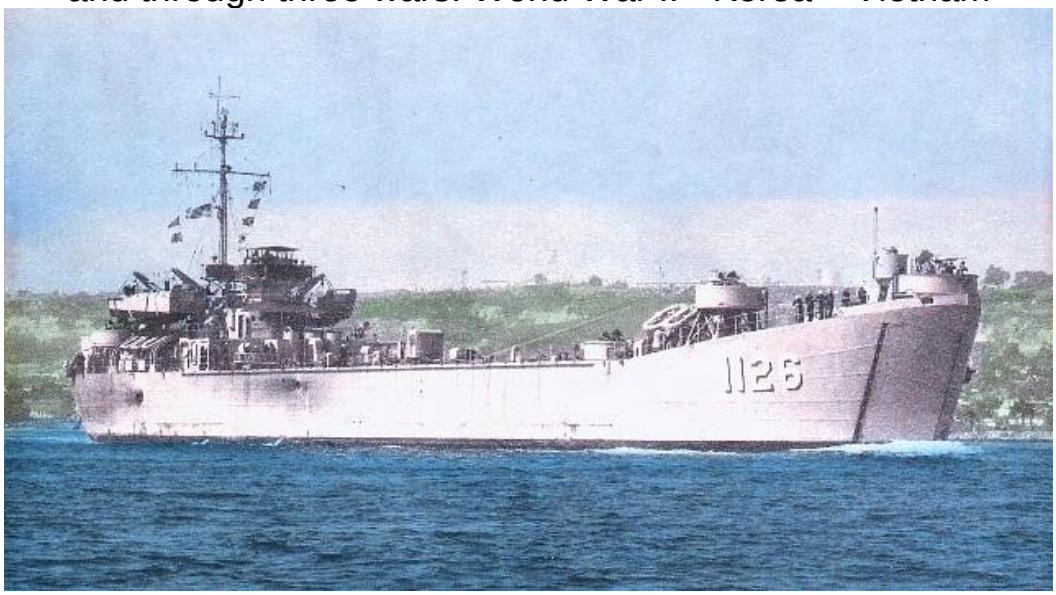
U.S.S. Snohomish County - LST 1126

Twenty five continuous years of United States Navy service, answering the call, completing every task, ever ordered, every time. Proudly serving in peacetime and through three wars: World War II - Korea – Vietnam



- LST-542 Class Tank Landing Ship: Laid down, 16 November 1944, at Chicago Bridge and Iron Co., Seneca, IL.
- Launched, 9 February 1945
- Commissioned USS LST-1126, 28 February 1945 at New Orleans, LA.
- Named USS Snohomish County (LST-1126), 1 July 1955
- Decommissioned and struck from the Naval Register, 1 July 1970, at Naval Station Guam, Marianas Islands
- Final Disposition, sold for scrapping in January 1971
- Snohomish County (LST-1126) earned eight battle stars for Vietnam service

The USS Snohomish County - LST 1126 (LST – Landing Ship Tank) served with honor and distinction for over 25 years in the United States Navy (1945-1970).

Between 1945 and 1960, LST 1126 deployed to the western Pacific eight times. Her first tour of duty in the Pacific occurred in April 1945, when she departed New Orleans, stopping in San Diego (via the Panama Canal) Seattle, and Pearl Harbor, before continuing westward. As she continued her voyage, LST 1126 called on Eniwetok Atoll; Apra Harbor, Guam; Saipan; and Okinawa. In late September of that same year, she joined the post-World War II occupation forces in China. When not in the western Pacific, the Snohomish County operated off the west coast of the United States, based in San Diego.

LST 1126 returned to the Far East six more time between 1948 and 1960. She also made three re-supply runs to Alaska in support of the Distant Early Warning system during the build-up to the Cold War and beyond (1949 – 1953). On July 1, 1955 (just after her return from her fourth deployment to the western Pacific) LST 1126 was named Snohomish County.

The permanent assignment of an LST squadron to Yokosuka, Japan (1959-1960) deployment was the USS Snohomish County's cruise last until the escalation of the Vietnam War. Prior to 1964, the ship operated from its San Diego base, completing two mid-Pacific cruises in 1961 and 1962. The second cruise was in support of Operation "Dominic," a series of nuclear tests. Upon completion of this assignment, she returned to normal operations along the Pacific coast.

By 1965, the American buildup in Vietnam was gaining intensity and priority. As a result of this buildup, the need for support ships grew, and the USS Snohomish County returned to the Far East once again. The ship and her crew were assigned tours of duty lasting five to seven months at a time. This cycle was repeated three times between 1965-1967.

In 1968, the USS Snohomish County was sent on an extended deployment which did not end until the spring of 1970. This extended deployment occurred just prior to her decommissioning. On each of these last deployments, the ship made

transited the Pacific on a route from Japan to Vietnam to Subic Bay in the Philippines. The normal cargo held on the ship included servicemen and supplies traveling from the American bases in Japan and the Philippines to Vietnam. On occasion the ship was assigned other duties, most notably riverine operations (1968)

There were also ports-pf-call in other parts of Asia including Hong Kong and Taiwan. These were mainly rest and recreation pot calls for the benefit of the ship's crew. When not deployed, the normal duties of the ship and her crew included exercises, drills, and upkeep in and around San Diego, CA.

In April of 1970, the USS Snohomish County returned to her West Pacific homeport of Apra Harbor, Guam, and underwent a full inspection. It was at that time that the ship was declared unfit for further naval service. On July 1, 1970, she was decommissioned at the Naval Station, Guam, and her name was struck from the Navy list. In January 1971, the ship was sold for scrapping.

General Information concerning the LST Class:
During World War Two it was decided by the Allies that a new type of ship was needed for amphibious warfare. Thus were the LST (Landing Ship Tank) and other similar ships and boats designed, built and the amphibious war implemented. Over 1000 of these type vessels were built during World War Two and used extensively in the "D" Day invasion of Normandy in 1944 and subsequently throughout the European theater. They were also used with great success island hopping on the beaches of Okinawa, Iwo Jima, and many other islands during the Pacific theater. The shallow draft of these vessels allowed for the "beachings" where troops, supplies, ammunition, equipment, tanks, trucks, jeeps, water and fuel trailers, and even freight cars rolled out of the opening on the bow of the ship, down the ramp, and onto the beachhead, sometimes over pontoons that had been delivered and placed there when needed.

Many of these ships had short lives, and were left on foreign beaches, rocks, sandbars, or on the bottom of the seas where they met their fate by torpedoes, mines, bombs, or Kamikaze aircraft diving into them. Others returned home to the United States, war weary and were de-commissioned immediately. Several were given to the various Allies and others decommissioned and put into mothball fleets. Several were returned later to commission for the Korean War and participated in the Invasion of Inchon, Korea. Also, many were recommissioned and used extensively in the Vietnam War delivering men and equipment, patrolling, acting as" Mother ships" for Swift boats, small patrol boats, helicopters and their troops. These Mother Ship LST's provided a nesting area for the small crafts to replenish their ammunition, take on fuel, and needed supplies, make repairs and perform maintenance while alongside the LST.

In the mid 50's new, larger, faster LST's were built. They were fondly called the "Super T's" because of their added length and speed. Still, they were of the basic shallow design which had served so well in previous years. These Super T's served well in Vietnam as well as in the Atlantic Fleet during the Cuban crisis.

In the early 70's a "New Design of LST" was built which had a dramatically different look with it's bow and ramp configuration. These new looks included a more pointed bow, protruding ramp structure and a stern disembarking dock. These newer LST's served well in Vietnam and with the Atlantic Fleet in the Gulf War during 1990.

U.S.S. Snohomish County Specifications: (as reported by Office of Naval Intelligence-1945)

Displacement: 1,625 t.(lt), 4,080 t.(fl) (sea-going draft w/1675 ton load)
Length: 328' o.a.
Beam: 50'
Draft: (light) - 2' 4" fwd, 7' 6" aft
(sea-going) 8' 3" fwd, 14' 1" aft
(landing) 3' 11" fwd, 9' 10" aft (landing w/500 ton load)
Speed: 12 kts. (maximum)
Endurance: 24,000 miles @ 9kts. while displacing 3960 tons
Complement:
(2-boat davits) 7 officers, 104 enlisted
(6-boat davits) 9 officers, 120 enlisted
Troop Accommodations:
(2-boat davits) 16 officers, 147 enlisted
(6-boat davits) 14 officers, 131 enlisted
Boats: 2 or 6 LCVP
Cargo Capacity:
(varied with mission - payloads between 1600 and 1900 tons)
Typical loads:

One Landing Craft Tank (LCT), tanks, wheeled and tracked vehicles, artillery, construction equipment and military supplies. A ramp or elevator forward allowed vehicles access to tank deck from main deck
Additional capacity included sectional pontoons carried on each side of vessel amidships, to either build Rhino Barges or use as causeways. Married to the bow ramp, the causeways would enabled payloads to be delivered ashore from deeper water or where a beachhead would not allow the vessel to be grounded forward after ballasting.

Armament:

(varied with availability when each vessel was outfitted. Retro-fitting was accomplished throughout WWII. The ultimate armament design for United States vessels was
2 - Twin 40MM gun mounts w/Mk. 51 directors
4 - Single 40MM gun mounts
12 single 20MM gun mounts
Lend Lease built vessels were to be outfitted with armament after convoying across Atlantic and included
1 - 12 Pounder anti-aircraft multi-barrel mount
6 - 20MM mounts
4 - Fast Aerial Mine (FAM) mounts

Propulsion:

two General Motors 12-567, 900hp diesel engines, two shafts, twin rudders

Sources: 1. Calhoun C. Benton
2. NavSource Online (Gary Priolo)