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LARRY S. NIXON

**TAONGI**

- Reference: (a) H. O. Field Chart No. 4012  
(b) H. O. Chart No. 6024  
(c) Sailing Direction Volume I 5-51

Problem. Same as Tarawa.

Discussion. Survey was conducted by visual inspection from low flying aircraft and the lagoon side of Pokaakku Island (H. O. Chart No. 6024) or Taongi (H. O. Field Chart 2014). The Taongi Island passage was seen at one hour past low tide and at high tide from the aircraft.

Coral heads are situated in the entire lagoon, many of which are uncovered at low tide. They range in size from very small to very large. All the islands approaches are cluttered with coral heads and care must be exercised by small boats while transiting this lagoon.

Due to the narrow width of the passage, the current is very swift and turbulent between slack water low and slack water high. When the passage was observed at high tide, it was considerably calmer than at one hour past low tide. Observations indicated that it would be dangerous for small craft to utilize passage in its present condition.

The lagoon side of Taongi Island appeared protected and the water was calm at the time of observation (from 1300 to 1530 6 June 1955). Several approaches were noted which could be used by small craft. A certain amount of blasting of coral heads was indicated to insure safe beaching and retracting of small craft.

Use of an LST cannot be considered due to the narrow passage and existing coral heads inside the lagoon. It would be impractical to attempt to construct the necessary channel for an operation of this nature.

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An LCU/the only type craft which can be used to off load equipment and materials to the beach. A limiting factor is transiting the passage after being off loaded from the mother ship on the lee side of the atoll. When observed from the low flying aircraft, the lee side of the atoll appeared calm enough to permit this.

- Recommendation. (1) Blast a passage wide enough to permit safe transit of small craft and clear the channel of coral heads which are of an obstructing nature. (2) Clear coral heads, also of an obstructing nature to permit safe beaching and retracting of small craft. (3) Allow small craft to transit passage only at slack water. (4) The use of an LCU appears to be the only feasible and suitable method if considered acceptable from cost stand point and availability. (5) That range markers be set up on landing site for island approach purpose.

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**KAPINGAMARANGI**

- Reference (a) H. O. Chart No. 6042  
(b) Sailing Directions Volume I

Problem. Same as at Tarawa.

Discussion. Southeastern passage was examined from a small boat and aerial observations. The current was swift and 2-4 foot swells were observed. At slack water it is believed an LCU could transit passage. It is however too narrow for an LST or and LSD.

The lagoon was calm and presented few coral heads. They were easily seen.

Recommendation. (1) That LCU's be used for operation. (2) That small craft enter only at slack water. (3) That range markers be set up on landing site for island approach purposes.

KUSAIE

Reference: (a) H. O. Chart No. 5420  
(b) Sailing Directions Volume I

Problem. Same as at Tarawa.

Discussion. LST operation presents no problem as previous LST use has proven satisfactory. LSD could be utilized. Only limiting factors would be narrow channel and condition of mooring buoy. Dragging anchor would be experienced therefore mooring buoy should be used if in proper condition.

Recommendation. (1) Use and LST for Kusaie.

PLM DOE  
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**SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on operation requirements for landing and evacuation of construction equipment and material, landing weather station equipment and materials and final roll-up of weather stations as designated, the following is recommended:

1. One LSD, Three LCU's (Provided by the U. S. Navy; manned by H & N personnel) and one DUKW (Furnished and manned by H & N) for stations at Kapingamarangi and Taongi. One of the above LCU's to be used as houseboat during construction phase at each station.
2. One LST for stations at Tarawa and Kusaie, in addition to one DUKW (furnished and manned by H & N).
3. Widen passage at Taongi and remove coral heads at passage and island beaching area.
4. Permit LCU's to enter and leave passages at Kapingamarangi and Taongi only at slack water.
5. Provide range markers on landing site for island approach purpose at Kapingamarangi and Taongi.
6. The LST operations to be conducted at low tide and with caution at Tarawa during off loading of heavy equipment.

**NOTES:**

1. No anchorages available outside Kapingamarangi and Taongi Atolls. Would require a ship to lay to during off loading operations.
2. Due to fact LSD and LST limitations very similar and LST cannot be used on Kapingamarangi and Taongi, LSD with LCU's or LCM's could better complete the job after passage at Taongi widened.

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TARAWA (BETIO ISLAND)

- Reference: (a) H. O. Field Chart No. 34  
(b) Sailing Directions Volume III

Problem. To determine landing site for LST to land construction equipment and materials and weather station equipment and supplies.

Discussion. A survey was conducted on the lagoon side of Betio Island on 5 June 1955 using Reference (a) as an aid. Visual inspection of the coral reef was made at low tide since it usually uncovers at this time. Soundings were taken by boat at high tide at the extremity of the coral reef in order to ascertain contour of bottom. These soundings were not exhaustive due to the sharp cut off of the reef from approximately 5 feet to 18 feet. From this, it was readily discernible that beaching an LST was impractical. However, approximately 100 feet east of the eastern slip (shown on chart), the cut off was more gradual but from the nature of the coral formation it appears that there is no sandy bottom. The beach, gradient at this point is between  $1/4$  and  $1/5$  although not constant because of irregular contour.

Prior to a recent change, Sailing Directions Volume III, stated an LST ramp was located at the end of the eastern slip on Betio Island. A survey of the ramp could not be conducted because of tidal conditions. No local information was obtainable as to the ramp's use or condition or location. An LST would be required to use extreme caution in utilizing the ramp after locating and surveying area.

Debris must be cleared from this area prior to use.

Recommendations. Use an LST with caution to off load initial heavy equipment there-after utilizing lighterage to off load light materials from deck after retracting from ramp and anchoring. Suggest equipping LST with 5 ton capacity crane for use on main deck. A crane, 5 ton capacity or over, will be required on the pier for off loading lighter. Suggest landing of LST be conducted at low tide.

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