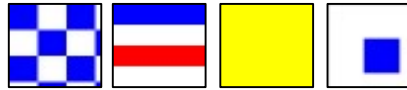


# The Sinking of USS YMS-365



CDR Richard L. Bigelow, USNR (Ret.)

with special thanks to Janet Cuccinotti for providing information and pictures about her father CMoMM Ed Johnson and the rest of the crew.



YMS-365 taken by LTJG Bigelow from ship's wherry. Date and location unknown.

(Credit LTJG Dick Bigelow, USNR)



Top Row: Asiatic Pacific Campaign, Presidential Unit Citation, World War II Victory Medal

Bottom Row: American Campaign Ribbon, Philippine Liberation Ribbon, National Defense Ribbon

On June 26, 1945, USS YMS-365 struck a mine and sank while conducting minesweeping operations off the Japanese-held oil producing city of Balikpapan, Borneo in the Dutch East

Indies. Many of the officers and enlisted men on board the ship were injured. Fortunately, no one was killed and all the officers and men and the ship's mascot "Doc" the dog were safely transferred to another YMS and eventually to the cruiser Columbia (CL-56). The ship was listing badly and another YMS poured gunfire into it to sink it.

This is the story of how the YMS came to life, was commissioned, and participated in operations in the Western Pacific and ultimately how it sank.

US Navy Auxiliary Minesweeper 365 (YMS-365) was commissioned at the Brooklyn (NY) Navy Yard on August 30, 1943. YMS-365 was built at Wheeler Shipbuilding Company, Whitestone, Long Island, NY. The commissioning crew included Commanding Officer LT F. S. Murphy, USNR; Executive Officer ENS R. L. Bigelow, USNR; Engineering Officer V. F. Borum, USNR; 1<sup>st</sup> Class Boatswains Mate Wilson L. Brown; 1<sup>st</sup> Class Motor Machinist Mate Edwin A. Johnson; 1<sup>st</sup> Class Pharmacists Mate Henry G. Moran; 1<sup>st</sup> Class Boatswains Mate Donald J. Treskman; and thirty other enlisted men.

YMS-365 was one of some 481 Auxiliary Minesweepers built for the US Navy during WWII. The design was virtually identical to the approximately 150 British Auxiliary Minesweepers (BYMS) built in the US and loaned to the UK under the Lend Lease Act.

The ship spent the first part of September 1943 provisioning, conducting various drills, degaussing, and conducting gunnery and minesweeping drills. On September 17, YMS-365 got underway for Little Creek, VA arriving on September 18, 1943. The ship spent the next three weeks training and conducting gunnery and minesweeping drills.



Ship's bell, YMS-365.

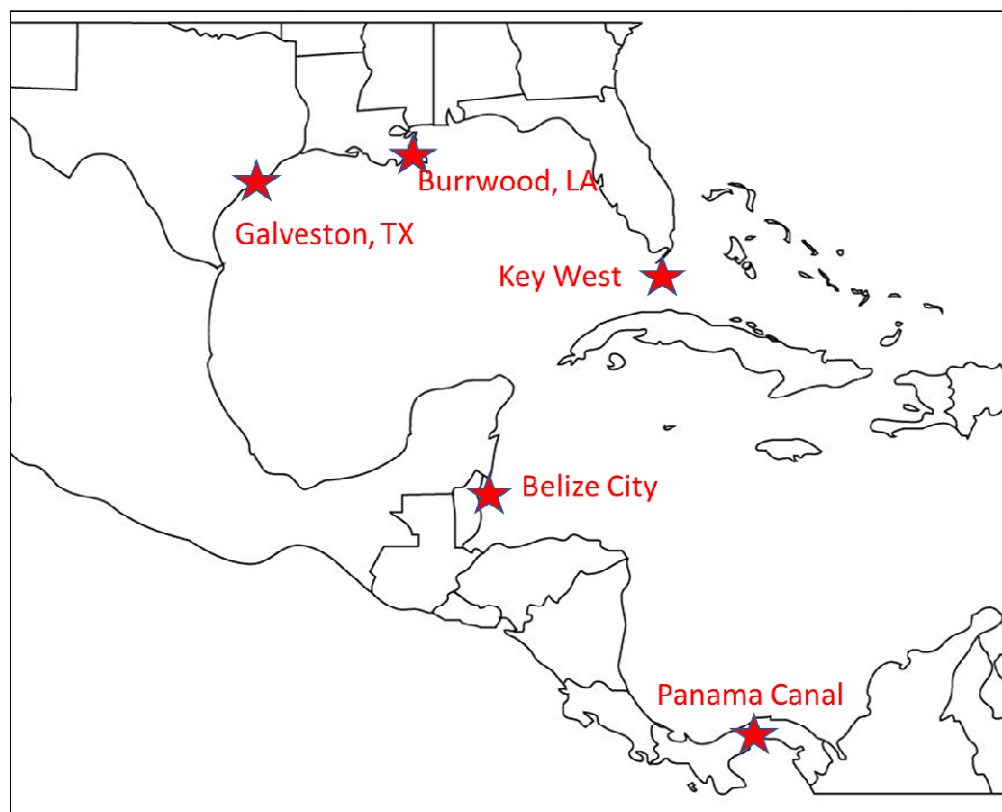
(Credit LTJG Dick Bigelow, USNR)

On October 13, 1943, the ship departed for Key West, FL in company with YMS-308 arriving on October 16, 1943. Following a period of additional training and provisioning, the ship departed for New Orleans on October 24 arriving on at the Algiers Naval Base in New Orleans on October 26, 1943.

For the next several months, YMS-365 escorted coastal convoys between Burrwood, LA at the mouth of the Mississippi River, Galveston, TX, and Key West, FL. When not escorting convoys, the ship ensured that shipping channels were kept clear of mines.

On March 17, 1944, YMS-365 got underway with USCG Barnwell, two tugs, and four lighters for the port of Belize, British Honduras. The ship arrived in Belize harbor on March 26, 1944. On March 28, 1944, the ship departed Belize for Burrwood, LA arriving on April 1, 1944.

The ship resumed convoy and channel sweeping activities. On May 24, 1944, LTJG Bigelow relieved LT Murphy as commanding officer.



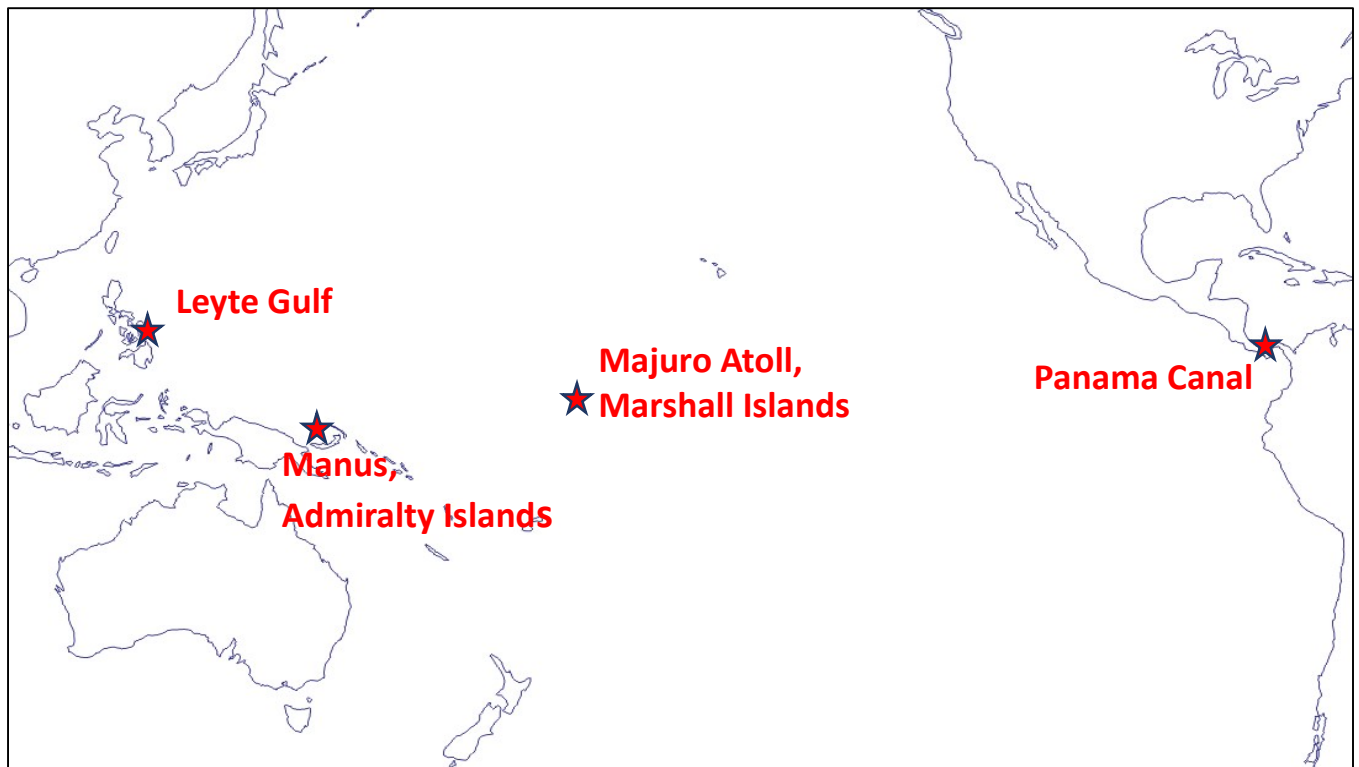
YMS-365 Operations in the Caribbean 1943-1944

(Credit CDR Rick Bigelow, USNR(ret))

On September 3, 1944, the ship departed Burrwood, LA in company with YMS-363 en route to the Panama Canal Zone. The ship arrived at the Coco Solo Naval Base on the Caribbean side of the Canal Zone on September 7, 1944. The ship transited the Canal on September 21, 1944 and anchored in the harbor at Balboa on the Pacific side of the Canal.

On September 27, 1944, the ship was taken under tow by ATF-105 en route to the Marshall Islands.

The ship anchored in Majuro Atoll, Marshall Islands on November 16, 1944.



YMS-365 Transit to Western Pacific 1944

(Credit CDR Rick Bigelow, USNR(ret))



LTJG Fred Huff with latest in USN washing machines,  
Majuro Atoll, Marshall Islands, November 1944.

(Credit LTJG Dick Bigelow, USNR)

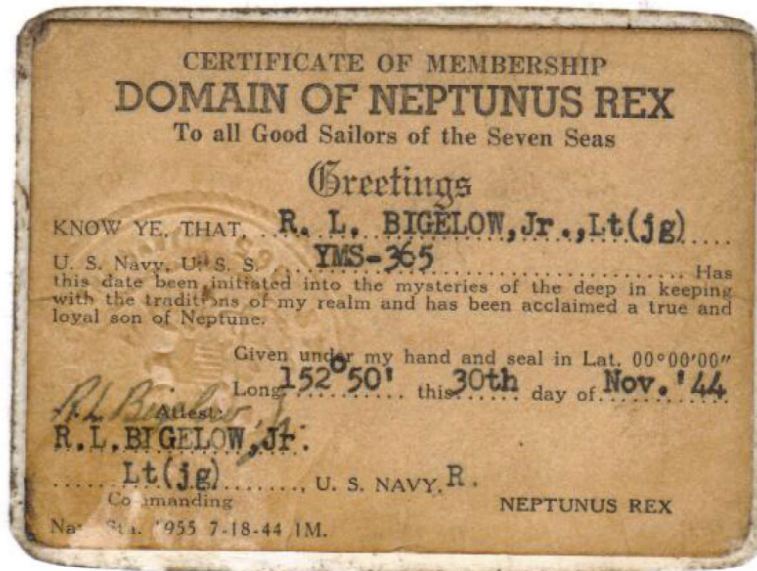
The ship departed Majuro Atoll on November 25, 1944 en route to Manus, Admiralty Islands in the Bismarck Sea.



LTJG Bigelow in the wardroom.

(Credit LTJG Dick Bigelow, USNR)

On November 30, 1944, the ship crossed the equator with appropriate ceremony.



(Credit CDR Rick Bigelow, USNR(ret))

On December 1, 1944, the ship entered Manus harbor in the Admiralty Islands.

For the next several weeks, YMS-365 patrolled the harbor and ensured the channel was kept clear of mines.

On December 22, 1944 the ship departed Manus harbor escorting the 14,000 ton tanker USS IX 132 Andrew Doria en route to Leyte Gulf in the Philippine Islands. The ship arrived in Leyte Gulf on December 30, 1944.

On January 2, 1945, YMS-365 departed Leyte Gulf as part of the invasion force heading to Lingayen Gulf, Philippine Islands.

On January 3, 1945 as the convoy was en route to Lingayen Gulf, the following occurred as was recorded in the '365's deck log:

0444 GQ. Enemy planes bearing 255 T, 10 miles and closing. All ships firing at planes. Planes release two bombs on starboard side of convoy. No damage.

0710 GQ.

0728 Enemy dive bomber attempts to crash into tanker that is part of convoy. Unsuccessful. Another plane leaves area smoking and crashes into the sea.

0740 Friendly planes astern of convoy.

0755 ceased firing. Secure from GQ.

1505 All flags in convoy at half-mast in honor of casualties suffered.

1622 Enemy planes 275 T at 29 miles.

1626 GQ. Planes attacking starboard side of convoy. No damage. Friendly planes arrive in area. Secure from GQ.

On January 4, 1945 as the convoy was en route to Lingayen Gulf, the following occurred:

0048 Three enemy aircraft circling overhead. Enemy drops no bombs.

0305 secure from GQ.

0320 GQ. Enemy aircraft circle overhead and drop no bombs.

1002 Enemy planes 180 T 10 miles. Sound GQ. Friendly planes 215 T 12 miles and closing.

1013 Friendly planes announce that enemy planes had been splashed 152 T at 12 miles.

1605 Enemy planes at 225 T at 16 miles.

On January 5, 1945 as the convoy was en route to Lingayen Gulf, the following occurred:

0805 GQ. 0817 Two enemy planes at 150 T 28 miles.

0900 Secure from GQ.

1030 Enemy plane 050 T 17 miles.

1032 Friendly planes tally ho after enemy plane.

1034 enemy plane 090 T 9 miles. Our plane on his tail.

1040 Our plane reports to have splashed enemy plane.

1552 Two Jap destroyers 101 T 63 miles speed 25 kts, cse 320 T. Three convoy escorts depart to take care of Jap destroyers.

1700 GQ. Two enemy planes 230 14 closing.

1729 Jap plane coming along stbd side of convoy.

1732 Jap plane shot down. 2<sup>nd</sup> plane shot down. Jap plane attempts to crash into LCI(G) – hits bow of LCI(G).

Note: The invasion at Lingayen Gulf took place from January 6 – 9, 1945.

On January 6, 1945 as the convoy was en route to and entered Lingayen Gulf, the following occurred:

Jap planes reported at various distances and bearings. None came closer than 9 miles.

0450 GQ. Jap planes in area.

0540 Jap planes 270 5 miles.

0610 Jap plane shot down off stbd beam of convoy.

0731 Jap planes attack astern of convoy. Friendly planes in area.

0905 assume minesweeping formation.

1115 Jap plane flying low off port side of convoy.

1245 Jap plane crashes into DMS off port quarter; another Jap plane crashes into APD off stbd quarter.

1432 unit closes up to proceed with minesweeping operations in Lingayen Gulf.

1620 GQ. Jap plane attacking ships off port beam.

1825 forming to retire to sea for the night.



On January 7, during the invasion of Lingayen Gulf, the following occurred:

Steaming in convoy retiring for the night from Lingayen Gulf into China Sea.

0135 Jap planes in area. GQ.

0145 Jap planes drop two bombs on convoy.

0200 secure.

0445 GQ. Jap planes attacking.

0729 ships on starboard side firing at Jap planes.

0735 Jap planes left area. Secure form GQ.

0915 Begin to sweep mag gear; lowered acoustic hammer.

0945 540 kw generator not working. Drop out of formation to attempt repairs. Can't repair. Stream O type gear.

1225 rejoin formation and sweep with O gear in Damantis area of Lingayen Gulf.

1408 sweep cable hits bottom/shoal near beach.

1735 recovered all sweep gear. Retired for night into China Sea.

On January 8, 1945, during the invasion of Lingayen Gulf, the following occurred:

Retiring in formation into China Sea.

0645 Returning to Lingayen Gulf. GQ. Jap planes in area.

0652 friendly planes astern closing.

0718 friendly planes still in area.

0807 stream acoustic and O gear. Begin sweeping in Port Saul area of Lingayen Gulf.

Retire for the evening to China Sea.

On January 9, 1945, during the invasion of Lingayen Gulf, the following occurred:

Steaming in formation retiring to China Sea for the night.

0533 Flash Red and Control Green while returning to Lingayen Gulf.

0730 sweeping in area of Lingayen in Lingayen Gulf.

0915 recover sweep gear and clear area so that troops can land. Receive fuel and supplies from USS AM 323.

1105 GQ. Jap planes in area.

1115 Secure from GQ. Steaming with unit in southern end of Area Escolata in Lingayen Gulf.

1855 Jap planes attacking ships in Area. Ships put up heavy AA fire. Jap plane shot down by ships off starboard bow.

1950 Secure from GQ.

Anchored in southern end of Escolta area, Lingayen Gulf.

On January 10, 1945, during the invasion of Lingayen Gulf, the following occurred:

Anchored in Lingayen Gulf.

0603 GQ. Small craft screening this ship in anchorage.

0640 Jap planes attacking ships in anchorage. Ships putting up heavy AA fire.

0714 Jap plane drops bomb near ship anchored close by.

1900 GQ. Jap planes attacking ships in anchorage. Heavy AA fire.

1901 Jap plane shot down near ship.

1916 Jap plane shot down off starboard bow.

1932 secure from GQ.

Blacked out for night.

On January 11, 1945, during the invasion of Lingayen Gulf, the following occurred:

Anchored in Lingayen Gulf.

0659 GQ. Jap planes in area 160 T 12 mi.

0709 secure from GQ.

0810 GQ. Anchor aweigh. Moving about harbor looking for supplies.

1257 dropped anchor in Area Shackle, Lingayen Gulf.

1853 GQ. Jap planes in area. Heavy AA fire. Secure from GQ.

On January 12, 1945, during the invasion of Lingayen Gulf, the following occurred:

Anchored in Area Shackle, Lingayen Gulf.

0657 GQ. Heavy AA fire. Jap plane shot down.

0756 another Jap plane shot down. Another Jap plane shot down in vicinity of APD causing fire on APD which seems to be under control.

0930 underway from anchorage.

Anchored in Area Shackle, Lingayen Gulf.

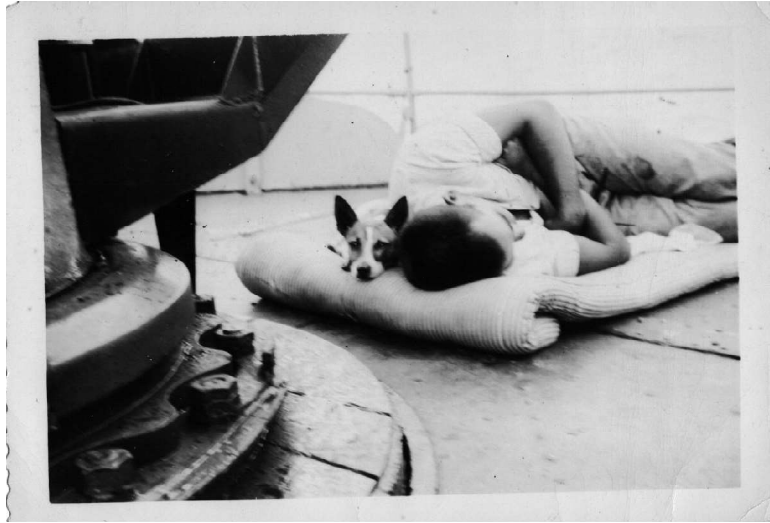


**April 1945: Crewmen from USS YMS-365 seen on Leyte Island, Philippines**

**Top row left to right: BM2c Jessie M. Kelly, SoM3c LaVerne D. Harwig, CY Edmond O. Pelino, GM3c James J. Wells, PhM1c Charles H. Morgan.**

**Bottom row left to right: S1c William W. Jones, EM2c George J. Powell, S2c Ruben D. Pasamonte, S2c Jacob G. Weber and S1c Benjamin T. Nordyke, Jr.**

(Credit CMoMM Ed Johnson, USNR)



### Little Doc and Big Doc

(Doc and Chief Pharmacists Mate First Class Charles Morgan catch up on some sleep)

(Credit LTJG Dick Bigelow, USNR)



**April 1945: Unidentified crewmen from USS YMS-365 seen on Leyte Island, Philippines.**

(Credit CMoMM Ed Johnson, USNR)



**GM2c John W. Woodward, S1c William C. Bones and GM3c Russell D. Richardson seen on USS YMS-365.**

(Credit CMoMM Ed Johnson, USNR)

Lingayen Gulf



PHILIPPINES



Leyte Gulf

The Si

below, USNR (ret)

(Credit CDR Rick Bigelow, USNR(ret))

For the next month, the ship remained in Lingayen Gulf patrolling the area and sweeping for mines. There was only limited Japanese aircraft activity during this period.



Ashtray made from shell of 3"/50 round from YMS-365. Bottom view of shell is on the right.

(Credit CDR Rick Bigelow, USNR(ret))

On February 13, 1945, YMS-365 got underway as part of a convoy headed to Leyte Gulf. The convoy entered Leyte Gulf on February 18, 1945. YMS-365 anchored in San Pedro Bay, Leyte Gulf on February 18, 1945.