

USS Tioga County – LST 1158



Photo courtesy of 'Darvin D Hensley' SFM3 1955-58
known as 'Tiger' by her crew



Motto: You Call

Awards, Citations and Campaign Ribbons



Precedence of awards is from top to bottom, left to right

Top Row - Combat Action Ribbon (16FEB66) - National Defense Service Medal (2) - Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (1-Taiwan Straits (23AUG50 - 1JUN63)

Bottom Row - Vietnam Service Medal (3) - Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation (3) - Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal

History of the USS Tioga County (LST-1158)

LST-1156 Terrebonne Parish Class Tank Landing Ship:

- Laid down, 16 June 1952, at Bath Iron Works, Bath, ME.
- Launched, 11 April 1953
- Commissioned USS LST-1158, 20 June 1953
- Renamed USS Tioga County (LST-1158), 1 July 1955
- During the Vietnam War USS *Tioga County* participated in the following campaigns:

Vietnam War Campaigns

Campaign and Dates	Campaign and Dates
Vietnamese Counteroffensive 11-JAN-1966 27-JAN-1966 10 to 22 February 1966 5 to 19 March 1966	Vietnamese Counteroffensive - Phase III 2 to 21 June 1967 22 July to 17 August 1967 29 August to 9 September 1967
Vietnamese Counteroffensive - Phase II 29 April to 4 May 1967	

- Decommissioned, 23 December 1970, at San Diego and berthed at San Diego Group, Pacific Reserve Fleet
- Reactivated for service with the Military Sealift Command (MSC) in 1972 and placed in service as USNS *Tioga County* (T-LST-1158)
- Placed out of service, date unknown
- Struck from the Naval Register, 1 November 1973
- Laid up in the Maritime Administration National Defense Reserve Fleet, Suisun Bay, Benecia, CA.
- Custody transferred to the Maritime Administration, 17 December 1992
- Scrapping contract awarded to ESCO Marine, Brownsville, TX., 21 July 2005
- Final Disposition, returned to Navy custody, removed from the National Defense Reserve Fleet Suisun Bay Group by towing, for scrapping, 17 August 2005 and subsequently scrapped.
- USS *Tioga County* earned three campaign stars for Vietnam War service

Specifications:

Displacement 2,590 t.(lt), 5,800 t.(fl)

Length 384'

Beam 55'

Draft 17'

Speed 14 kts.

Complement 16 officers, 189 enlisted

Troop Accommodations 15 officers, 380 enlisted

Boats three LCVPs, one LCPL

Armament

three twin 3"/50 dual purpose gun mounts

five single 20mm AA gun mounts

Propulsion four General Motors 16-278A diesel engines, 6000shp, two controllable pitch propellers



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY -- NAVAL HISTORICAL CENTER
805 KIDDER BREESE SE -- WASHINGTON NAVY YARD
WASHINGTON DC 20374-5060

Tioga County

Counties in southern New York and northern Pennsylvania. The former was established in 1791; the latter, in 1804.

(LST-1158: dp. 6,225; l. 384'; b. 56'; dr. 16'1"; s. 14 k.; cpl. 151; a. 6 3"; cl. *LST-1156*)

LST-1158 was laid down on 16 June 1952 at Bath, Maine, by the Bath Iron Works; launched on 11 April 1953; sponsored by Mrs. Joseph A. Callaghan; and commissioned on 20 June 1953, Lt. Comdr. Charles R. Patton in command.

Following shakedown out of Little Creek, Va., *LST-1158* shifted to the west coast in January 1954 and operated out of San Diego, Calif. For the next few years, the tank landing ship worked along the west coast and in the Hawaiian Islands. On 2 July 1955, the ship was named *Tioga County*.

The ship conducted two western Pacific (WestPac) deployments between January 1957 and mid-1960, interspersed with local operations and cruises to the Hawaiian Islands. While

en route from the Philippines to Yokosuka, Japan, *Tioga County* went to the aid of a stricken Taiwanese fishing craft on 2 February 1960. Bucking gale-force winds and 17-foot seas, the LST passed lines to the foundering craft and drew her alongside. The ship's crew passed lifejackets down to the fishermen and brought them up via a Jacob's ladder, including one of the nine who had injured his leg.

Following her return to the west coast from the second WestPac deployment, the ship resumed local operations out of San Diego. In August 1961, the ship sailed north for Alaskan waters and operated in the Aleutians for three months. On one occasion off Attu, the ship battled high seas and gales up to 80 knots. She returned to San Diego on 1 December 1961.

Sailing for Hawaii following leave and upkeep, *Tioga County* participated in joint Army-Navy exercises in the islands before returning to the California coast. She conducted local operations and training out of San Diego, on occasion between the west coast and the Hawaiian Islands, into 1965. On 31 May of that year, the ship was selected as the test bed for the "Sea Sparrow" missile; and she participated in these tests until June, when she was commended by the Raytheon Corporation for her part in the development of the missile system.

In July 1965, *Tioga County* departed San Diego, bound for Hawaii. During her five-month deployment, she operated out of Pearl Harbor and worked with the Army 25th Infantry Division on exercises. Although the ship was scheduled to spend Christmas in San Diego, a change of plans sent her to the Far East for her third WestPac deployment.

Arriving at Subic Bay en route to Vietnamese waters, she loaded barbed wire and aviation fuel tanks and got underway for Danang in mid-January 1966. After delivering her cargo there, she embarked troops and served as a "combat taxi" for the Army 101st Airborne Division, making troop and vehicle lifts between Phan Rang and Tuy Hoa and carrying up to 1,000 troops each time.

After shifting briefly to Subic Bay for a drydocking for repair of her screws, *Tioga County* soon returned to Vietnamese waters to take part in Operation "Double Eagle," off Quang Ngai province. She made numerous beachings to load troops and cargo and earned her first engagement star for this action.

Following this logistics support evolution, the LST returned to the west coast—via Hong Kong; Yokosuka, Japan; and Pearl Harbor—and reached San Diego on 14 May 1966.

Tioga County conducted local operations along the west coast until 2 March 1967, when she got underway for her fourth WestPac deployment. Proceeding via Pearl Harbor, Guam, and Subic Bay, the LST arrived at Danang on 28 April with 43 vehicles and other cargo.

Following a run to Okinawa, *Tioga County* returned to Vietnam and became the first LST of her class to participate in duty with the Mobile Riverine Assault Force.

Arriving at Vung Tau on 6 June, the ship loaded 30,000 cases of "C" rations; 700 tons of Army ammunition, and 350 tons of miscellaneous cargo. She transited the Song Cua Thieu to the 9th Infantry's advanced base at Dong Tarn and took on board 369 men of "B" and "C" companies of the 3d Battalion, 9th Infantry.

Under the aegis of Commander, River Flotilla 1, *Tioga County* served in the Rung Sat special zone of the Mekong Delta region, supporting "search-and-destroy" missions against Viet Cong (VC) troops. She acted as a "Mekong Hilton" to the men who were based on board and served as a mobile ammunition and supply depot. In addition, she accompanied the rest of the riverine force up the Song Soirap to Nha Be for close support of both artillery and infantry combat operations.

Difficulty with the ship's generators forced her back to Subic Bay for repairs before she returned to Vietnamese waters in late July. She then joined Amphibious Ready Group Alfa off the coast of Viet Nam near the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). Here she participated in Operations "Beacon Gate," "Beacon Guide," and "Beacon Point." During this period, in addition to logistics support operations, *Tioga County* conducted her first combat landing as her LCVP's put a Marine landing team ashore on the coastal region of Quang Ngai province—a known VC stronghold near the DMZ—with the initial landing wave.

Detached from this duty on 6 September, *Tioga County* sailed for the United States, steamed via Yokosuka and Pearl Harbor, and arrived back at her home-port on Navy Day, 27 October. The LST conducted local operations and training out of San Diego into 1970, before she conducted her fifth and final WestPac deployment from 5 January to 7 July.

Decommissioned on 23 December 1970, *Tioga County* was placed in reserve at San Diego with the inactive fleet. Activated in mid-1972 for service with the Military Sealift Command, *Tioga County* was designated T-LST-1158 and operated as such until she was transferred to the Maritime Administration in 1973 to be laid up in the National Defense Reserve Fleet. Struck from the Navy list on 1 November 1973, the former tank landing ship is in the Maritime Administration custody at Suisun Bay into 1978.

Tioga County received three battle stars for Vietnam service.