

LST-325:

KEEPING HISTORY ALIVE

One of only two examples left in the USA, Landing Ship Tank 325 serves as an operational reminder to America's tremendous contribution to final victory during World War Two

BY GREGORY L. WADE



In its wartime gray camouflage, *LST-325* makes an unusual sight at Nashville. (Gregory L. Wade)



LST-325 unloading while stranded at low tide during resupply operations, 12 June 1944. Note: propellers, rudders and other underwater details of these LSTs; 40mm single guns; barrage balloon; "Danforth" style kedge anchor at *LST-325's* stern.



On a blue-skied Labor Day weekend, the venerable *LST-325* paid a visit to Nashville, Tennessee, while hosting thousands who toured the ship docked in the shadows of the home of the NFL's Tennessee Titans. The

volunteer-manned craft welcomed aboard crowds from the very young to elderly World War Two veterans waiting in long lines for the experience.

The LST — Landing Ship, Tank — was designed to transport armor, wheeled vehicles, and personnel to enemy held coasts. The flat-keeled ships could land closer in on actual beaches unloading cargo with large front doors that allowed material to be offloaded via a retractable ramp.

The 1940 evacuation at Dunkirk of tens of thousands of Allied troops demonstrated the grave need for the ability to quickly design and build a landing craft capable of close-in delivery. The creation of such a vessel was the result of collaboration at a 1941 meeting between President Franklin Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

Typical of the efficiency and speed of the day, a design was finalized and

Dramatic view of *LST-325* unloading at Normandy at low tide on 12 June 1944. Note the sand ramp being constructed to permit unloading of ship through her bow doors and the ship's unsupported forward hull.