliver 6 life rafts to Green Beach on Bititu Island pursuant to orders received by the Commanding Officer of this ship. However when this officer reached the beach a rubber boat landing was in progress and he was informed that there was no need for the rafts on that beach. Consequently, the party returned to the ship with the rafts.

**Report on Gilbert Island Operations - D plus 2 Day, 22 Nov.1943**

Radar contact on unidentified aircraft reported by radar screen vessels at 0400. Set condition 1. Cast off L.S.T. 243. At 0423 set course 270° T speed 14 knots and steamed ten miles west, returning to transport at 0630. No aircraft were observed from this ship, and condition I-A was re-set at 0610. Intermittent naval gunfire from destroyers within the lagoon and aerial bombardment and strafing were observed throughout the day. At 1120 the ship proceeded from transport area "ABLE" to a position about 2 miles west of Bititu Island, and anchored in 25 fathoms of water one mile from the reef. Anchorage bearings, S.W. Tangent Bititu Island, 153°T Beacon on Bikeman Is. 081°T. During the afternoon two attached units of LT 1-8 consisting of G artillery and the task platoon and equipment were debarked into LCM's and sent to Green Beach. Remainder of ship's beach party left the ship at 1500 with orders to report to Lieutenant Dorrance, beachmaster, on Red Beach No. 2. Heaved up anchor at 1900 and got underway on various courses and speeds maneuvering to maintain station on U.S.S. MONROVIA in general vicinity of transport area "ABLE". Ensign Borgensen left at 1900 with various of attached unit personnel with orders to proceed to Diana Island. He had 10 LCVP's, one of which was towing 5 rubber boats, in his charge.

During the day, 23 Marine wounded were brought aboard. Two wounded Marines died and were buried at sea with the ship's Chaplain officiating.

**Report on Gilbert Island Operations, D-plus 3 Day, 23 Nov. 1943.**

At 0410 radar contact on unidentified aircraft reported by screening vessels. Set condition 1. Transport group got underway on Westerly course, speed 15 knots. Enemy planes reported over Tarawa Atoll at 0445. Returning to transport area "ABLE" at 0555. Secured condition 1 and set condition I-A. Intermittent naval gunfire from destroyers within the lagoon was observed throughout the day.

1456, orders were received to prepare for reembarkation of landing team, and condition I-A was set. 1710, secured condition I-A, and set condition III. 1750, got underway on Westerly course, speed 13 knots, to a point about 8 miles west. At 1851 changed course to an easterly course returning to transport area. 2005, returned to transport area "ABLE" and maneuvering to keep station on U.S.S. MONROVIA (O.T.C. and guide).

During this day, 33 wounded were received aboard of whom two died and were buried at sea with the ship's Chaplain officiating.

During the afternoon of this day the following message was received by TBX from Lieutenant Fletcher, boat group commander; "Senior Beach Master (BM0) has ordered us to remain on Cora Island for at least three days more due to the fact that we are the only beach party over here and have to work Cora Island."

**Report on Gilbert Island Operations, D-plus 4 Day, 24 Nov. 1943.**

0000, underway on various courses and speeds in area to Westward of Tarawa Atoll under orders from U.S.S. MONROVIA (O.T.C. and guide). 0511, set condition 1. 0603, secured condition I, and set condition I-A. 0645, returned to transport area "ABLE".

1200, commenced reembarking LT 1-8, and embarking LT 3-8 with attached units. 1304, completed reembarkation of troops. last of the boat pool composed of 1 officer and nineteen enlisted men sent ashore. At 1453, received the following message from Commander Task Group 53.1: "Beach parties have been ordered to secure. Report when aboard."

1719, got underway from Transport Area on course 270°, speed 13.5 knots on orders from U.S.S. MONROVIA (O.T.C. and guide). At this time the beach party and most of our boats and boat crews had not yet returned to the ship. We were ordered to get underway without them and left 5 officers and 75 enlisted men behind.

**D-plus 4 Day (cont'd.).**

1725, set condition 1. The wake of a periscope was sighted from this ship bearing 027 true, 2,000 yards distant. Ships in formation carried out a series of emergency maneuvers on orders from the O.T.C. in U.S.S. MARYLAND. At 1740 secured from condition 1, and set condition III. Transport Group now headed on Easterly course, and disposed as follows: Port column - HEYWOOD, BIDDLE, LA SALLE,; Starboard column - MONROVIA (guide), DOYEN, and SHERIDAN. At 1835, set course 110°T to proceed on route "United" to Pearl Harbor, T. H.

During this day four wounded were brought aboard and two men were buried at sea.

During the operation, boats of this and other ships were refueled and repaired. The boat repair crews under Ensign Williams and Chief Machinist Lamb were very active. Many of the boats were damaged on the coral reefs and required repairs to the motors, propellers or propeller shafts or to the hull. The machinists replaced 22 propellers, 6 propeller shafts and 6 cylinder liners. One boat which had been submerged, was put back in operation with new electrical equipment and the engine overhauled. No boats were out of operation except two, for more than one hour for such repairs. Twenty-two boats were repaired by the carpenters under Ensign Williams and no repair work required over 40 minutes time.

Attached to this report are statements submitted by each wave commander and boat division commanders concerning their participation in the operations. Also attached is a statement submitted by Lieutenant (jg) E.A. Heimberger, boat salvage officer. Unfortunately, information as to the activities of Lieutenant J.E. Fletcher, boat group commander, and Lieutenant S.E. Dorrance, beachmaster, are not available as these officers and the beach party were not aboard when the SHERIDAN was ordered to put to sea and retire from Tarawa. As soon as the reports of Lieutenant Fletcher and Lieutenant Dorrance can be obtained they will be forwarded to supplement this report.

(not signed)  
J.J. MOCKRISH,  
Commander, D-M, U.S.N.R.,  
Commanding,

(stamp) 12 01892

U.S.S. SHERIDAN

From: The Commanding Officer U.S.S. SHERIDAN.

1. From our arrival in Transport Area at Tarawa until departure on the evening of November 24, 1943, the actions and attention to duty of both officers and men was highly commendable and up to the best traditions of the Navy. Not a single instance was seen by me or reported to me that would require censorship.

2. Commander R.M. Ingram, D-V(G), USNR, as the Executive Officer of this ship performed his duties in a creditable manner. Due to his carrying out his duties with promptness, intelligence, energy and untiring effort he received cooperation from all hands which made the accomplishment of this ships duties a success.

3. Lt. William W. West, as Communication Officer, performed his duties in a manner worthy of a much more experienced officer. His department operated efficiently and with fine coordination under most trying circumstances. He did a fine job.

4. Lieutenant John T. GARROW, the First Lieutenant, handled his department with ability. He was assisted by Lieutenant (junior grade) Harold TERRIO at the after end of the ship and Boatswain James J. HALL, forward. Boats were despatched promptly, discharging of troops and cargo was well handled. No delays occurred. Splendid cooperation existed at all times between Marines loading details and Ships Company details.

5. Ensign Charles F. WILLIAMS and Chief Machinist Russell I. LAMB, with their crews did an outstanding job of keeping our boats repaired and running, as well as repairing boats from other ships which were received alongside in a damaged condition. During the entire operation no boat was laid up for repairs more than a few hours.

6. Our boat crews were directed by Lieutenant John E. Fletcher as boat group commander. His duties required him to be away most of the time. He handled inexperienced boat crews and beach details with unusual ability. In the handling of boats he was assisted by Lt. (jg) Howard N. Stephens, Ensign Norman S. Norburg, Ensign David Green, Ensign David G. Arter, Ensign Edmund T. Thomassen, Ensign James J. Borgensen, and APC Garland H. Broaddus. The Beach Party was directed by Lieutenant Sumter E. Dorrance. The salvage Boat was directed by Lieutenant (jg) Edward A. Heimberger. Statements received on board from returned Marine Officers who landed with our boats and boat officers was highly complimentary as to the manner in which the boat formations were handled, the skill and determination of the coxswains in landing troops by advancing their boats as near to the beach as was possible under heavy enemy machine gun fire.

7. The beach party, commanded by Lt. Sumter E. Dorrance also came under high praise from returning Marine Officers. One particularly fine job

U.S.S. SHERIDAN

of dock repairing under fire was done under the direct supervision of Carpenter Elbert P. Sills a member of this beach party.

8. The Medical Department under Lieutenant Commander Milton B. SMALL, assisted by Lieutenant (junior grade) Raymond M. SLABAUGH and corpsmen and assisted by some Marine doctors and corpsmen aboard was heavily taxed on a basis of personnel aboard and facilities but was capably and skilfully handled. Our junior Medical Officer, Lieutenant (junior grade) Donald L. MEAMBER was ashore with the Beach Party and a number of corpsmen.

9. The Chaplain, Lieutenant Joseph T. KEOWN, was untiring in his duties of burying the dead and assisting the wounded as he could.

10. Food and supplies were available at all times. All boat crews from any ship were fed and fueled if required when they came alongside, day or night.

11. The Engineering Department under Lieutenant James McENRY was efficiently handled without casualties during the entire period.

12. Many of our officers aboard have not been mentioned by name. This does not mean that they were less attentive or exercised less initiative in carrying out their duties which they performed exceedingly well. This statement is true in every respect to all of the crew aboard the U.S.S. SHERIDAN. It is my opinion that every department was very efficiently handled. All officers and men without exception carried out their orders and duties in creditable manner and reflects credit to this ship. All hands did a fine job.

(not signed)  
J.J. MOCKRISH.

U.S.S. SHERIDAN

28 November 1943

From: The Executive Officer  
To : The Commanding Officer  
Subject: Battle of Tarawa - comments regarding.

1. In commenting generally on the actions of our officers and men from the morning of November 20th, when we arrived in the transport area off Tarawa, until our departure on the evening of November 24th, the actions and attention to duty of both officers and men was highly commendable and up to the best traditions of the Navy. Not a single instance was seen by me or reported to me that would require censorship.

2. Lieutenant John T. GARROW, the First Lieutenant, handled his department with ability. He was assisted by Lieutenant (junior grade) Harold TERRIO at the after end of the ship and Boatswain James J. HALL, forward. Boats were despatched promptly, discharging of troops and cargo was well handled. No delays occurred. Splendid cooperation existed at all times between Marines loading details and Ships Company details.

3. Ensign Charles F. WILLIAMS and Chief Machinist Russell I. LAMB, with their crews did an outstanding job of keeping our boats repaired and running, as well as repairing boats from other ships which were received alongside in a damaged condition. During the entire operation no boat was laid up for repairs more than a few hours.

4. Lieutenant John E. Fletcher as boat group commander was away from the ship most of the time. He handled inexperienced boat crews and beach details with unusual ability. This statement is based on the reports of the Marine landing Teams commanders who were landed in our boats.

5. The boat wave commanders and division commanders carried out their duties with skill and efficiency. These officers consisted of Lieutenant (junior grade) Howard N. STEPHENS, Ensign Norman S. NORBURG, Ensign David GREEN, Ensign David G. ARTER, Ensign Edmund T. THOMASSEN, Ensign James J. BORGENSEN, and Acting Pay Clerk Garland H. BROADDUS.

6. Our coxswains, based on the reports I have received, were skilful in handling their boats and determined in landing troops, under heavy enemy machine gun fire. Their boats were advanced to the beach just as far as they could go before the troops were ordered to disembark.

U.S.S. SHERIDAN

7. The Beach Party, commanded by Lieutenant Sumter E. DORRANCE, was not observed by me at any time after they left the ship. The reports from our officers who contacted them is highly creditable. One particularly fine job of dock repair under fire is reported as being handled by our men under the direction of Carpenter Elbert P. SILLS of our Beach Party.

8. Lieutenant (junior grade) Edward A. HEIMBERGER in the salvage boat, with its crew performed their duties of salvaging and evacuating wounded and dying under fire with courage and determination.

9. As was to be expected under the conditions we were faced with, communications played a very important part and Lieutenant William W. WEST and his department operated efficiently and with fine coordination. A splendid job was done.

10. The Medical Department under Lieutenant Commander Milton B. SMALL, assisted by Lieutenant (junior grade) Raymond M. SLABAUGH and corpsmen and assisted by some Marine doctors and corpsmen aboard was heavily taxed on a basis of personnel aboard and facilities but was capably and skillfully handled. Our junior Medical Officer, Lieutenant (junior grade) Donald L. MEAMBER was ashore with the Beach Party and a number of corpsmen.

11. The Chaplain, Lieutenant Joseph T. KEOWN, was untiring in his duties of burying the dead and assisting the wounded as he could.

12. Many of our officers aboard ship have not been mentioned by name in this report to you but that does not mean that they were less attentive to duties or exercised less initiative in carrying them out. They all did well without exception. Their duties under the circumstances were not usual and they were performed well. This same statement is true in every detail to all our crew.

13. Food and supplies were available at all times. All boat crews from any ship were fed and fueled if required when they came alongside, day or night.

14. The Engineering Department under Lieutenant James McENRY was efficiently handled without casualties during the entire period.

U.S.S. SHERIDAN

15. Again, in summarizing, it is my opinion that every department was efficiently and properly handled; that our officers and men without exception were attentive to their duties and orders and carried on in a very satisfactory manner and reflect credit to this ship. Not a single case worthy of censorship was noted.

(signature)  
R.M. INGRAM  
Commander, D-V(G) USNR  
Executive Officer

U.S.S. SHERIDAN

28 November 1943

From: The Senior Medical Officer

1. On "D" day the Medical Department began to prepare for casualties early in the morning by setting up their equipment in the different battle dressing stations. Our own medical staff and corpsmen were assisted by the Medical Officers and Corpsmen attached to the Marines on board. This allowed us two doctors, and several corpsmen for each battle dressing station.

2. The Troop Officers' Wardroom was utilized as a collecting station and first aid station. The Dental Officers were assigned there, as assistants to the Medical Officers.

3. Our corpsmen manned the different supply rooms, diet kitchen, pharmacy, laboratory and assisted at each dressing station.

4. The first casualties to come aboard arrived late in the afternoon of the first day. They were four in number and none were dangerously wounded. Each one was carefully attended to and admitted to sick bay.

5. On the second day, casualties began to come in great numbers. These consisted of gunshot wounds of the head, chest, abdomen and extremities. The majority of these were serious wounds such as wound of the abdomen, chest and fractured and shattered joints. Each man was quickly and thoroughly examined and x-rayed where deemed advisable. Practically all cases were treated for shock by large volumes of plasma, whole blood and intravenous solutions, as these cases had been exposed to severe hardships for several hours due to the inability of evacuation from the beach to the ships. Following this the various casualties were treated according to the type of wound incurred.

6. The after care of all patients has been excellent and under careful management, and as of this date there are no dangerously wounded aboard.

7. We treated approximately one hundred thirty cases during the campaign and a large percentage of these were serious cases. Twelve men were buried at sea. Five of these came aboard dead, two dying a few minutes after arrival and the others were hopeless cases.

8. As a whole the Medical Department functioned as a well coordinated unit. There was no excitement, bungling or undue delay in the handling and treatment of the wounded. I wish to commend my staff and corpsmen for their splendid work

9. We were fortunate in having the assistance of the Medical Officers and Corpsmen attached to the Marines. Drs. Sussex and Weston were especially helpful.

(signature)  
M.B. SMALL

U.S.S. SHERIDAN

26 November 1943

Report of the First Wave of LCV'Ps from the U.S.S. SHERIDAN.

Boat group No. 11 went over the nets to the LCVP No. 26 at 0930 and continued to circle and lead the first wave until all the waves were formed and ready to start for the control vessel in the lagoon. Arrival at the control vessel was made at about 1300 and from that hour until 0600 the next morning the first wave was held intact and constantly moving in the area. About 2200 we were all informed that a landing could not be made at Beach Red No. 2 due to the coral reefs and tidal conditions. The only feature of interest occurring during the long night was the accidental explosion of a hand grenade in the boat. One of the Marines had three grenades packed in a canteen pouch which he placed in a corner of the boat. On either side of the pouch he placed water canteens, and on top he placed his automatic rifle and his pack. The freak explosion rendered him momentarily unconscious but luckily did not injure a soul. Only damage it caused was the bending of the rifle, bursting of the two canteens, and slight damage to the boat structure.

At 0615 we received orders to land at Beach Red 2, so we formed our waves and proceeded toward the beach in open V formation. Half way in, before the line of departure, an LCVP with a Captain (Marine) aboard came alongside with the news that the beach had been secured. He instructed each team officer to land the men and take them as far as the present lines and hold these positions until more men were landed. This news was the best we had heard and all of us in the first wave felt easier about the landing.

When the wave was about 300 yards from Beach Red 2 occasional sniper fire broke out from the beach. However when the reef was hit and the ramps let down machine gun fire poured at us from a nest on the dock to our left, two points on the beach ahead, and from a sunken hull on our right. The first three or four men off the ramp were hit badly, but the rest of Marine Group No. 11 gamely proceeded into the water which was about waist deep. By this time most of the six boats of the first wave had hit the reef and had unloaded. The fire from the machine guns and snipers was striking the boats and cutting down many of the Marines in the water. We suggested to the men in the water that we had better keep the boats in, to protect them, but they told us to follow the plan and retire so other waves could get in to help them take the beach. Most all the Marines by this time were ducking clear under the water to escape the fire of the machine guns. We backed off the reef and turned off to the right, passed the sunken hull, where we had a few more shots fired at us.

U.S.S. SHERIDAN

The boat crews of the entire first wave should be commended for their cool work in handling their boats under fire. They did a fine job in landing all the Marines and getting every boat away and safely back to the U.S.S. SHERIDAN. On a beach of that type it is remarkable that there was not more loss of boats from all ships involved.

(signature)  
H.N. Stephens,  
Lieutenant (jg) USNR,  
Wave Commander, First Wave.

U.S.S. SHERIDAN

29 November 1943.

Activity of Salvage Boat No. 13.

Boat No. 13, Salvage, went into the water at dawn on D-day, and worked as assistant control boat to the Boat Group Commander (Lieutenant FLETCHER), until mid-afternoon at which time orders were received to report to the U.S.S. PURSUIT in company with the rest of the boats from the U.S.S. SHERIDAN. She continued assistant control boat work under Lieutenant FLETCHER in the vicinity of the PURSUIT until dawn the following morning (D plus 1 day) at which time orders were received to land the waves on Beach Red 2. Two disabled LCVP's claimed her attention and she arrived at the Line of Departure reporting to Lieutenant FLETCHER as the LCVP's were returning.

The troops had suffered many casualties on landing and the beach was covered with dead and wounded. About 150 Marines, 100 of which were wounded, remained waist deep in the water, suffering rapidly mounting casualties from strafing by several machine gun nests on the end of the pier, in the sunken ship, and by numerous snipers in abandoned AmpTracs and LCVP's. There were few boats about so Lieutenant FLETCHER and the writer took it upon themselves to aid the men. Boat No. 14, under Lieutenant FLETCHER, and Salvage Boat No. 13, made three or four trips each picking up wounded men and carrying them out to LCM's from which they were transferred to ships.

On the third or fourth trip, Boat No. 13 suffered a damaged propeller and the Salvage Officer ordered her to return to the SHERIDAN with her wounded. Boat No. 14 had already left the scene carrying a heavy load of badly wounded men directly to the SHERIDAN, so it was necessary for the Salvage Officer to take over another LCVP for the next trip. For the first time the boat was strafed while picking up the wounded. There were no casualties. By this time the incoming tide was giving the wounded men a bad time of it and increased strafing was adding rapidly to the list of casualties. Stepped up measures were considered necessary. The Salvage Officer therefore decided to take in several LCVP's in an attempt to pick up all the remaining men in the water at once. Accordingly, on that return trip, he directed the coxswain to drop him at the nearest LCVP and continue on with his wounded to the nearest ship.

The writer boarded LCVP PA3-9 (uncertain about boat number) and took over four LCVP's nearby, ordering them to transfer their extra passengers to LCM's, retaining only the boat crews and to follow him to the beach.

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Halfway to the beach (2,000 yards out), bullets were dropping around the boats with increasing force. This development suggested that the enemy might have added to their fire-power so some approached the area more slowly in an effort to locate the enemy's gun positions and the extent of the added fire-power. It was found to be coming from the sunken hull (thought to have been knocked out by div-bombers an hour or two earlier) and also from a machine-gun nest at the end of the pier. Miscellaneous snipers and island-based guns were also present. All LCVP's were ordered to fire on these positions and this seemed to silence the enemy temporarily.

Because of the lay of the coral, the position of the men in the water, the tide, and the hazards of a concentration of boats, this officer decided that taking off the men with one boat at a time would be the best plan. The other boats were to lay to a few hundred yards off and attempt to keep the machine-gun nests quiet with their thirty calibers.

The lead boat, LCVP PA3-9 (question), went in first and began taking on the wounded. A sniper in a wrecked LCVP about 40 feet away became a problem and work was halted a moment while the boat's two 30 caliber guns worked him over. He was killed and work was resumed.

The skill and coolness of the coxswain of this boat must be noted here. He kept perfect control of his boat against a strong current, holding her off of the wounded men and yet close enough to make possible the lifting of the men from the water and yet not ground the boat on the coral. An additional mental hazard was the fact that the boat contained about eight large drums of gasoline that were in danger of being set off by incendiaries that were penetrating the hull and ricocheting around the interior of the boat. 60 caliber, armor-piercing bullets were also found in the boat afterwards. Against these difficulties the coxswain and his crew responded to orders quickly and efficiently without regard for their personal safety, and in all ways conducted themselves in a manner befitting men of the United States Navy.

Finally the last of the wounded men, thirteen in all, were lifted into the boat, leaving about thirty-five men in the water, unharmed as yet, but without rifles. They refused to come into the boat and asked this officer to bring them back something to fight with. They wanted to make another try at getting ashore.

At this point the strafing became quite intense, and, there being nothing left to do, the coxswain was ordered to back off, which he did with his usual business-like precision, in spite of bullets singing around his head and crashing through the boat.

29 November 1943.

The men, meanwhile, were stamping out the incendiaries before they could do any damage. The wounded were fairly safe lying in the bottom of the boat their weight and the weight of the gasoline drums brought the deck a foot or two below the waterline. The other boats were ordered to lay to out of danger and await further orders.

On the return trip, the free boat containing Colonel HALL and other officers, was observed speeding toward the beach in company with several boats. It was thought advisable to inform Colonel HALL of this added fire-power and their positions. Colonel HALL noted this information, transferred a medical officer from his boat to LCVP PA3-9 to administer to the wounded men, and ordered the writer to report to Commodore McGOVERN on the U.S.S. PURSUIT. This was done and Commodore McGOVERN ordered this officer to take the wounded to the nearest ship and report back to him.

The writer questioned the wounded men concerning the enemy's power and position and noted the information on paper. The wounded were taken aboard the U.S.S. SHERIDAN and the LCVP PA3-9 returned to its' ship. A freshly equipped Salvage Boat was made ready and the return trip to the U.S.S. PURSUIT was made accompanying two AmpTracs loaded with 37 MM ammunition. He reported to Commodore McGOVERN, submitted the information, and was ordered to take the two AmpTracs to the beach immediately. This was done.

Inasmuch as certain future amphibious landings may be made on coral, it is possible that wounded men may of necessity be picked up out of shallow water by LCVP's. The following suggestion is respectfully submitted:

"The writer believes he caused great additional damage to badly wounded men when he had to lift them from the water up over the high freeboard of the LCVP's, and then lower them to the deck. Conditions made it necessary to grab hold of a man wherever possible and sometimes it was necessary to haul him aboard by taking hold of a badly broken arm or leg. This undoubtedly aggravated the injuries. It is suggested that in future similar situations a stretcher might be lowered to the water, the man floated over the stretcher and hoisted aboard by hand lines on the stretcher with men in the water assisting by lifting underneath. The names of two wounded men who were subjected to the above rough handling are submitted that they may be examined and questioned on the above problem:

J.C. GIBSON, Co. B 1st Battalion, 8th Marines.  
G.G. LANGENHAM, A Co. 1st Battalion, 8th Marines."

29 November 1943.

By this time the Marines had secured the pier so the writer reported to the Chief Beachmaster for orders, and then relieved Lieutenant FLETCHER in the control boat, but only for a few moments, as Lieutenant FLETCHER, although he had been going without relief or rest for three days, refused to leave his job. The writer then worked on the pier for the balance of the day for Colonel SALAZAR, and Captain FARKAS, expediting the movement of supplies wherever he was able.

Snipers slowed movement of material along pier and CBM FABIAN directed the writer to report to Major COOPER and Captain WALTERS in an effort to expedite movement of certain much needed ammunition by following the order up personally from requisition to delivery. This was done, utilizing men, hand trucks, and motor trucks wherever necessary. Another sniper was killed by the writer during these movements.

The following day the writer was directed to do reconnaissance on Beach Green with Major SHARPENBURG, and Lieutenant DORRANCE. Survey was made, but damaged propeller caused boat to be hoisted aboard the U.S.S. MONROVIA for repairs. Major SHARPENBURG reported to Major ATKINSON, then to Commodore KNOWLES who directed party to report to Admiral HILL on the U.S.S. MARYLAND. This was done.

Returned to pier, made report to Colonel SALAZAR. At this point orders came for the writer to return to the U.S.S. SHERIDAN. He obtained a boat and complied with the orders.

(signature)  
Edward A. HEIMBERGER,  
Lieutenant (junior grade), USNR.  
Salvage Boat Commander.

U.S.S. SHERIDAN

25 November 1943.

Left the U.S.S. SHERIDAN 12:30 PM, November 20, 1943 (Saturday) with 2 tank lighters and 3 LCV's. I was in lead in a tank lighter carrying 2 hospital jeeps, hospital supplies and 15 hospital corpsmen under Lieutenant Smith, USNR. APC Broaddus was boat division commander. Followed third wave to U.S.S. PURSUIT control vessel and on arrival there was ordered to stand by and await further orders. My wave circled all night in the vicinity of the control vessel. About dawn I saw Waves 1, 2 and 3 begin to form and move off from the control vessel. Lieutenant Fletcher in the U.S.S. SHERIDAN control boat came by my boat and told me our orders were to proceed to Red Beach No. 2 which was reported friendly and land our troops and equipment. I followed Wave 3 timed so as to hit the beach 10 minutes after Wave 2. When I reached the SHERIDAN control boat Lieutenant Fletcher told me I would have trouble landing the jeeps but I went in to determine how far in toward the beach I could go. Lieutenant Fletcher held up the rest of the wave. My boat could not get closer than 2 or 3 hundred yards from the beach. Water was waist deep which was too deep for the jeeps so I backed off returned to the boat group commander, Lieutenant Fletcher, and reported to him. He instructed me to lay off. The rest of my wave had disappeared. Another boat group commander told me to lay off the DD marking the line of departure. I did so and then was sent to the U.S.S. PURSUIT. About 1800 I was instructed to land at the pier at Red Beach No. 2 at 2300. On arrival I was instructed to lie off. We remained there all night. About 0400 of the next morning, November 22, 1943 the island underwent an air raid. The beach was bombed and about 20 feet from my boat, a bomb struck the water. At dawn I approached the pier and was again told to lie off. We did so until about 1200 when we were told they were ready to unload our boat at the pier. We unloaded our troops and supplies about 1530 but they refused to unload our 2 jeeps. We picked up six casualties and returned to the U.S.S. SHERIDAN.

On the first attempt to land on November 21, 1943 and on every occasion when we approached the beach we encountered machine gun fire which was especially heavy during the initial landing. We also encountered sniper fire on November 22. While lying off the beach we encountered scattered fire which apparently was coming from some distance away.

(signature)

Norman S. Norburg, Ensign, USNR,  
Commander Wave No. 4.

U.S.S. SHERIDAN

26 November 1943.

Condition I-A was set aboard the U.S.S. SHERIDAN early Saturday morning, November 20, 1943. We stood by until about 0830 or 0900, when we were ordered to debark by Plan No. 1.

I entered boat No. 7, the first boat to come alongside Net No. 3, with Vollmer, my TBY operator, and was followed by Boat Team No. 31.

Wave No. 2 rendezvoused off the starboard bow, position we maintained for several hours, until we followed the control boat off to the U.S.S. PURSUIT. At the U.S.S. PURSUIT we maintained our wave formation until dusk, awaiting orders to go into the beach. About nightfall there was an air alert, and we were instructed to scatter, but to remain in the vicinity of the PURSUIT. When the alert was over we attempted to re-form our waves, but it was too dark by that time to accomplish our purpose. Accordingly we lay to and circled close to the U.S.S. PURSUIT all night.

At about 0515 in the morning, while we were trying to get the wave together again, the word was passed by Lieutenant Fletcher that we would move in to Red Beach No. 2 at once. Lieutenant Fletcher led off, followed by Wave No. 1, about 0545. We fell in behind in our proper order, and the information was passed back to us that Red Beach No. 2 was secured, and that we should encounter little or no opposition.

As we approached the beach, Lieutenant Fletcher pulled out to one side, toward the pier, and the first wave went on. We followed at about a five-minute interval. Coming closer to the beach, we could see and hear gunfire, and as soon as Wave No. 1 was seen to be backing off, we changed from a "V" formation to line abreast, and went in at maximum speed.

About 100 yards off the beach, we approached Marines wading in to the beach, and hit coral. Seeing we could go no further, we lowered the ramp, and the Marines disembarked. We were under gunfire for two hundred yards before we stopped.

When the Marines were out, we raised our ramp, and worked the boat off the coral. We kept as far toward Beach No. 1 as we could to avoid the waves coming in, and on passing Lieutenant Fletcher, asked for instructions. We were told to return at once to the U.S.S. SHERIDAN.

We made our way through the reefs to deep water, and proceeded to the U.S.S. SHERIDAN at low speed because of our damaged propeller. We arrived at the SHERIDAN about 0800 Sunday morning, November 21, 1943.

(signature)  
D.G. ARTER, Ensign, USNR,  
Commander Wave No. 2.

U.S.S. SHERIDAN

27 November 1943.

Subject: Landing of Marine Troops by Navy personnel on Bititu Island of the Tarawa Group, Gilbert Islands. Troops taken ashore via Navy LCVP's and LCM's.

Our first wave left the Control Vessel about 0630 on the morning of November 21. Half way between the Control Vessel and the line of departure our wave was stopped by an LCVP containing a Marine Captain who informed each of the six boats in our wave to strike at Red Beach Number two and advance forward until met by Marine troops who were already ashore. About 200 hundred yards off the beach I noticed sniper's shots hitting the water about our boat. One hundred yards off the beach we were stopped by coral and could advance no farther. The ramps of the six boats were lowered and the Marines entered the water and began wading towards shore. Immediately upon lowering the ramps the Japs cut loose with machine gun fire. In my own boat all the Marines got into the water without being hit first. We then pulled up the ramp and started to back off the coral. Heading back to the ship we stayed clear of the oncoming waves and about 250 yards off the beach we struck more coral. The boats behind me backed off the coral, entered the clear channel, and started back to the SHERIDAN. The one boat that was in front of me (about 100 feet) contained an injured Marine, and this boat was high on the coral because of the high speed it had struck it. I left my boat and swam and waded forward to the boat ahead of me to see if we could remove the injured man. The man had a head injury which we dressed and I could see that he was in no condition to be carried thru the water back to my boat. I went back to my own boat unloaded the crew and everything heavy on some shallow coral and started to worm my way up to the other boat. After a half hour I reached the boat and transferred its crew and everything heavy to my boat and I climbed into the boat that contained the Marine. Picking my way slowly I finally worked clear of the coral and started back to the ship. The crew that was in my boat picked up my crew who were still standing on the coral and followed me back to the ship. Enroute I had to stop and redress the Marine's injury as the motion of the boat caused more bleeding. The man's injury consisted of a bullet wound on the top of his head. We arrived back at the ship at 1030. Much praise is due to the crews of the two boats, both in the landing and in the rescue. Boat #17, Coxswain Hester, deck hands, Herbert and Hageman and Eng. Haver and of boat #23, Coxswain Robinson, deck hands, Way and Warren and Eng. Berquist.

That same afternoon I was ordered by our Executive Officer Comdr. R.M. Ingram, to take one LCVP and deliver six life rafts on Bititu Island on Green Beach. We left the ship towing the rafts about 1600 and arrived at Green Beach one hour later.

There was much coral there and we headed in towards the north end of Green Beach where I could see six LCM's near the shore. When we got to them I could see that each boat carried a small tank and that they were stuck on the coral. An officer in one of the boats informed me that the rafts were probably to be used on South Green Beach where a rubber boat landing was commencing. After heading for South Green Beach and approximately 100 to 150 yards from the six LCM's the Japs cut loose with machine gun fire at the six boats and the LCM's

U.S.S. SHERIDAN

retaliated. There was no firing at our boat, however.

When we reached the southern end of Green Beach there was a rubber boat landing in progress and an officer (probably the boat commander) seeing us coming waved our boat to one side. By the time the rubber boat landing was completed it was dark and another LCVP lying nearby went in to ask the officer if he knew where on Green Beach there was a need for the six rafts we were towing. The answer that came back was that he (the officer) was sure the rafts were not wanted on Green Beach and he suggested we return to our ship which we did.

The following afternoon I was ordered to take Marine troops and equipment to the northwest corner of Diana Beach. We left the ship at 1900 (November 22) with a complement of ten boats, the last one of which was pulling five rubber rafts. On the way towards Diana we struck the edge of a coral bed which disrupted our wave and in the poor visibility three of the boats (one of which was towing the rafts) became separated from the other seven. It was later learned that the rafts had broken loose and it took some time and the three boats to collect them. I had no knowledge that we were missing the three boats until shortly afterward I formed a circle and discovered them missing. With the walkie-talky in our boat we called the patrol of Marines already on Diana and they informed us not to look for the lost boats but come directly to the beach.

A short time later I discovered that the Bikeman Islet Beacon, on which I had based my course from the ship to Diana, was not lighted. We then had to call the beach again and they guided us in by blinking lights from the shore.

We brought our boats in, got them over the coral and with manual pushing aid from the marines who came out into the water, we got all the boats almost up on the beach where they were quickly unloaded.

The unloaded boats backed off the beach and put out their anchors and stayed there all night. If necessary they were to be used by the Marines the next morning.

After my boat was unloaded I started back to find our lost three boats and fifteen boats from the U.S.S. HEYWOOD which had not arrived by the time we left. We later saw the column of boats heading for the Diana beach and my boat started back to our ship, arriving shortly after daylight.

(signature)  
J.J. BORGENSON  
Ensign, USNR.

U.S.S. SHERIDAN

November 26, 1943

As Wave Commander of Wave No. 3, I disembarked from the U.S.S. SHERIDAN on D-Day in an LCM (3) with First Lieutenant SELZAR, U.S.M.C., 12 men and two 37 mm guns and a caterpillar tractor. Our wave rendezvoused near the SHERIDAN and then followed Wave No. 2 to the control vessel, the U.S.S. PURSUIT. There we were instructed to stand by for further orders. About dusk general quarters was sounded on the U.S.S. PURSUIT and we were ordered to scatter for air attack. I tried to keep my wave together and fairly close to the PURSUIT but some of them became separated in the darkness. We rendezvoused in the vicinity of the PURSUIT and at daybreak, began to reform the wave. While we were doing so, Mr. Fletcher came by on the SHERIDAN control boat and informed me that we would leave immediately to land on Red Beach No. 2 which was friendly. My wave consisted of three LCM(3)'s and two LCVP's. The second boat division in the wave under Ensign THOMASSEN was composed of four LCVP's. On the way to the beach and about 1500 yards from the beach a shell landed among these four boats. Shrapnel struck some of the boats but no one was injured. My boat grounded on coral about 500 yards from the beach. We were under heavy machine-gun and sniper fire at this time. There were marines in the water attempting to make their way to the beach. The ramp of our boat was let down and the marines got out in the water about waist deep, taking the two 37 mm guns but the water was too deep for the tractor. It was left in the LCM(3) with the two men who operated it. When the troops had disembarked we saw two wounded marines in the water and we assisted them into our boat. We had difficulty raising the ramp but it was finally raised by the hand crank. By the time we had picked up our wounded and raised the ramp all of the boats of the wave except three had backed off the reef and were on their way back toward the control vessel. One of these was an LCVP which could not get off the reef and which was being towed off by an LCM(3). The other boat was an LCM(3) which had picked up five wounded. This boat followed mine and we immediately headed back to the SHERIDAN with the wounded where they were taken aboard. One of the wounded had sustained a fractured arm. We put a splint on his arm, gave him morphine and stopped the bleeding by pressing on the artery.

Just before the third wave landed several of our planes strafed the beach. After we had backed off and were about 4,000 yards away, the beach was dive-bombed by about six of our planes. I learned later that they were dive-bombing the beached ship on the right hand side of Beach Red No. 2.

Considering the fact that they were most of them under fire for the first time, the boat coxswains and crew members that came under my observation performed their duties well and with courage.

(signature)  
ELLIOT FENTON, Ensign D-V(G), USNR.  
Wave Commander, Wave No. 3.

U.S.S. SHERIDAN

26 November 1943

At eleven o'clock, on 20 November 1943, we were ordered to debark according to Plan One. We rendezvoused until three o'clock in the afternoon when we went to the U.S.S. PURSUIT. We were ordered to stand by for orders. At dusk an air attack was reported and all boats scattered. After dark we reformed waves and rendezvoused until dawn. At about six o'clock we received orders to attack. Ensign FENTON was our wave commander. We formed two "V's" and proceeded in column to the line of departure where we brought our "V's" abreast of each other and started for BEACH RED NO. 2. We then brought all boats up to a line abreast and proceeded at full speed to the beach. About 1,000 yards out, a shell burst almost over our boat and a piece of shrapnel damaged the boat but no one was injured. At the same time we ran into heavy cross-fire from Jap Machine-guns which were located on the pier and in the old wreck to the right. We did not expect any fire. At about 700 yards from the beach we struck coral and dropped the ramp and the troops debarked in water about 3 or 4 feet deep. None were hit before they left the boat. We backed out and went to the right to make room for the other boats but ran on a reef. It took about an hour to get off the reef and we reached the ship about ten o'clock.

(signature)

E.T. THOMASSEN, Ensign, USNR,  
Third Wave Division Leader.

U.S.S. SHERIDAN

26 November 1943

The writer was Wave Commander 8th Division, Fourth Wave. While approaching Beach Red No. 2, for an amphibious landing on Tarawa Island, a withering gunfire broke out from a beached vessel and pill boxes on said beach. The landing officer (Lieutenant FLETCHER) promptly called my wave out and told us not to try a landing at that time. In the resulting confusion the rest of the wave became separated. At this time, there were four officers, the coxswain, and approximately twelve Marines in our LCVP, which boat was the only one in the fourth wave with combat troops, the rest of the boats were carrying ambulance jeeps and medical supplies and were not needed at the time, so we did not try to find the rest of the wave. Approaching the line of departure again with still only one boat, Major Otty (Officer-in-Charge of Marines) contacted Lieutenant Fletcher for information and he referred Major Otty to Colonel Hall, who now seemed to be Officer-in-Charge at the line of departure. Although we only had the one boat with sixteen men, Colonel Hall sent us in again for an attempted landing at Beach Red No. 2. Quite some distance from the beach the boat attracted machine gun and sniper fire. At about the same time we started hitting coral patches. The coxswain (McHale) from the KA19 by extremely skilful handling of the boat managed to work same in quite a lot even after this. Endeavoring to deliver Major Otty and his Marines as close to the beach as possible we continued on, finally going as far as was possible the ramp was lowered and Major Otty and his Marines disembarked in water that was about hip deep. Then we started to back and maneuver to get off the coral and out. About this time Coxswain McHale was hit twice, once in the left shoulder and once in the right lung. Ensign Mills of the KA19. dressed his wounds and gave him a shot of morphine, about this time we heard a shout from Major Otty and he indicated he and his men wanted to come back aboard, (they had only progressed about fifteen feet from the boat). When I looked his way there was a widening patch of blood in the water and they had three or four wounded Marines with them. We stopped and they came aboard. Then began the problem of getting off the coral, but with the added weight and shallow water we seemed to be only hopelessly stuck, by a series of backings and fillings we managed to swing the boat portside to the beach and found we were on a sandbar, by giving the boat hard right rudder we were now stern to the beach but still on the sandbar, racing the engine full speed would go ahead about a foot at a time and get stuck again. During this time McHale, the coxswain, had died even though we had done everything we could for him, Major Otty was taking care of the Marines that were wounded. The engine had apparently been hit in the fresh water system and kept heating up and dying out so to lessen the load and help us over the sandbar all the Marines that were able went over the port side and started pushing, then the motor quit entirely. We then rigged lines port and starboard on the boat and started pulling, twelve of us pulled to boat over the sandbars about two hundred yards, up until now we had been under fairly heavy enemy fire. Marine Lieutenant Berg scouting ahead trying to find a deeper channel came across two stalled and burnt amptracs, we got two men out of one and one out of the other, the rest of the crews had been burned to death. Shortly after we rescued the three men an amptrac came within sight and we waved him in and he gave us a tow into deeper water. There an LCVP hooked on and took us to the Control Vessel. We unloaded our wounded and Major Otty and Lieutenant Berg re-outfitted

U.S.S. SHERIDAN

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the Boat Team and left to make another landing in another boat. By working on the boat we got it running although it wouldn't hold fresh water and would only make about 200 RPM's. We then started back to the ship, carrying the dead man McHale with us. Time spent under enemy fire was about one and one-half hours. Total dead two, total wounded six, counting the three rescued from the two amptracs. During the most of the above described time the writer manned the port .30 caliber machine gun on the LCVP and conned the boat to the best of his ability. For Major Otty, Ensign Mills, Lieutenant Berg and all the Marines of Boat Team No. 81 the writer has the highest praise for coolness under fire and the fortitude to bring in their wounded, he also realizes that without their help and dogged determination and willingness to keep trying when everything seemed hopeless we would have never gotten off the beach and away from enemy fire. McHale up to the time he was hit did a wonderful job as coxswain. Although there were several hits close by the writer, (two in the ammunition box of his gun, one in a canteen sitting beside the gun mount and about three or four on the portside of the boat aft, he felt one bullet go by very close to his left knee). He was only struck by splinters from the ammunition box on the left forearm, which hardly pierced the skin.

(signature)  
GARLAND H. BROADDUS,  
Acting Pay Clerk, U.S. Navy.

LCH/mbj

OFFICE OF THE TROOP COMMANDER,  
USS SHERIDAN, AT SEA.

30 November 1943.

From: The Commanding Officer Troops, USS SHERIDAN.  
To : The Commanding Officer, USS SHERIDAN.  
Subject: Performance of duty, report of in the case of certain  
personnel, USS SHERIDAN.

1. Attention is invited to the following personnel, whose performance of duty during the action against the Japanese-held island of Tarawa, Gilbert Islands, was considered outstanding.

Lt. D-V(S) John E. FLETCHER.  
Lt. (jg) D-V(G) Edward A. HEIMBERGER.  
Lt. (jg) D-V(G) Howard N. STEPHENS.  
Ens. D-V(G) David G. ARTER.  
Ens. D-V(G) Elliot C. FENTON.  
Ens. D-V(G) David GREEN.  
Ens. D-V(G) Norman S. NORBURG.  
Ens. E-M Edmund T. THOMASSEN.  
Ens. D-V(G) James J. BORGENSON.  
Pay Clerk. Garland H. BROADDUS.  
Coxswains and crews of all ships boats participating.

2. Their boat handling and devotion to duty under machine gun fire was an important factor in the successful operation of Landing Team one-eight (1-8).

(not signed)  
/s/ L.C. HAYS, JR.

20 December 1943

**Report on LONGSUIT Operations**

Upon arrival in the Transport Area at 0345 on D-Day, all SHERIDAN boats were lowered away immediately, and nine LCVP's and two AmTracs were dispatched to the HEYWOOD in accordance with plans worked out during practice landings at Efate. One LCVP was returned to the SHERIDAN as soon as HEYWOOD waves were formed, leaving the ship with 14 LCVP's and two LCM's. Of the boats sent to the HEYWOOD, one was blown up by heavy gunfire, with one casualty. All other boats returned to the ship after assault waves had landed at Beach Red 3, on Helen.

At 1130 on D-Day we received orders to boat Landing Team 1-8 (1st Battalion, 8th Marines) in accordance with Debarkation Plan 1. This plan called for the use of 34 LCVP's and 2 LCM's, with four waves formed. Difficulties arose because of the failure of Command to supply an adequate number of LCVP's and because of faulty planning for the boating of 37mm's, jeeps, and cats, but the boating was concluded and the waves dispatched to the Control Vessel (YMS108 the PURSUIT) at approximately 1400. We were to await further orders there.

At the Control Vessel we were twice ordered to take all boats immediately to Beach Red 2, but the orders did not come through the proper chain of authority to CO, 8th Marines, who was standing by in a DOYEN boat, and so all SHERIDAN waves remained at the PURSUIT. We were there for 16½ hours, during which time an air raid alert caused the PURSUIT to disperse all boats, thus breaking up our wave formations and making it impossible for waves to re-form at night. TBY communication with the ship was faulty, and finally failed altogether. A light was put on a buoy marking the Line of Departure, and boats guided on that until dawn on D plus 1.

Just before dawn on D plus 1, orders were received for our unit to proceed immediately to Beach Red 2, with a statement that little resistance was expected. At daylight the waves were re-formed, and course 185 magnetic was followed to the beach.

The 1st Wave landed at 0645, led to the designated beach by Lt (jg) Stephens and Ensign Borgenson. This was three hours before high tide, and the boats were only able to go to a point approximately 300 yards off the beach before being stopped by coral reefs. Little enemy fire was encountered until ramps were dropped, at which time severe crossfire was experienced from the dock on the left, from a large pillbox at Beach Red 3, and from a point on the right of Beach Red 1. Our beach was between the dock and an abandoned hull left on the edge of the reef, and there were machine gun emplacements there as well. Marines were in the water up to their shoulders, and in some cases over their heads, and many casualties resulted. All boats of the 1st Wave backed off the reef successfully (as did all boats in all waves, largely through skilful boat handling by all coxswains.)

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The 2nd Wave was held up until the CO, 8th Marines, could be contacted, and his orders were to land all boats immediately. Ensign Arter and Ensign Green led the Wave in, and Ensign Fenton and Ensign Thomassen led the 3rd Wave in, with the same results as those experienced before. The 4th Wave landed without two of its boats - a Communications boat, containing a section of the Beach Party, and a Headquarters group in a boat under APC Broaddus. Ensign Norburg led the 4th Wave in, was unable to land his cargo, and was missing for about 36 hours until he returned to the ship. The hull on the right of Beach Red 2 was dive-bombed as soon as all of our waves had landed.

The boat containing the Communications section of the Beach Party was dispatched to the end of the dock, where it found a small area in which to work, hampered always by sniper fire. The Headquarters boat was dispatched to the beach alone, endured unusually heavy fire, and was forced to withdraw and make another landing later.

At this time it was noticed that many men wading in the water were making their way out to the edge of the reef, and several casualties picked up outside the reef indicated that all of these men were wounded and under machine gun fire while trying to make their escape. With Lt.(jg) Heimberger in the Salvage Boat, as well as two LCVP's from other ships, approximately eighty of these men were picked up and evacuated to various ships.

Boat #13 was sent back with casualties, and Boat #14 was sent to the ship for repairs, so a PA16 boat was taken over for the BGC's use.

It was learned that ammunition and medical supplies were desperately needed at the front, so loaded boats were called in a few at a time, and their contents taken to the beach along the north end of the dock by the use of AmTracs and rubber boats. Reinforcements were worked along the protected edge of the dock at the same time. The Beach Party arrived in the middle of the afternoon of D plus 1, and worked under great difficulties, with only a small area on a half-burned pier from which to work supplies. AmTracs kept a continuous flow of casualties coming from the beach to the end of the dock, and handling them presented difficult traffic problems. Lt. Dorrance, SHERIDAN Beachmaster, led the Beach Party in outstanding work; Dr. Meamber and his corpsmen worked under a constant fire on the beach; and Carp. Sills performed a difficult task by rebuilding the ramp on the dock so boats could be landed and unloaded more easily.

There was a bombing-strafting attack at dawn on D plus 2 by a single enemy plane, but by that time the dock was fairly secure and no longer subjected to heavy fire. Snipers continued to work out to abandoned AmTracs and boats at night, and there was some gun

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fire by day, but few casualties resulted.

On the 22nd the BGC was working salvage and boat control out of Boat #13. Boat #14, containing his radio and portable loud speaker, was commandeered by the staff of ComTransDiv 4, so for the remainder of the operation the BGC was out of contact with his ship other than through messages relayed to him by the Beach Party.

Operation continued through the next three days, with the flow of materials to Helen increasing, and troops moving out to Cora and Diana. The four foot tide caused considerable delay in all phases of the operation, since it made the channel to the right of the dock workable during only three hours out of twelve. Vehicles were worked down this channel, the most important item being the General Sherman tanks worked to the beach on D plus 2. During this phase of the operation the AmTracs proved their worth, keeping a continuous flow of cargo running to the beach, and evacuating casualties with each return trip.

Special mention should be made of the reconnaissance performed by Lt. Dorrance on Beach Green and on Cora, and of front-line organization by Lt.(jg) Heimberger, who served in several capacities after being relieved as Salvage Officer. Both men performed outstanding services which contributed greatly to the success of the operation.

On D plus 2 the Y section of the dock collapsed, but each day saw an increase in the flow of stores to the beach. Many boats were unable to unload their cargo for days, and had to lie off the beach, and the traffic problem was a major one. There was always a jam at the dock, with upwards of fifty boats trying to unload at a space which could accommodate only three boats at a time. Then, too, there was a strong westerly set to the current, in the direction of the reef; many boats were held up for varying times by the tides and currents.

On November 24th the SHERIDAN Beach Party was called back to the ship, but the order was cancelled by the Beach Party Commander, who sent them to work Cora instead. On the 25th the BGC was called to the SHERIDAN to answer questions pertaining to the operations. As a result, he was sent to ComTransDiv 4 with a letter requesting information concerning the return of ships boats and Beach Party to the SHERIDAN. These questions were never answered, and as a result it was not learned until 1545 that all boats and Beach Party personnel were to return to the ship. The Beach Party likewise had no knowledge of the imminent departure of the SHERIDAN because their TBX was out of commission with a faulty generator.

The BGC made efforts to round up SHERIDAN boats and send them back to the ship. At the same time he took Boat #13 and one LCVP and made for Cora, where the Beach Party was picked up within fifteen minutes and the return was begun. On the way the group stopped at the LSD 1 to relay a message to the SHERIDAN, but a submarine alarm originated by TenStrike caused a delay in communications. The

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group then followed the SHERIDAN outside of the reef until ordered by the MARYLAND to return to the PURSUIT and report to ComTransDiv 4. Several other stranded boats were picked up, and the group navigated back to the PURSUIT at night, reporting to the Commodore as ordered. His decision was that the Beach Party should be embarked upon the THUBAN, to rejoin the SHERIDAN at a later date. Accordingly fifty men and five officers reported to the THUBAN and were taken aboard. All boats and boat crew personnel left in the area were to be part of the Boat Pool remaining in the area. Since boats were over-manned according to Boat Pool personnel specifications, hasty efforts were made to pick up as many men as possible above the required number. The Salvage Boat crew and the BGC's crew were relieved and taken aboard the THUBAN.

Two hours after reporting to the THUBAN, orders were received from ComTransDiv 4 for the Beach Party to proceed immediately to work the beach at Diana. Several members were hospitalized, including the Beachmaster, but the rest landed on Diana and worked the beach until recalled by the THUBAN Commanding Officer.

Several hours after his return, the BGC was ordered to bring another officer and report to the PURSUIT. The purpose of the order was to get together all non-Boat Pool personnel and boats and get them on board any of the vessels in a convoy apparently headed for the same destination as the SHERIDAN. Accordingly, twenty-four men and two boats were taken aboard the VIRGO for transportation, where they are at this writing.

During the night of the 27th the BGC was called to organize an expedition taking medical supplies and corpsmen to Sarah, and to pick up Admiral Nimitz, Major-General Smith, and Staffs at Cora.

At the present time, we are under way in convoy. There are 50 SHERIDAN men and three officers on the THUBAN, and 24 men with two officers on the VIRGO. Ensign Green, remaining with the Boat Pool, has instructions to take care of the men who might have been left behind. He will send to the SHERIDAN a list of all personnel remaining, so their gear and records may be sent to the address indicated on the original Boat Pool orders. It is believed that very few men were left in addition to the 19 originally assigned to the Boat Pool. Many boats were left, however, because of the number of Boat Pool boats out of order, and the limited facilities for repair.

Any report would be incomplete without sincere compliments on the performance of SHERIDAN boat crews and Beach Party. The men, most of them untried in action, measured up in every respect. They endured eight grueling days, lacking food and sleep and rest, without complaint, stood up under fire, and did more than was asked of them. The Commanding Officer of the SHERIDAN may well be proud of the conduct of his men during Longsuit operations.

(signature)  
JOHN E. FLETCHER  
Lieut, D-V(S), USNR.

20 December 1943

**REPORT ON TARAWA OPERATION**

At 1130 on D-Day orders were received aboard the U.S.S. SHERIDAN to boat landing team 1-8 in accordance with Debarkation Plan #1. In accordance with this plan the Command and Communications sections of the Beach Party were boated in the Third Wave. The remainder of the Beach Party was left aboard the SHERIDAN, to be called into the beach at a later time by the Beachmaster. In addition to the Naval Personnel in Boat Team 53, there were ten Marines and one Marine Officer, with several carts of communication equipment.

At approximately 1400 on D-Day the waves were completely formed and proceeded under the direction of the Boat Group Commander, Lieut. J.E. Fletcher, to the U.S.S. PURSUIT, which was serving as Control Vessel. Here the waves were forced to wait for a period of about 16 or 17 hours, due to some misunderstanding on the part of those in authority as to where the waves were and when they should be sent in. During the night of D-Day, the boats were forced to disperse due to an air raid alarm, and not until well after dawn were they able to be re-formed properly. At approximately 0700 on D-Day plus one the first wave was sent in and made its landing on the coral reef which lay off Beach Red Two. They encountered heavy fire from the defenders, who during the night had manned an old hulk which was lying off the beach with about six or seven machine guns. In addition to this, fire came from the direction of the pier and from a large pillbox on shore.

There was some delay in sending the following waves in, and the third wave made its landing approximately 25 minutes later than the first wave. The boat which contained myself, the BP Communications section, and the Marine Comm. Section made its landing with the rest of the wave. The Marine invaders were finding it very tough going, and were wading in water that was between waist and chin high. Not wishing to risk losing the radio equipment (TBX and TBY) which we had, I decided to pull off and try another attempt to land where it would not be necessary to wade 300 yards to the beach. We were ordered by Colonel Hall, Commanding Officer of the 8th Marines, to stay with his boat. While lying off the beach with him, we were able to watch the naval dive bombing of the old hulk and the magnificent rescue work done by Lieut. Fletcher in saving wounded Marines from the water. Time and again Lieut. Fletcher risked his personal safety and that of his boat to go in under severe fire to pick the wounded out of the water.

At about 1030 on D-Day plus one Colonel Hall ordered me to go into the pier and establish communications. We went in alone, and made a successful landing on the head of the pier, which we found still burning in spots and deserted save for a handful of wounded Marines. The sniper fire was heavy, but by keeping low we were able

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to avoid being hit, and we loaded about 20 casualties in the boat which had brought us in. While the radioman were setting up their sets, I made a trip in the water beside the pier to within about 20 yards of the beach to get out more casualties, and to ascertain the possibilities of getting the radios into the beach. All would have gone well, and I had decided that we could float the radios in on planking that was adrift everywhere, except when I returned to the head of the pier I found that a wounded Marine had grabbed the antenna of our TBY for support and had broken it beyond repair, and an accident equally disastrous had occurred to the antenna of the TBX. We were without communications. Until the arrival of other Beach Parties we did nothing but evacuate casualties with the few boats that we were able to obtain. Shortly after noon other Beach Parties arrived, and as soon as communications were set up a message was sent to the SHERIDAN requesting that Dr. Meamber and the Medical Section of the Beach Party be sent in. At this time there was no first aid station nor any doctors on the dock, and it was planned for Dr. Meamber to take charge here. However, he was slow in getting in and arrived rather late in the afternoon, second to a Beach Party doctor from another ship. Consequently, he and his group were sent to the beach to work with the assault Marines and was separated from the remainder of the Beach Party for several days. The hydrographic and boat repair sections were called for shortly after the medical section, and arrived in time to give valuable aid in working cargo and making preliminary repairs to the dock, which had been badly damaged by gun fire. During this same afternoon both radio sets were repaired, and permission was requested of Lieut. Comdr. Fabian, Senior Beachmaster, to take them and the communications section into the beach to be near the headquarters unit of the 1st Btn., 8th Marines. However, at this time, and for the remainder of the time that we spent on the dock, the SHERIDAN radios were the only ones that were working, and permission was not granted.

From mid-afternoon of D plus one Day boatloads of stores came with tremendous rapidity to the dock. Due to its inherent characteristics, the dock was unable to accommodate more than three or four boats at one time, and often there would be as many as 20 or 30 boats lying off and awaiting their turn to be unloaded. In his job of traffic control, Lt. Fletcher did excellent work. He was the only Boat Group Commander who could be counted on to be present and single handed he did a job that should have taken four or five officers. In addition to traffic control he did practically all the boat salvage work, the salvage officers of all ships being strangely noticeable by their absence.

On D plus 2 Day Comdr. Fabian ordered this officer to accompany Major Spellenburg on a reconnaissance trip of the seaward approaches of Beach Green. After waiting countless hours, the trip was finally postponed. This officer then left the pier with Cox. H.A. Yeager to make the trip on foot to Beach Green, but so much time had been wasted in useless waiting during the afternoon that we were forced to turn back due to approaching darkness.

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During D plus 2 Day the beach party was busy handling stores, evacuating the wounded, handling the dead, and marking the deep spots on the reef so trucks and light tanks would not get bogged down when making the run ashore. In the late evening of this day Carpenter Sills and the Boat Repair Section commenced repairing the ramp on the end of the dock.

On the morning of D plus 3 Day this officer was sent with Major Spellenburg and Lt.(jg) Heimberger to make the previously planned reconnaissance of the seaward approach of Beach Green. This beach was almost completely blocked to boat traffic by numerous coral heads that came to within inches of the surface from depths as great as 20 to 30 feet. During the reconnaissance the boat that we used had its screw fouled on one of these heads, and we had to go to the U.S.S. MONROVIA for repairs. From the MONROVIA we were sent by some authority (I'm not sure what) to the U.S.S. MARYLAND to report to Admiral Hill. Upon arrival at the MARYLAND we spent nearly an hour trying to see the Admiral, or a member of his staff, but apparently the first-hand information that we had was not needed, and the Admiral had no desire to see us. Again valuable time had been wasted.

Upon return to the dock it was noted that Carpenter Sills, of the SHERIDAN beach party, had done an excellent job of repairing the dock, and this officer received a compliment for Mr. Sills' ability from Commander Fabian. Shortly thereafter I left on foot for Beach Black to make preliminary land reconnaissance there. Upon arriving, I found the beach to be long and sandy and I judged that at high tide cargo could be worked very effectively. I hurried back to the pier to obtain a boat to make the seaward approach survey, and there received orders to return to the SHERIDAN. We then made preparations to leave, and recalled the medical section from the beach. However, upon display of the orders to Commander Fabian he said that he would take personal responsibility in countermanding them and that we were to immediately leave for Cora to work the beach there. In about two hours we arrived at Cora to find an LST anchored outside the reef and an LCT and several LCV's high and dry on the beach. We set up quarters for the night, and I contacted Captain Clark, the Shore Party Commander. He informed me that until that time almost no cargo had reached Cora.

High tide that night was at approximately one o'clock and the Captain of the LST had contacted me saying that he wished to try to reach the beach at that time. At 2300 I was able to round up two boats to mark either side of the channel for him, and in a third I was to run a straight course from his bow to a point between them to mark his course. At approximately 0130 he got underway, but unfortunately the wind caught his bow and he could not follow me. Here he made the mistake of trying to buck over the reef instead of backing down and making another try, and as a consequence he was stranded and could not get off, although he tried until about 0400.

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On the morning of D plus 4 we started AmTracs working on the stranded LST. Her cargo, unfortunately was very poorly stowed and had to be shifted back and forth for each load that was taken out. At high tide on this day, about 1400, the Captain was able to get her off and left, carrying many provisions that had been destined for our beach at Cora.

The tide was high enough by 1000 for the LCV's and LCM's to come in by the channel we had marked and to make landings on the beach. Soon I found out that we did not have enough Marines to do the work necessary to handle the boats, and at this point found out that Captain Clark, the Shore Party Commander, had left that island that morning. He did not return during the entire day, and had left only a few 2nd Lt's., with no orders, to work the beach. These Lieutenants were unsure of themselves and took little interest in the work of the day, provided for no removal of the cargo to inland dumps and gave me as little cooperation as possible. Later in the morning, I personally sent inland to the command post requesting 150 hand working party and orders as to what cargo was wished. We were fairly successful in the working party, as 100 Marines arrived about an hour later, but I was given the news that they only wished to unload water, rations, and small arms ammunition at Cora. At this time we had taken a large quantity of 75 and 105mm ammunition, several jeeps and many other items that were unnecessary. The boats continued to arrive, laden with all types of cargo. Those not having the above mentioned cargoes were sent back to the PURSUIT with a request that we wanted only those three items and nothing else. It did little good however, for up until the end of our stay on Cora we were sending boats back to the PURSUIT.

During the entire day there were never enough Marines to work the cargo. All hands of the Beach Party including the medical section and even the Doctor became stevedores, and worked hard and long. Finally I was forced to cease taking cargo on the beach, as there was no more room. The Marines had completely failed to remove it to inland dumps, and for a period of about an hour I allowed no boats to come to the beach. This apparently scared the Marines into working, and much of the cargo was removed to the interior.

Between 1600 and 1630 on this day, D plus 4, Lt. Fletcher arrived with the news that recall had been ordered by thw SHERIDAN and that we had 15 minutes to break camp and get off. Our TBX had burned out a generator early that morning, and although a radioman had been dispatched to get a new one, he had not arrived in time to get it repaired. Had he, perhaps we should have received the message earlier ourselves. Making the best of the situation we left the island in all haste, but as has been outlined in other reports, missed catching the SHERIDAN by a matter of minutes.

All later operations have been outlined by Lt. Fletcher, this officer having been laid up in sick bay aboard the THUBAN with bad feet.

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Upon arrival at Honolulu the beach party, with Lt. (jg)  
Van Ness in charge, was sent to the U.S.S. HARRIS for duty.

(signature)  
S.E. DORRANCE  
Lieut, D-V(G), USNR.

20 December 1943

**Medical care during Amphibious Operations in Tarawa (G.I.), report of.**

When troops were disembarked from the U.S.S. SHERIDAN on D-Day the beach party with the exception of Lt. Dorrance and the Communication section was left on board. On (D-plus one) day large numbers of casualties began to arrive aboard the U.S.S. SHERIDAN. The Medical section of the beach party assisted in the treatment of these casualties. At 1330 a message was received from Lt. Dorrance directing Dr. Meamber and the Medical section to come to the dock head. This group, after disembarking two USMC Majors of the Medical Corps from the U.S.S. SHERIDAN and the U.S.S. MONROVIA, arrived at the dock head at 1630. In the confusion of snipers, cargo unloading and overcrowding no definite medical plan seemed possible. USMC headquarters on Red Beach II was contacted and we were ordered to set up on Red II. We were taken to Beach Red II immediately, being the first beach party members to arrive on the beach.

The beach was extremely crowded at all times because it afforded the only natural barrier from enemy fire. Troops, cargo, beach and shore parties, and much large combat equipment remained there for variable lengths of time. We were forced to move men, equipment, etc. repeatedly because of rising tides, enormous waves set up by amph-tracks, better available space, etc.

The first night was spent in attempting to correlate our work with that of the USMC medical units, but since evacuation of the wounded could be done simply by loading onto amph-tracks, our function of evacuation of casualties was repeatedly denied by the USMC. However, the following day the USMC headquarters had us move near them and function as a separate unit for evacuation of any casualties toward us. In this manner many casualties were received and evacuated after proper treatment during the next two days. On D-plus 3 day we were instructed by Lt. Dorrance to join him and return to the SHERIDAN. However, at the dock we were given orders to accompany the rest of the U.S.S. SHERIDAN beach party to CORA Island. The order was carried out. On CORA medical need was minimal and most of the medical personnel turned to unloading cargo. All went well until we were ordered to return to the ship immediately. That failed and we spent the night alongside the PURSUIT. The following day we embarked on the THUBAN only to be ordered to DIANNA that night. We arrived at high tide and acted as a working party to speed the unloading of the THUBAN boats. On D-plus 6 we were ordered to return to the U.S.S. THUBAN. On D-plus 8 day Lt. Fletcher and I gathered all boat crews of the SHERIDAN, not belonging to the boat pool and embarked them and myself aboard the U.S.S. VIRGO, where we remain.

(signature)  
D.L. MEAMBER.  
Lieutenant (jg), MC-V(G), USNR

20 December 1943

**Report of Ship's Carpenter on Tarawa Landing Operation.**

Left ship "D" day plus one. Reported to U.S.S. PURSUIT for instructions. Ordered from "PURSUIT" to land on end of pier. Landed about sunset. Reported to Senior Beachmaster. Beach Party immediately turned to in unloading boats and continued to do so until low tide.

"D" day plus two. Requested Senior Beachmaster to order as much 2" x 12" lumber as ships present could spare for repairing burned and rotten portion of the pier. Beach Party turned to on stores. Started unloading lumber from first boat approximately 1700. By the time lumber was unloaded from other boats it was to dark to make repairs. Beach Party then turned to on stores.

"D" day plus three. Started making repairs to dock at sunrise and worked until tide was coming in. Salvaged one swamped boat off end of pier by pumping out with gasoline handy-billy. Beach Party turned to on stores. Turned to repairing pier as soon as tide was out. Completed repairing dock this date. Beach Party turned to on stores and clearing broken timbers from pier. Orders received to return to ship but were sent to "CORA" to work beach there. We were unable to handle stores during night.

"D" plus four. Started unloading stores at high tide. Salvaged one LCVP by pumping out with gasoline handy-billy and calking ramp. This boat was towed to its ship. Received orders to return to ship from Lt. Fletcher and Beach Party loaded within fifteen minutes. Started back to ship but missed due to ships getting underway. Received orders from U.S.S. MARYLAND to return to U.S.S. PURSUIT for orders. Tied up alongside for the night. Received treatment for sunburn.

"D" day plus five. Ordered to report to U.S.S. THUBAN. Obtained small stores immediately after reporting aboard. Received orders from U.S.S. PURSUIT to go to the Beach on DIANA. Unable to land there until high tide. No stores handled during night.

"D" day plus six. Beach Party turned to at high tide unloading stores. Stopped unloading stores at low tide. Received orders to return to U.S.S. THUBAN. Ordered to report to U.S.S. CALVERT for transportation to whatever port U.S.S. SHERIDAN might be, this was on December 11. December 19 - Reported aboard U.S.S. SHERIDAN this date.

(signature)  
E.P. SILLS,  
Carpenter, USN.