



# “THE ELSIE ITEM”

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE  
USS LANDING CRAFT, INFANTRY, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, INC.

• ESTABLISHED MAY 14-18, 1991, NORFOLK, VA •

FEBRUARY 2006

ISSUE #55

## In This Issue:



Upcoming Reunion News



Mine Protection at Peliliu

## LCLers SAIL AGAIN TO NORFOLK!

The Luxury Dinner Cruise Vessel  
*Spirit of Norfolk* will welcome  
LCLers to our Tenth Reunion

Full Details in this Issue



Official Newsletter of the USS LCI National Association, a non-profit veteran's organization. Membership in the USS LCI National Association is open to any U. S. Navy or U. S. Coast Guard veteran who served aboard a Landing Craft, Infantry. Associate membership, without voting privileges, is offered to others.

Published quarterly by the USS LCI National Association. John P. Cummer, Editor. Any material for possible publication should be sent to the Editor at 302 Pinewood Cottage Lane, Blythewood, SC 29016

## **A Couple of Words from the President/Editor**

I tell you, guys, I've just got to think up a better label to put on this page! It used to be easy with Jim Talbert's "From the Desk of Jim Talbert" and my "A Word from the Editor", but that title up there just seems too awkward. Any suggestions? I'd thought of "Dope from the Dope," but I'm not sure my ego could stand that.

Anyway, it's good to welcome you again to another issue of The Elsie Item and especially so with this one, because it has all the information on our April reunion in Norfolk.

### **The Reunion:**

This will be something quite special and we are hoping that many, many of you will be able to join us for this our Tenth Reunion. Armed Forces Reunions has worked diligently once again to put together an outstanding program of tours and other activities, and we think it will be a reunion that you will remember for a long time.

Many of us are anticipating seeing Little Creek Naval Amphibious Base again. Believe me, it's a far cry from the Quonset huts, mud, etc., that so many of you remember from World War II. We'll have the opportunity to see first hand what our modern amphibious forces look like. Have you ever seen an LCAT? That's the landing craft that rides on a cushion of air and climbs right up on the beach. Tiny Clarkson, Leo Janetis and I had the opportunity to see up close when we were there a couple of years ago presenting an LCI Model to Admiral Tom Moran, who at that time was Commander of Amphibious Group Two, based at Little Creek.

Times and schedules being what they are, we have not been able to get confirmation as we go to press, but it is our hope that we will have the opportunity to hear from Admiral Garry E. Hall, present Commander of Amphibious Group Two whom we have invited to be our banquet speaker. We've also invited Captain Garret "Gary" Cooper (how do you like that name!) to greet us if possible when we tour Little Creek.

We're sure the late afternoon/evening dinner cruise aboard the beautiful Spirit of Norfolk (See that cover picture!) will be an outstanding event. By doing it in the late afternoon we'll be able to see all the big ships at the Naval Operating Base much better than if we were there after dark. And we are certain you'll find the dinner aboard equally outstanding.

But, however great all our tours and other activities are, we all know that it is the comradeship of old friends and renewing acquaintances that makes our reunions so very special. It's great to see shipmates again and to retell those tall tales that we've enjoyed regaling our grandkids with – that is, if we can get them to stay in one place long enough for us to tell them those great sea stories! Be sure to bring with you all the photos and memorabilia you can!

And we are again looking forward again to a good representation from our sons, daughters, grandkids and other family members. As they join us in increasing numbers, we find the life of our Association revitalized and we are grateful for that.



## **The Future:**

There's a couple of items concerning our future about which we'd like to have you thinking. Most likely we'll be discussing these at the reunion and your input will be valued.

First, we've had approaches from two other World War II Navy Veterans groups that are interested in exploring the possibility of holding joint reunions - not joining Associations together, but meeting together. The two groups are the Patrol Craft Sailor's Association, and the Mine Warfare Association.

Duane "Bucky" Walters, President of the Patrol Craft Sailors Association and Jack Fogarty, President of the Mine Warfare Association have appointed committees who will be meeting this month to explore the issue. The Patrol Craft Sailors Association use Armed Forces Reunions, Inc, as we do, for planning their reunions but the Mine Warfare Association does not.

One significant issue might be the ability to negotiate better prices with hotels because of the larger numbers involved.

Your Board of Directors will keep this issue under active consideration and your input would be welcomed. Should any such move be made, it most likely would be at least three or four years into the future.

The second issue has to do with our reunion locations. Last year, noting the increasing difficulty many of our members have in traveling long distances, the Board of Directors decided that it might be wise to hold future reunion only in the middle of the country instead of alternating east coast, mid-west, west coast as we have been doing. Next year, as you may remember, we are planning on meeting in Branson, Missouri. The Board feels that it would be well to plan again in 2008 for the middle states and so we are asking Ted Dey, our reunion planner, to bring in proposals from those areas. We have thought of Mobile (Battleship Alabama, nearby Naval Air Museum in Pensacola), Milwaukee (near

Great Lakes), or perhaps a return to Louisville, St. Louis or Nashville. If you have any thoughts on this subject, please pass them on to any one of our officers or directors for their consideration.

## **State Directors**

It's been most heartening to see the response to the efforts Rod Scurlock and Hal Blehyl are making in re-vitalizing the State Directors. We are almost at the point where we have a director for each state! Already there's been at least one new state reunion as a result. In this issue you will read Charlie Savary's report on the reunion organized by State Director for New Mexico Mick Greenbank. We're hoping to have many more such state reunions to report to you in the future.

At Norfolk we are planning a special breakfast and planning session for these State Directors and are urging each of them to come with as definite plans as possible for their state reunions. We are planning special recognition for these valued volunteers. The list of directors as at present is also in this issue along with addresses and telephone numbers to help you get in touch with them. I'm sure each of them will value hearing from you and, if possible, offering help in organizing a state get-together.

## **On a Personal Note**

Finally, my special thanks to each of you who sent expressions of support and well wishes as I went through heart by-pass surgery in November. I'm very happy to report that the procedure went very well. They only had to do three by-passes instead of four, and they let me out of the hospital in three days! My cardiac rehab exercise program is going very well and I'm feeling much better.

Now all I've got to do before Norfolk is take those dancing lessons I promised my wife!

See you in Norfolk!

*John Cummer*



# Welcome to Norfolk and Another Great Reunion



## The Sheraton Waterside Hotel – Our Reunion Headquarters

Forget the gin mills, tattoo parlors and burly Shore Patrolmen of Front Street! Forget those much-rumored “Sailors and Dogs Keep Off” signs on lawns! Forget wall-to-wall sailors wherever you go! Forget the frustration of never getting a seat on the Granby Street streetcar!

The Norfolk of our World War II memories is a far cry from the beautiful, vibrant city with great tourist attractions that we will be visiting in April. Take a look at that beautiful hotel above, read through the plans and tour descriptions, and make your plans to join your shipmates for what promises to be one of our most outstanding reunions. It was ten years ago that a small group of LCLers met in Norfolk and laid the groundwork for our Association, so this is an important anniversary celebration for us.

Along with the always enjoyable comradeship and

exchanging of sea stories once again with shipmates from so long ago, we will have an opportunity to visit both the Naval Operating Base where the deep water Navy hangs out and the Amphibious Training Base, Little Creek, where we will have a chance to see what our modern amphibious Navy is like. Additionally, we’re planning some great dining and sight-seeing excursions. You’ll have the opportunity to visit Nauticus, the great water-front tourist attraction featuring the battleship USS Wisconsin. We’ll also see the MacArthur Memorial in downtown Norfolk.

The following pages will describe our reunion program in more detail, and the hotel and reunion registration blanks are right there for you to complete and send in.

**See you in Norfolk!**



# USS LCI NATIONAL ASSOCIATION REUNION

APRIL 19–23, 2006

SHERATON WATERSIDE—NORFOLK, VA

## Wednesday, April 19

1:00 pm–7:00 pm

1:00 pm

7:00 pm

### Reunion Registration open

Hospitality Room open throughout the reunion (Cash bar available)

Board Meeting

## Thursday, April 20

7:30 am–8:30 am

9:30 am–2:30 pm

3:00 pm–5:30 pm

6:00 pm–9:00 pm

### Reunion Registration open

LITTLE CREEK / NORFOLK NAVAL STATION TOUR

### Reunion Registration open

CAPTAIN GEORGE'S SEAFOOD RESTAURANT

## Friday, April 21

7:30 am–8:00 am

9:00 am–1:30 pm

9:45 am–2:15 pm

2:45 pm–6:15 pm

4:30 pm–5:30 pm

### Reunion Registration open

CITY TOUR / MacARTHUR MEMORIAL

NAUTICUS / MacARTHUR CENTER

SPIRIT OF NORFOLK DINNER CRUISE

### Reunion Registration open

## Saturday, April 22

7:00 am–8:30 am

9:00 am–11:30 am

9:00 am–12:00 pm

1:30 pm–2:30 pm

5:30 pm

6:30 pm

State Directors Breakfast

Business Meeting for the men (coffee available at 8:30am)

LADIES TOUR

Memorial Service

Cash Bar Reception

Banquet

## Sunday, April 23

Farewells & Departures

### **CANCELLATION AND REFUND POLICY FOR ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC.**

For attendees canceling reunion activities prior to the cut-off date, Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. (AFR) shall process a full refund less the non-refundable AFR registration fee (\$5 per person). Attendees canceling reunion activities after the cut-off date will be refunded to the fullest extent that AFR's vendor commitments and guarantees will allow, less the non-refundable AFR registration fee. **Cancellations will only be taken Monday through Friday from 9:00am until 5:00pm Eastern Standard Time, excluding holidays.**

Please call (757) 625-6401 or email [cancel@afri.com](mailto:cancel@afri.com) to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion. Canceling your hotel reservation does not cancel your reunion activities. Please remember to do both if you find you need to cancel.



# TOUR DESCRIPTIONS

## LITTLE CREEK / NORFOLK NAVAL STATION TOUR

Thursday, April 20

Embark on base tours today of two different Naval bases. Some will start at Norfolk Amphibious Base, better known to you as, LITTLE CREEK. You'll see a variety of Navy ships, buildings and support and recreation facilities as you ride and tour the Little Creek Base, home to the East Coast Navy SEALs, Navy hovercrafts, an EOD command, a diving and salvage command and various other supporting units. At the Norfolk Naval Station, the world's largest naval facility, you'll see Admiral's Row, the Naval Air Station, and the piers. Between tours, enjoy lunch at one of several clubs on the bases.

**9:30 am board bus, 2:30 pm back at hotel**  
**\$38/Person includes bus, escort, and lunch.**

## CAPTAIN GEORGE'S SEAFOOD RESTAURANT

Thursday, April 20

Enjoy a great meal with your comrades and friends at this well-known restaurant. Captain George's features an "all-you-can-eat seafood buffet" with soup, salad, crab legs, steamed or fried shrimp, clams, oysters, catch of the day, Prime Rib, as well as other entrees and accompanying side dishes. Both locals and tourists rank Captain George's a favorite! Bring an empty stomach and expect to leave more than satisfied.

**6:00 pm board bus, 9:00 pm back at hotel**  
**\$57/Person includes bus, escort, and dinner.**

## CITY TOUR / MacARTHUR MEMORIAL

Friday, April 21

Board bus for a driving tour of Norfolk. Drive by the Moses Myers House, where one of America's first millionaires lived; the Willoughby-Baylor House, built in 1794 and representative of both Georgian and Federal architecture; and St. Paul's Church, built in 1739 and the lone survivor of the British bombardment and fiery destruction of the city by Lord Dunmore in 1776. A British cannonball is still embedded in the southeastern wall of the church. Drive thru the Ghent Area, an affluent residential and shopping community. Continue on to the MacArthur Memorial, featuring an eleven-gallery museum and the final resting place of the late general. Visit the gift shop and see a film summarizing the general's life and achievements. On the way back to the hotel, the buses will drop off at both MacArthur Center and Waterside Festival Marketplace (both of which are w/in walking distance of the hotel) for lunch and shopping on your own. Others may wish to eat back at the hotel. Note: This tour is limited to the first 100 people registered.

**9:00 am board bus, 1:30 pm back at hotel**  
**\$29/Person includes bus and guide. Lunch on your own.**

or

(See Next Page)



## **NAUTICUS / MacARTHUR CENTER**

**Friday, April 21**

Spend the day in downtown Norfolk starting at Nauticus, an exciting 120,000 square-foot science and technology center that explores the power of the sea with interactive and educational exhibits. On the second deck of Nauticus is the Hampton Roads Naval Museum, which features a large collection of naval artwork, ship models and underwater artifacts. Also part of Nauticus is the USS Wisconsin. The Wisconsin is one of the largest and last battleships to be built by the U.S. Navy. At your leisure, our buses will shuttle over to MacArthur Center Mall for lunch and free time. Choose from full-service restaurants to fast food options. Visit Nordstrom, Dillards, and over 100 other shops. Return to the hotel at your leisure. Note: Due to the short trip from the hotel to Nauticus, each bus will make two trips to get everyone over to Nauticus from the hotel. Buses will shuttle from Nauticus to the mall, departing at 11:30 am and 12:45 pm. Buses will leave the mall and return to the hotel at 1:00 pm, 1:30 pm, and 2:00 pm.

**9:45 am buses begin shuttling, 2:15 pm back at hotel at the latest  
\$25/Person includes shuttle bus, escort, and admission. Lunch on your own.**

## **SPIRIT OF NORFOLK DINNER CRUISE**

**Friday, April 21**

Board bus for the Spirit of Norfolk, the premiere cruise boat on Norfolk's waterfront. The harbor dinner cruise with live musical entertainment features the sights of Hampton Roads harbor, the mighty ships at the Norfolk Naval Station, and a lavish dinner buffet. Please note: The ship is approximately three blocks from the hotel. Some may choose to walk. Refunds for transportation can't be given for those who change their mind at the reunion. This tour is limited to the first 400 people registered.

**2:45 pm board bus, 6:15 pm back at hotel  
\$60/Person includes bus, escort, and dinner cruise.  
\$45/Person includes dinner cruise only (no transportation). Cruise is from 3:30 pm-6:00 pm**

## **LADIES TOUR**

**Saturday, April 22**

Board bus for the Norfolk Botanical Gardens, home of the International Azalea Festival, celebrating the NATO Alliance. Surrounded by Lake Whitehurst, Norfolk Botanical Gardens represent an oasis of many gardens covering 155 beautiful acres. The Gardens dates back to 1938, when 200 African-American workers sponsored by a Works Progress Administration grant cleared the dense native vegetation and planted 4,000 azaleas. Today, Norfolk Botanical Gardens features one of the largest and most diverse collections of azaleas, camellias, roses and rhododendrons on the east coast. Your tour includes a tram ride orientation of the gardens and free time to roam your areas of particular interest.

**9:00 am board bus, 12:00 pm back at hotel  
\$35/Person includes bus, escort, and admission.**

*Driver and Guide gratuities are not included in the tour prices.  
Please plan to be at the bus boarding at least five minutes prior to the scheduled time.  
All tours must have a minimum of thirty people, unless otherwise noted.*



# USS LCI NATIONAL ASSOCIATION ACTIVITY REGISTRATION FORM

Listed below are all registration, tour, and meal costs for the reunion. Please enter how many people will be participating in each event and total the amount. Send that amount payable to ARMED FORCES REUNIONS INC. in the form of check or money order (no credit cards or phone reservations accepted). Your cancelled check will serve as your confirmation. Returned checks will be charged a \$20 fee. All registration forms and payments must be received by mail on or before March 17, 2006. After that date, reservations will be accepted on a space available basis. We suggest you make a copy of this form before mailing. Please do not staple or tape your payment to this form.

**Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.**  
**322 Madison Mews**  
**Norfolk, VA 23510**  
**ATTN: LCI**

OFFICE USE ONLY	
Check# _____	Date Received _____
Inputted _____	Nametag Completed _____

**CUT-OFF DATE IS 3/17/06**

THURSDAY: LITTLE CREEK/NORFOLK NAVAL STATION TOUR

THURSDAY: CAPT. GEORGE'S SEAFOOD RESTAURANT

*Choose one of the following two tours:*

FRIDAY: CITY TOUR/MacARTHUR MEMORIAL

FRIDAY: NAUTICUS/MacARTHUR CENTER

*Choose one of the following two options:*

FRIDAY: SPIRIT OF NORFOLK WITH TRANSPORTATION

FRIDAY: SPIRIT OF NORFOLK WITHOUT TRANSPORTATION

**MEALS**

DAY: BANQUET *(Please select your entree)*

ROAST PRIME RIB OF BEEF

CHICKEN WITH TARRAGON SAUCE

**MANDATORY PER PERSON REGISTRATION FEE**

Includes Hospitality Room and administrative expenses.

Total Amount Payable to **Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.**

Price Per	# of People	Total
\$38		\$
\$57		\$
\$29		\$
\$25		\$
\$60		\$
\$45		\$
		\$
\$35		\$
\$35		\$
\$15		\$
		\$

**PLEASE PRINT NAME**

FIRST \_\_\_\_\_ LAST \_\_\_\_\_ NICKNAME \_\_\_\_\_

LCI # \_\_\_\_\_ SPOUSE NAME (IF ATTENDING) \_\_\_\_\_

GUEST NAMES \_\_\_\_\_

STREET ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

DISABILITY/DIETARY RESTRICTIONS \_\_\_\_\_

*(Sleeping room requirements must be conveyed by attendee directly with hotel)*

MUST YOU BE LIFTED HYDRAULICALLY ONTO THE BUS WHILE SEATED IN YOUR WHEELCHAIR IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN BUS TRIPS?  YES  NO **(PLEASE NOTE THAT WE CANNOT GUARANTEE AVAILABILITY)**

PLEASE SPECIFY BANQUET SEATING PREFERENCES IF DIFFERENT FROM YOUR LCI# \_\_\_\_\_

EMERGENCY CONTACT \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

ARRIVAL DATE \_\_\_\_\_ DEPARTURE DATE \_\_\_\_\_

ARE YOU STAYING AT THE HOTEL?  YES  NO ARE YOU:  FLYING  DRIVING  RV

For refunds and cancellations please refer to our policies outlined at the bottom of the reunion program. **CANCELLATIONS WILL ONLY BE TAKEN MONDAY-FRIDAY 9:00 AM-5:00 PM EASTERN TIME (excluding holidays.)**

Call (757) 625-6401 or email cancel@afri.com to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code.

Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion.



If you'd rather not cut up your Elsie Item, please copy this form and mail it to the address given below

## USS LCI NATIONAL ASSOCIATION HOTEL RESERVATION FORM REUNION DATES: April 19-23, 2006

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. Number (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Arrival Date \_\_\_\_\_ Approx. Time \_\_\_\_\_ Departure Date \_\_\_\_\_

### ROOM PREFERENCE:

Number of Rooms \_\_\_\_\_ Number of people in room \_\_\_\_\_

Handicap Access? \_\_\_\_\_ Smoking \_\_\_\_\_ Non-Smoking \_\_\_\_\_

King Bed \_\_\_\_\_ 2 Double Beds \_\_\_\_\_

*(If room type requested is not available, nearest room type will be assigned.)*

**RATE:** \$92 + tax (currently 13%) for up to 2 people in room (\$15 for each additional person)  
Rate will be honored 3 days before and after reunion dates, based on availability

**CUT OFF DATE:** March 1, 2006. Reservations received after 5:00 p.m. local time at the hotel on the cut-off date will be processed on space and rate available basis.

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** Deposit is refundable if reservation is canceled 73 hours prior to arrival

### PAYMENT:

All reservations must be guaranteed by credit card or first night's deposit, enclosed.

\_\_\_\_\_ AMEX \_\_\_\_\_ DINERS \_\_\_\_\_ VISA \_\_\_\_\_ MASTER CARD

\_\_\_\_\_ CARTE BLANCHE \_\_\_\_\_ DISCOVER

CREDIT CARD NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE *(regardless of payment method):* \_\_\_\_\_

### Mail to:

**Sheraton Norfolk Waterside Hotel ■ 777 Waterside Drive ■ Norfolk, VA 23510**



# Welcome Aboard!

Here they are! Some “new” old shipmates and their appreciative family members.  
We’re happy to see each and every one come aboard.

## **New Members**

**LCI(G) 24, Joseph J. Pritchard,**  
Watervliet, MI

**LCI(G) 70, Leo D. Wilcox,**  
Houston, TX

**LCI(L) 556, Charles S. Rickards,**  
Mullica Hill, NJ

**LCI(G) 1010, D. Harold Kinney,**  
Lexington, NC

## **New Life Members**

**LCI 24, Ronald H. Smith,**  
Benton Harbor, MI

**LSD 32, Jacob L. Ritzen,**  
Sarasota, FL

**LCI 412, Robert R. Towndrow,**  
Briarcliff Manor, NY

**LCI 423, Russell C. Brown,**  
Orefield, PA

## **New Affiliates:**

**Barry J. Brown,**

Son of Russell C. Brown, LCI 423, Whitehall, PA

**Barbara Brown,**

Daughter of Russell C. Brown, LCI 423, Schnecksville, PA

**Edward B. Sorrentino,**

Son of Edward Sorrentino, LCI 966, Doswell, VA

## **Affiliates Becoming Life Members**

**Robert W. Cook,**

Jacksonville, FL



# E-MAIL CHANGES AND CORRECTIONS

Please make the following changes in your list of LCIers emails:

<b>LCI</b>	<b>Name/Email</b>
61	<b>Smith, Reginald B.</b> acastle@bellsouth.net
69	<b>Johnson, Desmond</b> desivo@genevaonline.com
78	<b>Collins, Neal</b> nealcoll@insightbb.com
84	<b>Swain, Earl</b> Swain05@aol.com
355	<b>Dorflinger, Dave</b> dgwwm@wmconnect.com
366	<b>Bowen, Charles D.</b> cchazbow@cs.com
537	<b>Clarkson, Howard B.</b> hbclarkson@verizon.net
618	<b>Clements, Tom</b> thomascléments@webtbv.net
LSD 32	<b>Ritzen, Jacob L.</b> K74n8@netscape.net



# Letters to the Editor

*Here's an interesting observation from a practicing Motor Mac about the article in the August, 2005, issue in which the engineer who developed the clutching mechanism that enabled the four engines of the "Quad" to work together referred to it as a "mechanical monstrosity."*

Re: the LCI Power Plant

I really enjoyed the article describing the origin of the Quad. I do not agree that the Quad was (or is) a "mechanical monstrosity". I was a MoMM 1/c on LCI 584 in the Med in 1944 and have a degree (1951) in Mechanical Engineering from Washington State University. Both from operating experience and my knowledge of mechanical engineering I do not see the Quad as a monstrosity.



*R. J. Ascherl in 1944 with his Ship, LCI 584 in the Background.*

As a power plant for a small ship, the Quad provided reliability, flexibility and economy that could not be matched by any other power sys-

tem of equal horsepower in that period.

As an example of flexibility and reliability, I relate an experience in a convoy of LCIs from Pozzuoli (near Naples) to Civitavecchia (now the Port of Rome) in the summer of 1944. About midnight the port aft engine of the port Quad "blew up" ejecting oil all over the engine room – the result of a burn-through of one piston head. We were cruising on four engines, so another engine was engaged and we proceeded without any effect on ship speed. Starting about 0100 the first of six or seven fuel pumps failed over a period of a couple of hours, leaving us at one point with only two operating engines so that we could no longer maintain convoy speed. We had used all of our spare pumps (including the pump from the failed engine) and had to borrow a couple from another LCI to get back to four operating engines so we could maintain convoy speed. There was no sign of water in the day tank. We never did determine the cause of the failures although a slug of water in the fuel could have been the cause.

The above experience demonstrates both the reliability and flexibility of the Quad "monstrosity".

Sincerely

R. J. Ashcherl  
22304 Old Siler Logging Road  
Snomish, WA 98296



*... and here's a picture of the crew of Ascherl's LCI 584, taken in Oran on the occasion of their winning the pennant for inspections*



*By email, we were most happy to receive this note from Gordon Smith:*

Dear John,

Thank you for another splendid edition of "The Elsie Item".

I wish to also thank you for the fine coverage you gave our successful Northwest Reunion and the participation of the LCI (L) 713.

However, there was one large omission. The reunion was a success because of the support of Rod Scurlock and Hal Bleyhl. New state directors should be aware that they will have the assistance of experienced hands in the promotion of state events.

Much thanks to all,

Gordon Smith, LCI 43  
Vancouver, WA

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*In our last issue we had several pictures of LCI crews. One, of the crew of LCI (M) 809 was without identification but included the note that he was "the one in the far right next to the Army Doc". Leonard Young, of Incline Village, Nevada, wrote to inform me that he was the one who had sent in the picture (see below) and had this most interesting bit of additional information:*



My family, including brothers, really enjoyed the group picture of LCI (M) 809 taken in Panama on our way to Galveston. However, they insisted I write to tell you that "Doc" was my father, Colonel George Young, who stopped by to welcome us back!

Sincerely,  
Leonard Young

---

*We may have started something with pictures of ship's crews! Here's another and, if you've got a good crew's picture, send it on in. Think of how much it will help you when you try to convince your grandkids how good looking and cocky you were!*



As a new member of the LCI Association I enclose a picture of the crew of LCI (L) 545.

I was C.O., and I had a real sharp crew.

Sorry our number isn't shown in the picture

Bernard A. Clark  
Harbor Springs, MI



## ...and now, here's Rod Scurlock!



John Cumber has asked me to contribute an article for the Elsie Item, and me, being a man of few words, this may be difficult. Gary Cooper was my idol and he got by with just a "YEP". Anyway, here goes:

Being the new kid on the block in this outfit, there are a few things I have noticed since I've been involved that I would like to pass on to you. In the past, going to the meetings, I acknowledged that the officers put together a meeting and I knew that took a little effort, and the Elsie Item got printed and I knew that took a little effort, and that was about it. Man! Talk about looking at the mountain and seeing a molehill!

John Cumber has been working on the Norfolk meeting with the Armed Forces Reunion, Inc., ever since he walked out of the door in New Orleans. He did take a little time out to squeeze his new bride, and get a triple by-pass in between, and put together the next issue of "The Elsie Item" in his spare time.

Jim Talbert, Chairman of the Board, works tirelessly at keeping current the names of the members of the Association, recording the names of the new members, the names of those who have passed on, and trying to keep up with the changes in addresses, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses of 2500 or so members. This is an almost impossible job, and especially when so many hold these vital facts close to their chests and he can't find out about them. Jim also plays an important role in keeping the activities of the Association within legal bounds.

Tiny and Janet Clarkson, Treasurers, keep your money invested, doing everything they can to bring in the highest return. They keep records of the life members, the new members, and record the money from each of these accounts, as well as keeping track of the money each of you pay in for dues each year. They issue funds for the various projects that the Association is involved in each year, and for the day to day expenses that occur. They provide a monthly report of the financial status of the various categories of Association funds.

Bob McLain, Secretary, keeps the minutes of our meetings, and provides a record of the activities of the organization over the years.

Earl Henshaw and David Cox, our chaplains, provide spiritual guidance to us at our meetings.

Roy Age, Overseer. Keeps his benign and all-knowing eye on all of us and makes sure we don't get too far out of line.



I have also discovered that the vice president's job description "other duties as assigned" has more meaning than the words might indicate under President John Cummer.

The board of directors consisting of Hal Bleyhl, Shelby Smith, Sam Rizzo, and William Hedger, will have a large role to play in the new organization. They will be working with the state directors, giving them assistance in setting up their meetings and carrying word between the states and Board Chairman, Jim Talbert, as to their activities, state reunions, etc. Hal Bleyhl, Western Area Director, has been working tirelessly to locate state directors in the western states without a current director.

Lastly, I would like to say a word about the state directors. These guys are the first line of defense for the organization. They are the ones that put your state meetings together. They know you personally, they are your first contact to report changes in your status, and they are your pipeline to make your wants and ideas known. They also put in a bunch of time and effort in carrying out your programs. We need to give them all the help we can to make their job easier.

I wanted to bring this out because I had no idea before I became involved, the amount of time and effort that these people put in, in our behalf. A great deal of their time all year is devoted to making this organization run smoothly, and we as members need to give them the support they deserve to keep our Association viable. Keep them current on your addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and keep your dues current each year. That will make their jobs a lot easier.

Also, be sure to come to Norfolk; there will be a lot of memories for a lot of you there!

*Rod Scurlock*

## **No New Candidates! Cummer and Scurlock to Stand for Election**

Since no other members have submitted biographies indicating that they wish to be considered as candidates for the offices of President or Vice President, the two announced candidates, whose autobiographies were carried in the last issue of the newsletter, will stand for election at the business meeting in Norfolk.

# Amphibious Forces Memorial Museum to Take Ownership of the 713

Gordon Smith, President of the Amphibious Forces Memorial Museum, has announced that, during the month of January, 2006, ownership of the LCI (L) 713 will be transferred from owner Walt James to the Amphibious Forces Memorial Museum located in Astoria, Oregon.



*A delighted Gordon Smith tosses off a snappy salute from the bridge of the LCI 713*

Obviously delighted with this move which gives a permanent home to the one remaining LCI being configured to her World War II appearance, Smith said, "The entire Board of Directors, along with Walt James and 'Chief of the Boat' Leon Gilbo, have worked hard to make this happen. A verbal agreement has been reached on all terms and conditions and formal signatures are to follow soon."

"This is a huge step up the gangway to success of the Museum. It is our cornerstone of things to come," said Smith. "We will now be in a position to apply for grants and other funds for the further restoration of the ship."

Smith reports that short and long term plans for completion of the restoration will be developed. One of the first things to be done will be to install a new bottom for the hull. With seaworthiness restored, consideration of installation of engines could follow in the future so that the 713 could once again navigate under her own power. All parties concerned agree that that is a long-term dream and will need a great deal of funding and labor to make it possible. The foundation for the dream, however, has been firmly laid with the Museum assuming ownership of the vessel.





"We have been holding off any announcement until the formal signatures have been applied", said Smith, "but we cannot delay any longer and still get the news out to the LCI National Association in the January issue of the newsletter."

Smith emphasized that it has been the encouragement of LCI sailors across the country that has given them the desire to commence this huge project.

"We will look for the backing of all LCIs in the future," said Smith.

Smith expressed thanks on behalf of the Board of the Museum and the many hard working volunteers for all the support given to them in the past.



*Aboard the 713, (left to right) Gordon Smith, LCI 43; Vern Malmquist, LCI 948, Wendy Lucht and Owner/Reconstructor Walt James*

Located at Pier 39, Astoria, Oregon, the Amphibious Forces Memorial Museum currently features display of LCI 713 and USS Washtenaw County, an LST of post WWII times which operated during the Viet Nam war. Future plans call for special displays of uniforms, equipment and personal artifacts ranging from letters home, to rare photographs. During special events such as reunions, open houses and youth overnight programs, the museum's living history crew will give an up close and personal look at what life aboard the amphibs was really like.

As the museum grows, future displays will include additional military vehicles associated with the amphibious forces. Further information on the museum can be obtained at their website, [www.amphibiousforces.org](http://www.amphibiousforces.org). Applications for membership are available from the museum at 100 39th Street Pier, Astoria, Oregon 97103, and also will be available at the Norfolk reunion.



# Finding an Old Gator Sailor!

By

Vaughn Hampton, LCI 450  
State Director for Colorado

After volunteering to serve as State Director for Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah, I was sent a roster of LCI members living in those states. I contacted one of the men who lives in Arvada, Colorado, where I reside. His name is Roger Walker. Roger served on LCI 657. He had a stroke about three years ago and is unable to talk.

When I called him, I talked with his wife Margaret and she drove him to my home where we spent an afternoon recalling incidents from years ago when we sailed the Pacific in the bouncing LCIs.

Roger asked me to submit his recollections of happenings during the war for consideration for publication in *The Elsie Item*. I typed them for him and am sending them in, knowing that Roger would appreciate seeing his thoughts appear in the newsletter. Perhaps it might also reach some of Roger's shipmates, and that is what he really wants to happen.

*Editor's note: Thanks very much, Vaughn, for your kindness in seeking out Roger and giving him some happy moments. Your actions remind us that we who have been blessed with better health should be sensitive to the needs of our shipmates who have been slowed down physically and reach out to them, remembering the great friendships of our youth.*

*We're glad to be able to share these words and pictures with our readers.*

## LCI Signalman

by

Roger Walker, Signalman, Second Class,  
U. S. Naval Reserve



*Roger Walker - Waving Skivvies in the Conn!*

After joining the USS LCI National Association I perused the record of the US Navy LCI Flotilla Fourteen. As a member of Flotilla Fourteen's staff, I would like to shed some light on the record as written, if I may.

I was drafted into the US Navy Reserves June 1943 while I was a junior in Midland Michigan High School. I went through Boot Camp at Great Lakes Naval Training Station in Illinois. After completing my Boot Camp, I was sent to Signalman's School there at Great Lakes. In January 1944, I was transferred to San Diego US Navy Receiving Station where I was assigned to the staff of the USS LCI (FF) 738 which was the flagship of LCI Flotilla Fourteen. My Commanding Officer was T. W. Rimer, Captain, USN. We sailed to Pearl Harbor, Einewetok Island, and Manus Island in route to the Philippine Islands.



On October 20, 1944, we sailed in convoy for the invasion of Leyte Island in the Philippines under command of Admiral Thomas C Kinkaid's 7th Fleet. I was on Leyte Island when Gen MacArthur made his famous "I have returned" speech. The LCI (FF) 738 participated in the 9 January, 1945, Luzon Lingayen Gulf invasion. We then sailed to Leyte and were assigned to Adm. 'Bull' Halsey's Third Fleet. We sailed 19 March 1945 for Ryukyu, south of Okinawa.

I was then assigned to the Flagship USS LCI (FF) 657. We invaded Tokashiki Shima off Okinawa 27 March 1945, then participated in the invasion of Okinawa 1 April 1945. We then sailed to Ie Shima, an island in the Okinawa group, where we all lost a friend. Ernie Pyle, on 18 April 1945 two days after the Ie Shima invasion.



*The Ernie Pyle Marker on Ie Shima*

On 14 June 1945 we received orders to sail for Pearl Harbor to overhaul the ship's engines. Our sailing orders took the ship out of harm's way of the typhoon that devastated Okinawa. After we regrouped, our convoy got underway three times for the Japanese Islands only to be instructed to return to Pearl Harbor. I had the feeling I wouldn't return from this Japanese voyage. "Thank God for the Bomb".

I was one proud sailor to be able to watch the VJ - Victory Day Parade in downtown Honolulu.

We decommissioned our LCI Flotilla Fourteen ships in Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii. I returned stateside for a 30 day leave and returned to Shoemaker, CA, from where I was sent to Treasure Island Separation Center, San Francisco until I had enough points to be released from the Navy. I was discharged from the US Navy Reserves 17 March 1946.



*Roger and his wife Margaret live in Arvada, CO and can be reached at 303/422-1021*

*Roger had a stroke three years ago, affecting his speech ability and one side of his body, requiring the use of a cane to walk. His mind is still sharp as a tack, and he recalls many incidents from his service aboard LCIs. Roger and Margaret married in 1948 and she is his "voice" for anyone who might wish to contact him.*



# LCI(G) 457 – One of the Valiant at Iwo Jima



LCI(G) 457 – Veteran of Iwo Jima

*The exploits of LCI(G) Group Eight at Iwo Jima have been told before in the pages of Elsie Item. We hear again from one of those who were present on that momentous day in February, 1945, when the LCI's went in before D-Day to give protection to the Underwater Demolition Teams and withstood a devastating pounding from the Japanese shore batteries.*

*"Request permission to return to the firing line" were the gallant words of one LCI skipper after suffering casualties and severe damage*

*Richard O. Churchill of Ravenna, Ohio, was there serving aboard LCI(G) 457. We are indebted to him for sharing this first hand account of that memorable day.*

The LCI gunboats fired 20mm and 40mm guns at the beaches and prepared to launch their 4,5 inch rockets. Soon after the gunboats passed the 1500 yard line, mortar shells began falling among them. A little later, as they were beginning to launch rockets, they came under intense fire from the flanks of the beaches. These batteries had remained concealed through more than two months of softening preparation. Around 1100

the seven LCI(G)s, advancing in line abreast, began to take hits, but pressed on to support the swimmers until forced out of action by damage and casualties. Others dashed in to replace them, to be hit in turn, time after time. LCI(G)s 471, 438, 441 and several others, although hit several times, gallantly returned to the fray after retiring just long enough to extinguish their fires and plug holes in their hulls. LCI(G) 474, after closing the destroyer *USS Capps*, had to be abandoned and went down. After going in twice, LCI(G) 409 sustained 60 percent casualties. In all, 12 LCI(G)s took part and all were hit, but they stuck to it until the swimmers were recovered and clear. Everyone who watched these vessels was inspired by their courage and persistence.

John P. Marquand, the novelist, who was gathering material aboard the battleship *USS Tennessee*, thus describes LCI(G) 466 coming alongside:

"There was blood on their main deck, making widening pools as she rolled in the sluggish sea. A dead man on a gun platform was covered with a blanket. The decks were littered with wounded."



Following this operation, LCI(G) 457 pulled back for much needed repairs. With repairs finished before the end of the war, she steamed into Japanese harbors on 2 September, 1945, along with the Occupation Force and remained until 22 September 1945. She returned to the United States, transiting the Panama Canal, and reported to Com 8, New Orleans, Louisiana. She was placed out of commission at Orange, Texas.

USS LCI(G) earned four battle stars for her World War II service.

*Richard also shared with us this news article, written at the time by John R. Henry, Staff Correspondent for the International News Service while the battle for Iwo Jima was still raging. It carries a sense of vivid immediacy that reminds us again after all these years of the gallantry of our LCI shipmates:*

With the U. S. Marines, Iwo Jima, February 19 – (Delayed). The men who take Iwo Jima will relate in days to come and naval histories probably will record the heroism of a few hundred sailor lads and their small gunboats who defied Japan's eagle-eyed gunners on this volcanic bastion.

Many of the gutty little gunners, who thought they were unimportant in the gigantic scheme of an American amphibious landing, did not live to hear themselves compared with Farragut's blue-jackets under siege batteries at Vicksburg and scores of others found out what the big ship boys and the Marines thought of them only after they had been carried, bloody and helpless, into the operating rooms of nearby battleships.

But today, Captain B. H. Hanlon of Vallejo, California, who was in tactical command of the LCI(G)s, echoed the feelings of all when he said:

“My respect and heartfelt admiration for those men is beyond words.”

The LCI(G)s moved in against the shores of Iwo Jima, almost 24 hours before the Marine assault, with their guns blazing and their rocket-firing apparatus hurling a merciless barrage into the enemy emplacements along the shoreline. The gallant little fighting ships drew a hail of steel from enemy batteries hidden in the rocky Iwo Jima high ground.

“When the LCI(G)s got to within a thousand yards of the beach, everything seemed to hit them at once,” said Captain Hanlon, adding that the enemy barrage continued unceasingly “for all of 12 minutes.”

Eight of these craft, which the Navy converted from infantry-carrying craft to close gunfire support vessels, were hit. Some were ablaze. Most of their crews, from their Lieutenant skippers to the seamen, were Reserves. Despite heavy casualties, the little gunboats kept on shooting.

“Those that were hit came out, made repairs and went back in”, said Lieutenant, Junior Grade, “Hoff” Hoffman of Portland, Oregon. He said he had never seen such a display of “real bravery and guts”.

Some that went back to the firing line were still fighting fires as they slid in to join the other green-camouflaged ships.

One officer, according to Captain Hanlon, who went in merely as an observer, changed ships three times. three times after each had been hit.



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The roster of State Directors is almost completed. Please keep this list for future reference.  
Updates will be provided as changes are reported.

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# California USS LCI National Association holds Pearl Harbor Luncheon in Oceanside, CA

Reported By  
Joe Flynn, LCI 347  
El Cajon, CA

On December 10, 2005 some of the men who manned LCI's in World War II and their wives met in Oceanside, CA, to renew acquaintances and honor those who gave their lives in defense of the United States of America, especially those who died at Pearl Harbor December 7, 1941.

The annual meeting of the California division of the USS LCI National Association was attended by 43 members, wives and guests. They represented 22 ships, which together were awarded 97 Bronze Battle Stars, 22 American Campaign Medals, 22 Combat Action Medals, 22 WW II Victory Medals, 3 Navy Unit Citations, 2 Presidential Unit Citations, and one Navy Silver Star. One ship represented at the meeting, the LCI (L) 1091, received the most medals and citations of all LCI's.

It has been more than 60 years since many of these men enlisted in the U.S. Navy following the attack on Pearl Harbor. Now in their 70's and 80's these "Elsie Item Sailors" stand a little straighter and a little taller when they meet again with others who sailed their small ships into big battles.



*Leonard Martin, LCI (G) 345 (left) was on the USS Missouri and viewed the surrender ceremonies. Joe Flynn, LCI (G) 347 (right) is wearing his brother-in-law's pea coat.*



*California Director Jim McCarthy and friend Shirley Paley at the head table greeted guests.*



California State Director Jim McCarthy LCI (L) 685 who organized the luncheon was on hand to greet the attendees. He also introduced the members, their wives and guests and remembered those who gave their lives in WWII and those who serve today. Sea stories filled the air and a drawing with endless door prizes sent many attendees home lucky winners. Vinnie Piser, LCI (L) 405, won a illustrated book on Pearl Harbor. Also in attendance was Fred Langston, LCI (L) 605 and his wife Patricia. Fred publishes the internet newsletter MILVET and has recently relocated from Washington State to southern California so it was a much shorter trip for him this time.

We also had a representative of the USS LCI National Assn. Flagship, the LCI (L) 1091, Dave and Marlene Davis. Dave is the brother of Ralph Davis, owner of the 1091 who recently donated the ship to the Humboldt Bay Naval Air and Sea Museum in Eureka, CA.

After renewing acquaintances and sharing their stories, the “Elsie Item Sailors” dropped the lines and headed for home ports, till we meet again.



*Fred and Patricia Langston at the head table. Fred just couldn't resist trying on that pea coat.*



# IN MEMORIAM

*These, our shipmates, have slipped their moorings for their last sailing to their eternal rest.  
May God go with them and may His comfort be with all their family and friends left behind*

---

LCI 34  
Robert Glauner

LCI 61  
George Berlin

LCI 73  
William DeFries

LCI 193  
Fred R. Simmons

LCI 218  
Paul Demers

LCI 226  
Bennie L. Tucker

LCI 234  
Arthur R. Lieverman

LCI 234  
John P. Mannagotter

LCI 235  
Marvin Van Dellen

LCI 327  
Mackey Martin

LCI 330  
George J. Markus

LCI 344  
Calvin Galliano

LCI 414  
Carl Copeland  
LCI 419  
Cornelius Stoffel

LCI 429  
Michael J. Carroll

LCI 461  
Andrew Kamp

LCI 488  
John J. Bujold

LCI 490  
James Clark

LCI 490  
Peter Ster

LCI 548  
Robert J. Funk

LCI 558  
Donald T. File

LCI 624  
John E. Mertz

LCI 631  
Jerry L. Trinka

LCI 634  
Wood Stringer

LCI 646  
Jerry E. Lane

LCI 658  
George Heider

LCI 669  
William J. Esrich

LCI 681  
Paul Bischoff

LCI 687  
Raymond J. Marchand

LCI 871  
Fredric Griffin

LCI 949  
Reuen M. Ryan

LCI 972  
Byron Sellers

LCI 979  
Joseph McGrath

LCI 1001  
John T. Loehnert

LCI 1010  
Wilbur Ferris

LCI 1029  
Donald M. Kearns

LCI 1090  
Eugene Wilkinson





## **CITY of NORFOLK**

*Office of the Mayor*

Paul D. Fraim  
Mayor

**To all Attending the  
USS Landing Craft Infantry Association  
Tenth Annual Reunion  
April 19-23, 2006**

Greetings!

As Mayor of the City of Norfolk, it gives me great pleasure to extend to you cordial greetings and a warm welcome to our City. We are indeed honored to serve as host city for the USS Landing Craft Infantry Association Tenth Annual Reunion. We look forward to sharing our hospitality with each of you and sincerely hope you enjoy your stay in Norfolk.

During your visit I encourage you to spend some time exploring our city. Norfolk is the business, financial, cultural and educational hub of Southeastern Virginia, and an international city in every respect. We boast one of the Country's largest and busiest ports, we are home to the world's largest naval base, and we are the North American headquarters for NATO.

I invite you to take advantage of the many opportunities our downtown offers for relaxation, dining and entertainment. We hope you will have time to visit MacArthur Center Mall, The Waterside Festival Marketplace, Nauticus (The National Maritime Center), the battleship USS Wisconsin, the MacArthur Memorial, the many restaurants located along Granby Street, the Chrysler Museum (one of the top twenty art museums in the country), and the Armed Forces Memorial. All of these attractions are conveniently located in our downtown area near the Sheraton Waterside Hotel where many of you are staying.

While Norfolk embodies the cultural and commercial advantages of a big city, visitors still become wrapped up in our town's intimate charm, historic past and friendly atmosphere. We are glad you are here, so please enjoy yourself and enjoy Norfolk.

With best wishes for a successful reunion, I am

Sincerely,

Paul D. Fraim  
Mayor



# Mine Protection at Peliliu— Another Example of LCI Ingenuity!

By  
Ed Clark  
Former Skipper of LCI 456  
Tallahassee, Florida



*LCI 456 equipped to ward off floating Mines*

Recently I came across some old pictures and thought that other LCIs might like to see this one.

At the time the above photo was taken, we were doing picket duty, mostly at night, at Peliliu after the invasion. The heavy screen which we rigged up was lowered when we anchored by the bow to protect us from mines the Japs floated down toward us.

Luckily, the contraption was never tested, nor did the Navy Department send out their engineers to copy it!



*Ed Clark—LCI Poster Boy!*



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# 2006 LCI Calendar Now Ready!

The emphasis in the 2006 calendar is on the first LCI gunboats converted in the fall of 1943 to stop the barge traffic moving troops and supplies into and out of the various Solomon Islands. The main armament of these Flotilla 5 LCIs was a 3"/50 gun mounted over the well deck. A discussion of the gunboat activities is on the inside back cover and there are photos of three of the ships. One shows the LCI(G) 22 right after the conversion on its shakedown out of Noumea, New Caledonia; another shows a portion of LCI(G) 23 which gives a good view of the #50. The last shows a hole from a torpedo that bounced into the side of LCI(G) 70.



Other photos show the long walk to the beach the 31st Division troops made at Morotai, laying smoke in Lingayan Gulf, the 744 landing ANZAC troops, the 472 coming alongside a battleship for fuel and water, the 713 on her way to her permanent berth at the Amphibious Memorial Museum, the 416 sunk on Omaha Beach, the Balikpapan Landing, the Cape Sansapor Landing, and the 1091 on her way to San Diego for the 1995 national reunion. The back cover shows Flotilla 10 ships on their way to Normandy. This calendar continues to depict historical information about LCI action in World War II.

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## 2006 LCI CALENDAR ORDER FORM

Send orders to : J. E. McCarthy  
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## USS LCI NATIONAL ASSOCIATION APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

If you served aboard an LCI during WWII, you are cordially invited to join our Association. Please complete this form and mail it to the address indicated below with your first year's dues.

DUES ARE \$15.00 PER YEAR, June 1 through May 31. Life Membership \$75.00

Name \_\_\_\_\_ LCI Served On \_\_\_\_\_ Rank/Rate \_\_\_\_\_

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Occupation or Former Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Wife's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Make Check payable to:  
**USS LCI NATIONAL ASSOCIATION**

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