

TO MARK the 70th anniversary of the Normandy landings, the Maritime Archaeology Trust (MTA), a Hampshire-based research and education charity, has released images of the cargo of a landing craft which sank on the eve of D-Day.

The images of LCT(A) 2428 and its cargo were taken during a survey which was funded by English Heritage and undertaken in conjunction with Southsea Sub-Aqua Club. The project aimed to record the physical remains of the sunken landing craft and its cargo.

LCTA 2428 had originally been a Mk.V Landing Craft Tank, LCT 428, built by the New York Shipbuilding Corporation in Camden, New Jersey, during 1942. Once completed, LCT 428 was transferred under the Lend Lease programme to the Royal Navy for operations in the Mediterranean. In time, LCT 428 was one of twenty-six of its type returned to the UK. At various shipyards, these LCTs were converted to



LCT(A)s, the 'A' standing for "Armoured", by the fitting of additional armour plating. Each vessel also had a "2" added to the original hull number. Hence LCT 428 became LCT(A) 2428.

It was intended that these landing craft would carry two or three tanks that would provide heavy firepower support, firing on enemy positions during the approach to the beach. The tanks would then disembark to provide support for the infantry. Some of the LCT(A)s also carried armoured bulldozers to assist in the clearing of beach obstacles.

LCT(A) 2428 was the flotilla leader of the 105th Flotilla of Assault Group J1's Support Squadron. It was assigned to Juno Beach to support the 7th Infantry Brigade of the 3rd Canadian Division at Courseulles-sur-Mer. The loading tables for LCT(A) 2428 indicate that it was destined for Mike Green beach at H-Hour (i.e. in the first wave).

It carried a cargo of two Centaur CS IV (Centaur Close Support Mk.IV) tanks, two Caterpillar D7 armoured bulldozers and one "Truck Airborne" (a typical British designation for a Willys Jeep). The Centaurs were from Q Troop of the 4th



D-Day Landing Craft Cargo Surveyed

ABOVE: A close up of the 95mm howitzer on one of Centaur CS IV tanks that formed part of LCT(A) 2428's cargo.

MAIN PICTURE: One of the Caterpillar D7 armoured bulldozers being carried by LCT(A) 2428 when it got into difficulties. (COURTESY OF MARTIN DAVIES DAY)

TOP RIGHT: A diver surveys one of LCT(A) 2428's pair of Centaur CS IV tanks, pictured here from the north-east. (COURTESY OF ALISON MAYOR)

