



LCT 7074 - LAST SURVIVOR OF D-DAY LANDINGS



LCT 7074 is the only surviving Landing Craft Tank that took part in the D-Day landings. She was given her orders to sail to Normandy from HMS Woolverstone.

A flotilla of 7000 ships and amphibious craft brought the Allied armies to the beaches of France on 6th June 1944. Of these, over 800 were LCTs.

Landing Craft Tank were designed to bring tanks and their personnel onto beaches. They had flat bottoms and a shallow draught. A front-loading ramp allowed the vehicles to drive off. High sided double hull kept vehicles hidden from sight and protected from the weather. Aft were the engines, wheelhouse and living accommodation. LCT 7074 was a modified Mark III design.

LCT 7074 was ordered in late 1943 and built by R & W Hawthorn, Leslie and Co Ltd, in Hebburn yard, just outside Newcastle-on-Tyne. Her yard number was 677. She was equipped with the American Sterling Admiral petrol engine. Her body was rivetted rather than welded. She was launched on 4th April 1944. She had a crew of 10 ratings who often slept aboard in cramped conditions on the mess deck. Two officers had their own cabin in the corner of the armoured wheelhouse. There was a small galley, shower and toilet. Small wardroom for the officers. She was armed with two 20mm Oerliken anti-aircraft guns. There was no radio and no radar. Crew reported terrible condensation that meant they had to sleep under waterproof clothing.

LCT 7074 was commanded by Sub-Lieutenant John Baggot RNVR. He was 20 and a trainee solicitor. His deputy was Sub-Lieutenant Philip Stephens. They were stuck on Tyneside for the first month due to problems with the engine.

On 9th May, LCT 7074 finally left for Great Yarmouth to join the 17th LCT Flotilla. On Monday 22nd May, the flotilla sailed around the coast to the river Orwell and anchored. 10 days later, Friday 2nd June, she sailed to Felixstowe to embark her cargo of tanks, belonging to the 7th Armoured Brigade, the famed Desert Rats. On Monday 5th, they set sail for Normandy. She carried seven Stuart light tanks, two unarmed "Observation Post" tanks, and one Cromwell tank.

The 17th Flotilla was one of five flotillas that made up Assault Group L2. This was part of the naval Force L providing follow up support on Sword, Juno and Gold beaches. They intended to land their troops on the evening of 6th of June but tide and weather delayed until dawn on 7th. - D+1.

60 embarked soldiers, along with their tanks, slept on the tank deck. There were only two toilets and wash basins. The tank's engines were regularly started to ensure they were in working order. The air was thick with fumes. Poor weather meant the sea was rough with a heavy swell. Soldiers clung to the gun turrets and the sides. Many were violently seasick. Little sleep was had.

"Seldom could there have been an invasion force so eager to leap ashore" Lieutenant John Liverman.

LCT 7074 unloaded her tanks and crews into 6 feet of water at 9:30 on the morning of 7th June on their designated beach, Jig Green, Gold beach. Only one Stuart tank failed to make the shore sinking into deep water.

Stuart tank from LCT 7074 on beach beyond repair.



Task achieved, 7074 had to wait until the tide returned to get off the beach - "drying out". This provided an opportunity to do some running repairs. Some of the crew went inland and were treated to champagne in a restaurant in Asnelles-sur-Mer.

LCT 7074 was expected to return to England with 200 prisoners of war. However, with only a crew of 12 this was considered unwise and they were transferred to a larger craft, an LST, Landing Ship Tank. She returned on 8th June, having lost her convoy and having more engine troubles. From this point, on until March 1945, LCT 7074 made numerous crossings of the channel with troops and supplies, only suffering a major engine fire on 15th June.

One of her last tasks was to carry a pair of mobile cranes to Antwerp on 3rd March, 1945. She was then moved to Liverpool for modifications. After the war, she was bought in 1947 by the Master Mariners' Club as a permanent Clubhouse. She was converted in 1948 and renamed "Landfall". The engines were removed and the deck divided into rooms.

Two decades later, in 1968, she became a nightclub. At the end of the 1990s, she was bought by the Independent Warship Preservation Trust. They set about returning her to her original state. In 2006, the WPT closed and LCT 7074 was abandoned. She sank in 2010.



Towards the end of 2013, LCT 7074 was designated part of the National Historic Fleet and rescued. In October 2014, she was refloated and taken to Portsmouth where she has been completely restored and saved for the Nation.



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EXPEDITIONARY FORCE
SHUTTLE SERVICE—MAJOR LANDING CRAFT—continued.

12 L.C.T. Flotilla			17 L.C.T. Flotilla		
"V" L.C.T. Squadron (Forward—Dover. Main—H.M.S. Woolverstone. (Administered by H.M.S. Woolverstone))			"V" L.C.T. Squadron (Forward—Dover. Main—H.M.S. Woolverstone. (Administered by H.M.S. Woolverstone.))		
State	Unit	Equipment 20 L.C.T. (5)	State	Unit	Equipment 22 L.C.T. (3)
A	"	341 Dover.	A	L.C.T. (3)	7035 Dover.
A	"	345 Harwich.	C	"	7038 Harwich.
A	"	359 "	A	"	7040 Southampton.
A	"	389 "	A	"	7043 "
A	"	429 "	C	"	7045 "
A	"	430 Dover.	A	"	7046 "
A	"	432 "	A	"	7048 "
A	"	433 "	A	"	7049 "
A	"	444 "	A	"	7051 Dover.
C	"	453 Harwich.	A	"	7055 "
C	"	454 Southampton.	A	"	7061 "
C	"	463 Harwich.	C	"	7062 "
A	"	474 Dover.	A	"	7066 "
A	"	475 "	A	"	7067 Southampton.
C	"	7012 Harwich.	A	"	7071 "
			A	"	7074 Dover.
			A	"	7076 "
			C	"	7079 Shoreham.
			A	"	7080 Dover.
			A	"	7081 "
			A	"	7083 "
			C	"	7084 Southampton.