

THE ELSIE'S NEWSLETTER # 17

THE NAVY'S SECRET WEAPON DURING WWII

USS LCI NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

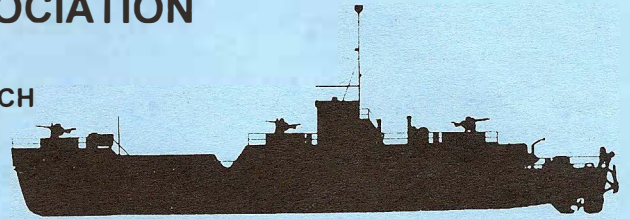
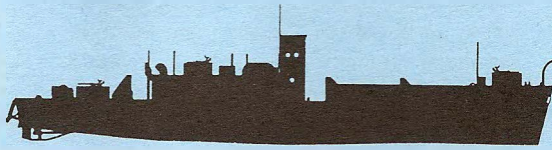
JUNE 1996

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1997 REUNION SITE CHERRY HILL, NJ

HILTON HOTEL
APRIL 23 TO APRIL 27,
1997

For those of you not familiar with the Cherry Hill, New Jersey area, It is located across the Delaware River from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. I will try and have more information for you on the next newsletter which I plan to publish in September.

One thing I must warn you now, is that we have blocked off 375 rooms for our reunion at our special room rate. Most likely we will fill all of those rooms very quickly. A back up hotel will have to be located which **will not** be within walking distance of the Hilton Hotel. From all indication from the mail I have received so far, we will have a great number of first time reunion attendance.

We have a great number of our members living within a days drive of Cherry Hill, who will attend for the first time. We had our reunion hotel overfilled at Nashville, San Diego and St Louis.

One of the hardest things to do in planning a reunion is to guess how many people will be attending. It's something that is always the unknown.

Looking into the future: The 1998 reunion was selected during our St.

Louis reunion. It will be in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The dates are May 13 to 17, 1998. Our hotel will be the Sheraton Inn, Our room rate will be \$85.00 per night.

LCI Association Annual Meeting

We had 849 people registered for the reunion, 794 people attended the banquet on Saturday evening. The cities that were selected for a possible site in 1998 were, Portland, OR (85 votes) Reno, NV (82 votes) Colorado Springs, CO (185 votes). Our President Robert Weissner proposed a resolution to our By-Laws that stated when our Association is down to 200 members that we disband and our funds in the treasury be given to some navy museum. The proposal was then tabled for further consideration.

For some reason the issue of naming the Elsie newsletter never made it to the floor. It was on the docket but was overlooked.

Phil G. Goulding, LCI 506 our Guest Speaker during our banquet had the audience in splits the whole time. His speech was so good that three or four dozen people wanted a copy of his address. I asked Phil if he would send me a copy of his speech. I have printed it in its entirety in this issue.

Another accomplishment Phil has

to his record is the publishing of a book on Classical Music, before Phil started on this book he said he knew nothing about Classical Music

Phil's wife Miriam said that a number of people asked for the title of his book. It is *CLASSICAL MUSIC: THE FIFTY GREAT COMPOSERS AND THEIR THOUSAND GREATEST WORKS*. It was published in hardcover by Ballantine Books three years ago and in paperback by Ballantine last November.

USS LCI BASEBALL HATS ARE NOW IN STOCK:

The caps are made in the USA and have gold thread letters, **USS LCI NATIONAL** across the top. Under the above lettering is a silhouette of a LCI in silver thread. The detail is so fine that you can see the guns, handrails, stern anchor, range light, and radio antennae just to name some of the detail of the ship. The hats come in **square conn** and **round conn** style. The cost to you is \$10.00 each, including POSTAGE.

TOTE BAGS FOR THE LADIES:

For **\$5.00** including **POSTAGE** you can get a tote bag with LCI NATIONAL ASSOCIATION **"FIRST MATE"** printed in Gold. The bag is navy blue in color.

You fellows are ordering hats for your self, but you are not thinking of the **"FIRST MATE's TOTE BAG"**

I have had a number of reports from the ladies that tell me they are proud to use the LCI tote bag every day.

If you attended the St. Louis reunion and made note of those wearing base ball caps you found that the vast majority preferred black wool hats verses the white hat given out at the reunion.

Everyone comments on how beautiful these caps are.

If want to purchase a hat or tote bag, contact Editor: Bob Kirsch, 643 Callery Rd., Evans City, PA 16033

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NEW INFORMATION ON ORDERING YOUR SHIP'S DECK LOG:

INFORMATION SENT BY WILLIAM VAN SCOY LCI 658

EDITORS NOTE: I must warn you that these deck logs can amount to over \$100.00, depending how long your ship was in commission. Information contained therein is the day by day operation of your ship. The average pages entered every month is 45. There is a charge of 25 cents per page to reproduce the log book. Multiply 25 cents by every month that your ship was in commission to have an approximate cost. NOTE: You can order specific dates without purchasing the whole deck log. A \$6. minimum is charged.

To order copies of the deck log contact NAVAL ARCHIVES, RECORDS DIVISION, WASHINGTON, DC 20408. Use this address to purchase deck logs prior to June 30, 1945. Deck logs after June 30, 1945 thru 1961 are located in the Suitland Reference Branch, National Archives records Adm., Suitland, MD 20409.

Navy WWII ships diaries and action reports are in the custody of the Operational Archives Branch, Naval historic center, Bldg. 57, Washington Navy Yard, Washington DC 20374.

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A PICTURE OF YOUR SHIP?

Contact NAVAL HISTORICAL CENTER (CUP) Navy Yard, Washington DC 20374-0571, PH (202) Cost is about \$10.00 for a B&W 8X10

Commercial Outfit: Real War Photos, PO Box 728, Hammond, IN 46320. They put out a catalog for several bucks, save your money, no LCI's are listed here. Only the big boys. Ask for their list of LCI Photos, it's free. Not all LCI's are listed, but you never know what they have.

A number of you have asked me how can they get a picture of their ship? One excellent source would be for you to contact our President Robert Weisser to see if he may have a picture of your ship. He has well over 200 pictures collected. He would be only too glad to help out. A number of his pictures are not too clear.

I too, have very few ships listed in my file, most of my pictures have appeared in the Newsletter.

First send a letter to Bob Weisser or myself enclose a SASE so we can write back and tell you if we have a picture of your ship and what the quality is. **DO NOT, I stress DO NOT SEND ANY MONEY at this point.**

The cost of the picture is around \$2.00 for a laser copy. Postage would be \$3.00 priority mail. Total \$5.00. Make the check out to the LCI National Association. If we have a picture of your ship, give us plenty time to get the laser copy made as we have to travel 15 miles to get your copy made. Bob & I would be only too happy to help a shipmate out.

Robert Weisser, 134 Lancaster Ave. Columbia, PA 17512.

Master Chief Joseph Ashfield, LCI 195 has offered to go to the Naval Archives and look over the LCI pictures on file. I will use those pictures for future newsletters. My supply of pictures is getting thin. If any one has a good sharp LCI picture, send me a laser copy of it. Remember, dark pictures don't copy to well for the newsletter.

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BACK ISSUES OF NEWSLETTERS

I have to raise the price to **\$5.00** since I have run out of several issues and had to get them Xeroxed. Those of you that didn't get all of the back issues, send me a letter stating which issue you missed. I will send it to you at no cost.

When ordering back issues state which issues you need.

THE ULTIMATE CHALLENGE!!

Through the pitch black night, the Captain sees a light dead ahead on a collision course with his ship. He sends a signal, "Change your course 50 degrees east." The light signals back: "Change yours, ten degrees West."

The angered Captain sends, "I'm a Navy Captain! "Change your course, Sir!"

"I'm a seaman, second class, "comes the reply, "Change your course, Sir!"

The Captain is now furious, "I'm a battleship I'm not changing my course!"

There was one last reply, "**I'm a light-house, Sir, Your CALL!!!!**" ☺

From The Pointer, Armed Guard Newsletter.

Editor's Note: The following item was sent to me by Lou Knecht, LCI(G) 458, 1722 Coloma Way, Woodland, CA 95695. The article appeared in the Santa Rosa Press Democrat in October 1995, written by Gaye LeBaron. Robert Clark was the CO of the LCI(R) 74 of which I served on.

ASK AND it shall be given: Last week I wrote a piece of a column about some events in the Pacific Theater of WWII that took place 50 years this month. .

One of them was the sinking of the naval

tug *Sonoma*, which was one of the first two vessels to be sunk by kamikaze planes.

All I knew about the *Sonoma* was what I read in a book on kamikazes. "The Sacred Warriors"---until Bob Clark called, a retired Santa Rosa insurance man, knows a whole lot about the *Sonoma*, and the other kamikaze casualty that day. LCI 1065. Turns out he was the executive officer of the ship that answered the fire call that day.

Clark, who lived in Healdsburg before the war, was a naval officer, a LT(jg), assigned to the LCI(R) 74. His ship's primary roll was that of a rocket firing ship, it's secondary roll was a fire fighting ship.

Clark had been in San Pedro Bay at the upper end of the Leyte Gulf since the invasion on October 20, 1944, which was the fulfillment of General Douglas MacArthur's promise. As any student of history knows, the supremely confident general who had been commander of American forces in the Philippines had vowed when he fled before the invading Japanese in the spring of '42, to come "back to Bataan." When he did, it was one of the final blows to the Japanese. With their backs to the wall, they began the suicide missions.

Clark remembers his crew's attempts to save the 70 foot tug after the Japanese pilot pancaked his plane on it's deck. It not only set the wooden craft aflame, he says, it blew a hole in the side of the *Benjamin Ide Wheeler*, a liberty ship the tug had been alongside when the attack occurred.

The *Sonoma* never actually sunk, Clark recalls. It burned out and the hull was towed aground on a small island called Dio, in the bay. The other target was the LCI 1065, which his men also fought to save, did sink, the first of 60 ships lost to kamikazes. ☺

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Hello Bob,

I just received a letter from a shipmate of mine, Quartermaster Harold Morder. I haven't seen him for 53 years. We were part of the original crew of the LCI 48. In his letter to me was a Stars & Stripes article printed in Italy in 1944. You might care to share this article with other LCI crew members in your newsletter.

I sent for the deck log of the LCI 48. I will be glad to share them with you when I receive them. I enjoy the newsletter very much, keep up the great work. ☺

Respectfully; Harry Davis MoMM 2/c, Rt2
Box 98, Dayton, TX 77535

THE LCI DOES MUCH MORE THAN HER FORM 20 ADMITS

By Cpl. Wade Jones
(Stars and Stripes Staff Writer)

ABOARD AN AMERICAN LCI, Feb 26 (Delayed). Like every American LCI (Landing Craft Infantry), this one plowing northward with a cargo of mail for Anzio beachhead boys is, as a prairie state folks would say, 158 feet wide and 24 feet long.

She was born to land Yankee doughboys on invasion beaches and has lived to act as a tug boat, to salvage wrecked vessels, haul supplies, run messages, and serve as a patrol boat. Every fine quality that enables her to skim up onto a beach and unload her cargo makes her jump like a wild mare when she's out in the open sea.

Up in the pilot house is a 20 year old who seems to be running the whole boat. At least he is squinting into the compass, then looking up at the sea ahead of him and pulling levers and talking into a tube at the same time. He is Gunners Mate 3rd Class John Ruppel, Oshkosh, Wis., a cabinet maker.

The boat's jagged ribbon of wake shows what he means. With the least bit of crosswind, an LCI will skip sideways like a flat rock on a pond.

When Ruppel wants a little more speed or a little less he works a gadget which transmits a message to a shiny brass--fitted table in the engine room. Down in the engine room, this signal is picked up by the oldest man on the ship, Motormac 2nd class Alfred Moses, Washington, GA. He is 29 years old.

Moses is quite a guy. In the first place, he is a most thoroughly pleasant and amiable kind of a person. Some of this may be because of the way he talks. He was born in Cologne, Germany, and learned his first words of English in Georgia. He sounds like Hitler speaking at Georgia Tech on homecoming day. He came to the states in 1935, after three years of college in Cologne, and worked in a department store in Georgia and New York.

The skipper of the LCI, Ensign Bernard J. Gigot, 24, Denmark, Wis., is French and Belgian, and he and Moses have definite plans for post war Europe.

The crew of the mail-carrying LCI tonight consists of 21 enlisted men and there are

three officers. All of the enlisted men have served on their boat through the Sicilian, Salerno and Anzio landings. Six of the men were on the initial landings in Africa in November 1942.

In the Anzio landing they led the second and sixth waves of assault boats onto the beach and while the landing was unopposed, they had to stay in the harbor for the first nine days, running messages back and forth between the naval force commander and the components of the landing force fleet. And that was done under fire from enemy artillery as well as enemy bombs. ☺

Editors Note: *When I was typing the above article, I noted that Alfred Moses was not listed in our association. I ran his name through my phone disc and sure enough he was listed in Washington, GA. I called and talked to his wife, she said that he had died in 1992. She also said that he often talked about the LCI 48 and would have loved to attend reunions. Ensign Bernard Gigot is a member of our LCI Association.*

WEARING MILITARY MEDALS ON CIVILIAN CLOTHING

Recently, DOD has authorized the wearing of FULL SIZED or MINIATURE medals on civilian suits, or equivalent dress for women, by honorable discharge and retired military personnel. The choice of wearing full or miniature size medals has been left to the discretion of the individual. Miniature medals may be appropriate when several medals are worn. Medals may be worn on Memorial Day, Armed Forces Day and any other appropriate occasions. Several LCI members have asked how to obtain replacement for military medals and awards. A written request to the following will do it. National Personnel Records Center, 9700 Page Blvd. St. Louis, MO 63132. Indicate the branch of service which you served in and the medals that you are seeking to replace. Give your full name Navy service number and your social number. There may be a small charge for replacement. A Xerox copy of your discharge will speed up the order. ☺

Editors Note: *The above information was obtained from the National Association of USS LCS(L) 1-130 newsletter. For information purpose the LCS, Landing Craft Support is a LCI hull, but was built as a gun ship in the ship yard. They appeared at the end of WWII. They*

supported a 3" 50 gun and twin 40 mm guns on the forward section of the ship. There were 130 LCS(L)'s built.

TYPE "O" LCI BOOK II

The article listed in LCI Book II under the heading of *Our Journey Our War* listed Darnell Aiken as the writer, when in fact the article was written by C.L. Edmon of LCI 1056.

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE

PRESIDENT: Robert Weisser;

I would like to express my thoughts and "Thanks" to the membership for your confidence in our staff and myself by electing us to another term. We were very fortunate having men at Norfolk like Walter Kopacz, our Vice President, Howard Clarkson our Treasurer, Robert Kirsch, our Secretary and Newsletter Editor, who are the working personnel for our association.

Our directors also share a great responsibility for our success. At this time I want to welcome aboard, Donald McGranahan our fifth new director. Donald is also the State Director for the state of Florida, He has done one outstanding job. Jim Talbert, from Florida, is now our State Director and Chairman. of our State directors, please keep in touch with Jim). James McCarthy, Association director and State director for California who was the chairman for our San Diego invasion which was an outstanding reunion. Sam Rizzo Our Association Director from Michigan, is the chairman for the placement of all our information kits and models at Naval Institutions. The purpose of this project is to inform the public just what an LCI stands for. Shelby Smith is also one of our appointed officers that was at Norfolk, VA when our association was organized.

For the members of our association that missed out St. Louis invasion, (shame on you). It was the best gathering yet. We had 856 people registered and everyone had nothing but good words and many expressed their desire for our next reunion at Cherry Hill, April 23-26, 1997, to be exactly the same pattern. As one gentleman said he attended many class, college, other veteran reunions, but this was the best reunion he has ever attended. To meet with his crew of 50+ years ago, to attend the memorial services, which by the way he said brought many tears, and to attend the banquet, that for a change served good food. The Freddie White band that played

our 40's music and of course our guest speaker Phil Goulding. He related his experience while aboard the 506. Phil did an excellent job and we sure hope he will be available for Cherry Hill.

At this time I want to thank all the people that helped make the St. Louis invasion the best yet, especially all the members that attended. Without your turn out this project could not have happened.

We had many new members attend St. Louis and this time I really believe all had their pictures taken. Our reunion "Memory Book" this year should be the best yet. Members please remember to order a book which cost only \$12.00. Your picture and pictures of all the activities will be represented. It will also have a list of all attendees, name, address and phone #. This information alone is worth more than the cost of the book.

OK!!! THINK CHERRY HILL so we will be able to welcome you aboard in '97. Make your reservation early next year. May God Bless and keep you well. ☺

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE TREASURER, HOWARD CLARK- SON.

REGISTRATION FEES AND DUES

Each year at our annual reunion I can count on someone approaching me in the following manner:

"How come I didn't get my newsletter?" I paid my dues as a new member at the reunion last year in San Diego". I then check and find no record of this member having paid his dues.

Then he says **"I paid my \$15 dues when I check in". Ah ha!** Our dues are still only \$10 per year. What the complainant paid was his **REGISTRATION FEE.**

When you pay registration fee you are not paying your annual dues. The registration fee is for incidental expenses generated by the Reunion itself - such things as banquet music, snacks for the hospitality suite, permits for memorial services, reunion caps and favors for our ladies, etc.

No one is authorized to collect dues at the reunion except me (*Tiny*) or my wife, Janet. This is one of the reasons I dislike collecting dues at the reunion, but I do it as a favor to those of you who dislike making out checks and addressing envelopes. If you think you paid your dues at the reunion and do not receive a current

card within 30 days please contact me immediately. Please do not take your frustrations out on my wife -- it is hard enough to get her to volunteer 20-50 hours per week as it is.

My thanks to you all. It was great to see each of you once more in St. Louis.

PLEASE NOTE YOUR 1996 DUES ARE NOW DUE effective 01 June 1996. Please make a note on the memo line that this check is for your 1996 dues.

Our annual dues are **still only \$10 or \$100** if you want a life membership

If you don't remember that your 1996 dues were paid, look at your address label on this newsletter. If you see a **NO** above your name, that means that you haven't paid your **1996** dues. If a **YES** appears, you are in good standing and will continue to receive your **NEWS LETTERS.**

USS LCI 39

1 January 1945

The ship left the United States from Norfolk VA and arrived in the Mediterranean area in March 1943. Her original officers were: Raymond *Wolcott* Ensign, Commanding Officer Robert C. *Linnell*, Ensign, Joseph B. *Anderson*, Lt(jg), Engineering Officer.

The first few months were spent in assault training in North Africa in Port Lyautey, Arsew, Mostaganem, Philippeville and finally in Pizeerte.

Her first action was in the landing at Gela, Sicily, 10 July 1943, after which she returned to Bizerte for more training until the invasion of Salerno, Italy, 10 September 1943, in which we participated.

Until the landing at Anzio, Italy 22 June 1944, the intervening months were spent in carrying troops from Bizerte to Salerno or to Naples, Italy.

On Nov. 27, 1944 John M. *Spindler*, Ensign, USNR, reported for duty.

At Anzio this ship sustained a near miss from a 500 pound bomb while engaged in disembarking troops. The underwater concussion of this bomb cracked engine housings and did other damage to shafts and propellers. The ship underwent repairs during February and March in Tunis and in Pizerte and then returned to the Naples area to shuttle troops to the Anzio beachhead. (From March until 15 August 1944. This ship was variously employed in

either carrying troops from Africa to Italy, from Naples to Anzio, or in training and repair, either at Palermo, Sicily Bizerte, Tunisia or at Pozelli, Italy. With this exception:)

On June 17 the island of Elba was taken by French troops carried in British and American landing craft. The LCI 39 was included in this task group.

On June 21, Frederick M. *DePue*, LCI 339 & 369, Ensign, USNR reported for duty.

On June 26, 1944, Raymond *Wolcott*, original Commanding Officer was relieved by Robert C. *Linell*, former Executive Officer. Mr. *Wolcott* was detached from the ship

On August 15, 1944 the LCI 39 was part of a task group which made landings in the St. Raphael area of Southern France. She remained in this area until 9 September acting as unloading control for LCT's.

She arrived back in Pozzuoli the afternoon of September 12, 1944. Smooth logs submitted to the Bureau give an accurate account of the USS LCI(L) 39 from this date forward.

On July 4, Joseph *Anderson* was detached and John M. *Mitchell*, reported aboard from the USS LCI(L) 17 to replace Mr. *Anderson* as Engineering Officer. ☺

John M. *Spindler*, LT(jg) USNR

A HISTORIC VENTURE LCI (L) 612

When the atomic bombs were dropped on Japan in August of 1945, the USS LCI (L) 612 was on station, conducting operations in the southern Philippines. Shortly thereafter, the 612 received orders to proceed to the mouth of the Yangtze River where we were to join a joint USA and British Task Force for further assignment.

Accordingly, we set sail for the South China Sea and the mouth of the Yangtze. En route we struggled through two typhoons sustaining severe structural damage. Finally, we took refuge at Buckner Bay in Okinawa for rest and repairs before proceeding to rendezvous with the Joint Task Force.

After battling through yet another severe storm, we arrived at the mouth of the Yangtze River where we were ordered to proceed up the river to the mouth of the Whangpoo River, on the banks of which Shanghai is located, and then on to the city of Shanghai. The purpose of this mission of the LCI 621 was to take depth sound-

ings of the two rivers to determine the necessary draft of vessels that were to follow toward Shanghai. One of the significant, and largely overlooked, aspects of this mission was that the USS LCI(L) 612 was, therefore, the first United States ship to traverse these rivers since the sinking of the USS Panay on the Yangtze in 1937. These rivers are renowned for their rapidly shifting depths caused by the incessant deposits of sediment in the channel. The allied forces, therefore, had no current information about their depths in 1945, hence the assignment of the LCI 612.

On our trip up these two rivers, we were constantly under the sights of the Japanese gun emplacements on both sides of the rivers. When we arrived at Shanghai, heavily armed Japanese soldiers took and fastened our docking lines. We didn't know whether or not they knew that their nation had surrendered and that the war was over. Without incident, our crew disarmed the Japanese and placed them in custody of local officials awaiting arrival of US forces during the next few days.

Over the following few months our LCI Flotilla was engaged in transporting Chinese troops from Shanghai, Foochow, and Ningpo to Formosa, now known as Taiwan. Upon completion of that assignment, we proceeded homeward across the vast Pacific Ocean, together with other ships of our flotilla, to various ports in California. ☺

LCDR. Fred L. Nicalai, USNR (Ret)-
Former Engineering Officer, USS LCI(L)
612

LEYTE GULF WAS NO PICNIC TO LCI(G) 580

From the notes of Lt.(jg) Elbert S. Smith as aboard the 580 as she headed for the biggest battle of the season.

"Soon...we heard in 24 hours...we'll strike. At midnight we'll enter Leyte Gulf. All is in readiness.

"We're only doing what hundreds of others were doing and have done before, but just consider...less than seven months ago our ship was only a mass of steel in a shipyard awaiting women welders who previously had never handled anything hotter than a curling iron. Consider...that less than 14 months ago the skipper walked out of a Middle west law office in a military uniform for the first time in his life to catch a train that would deliver him to an

indoctrination school. Consider...that all other officers aboard are junior to the skipper. Consider...that about a year ago most of the crew were on farms, in high schools, in the multitude of civilian pursuits representing merely a gleam in the Draft Board's eye. Consider...these things and see that it's all a tribute to America, to its ingenuity, industry and determination.

"All is in readiness. The Gunner's Mates have cleaned and polished their guns to perfection. The black gang has put the final touches on the engines; the cooks have baked a surplus of bread to provide sandwiches in anticipation of long vigils at general quarters without relief for regular chow. The officers have gone over the charts, orders, plans and photographs. We have all been on the payroll for about a year, training and preparing for a mission such as this and we want to demonstrate that the time, the money and effort spent in getting us this far will really count. There is a deep seriousness in all hands; church attendance on board last Sunday was high. The seriousness is deep; it cannot be detected from the surface. There is no evidence of timidity nor any evidence of lust or bitterness toward the enemy. We just have a job to do and we face it with confidence in our commanders, in our ships and in ourselves. I can truthfully say that the men and officers are not jittery. From all outward appearance we might well be on a training cruise in the Chesapeake where we were only a few short months ago. And now, suddenly we're more experienced...and possibly wiser,

"At 0614 we were strafed by a Jap plane. Nine men were wounded on our 40mm gun crews just forward of the conning tower. The bullets detonated two clips of our ammunition and the resulting explosion accounted for the large number of casualties. Smoother then they had never performed in drills, our pharmacist's mate and damage control party went into action. No confusion. This was for 'keeps' and all responded accordingly. One man, George C. Thomas GM2c, died at 0635; he was one of the veterans aboard, and a great favorite with the crew. He'd been through the New Guinea campaigns and participated in the early Pacific amphibious operations; he acted as 'Senior Shell back; at the initiation when we crossed the Equator.

"This misfortune took a little starch out of us but we proceeded with a grim determination; four of our casualties were quite serious (one had his leg amputated shortly

after we were hit) so we received word to leave the formation to transport wounded. We found an LST and we affected the transfer post haste so as to be able to rejoin the formation in time to assault the beach at H-26 minutes. This we did. Replacing nine men on gun crews at that hour was no cinch. Three of the wounded felt able to resume their posts and requested permission; that left us six short. The cooks, black gang and damage control party all volunteered to fill the gaps. The executive officer, Ensign. Thomas L. Kahn, was a GM3c less than a year ago and he asked permission to take over the number 2 gun where Thomas had been captain.

"We made the beach assault as advertised. Our rockets went off furiously but precisely. We had some near misses by Jap mortar fire and a bullet severed one of the guy wires to our mast; but there were no personal injuries. We fired 1,500 rounds of 40mm and 2,000 rounds of 20mm into targets of opportunity. Later in the morning two Jap planes came over us strafing. They were very low and very fast...so fast that neither we nor any of the other ships nearby saw them in time to open fire. They dropped one bomb each at a large ship but missed. We heard later that they were shot down on their getaway; we also heard later from an eye witness on another ship that the plane that strafed us was shot down by an LST. Shortly after we retired we transferred the Gunner's Mate's remains to the Admiral's flagship and held silent prayer. He had made the beach assault with us in spirit and will be buried in the Philippine Islands in American soil." ☺

Submitted by W.G.'Spider' Banks, 2433
Royal Rd, DeLand, FL 32724

WIFE'S VIEW POINT OF AN LCI

Dear Mr. Kirsch:

Perhaps you won't mind hearing from the distaff side of one of the "Elsie" sailors.

For all of my married life, 43 years come June, I've heard stories of LCI 808 and the crew's shenanigans. The name Al Beehler is so familiar to me that I feel almost as if we were acquainted, although we've never met. Imagine my delight to find in the March, 1996, issue of The Elsie Newsletter an article written by Al entitled "American Ingenuity". The events he described brought back pleasantly, vivid memories of those and other times on the 808 to my husband, Hugh Bailey, Lt(jg),

who is alive and well and living in Durham, North Carolina.

Hello to Al and to the crew of the 808; and hats off to them and the others like them who, in times that were anything but funny, managed to create light-hearted memories.☺

Sincerely yours, Kay Bailey, 5015
Buttemut Rd. Durham, NC 27707

"CHARLIE NOBLE"

Yes an LCI did have a "Charlie Noble" aboard. In fact most every ship has ONE of them.

The book Naval Customs, Traditions, and Usage written by Lt.Cmdr. Leland P. Lovette, USN and published by the United States Naval Institute, Annapolis, Maryland states: "Charlie Noble, Sailor's nautical name for the galley smoke pipe. Derived from the British merchant service Captain Charlie Noble, who required a high polish on the galley funnel. The funnel of his galley was of copper and its brightness became known in all ports visited

In Knight's Modern Seamanship under Naval Terms and Definitions it simple states: Charlie Noble. "The galley smoke-pipe." ☺

From Peter Murray: LCI(L) 215, 497
Pacifica Avenue, Pacifica, CA 94044

ABOARD LCI(FF) 87

Dear Bob,

As usual, I thoroughly enjoyed Newsletter #15 and would like to add some information to Sewall Webster's account on page ten.

I had the conn aboard LCI 87 as we approached the dock at Colon on the day mentioned and had a pilot aboard. We had made a signal to the following ships to test their reversing propellers as we had not done so since leaving Key West, Florida. After this was accomplished to my satisfaction, the pilot informed that there was a slight current setting towards the dock and that I would prefer to keep the conn but would appreciate any other comments on local conditions. We proceeded at 1/3 on both shafts and as we approached the quay, I reversed both shafts to 1/3 astern. As I noticed no decrease in our forward speed, I called for all back two thirds and mentioned to the pilot that the on setting current was pretty

strong. As the ship gathered speed instead of slowing down, I realized that the screws were stuck in full ahead pitch. I immediately called for stop all engines. At this point the pilot, who did not understand the idiosyncrasies of these vessels, called for all back full. I then pushed the pilot aside and called to belay the last order and STOP ALL ENGINES. We were then approaching a DE tied up ahead of our intended berth at about 5 knots. I called for a hard left rudder and then a hard right and we were fortunate to fishtail around the DE and I made an impromptu beaching on the sandy beach. Due to an experienced QM on the helm, we cleared the DE's stern by inches and were able to retract from the beach with no outside help. At no time was the engine room watch at fault as they answered all bells correctly. The 87 dry docked and the screws were replaced. They had seen thousand of miles and many beachings and were just worn out.

The next LCI to dock was not so fortunate and plowed into the DE's stern about 15 feet. After Colon, we had a trouble free trip through the canal and up the coast of Central America to San Diego. This part of the long journey that began in France, was the most enjoyable trip that I had ever made on an LCI. The weather was great and we were taking bearings off mountain peaks many miles inland. Our one regret was that we were not permitted to visit Acapulco en route. ☺

Sincerely Al Vernon, aboard LCI(L) 87,
January 1945. P.O. Box 1019, Sebastian
FL 32978.

P.S. Thanks, Mr. Sewell for the input on the loss of the 88's C.O. I had thought that he dived overboard to rescue a crew member.

THE TRUE STORY OF LCI(L) 684

Volume II of USS LCI states that LCI(L) 684 was lost to enemy action November 1944. The March 1996 Elsie Newsletter #16 lists the 684 sunk in an amphibious operation SW Pacific 1945. Since I was the Communications Officer aboard the 684 at that time I will set the record straight.

On November 12, 1944 the 684 was tied up to an LST repair ship inside Pedro Bay, Leyte Gulf. Sometime that morning an air raid took place. I looked out over the water and a Kamikaze was heading for us. One of our men opened fire with a 20mm, hit the plane and it veered off striking us in

the port side and stern. Her lines were snapped and she started to list and take on water. A call was sent out and two LCI's came over and supported the 684 with their lines. She was towed to the inner harbor and beached at Anibong Point, Leyte. The ship remained there with the crew on board into 1945. The damage to her sides and fantail was so extensive she obviously could not get underway.

Subsequently, a three-officer commission headed by a Commander came aboard. The ship's officers and the panel checked the 684 frame by frame. Later that same day we were called into the wardroom where we were told by the Commander, that the ship was not worth repairing. It was to be de-commissioned. The members of the crew were assigned to other LCI's. Three of the ship's officers, *Gulbrand Kramer*, *Warren French* and I were assigned to the 979. *Tim Donahue* of Yonkers, NY, captain of the 684 was transferred elsewhere.

When we left the 684 she was beached at Anibong Point, Leyte, where she may be to this day. She was not able to function due to enemy action, but she was not sunk in 1945 in the SW Pacific!! ☺

Fred Engelken, 114 Midland Ave.
Hillsdale, NJ, 07642

Dear Bob:

USS LCI(L) 50

I recently became aware of and then became a member of the LCI Association.

Walt *Kopacz* was kind enough to send me copies of letters 9 thru 14. The stories bring back memories of things long forgotten.

I didn't read much about LCI's in the European theater so I thought I would mention my craft, USS LCI(L) 50.

After completing diesel schools in Richmond, VA and Detroit Mich I was sent to Perth Amboy, NJ to meet with Bob *Brennan*, F1/c and Hugh *Kimme* EM3/c. We were there to see the construction of our ship from start to finish and as I recall it took just seven days.

The ship was put into commission on Nov. 18, 1943 at Pier 42, North River, NY and after a shakedown cruise our crew of 24 and 4 officers sailed to Solomon, MD where we went thru all the training familiar to you.

Early in 1944 we sailed to England with a stop in the Azores for resupply. The trip

was rough and long but we had been at Cape Hatteras so we knew what rough was.

We arrived in England to first go up the river at Dartmouth. It was there we picked up a ferry cable in our screws and spent sometime in repair.

We trained with and without troops around Weymouth, Dartmouth and South Hampton until D Day approached. We loaded with English troops and had them aboard an extra day because of the gale in the channel, which delayed D Day, one day. The troops with their cleated boots played hell with our painted decks.

For a sea going country, those English troops became more seasick than we ever imagined they would.

We crossed the channel easily and when our time came to go to the beach we had no trouble. But we couldn't get off after unloading. Once again we fouled the screws with cocoa matting put on the beach to aid in the landing of equipment.

At low tide we recovered and took injured back to England. From then on we made numerous trips across the channel ferrying troops.

In late October '44 we were ordered to Edinburgh, Scotland, where we stripped the ship of everything that had USA on it. On October 31, 1944, the ship was decommissioned and turned over to the English Navy. I often wondered about her history after that.

Our crew returned stateside and got off the ship at Pier 92 in a cold December night, there to be met by ladies from the Salvation Army with plenty of hot coffee and donuts. They were great.

Our crew split up with everyone getting home for Christmas and I never heard from our fellows again.

My getting home was especially great as I had become a father on D Day. My daughter having been born that day but word did not reach me until June 18.

I was sent to another school in Cleveland and then off to the Philippines hoping to end up on something big. But wouldn't you know, I was assigned to a minesweeper (YMS 364). I left the ship in points in December 1945 as a MoMM1/c.

If any of my shipmates read this, I am retired from the Hamilton, Ohio fire department, play golf and pitch horseshoes and would like to hear from them. Maybe

we can reunion. Thanks for letting me write you. ☺

Herb Cox, 416 Fenwick Dr. Fairfield OH 45014

TRIBUTE TO A SHIPS COOK

The LCI Newsletter has many stories about various ratings - mostly MoMM's. I guess that's because they were largely responsible for starting the National LCI Association.

I'd like to tell you about a man who wore the chevrons of that most maligned of all ratings - the ship's cook.

At commissioning in New Jersey, the LCI(L) 614 had on its roster a ship's cook 1st class. It wasn't long before we realized that this cook believed in operating the galley from his sack. He would have whoever had KP duty that day report to him in the crew's quarters as to the progress of the day's meals which got progressively worse.

In Norfolk, before sailing to Key West and the Pacific, we put Mr. Operate-from-the-sack ship's cook on the pier with his sea bag and waved goodbye to him. This was totally illegal but we took our chances and got away with it.

John Mangione, in civilian life, operated a car upholstery business. When he joined the Navy, he was asked if he had ever run any machinery. John figured his sewing machine qualified, so he said "Yes." With true Navy logic, he was made a fireman and reported aboard the 614 was a Fireman 1/c.

The engine room was a shock to John who had never even seen a diesel engine up close. When we tossed our cook, he asked if he could have the job. He assured me that he could cook so he became our replacement ship's cook.

The first week, we had spaghetti, lasagna, chicken caccatori, ravioli, meatballs and peppers, etc. At the end of the week, having heard some grumbling from crew members, I took John aside, I pointed out to him that he and one other member of the crew were the only two men of Italian extraction on board. I suggested he open the Navy Cook Book and try for a little diversity.

He did and soon we were eating very well. His fresh baked bread was a real treat as were his doughnuts and pies. Some of the crew were noticeable putting on weight.

The heat in the galley when we were in New Guinea reached as high as 130 degrees F. but John, although covered with heat rash, never complained and kept turning out culinary delights.

In 1945, after the war ended, we were on our way from Leyte to Okinawa when we were hit by that now famous typhoon. John had a hard time keeping pots and pans on the range but he kept us fed.

Tied up in Shanghai in early November, 1945, John had enough points to permit him to leave for the Us and release from the Navy. He turned down the chance to go home to wife and family in order to stay and cook Thanksgiving for his shipmates.

John has made past National Association conventions but missed the one in St. Louis due to illness.

John Mangione, Ship's Cook 1st Class, I salute you! ☺

William Hedger, 54 E. Mindy La. Segun, WA 98382 (360) 681-3821

Dear Bob:

Just in case, Bob Bretsch's letter concerning the sinking of the LCI 20 at Anzio, Salerno, I can assure everyone who wasn't there or don't remember that the #20 took a 500 lb bomb - dropped by a F.W.190 (German) during the tenth wave. The bomb made a direct hit between the two banks of the ships engines and blew a hole big enough for a jeep to drive in.

The only survivor in the engine room was a little red head striker, who was bent over checking the starboard water pumps (to insure they did get blocked by the sandy, beach bottom) and the starboard bank of engines (four) sheltered him from the brunt of the blast.

I was operating the port ramp hand wench of the LCI 221 at the time - which was (I believe the second ship starboard side of the LCI 39 at the time, and as we pulled back off the beach, I was able to watch this little red head struggling - dazed - out of that gapping and jagged hole and swimming toward the shore.

The LCI was extremely lucky that day, because the ship missed the sand bar and glided right on to the beach and the bomb intended for us made a direct hit on our anchor cable rather than our engine room, too.

After we were relieved to return to Pazzoli, the entire Liberty party went over to

Naples and visited with that "Red Head" (I can't remember his name) and was relieved to learn that his injuries earned him a "Purple Heart" and a trip back to the States, but not life threatening.

(Footnote: Red complained that there were so many injuries that the Army, was going down the line of hospital beds, collecting names and passing out Purple Hearts, and never minding what they were hospitalized. So, would you know it, some guys got Purple Hearts for getting VD. This pissed "Red"!)

As "Red" told it, he was the only one in the engine room who survived and most of the troops in the number 3 troop compartment were also killed by the bomb.

As late as 5 months later the bombed out #20 set on the beach along with other war debris.

Another footnote: I was on the phones at the time, and when Capt. "Skin" Ellis gave the order for Bart Fowler to take us off the beach (using the stern anchor wench) Fowler answered "We don't have an anchor anymore - see".

And in clear sight from the bridge Fowler held up the burnt end of our anchor cable, showing what the bomb had done.

Hence, we had to work our way off the beach, using both banks of engines, independently to make the ship fishtail its way into deep water and free of the beach.

Just in case there was a second way of 190's in the air ready to attack, LCI's were only targets when on the beach! ☺

Ray Rapier, 902 E. Young Ave, Hoopes-ton, 60942.

SCREW UP DEPARTMENT

"PUNCHING BAG OVERBOARD!" LCI(G) 461

While underway toward Berlin Atoll in the Kwajalein group - our ships punching bag, installed topside is lodged from its socket and flew over the side.

When informed the ship immediately slowed, turned and maneuvered cautiously toward it as it bounced in the Pacific. However, the currents, winds, waves were to be our nemesis - we couldn't get close at all.

With screws churning a member dove overboard and swam and caught up to it. Regardless of how hard he tried he

absolutely could not make it back on his own. He soon tired, hung on to the bag for his life and looked for help.

Ship's Company score - 29-1=28

Remember now, this invaluable piece of war equipment must not be lost - or put in the hands of the enemy. So many depended on so little.

In quick time another member dove overboard - thinking the two of them could dog paddle - (kick like hell) and get back to their circling ship - **WRONG!!** - he couldn't make it back either.

Ship's Company score - 29-2=27

Another brain storm - a member tied a heaving line around his waist and made like a "flying fish."

SCREW -UPS

They forgot to secure the line to the side railing. We now had three potential casualties hanging on to a small speed bag for their precious life.

Ship's Company score 29-3=26

Next! another member tied another heaving line around his waist - this time it was secured to the railing and he went overboard into the Pacific. Because of the a aforementioned currents, winds, you guessed it - he became the 4th human buoy.

Ship's Company score 29-4=25

I was on the helm and didn't have to be a mind reader to sense the anxiousness coming from the officer on deck. (ie:) would he be the one to explain the loss of four US sailors for the sake of a "stinking punching bag."

SOLUTION: - Lower the dingy with an officer and two additional members to row like hell.

Score - 29-7=22

Finally with everyone dog paddling - plus the rowing they made it back to a maneuvering - screw turning fantail.

HAPPY ENDING - Their prophecy was fulfilled - "We shall return" - and the word was passed - I saw nothing! I heard nothing!

And now the cats out of the bag - you asked for it - so sorry. ☺

Respectfully submitted, Charles Behrens,
QM 1/c, Retired USNR, LCI 462
19 Beechwood Rd. Blauvelt NY 10913

USS LCI(L) 759

MAY 1944 TO SEPTEMBER 1945

I have been most impressed in reading LCI Newsletter stories about what happened and where. These all are most detailed in dates, names, places rather like diaries or logs. They are fascinating to read and I'm envious if these tale tellers' specific recalls.

On the other hand my own memories are broader and on a more distilled scale rather like movie shots one continuing basis. So, if you can indulge an old LCI sailor this is what I remember:-

Before I shipped aboard the 759 I was on a YMS (wooden minesweeper). We swept the Atlantic approaches of the Panama Canal on a daily basis. We also served as a picket ship to indicate the safe and proper course to follow into the canal. We would sit at anchor and guffaw and slap our thighs at the sight of the LCI's en route from the Atlantic to Pacific theaters. My God, they were ugly trying to keep in line en route to the Panama Canal.

Then came orders to Solomon Island for training as a prospective commanding officer. I never laughed or scoffed again at the sight of an LCI When I last saw an LCI --the 1091--in San Diego last summer, over 50 years later, I wasn't laughing or slapping my thigh at all. It was quite an emotional feeling instead.

The 759 crew assembled in Solomon was already a quality group. We had 2 chiefs who had been on LCI's in Europe and who saved the day many times later. The bulk of the crew as time went on, were reservists and draftees, many of whom were middle aged family men. This nucleus of solidity was the glue that kept us together.

We went to Portland, Oregon for the 759 and we couldn't have hoped for better citizen's to help us get the ship up to speed, particularly the employees of the commercial Iron Works.

In time we went on to San Diego and Pearl Harbor with minimal problems. I particularly remember the Pacific Amphibious Commodore who told us at a meeting in his quarters, that "we were lucky. There are still plenty of Japs left for you to fight. Don't worry" What a comfort the Commodore was to us all. He was remaining at Pearl Harbor and we were on our way to fight the Japs.

The LCI's anchored at Pearl Harbor way up in West Lock Channel where there was a battleship turned turtle on the bottom

which got our attention.

There was also a privy mounted on the end of a long pier. I managed to knock it off the pier with the 759 bow but fortunately it was unoccupied.

En route to Milne Bay, New Guinea, we stopped at Funa Futi (Ellice Islands). We were at last in my idea of the south seas. They had a contingent of black US Marines stationed there, and I noticed that all the native village clothes lines had USMC tee shirts drying.

When we got to New Guinea we took a load of Australians soldiers to Madang where they were to proceed across land to further battles. They all had those flat hats and heavy metal shod boots, which caused the first Lieutenant and the deck gang to cry when they saw what these boots did to the deck.

These Aussies all carried little white ditty bags on their belts. When we gullible Yanks timidly asked what the bags were, the Aussies said they were "tooth bags". The drill was when Japs were fighting them hand to hand, the Aussies would punch out the Jap teeth with rifle butts, scoop the loose teeth into the ditty bags. When time permitted, any Jap gold in the teeth was removed and dried. Talk about Australian troop initiative!

When we got to the Philippines we at last started earning our pay and doing what we were supposed to be trained for. On the Philippine landings there is a great jumble of memory movie shots.

The Kamikaze crashing the flagship USS *Nashville* and careening and over end from bow to mid ships, with bodies flying everywhere, and right alongside of us it seemed. The Admiral had to shift his flag to another ship.

On one landing when we were beached awaiting orders, a Filipino in an old fashioned pre war mess attendant's uniform came aboard "Reporting for Duty" with his old 1940 I.D.. He had been stationed in the Philippines in Manila. When the Japs overrode the area, he came back to his home in the rural Philippines, disassembled his white uniform, stowed it in a big container and buried it. for the duration

The 759, too, was a qualified smoke layer. We poured smoke all one long night around an LSD. Come morning we ceased smoking and lay off at anchor, for breakfast. Not too much later a Kamikaze made a hit on the LSD. What a waste all

around!

At the same time in this area, the Kamikazes came after anything they could get early in the mornings. We always waited for them in those Philippine sun rises. Fortunately Major Bong, the Air Force Fighter pilot hero and group were there to clear the skies and save our bacon. He was later killed in an experimental plane crash.

Many times during these landings both at dawn and dusk, I would wonder just what in the hell a Chicago land locked city boy was doing in the South China Sea, watching these sun rises and sets with the Australians stars shining down on all of us.

On most landings the LCI's hit the beaches on the first or second waves. We were always eager to get on and off the beach, form up and head back to Linggan Gulf. At the same time we could always look back and see the LST's landing in the later waves as they blew up and burned. We could see the smoke for many hours as we were on the way home.

On one major landing our Flotilla commander crossed our returning outgoing form action column directly over the incoming columns. There was a reason apparently that we had ended up with us as an Amphibious Flotilla commander rather a cruiser Flotilla commander.

On the Luzon landing, the 759 was designated as the Press ship for General MacArthur's press corps of around 100 reporters. Being a Chicago boy I made fast friends with the Chicago Tribune reporter. Consequently my name and address appeared in the paper the morning of the landing and my wife and family knew just where I was and when.

We also took aboard a number of American POW's who had just been released from the Jap Philippine POW camps. In talking with one of these from Chicago, he told me the Japs had been fattening them up prior to their release so that they didn't look too bad. He also was kind enough to calm my family in Chicago and tell them of our contact.

Toward the end of our landings we were summoned by our group commander to be briefed. Several of us LCI's were to enter a river like area in the jungle and pass through several small islands and native housing areas. This was to be dangerous stuff, remain at GQ throughout and if bushwhacked and ambushed to abandon the ships and escape through enemy territory. Nothing but Japs throughout the

area.

So, fully expecting to die either in this river or stream, or by hand to hand final combat, we were on our way. (Incidentally, in passing through these river bank native housing areas, I noticed that each hovel had an old fashioned Singer sewing machine in the front room).

When we finally arrived at our river bank beach area, several US soldiers came out of the bush with semaphore flags. They waved to us and started semaphoring to us. Their message was short: "Come on in gang, the ass here is great". They were on advance Army scouting party who obviously had secured the area.

Well to sum up, this was the greatest adventure any of us had ever had. We did something important early in our lives.

William G. *Blackman*, LCDR USNR
(RET)

80 2ND ST. #5, LOS ALTOS, CA 94022

Dear Robert,

USS LCI(L) 982

I received Elsie's newsletter #16 in the mail today. It brought my attention to the article about 22 LCI's lost to enemy action during WWII. It listed LCI 1065 damaged by enemy aircraft off Leyte on 24 October 1944.

In my diary I noted that my ship LCI 982 stood general quarters from 5am to 9pm on 24 October 1944. We were making smoke screens all during the day through out the harbor. LCI 1065 took our place landing supplies that morning and was sunk during the 3rd wave of ships that landed that day.

During the day 35 Jap planes were shot down. Incidentally my nick name was T.P.

Through the National LCI Association I have made contact with two shipmates after 50 years. Bob *MacFeat*, Albert *Drukalski* of Pittsburgh. We have been visiting each other since that day. I hope that through this letter, other crew members of LCI 982 will contact me. ☺,

T.P. *Kennedy* 230 S. 4th ST, Minersville,
PA 17954

A LETTER FROM YOUR MOTHER

Dear Son,

I am writing this slow because I know that you can't read very fast. We don't live where we did when you left home. Your pa read in the paper where most accidents

happen within 20 miles of home, so we moved. I won't be able to send you the new address because the last family who lived here took the numbers with them for their next house so they wouldn't have to change their address.

This new place has a washing machine. The first day I put four of your pa's shirts, pulled the chain and haven't seen them since. It only rained here twice this week - three days the first time and four days the second time.

The winter coat you wanted me to send you is in the mail. Your Aunt Sue said it would be too heavy to send with those heavy buttons, so we cut them off and put them in the pocket.

We got a bill from the funeral home saying if we don't make the last payment on grandma's funeral bill, up she comes.

About your pa - he has a lovely new job. He has 500 men under him. He is cutting the grass over at the new cemetery.

About your sister, Emma Lou, she had a baby this morning but I haven't found out whether it's a boy or a girl, so I don't know if you are a aunt or uncle.

Three of your friends went off the old wooden bridge the other night in a pick-up truck. One was driving and the other two were in the back. The driver got out by rolling down the window, but the other two died because they couldn't get the tail gate down.

You remember old Uncle John? Well, he fell in the whiskey barrel down at the old still and some men tried to pull him out. However, he fought them all off and then he drowned. We had him cremated and he burned for three days.

Not much else is going on at this time.

Write more often, will you?

Love, Ma

P.S. - I was going to send you some money, but the envelope was already sealed. ☺
From LST 829 newsletter.

Dear Bob:

Thank you for the December 1995 Newsletter, as usual beyond reproach, excellent.

Going back to the September issue, a gentleman called, Carl Dalligan and the article LCI with sails by Dr. W. William Clark. In it they mentioned certain

American sailors had criticized British LCIs for being dirty. As a general service Wireman as opposed to handling craft Wireman, I was able to go aboard any British Naval Vessel and do my job and only my job, no other.

However, being under crew strength as against American LCI's, my subsidiary job included a course on depth charges when trained they were my baby. I was also the medic on board and as I have said before I was also trained on Sperry & Armond Gyros, on top of this, those able were put in the galley for a spell - we took turns about and the only extra pay I got for this was about 5 cents a day for my turn in the galley, understandably so at that time Britain needed every able bodied man so could not afford 10 cents a man, especially landing craft, who were known over here as ("The Forgotten Navy"). and believe me it never rang true. Such was combined OPS.

In Newsletter 15, the article by James D. Parker, Jr., LCDR, I must rectify his article a little. The first wave of LCI's into Anzio were British in Reo Beach, he is right in saying 2 British LCT converted into rocket ships did clear the beach and how. And typically, Bob as in all cock ups (foul ups), the higher ups covered up there were 400 British Marine Commandos, were to go ashore after the commandos had landed but not before the LCT rocket ships had done their job, but the timings were way out, the Commandos had landed when the American officer in charge issued orders to open fire to the LCT. Needless to say the Commandos were wiped out as well.

The gun he refers to causing havoc at Anzio was called "Anzio Annie". Eventually after a lot of damage it too was destroyed.

After the landings at Anzio, I was on LCI 273 at the time we never stopped ferrying supplies from Naples to Anzio, eventually we remained at Anzio about March 6, 1944, we were harbour guard there, shelled, bombed, shot at, you name it. Even miniature radio controlled tanks were a hazard by March 17. We were absolutely bomb happy, till a Stuka Dive bomber put us out of our misery at three o'clock in the morning of St. Paddies Day, March 17. Before this LCI stopped or virtually stopped running supplies, liberty ships came in and stopped short of the sand bar at the entrance to the harbour and DUKW'S were the work horses ferrying from Liberty ships to the beachhead where

dozens of ferries were backed up to our boat. The DUKW. I could go on all day about Anzio one of the biggest cock ups of the war. Incidentally Bob, our LST and landing craft association has been mobile now for about eight years not three as Tim Sunderland states.

Am enclosing some photostats of Elba. It may be of interest to some of your members. I will endeavor to send some more information later.

I am enclosing a Christmas card painted by one of our members, quite good I reckon.

Incidentally Bob Weisser, did you write to the Duke of Argyle regarding your model of an LCI for his museum. You never did reply..

Our association is still trying to get the proper recognition by the Royal Navy of our activities. I think we should, considering there were between 1400 and 1600 landing craft sunk or destroyed.

Well Bob, I have rattled on long enough. Cheers now. Take great care regards to your wife Fran. All the best for the new year. May it be a good one. ☺

Sincerely

Ron & Sue Edwards, 32 Harris Drive,
Newton, Hyde, Cheshire SK144UB,
England

FIERCE FIGHT ON ELBA THOUSANDS OF OUR TROOPS SUPPORTED BY NAVY GUNS

June 18 1944.

A fierce battle is being waged on the island of Elba, off the Italian west coast between the strong German garrison and the thousands of Allied troops landed at dawn yesterday. Allied tanks are in action and ships of the Royal Navy and U.S. Navy are pouring shells on to the island in support of our forces at the direction of forward observation officers

This news was received late last night in a cable from Reynolds Jones, Reuter's special correspondent on board the headquarters landing ship off Elba.

A tremendous barrage of rockets from Tank landing craft was the signal for the start of the attack on Elba at dawn yesterday, he says.

The west and east beaches of Campo Bay, in the south of the island, were the scene of the main assault. The village of Marino di Campo was the first objective.

A seven-minute attack on a German vessel in the bay proceeded the main assault. A party of bluejackets leaped from their

landing craft, climbed over the sides of the ship and attacked the crew with hand grenades and revolvers. The ship was set afire and burnt out. French troops, with special detachments of British and American troops are engaged in the operation. It is the French troops first experience of an amphibious operation. The main plan of attack called for diversionary feints on the north coast and attacks aimed at neutralizing the German batteries through the island.

DETERMINED RESISTANCE

It had been thought that opposition might be slight in view of the rapid advance of the Fifth Army on the main Italian front to a point almost level with the northern tip of the island.

But the attacking troops ran into determined resistance. Crisscross fire met the invading craft, mortar and machine-gun fire greeted the landing troops.

The landings went on. Thousands of men gradually secured a foothold on the beaches and stayed there.

At 4 a.m. as I write, many enemy batteries have still not been silenced, says Jones. Shelling and mortaring of the beaches continues, hindering the landing of supplies.

The beaches are shrouded in smoke. Spitfires with British and American and French pilots are maintaining a ceaseless watch for enemy planes - but none has so far appeared.

KESSELRING'S NEXT LINE

Kesselring's next defensive position - the "Gothic Line" - will lie north of Florence, it is believed here, says Astley Hawkins, Reuter's correspondent at Italy H.Q.

This line starts on the west coast at Carrara, 14 miles from the naval port of La Spezia, and passes through an area about seven miles north of Lucca, five miles north of Pistola and 18 miles north of Florence.

Pill boxes, gun emplacements and infantry positions are being constructed in that general area.

The Germans recent form delaying tactics supports the evidence that they are attempting to salvage as much strength as possible to man this line. ☺

Submitted from original newspaper Sunday mail by Ron Edwards, England.

THE CAPTURE OF ELBA **LONDON NEWS JULY 8 1944**

The capture of the island of Elba by French forces was announced on June 20 after twenty-four hours of stubborn resistance by the Germans. The vigorous and rapid advance of the French prevented the evacuation of all but a small portion of the enemy garrison, and 1800 prisoners, most of them Germans, were captured. A large quantity of material was also abandoned by the enemy. Whilst the French forces were overcoming the enemy garrison on Elba, off the west coast of Italy, the Fifth Army, in support of them, advanced further up the coast of the mainland and by fanning out from Grosseto. They were in a position to threaten the nearest points from which the Germans could supply the island or to which they might be expected to retreat. An eye-witness wrote at the time of the fall of Elba; "Napoleon's villa, first believed burnt out, has been captured intact save for a charred storage wint." The capital, Porto Ferraio, was wrecked beyond belief. ☺

Ron Edwards, England UK

OBITUARY OF OSCAR WALTER MILLS APRIL 3, 1925 - FEBRUARY 5, 1989

Oscar joined the Navy on July 8, 1943. He completed boot camp at Great Lakes, IL. He was sent to Little Creek, VA for Amphibious training, he was assigned to the USS LCI(L) 440. On February 2, 1944 during the invasion of Parry Island (Eniwetok) Marshall Islands, the 440 was hit by "**Friendly fire.**" An American destroyer (USS HALL) hit the three LCI's, the 365, 440, and the 442. The 440 was hit with two five inch shells, killing eight of the crew and wounding 40. The 442 suffered six men killed and five wounded. Oscar was a loader on the #3 40mm (starboard side) and was badly burned on his face, hands and arms. The wounded were evacuated to a hospital ship, then transferred to a Naval hospital at Pearl Harbor. Oscar received the Purple Heart for this action. After only two months in the hospital, he was assigned to the LCI 455 on 22 February 1945. Oscar received a 30 day leave in July after the 455 returned to Hawaii from Okinawa. He was in his home town of Leaksville, NC (now Eden, NC) on V-J Day. After his leave he was assigned to the 5th Naval District Shore Patrol in Norfolk, VA (Glen Christiernssor and Bob Martin were also stationed there) until his discharge at Camp Shelton, VA on April 4, 1946. After

discharge from the Navy, he entered Pharmacist school at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. After graduating, he was employed as a Pharmacist until his death. Oscar was one of our shipmates, one of our Quartermasters, one of our barbers, and also our friend. ☺

Signed: The crew of **USS LCI(L) 440**

AFTER 50 YEARS MEN STILL HAVE NIGHTMARES ABOUT MORTAR SHELLS

After 50 years, men still have nightmares about mortar shells. Walt Phillips was an enlisted man working on the bridge of LCI 557.

We were approaching shore when an order came from the beach master at Omaha Beach to stand off. We reversed the engines and in the process became almost dead in the water. Simultaneously, German mortars fell in progression at regular intervals dead on us.

"A captain of the 29th Division saw what I was seeing and came running up the ladder from the well deck. He pointed at the oncoming explosions and screamed at the skipper. "For Christ sake, back up. They have your range.

"Being the telephone talker on the bridge, I didn't wait for the skippers order. I yelled into the phone to the engine room, "All back full"

Very soon afterwards, a mortar exploded where we had been. So close it raised our bow out of the water but did no damage. To this day I feel providence prodded me to give that order. ☺

Walt Phillips, 543 59th Ways,
St Petersburg, FL 33707.

Dear Shipmate Bob,
My old granny used to say, if somebody does something for nothing, they want paid for it...and if they don't, at least say thank you!.

Well I know that you don't want paying for it, so I am writing to say thank you for "ELSIE'S" newsletters (latest no 15). It's a big job that you got there, and you are doing a great job with all that correspondence. WELL DONE.

I am enclosing a true story of Christmas Eve 50 years ago...yes quite true Bob, but would you believe...cleaned it up a bit!!!!. Anyway, it's the editor's prerogative whether to use it or not. I will understand

if you don't...OK?

I sent a load of "bumph" about us in the West Midlands Region of England to Howard 'Tiny' Clarkson the week before Christmas, so I don't want to bore you with it also, PTO member of the FEDERATION of ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATIONS. ☺

So here is the true story by Rege Dean THE MAN WHO CRIED

It was the Christmas Eve 1945. The first Christmas after the end of WWII. I was signalman aboard the LCI(L) 305. (For any landlubber reading this story, signalman were 'bunting tossers' commonly known as "Bunts".

We were docked at Singapore, since VJ day, we had been doing a lot of ferrying jobs back and forth to Java and Sumatra bringing back Dutch women and others who had been interned by the Japanese.

Darkness had fallen immediately after we had tied up, but the environment, the circumstances and the hot temperature and the atmosphere made it seem anything but the traditional Christmas Festive Season we were used to back home in the U.K.

But the 18 members of the crew plus the Skipper were in high spirits knowing they would be in the Oriental City of Singapore for the Christmas season.

The 9 members of the port watch were allowed shore leave for the night, and had washed off the mucky working day sweat and replaced it with talc scented leisure time sweat, before putting on their 'whites' to go ashore. The mess was a hive of activity, with a lot of scrounging going on. "Anybody loan me a pair of white socks? I can't find mine". "I've got a pair of white socks if you've got a clean pair of white shorts I can have". Among all this swapping, begging and stealing, "big Shilts" a seaman from Burnley was pleading with "Dinga" Bell for a loan of some 'tickler'. (Tobacco for rolling into cigarettes). As 'Dinga' handed over his tin of 'tickler' he asked 'Big Shilts' "Where are you going tonight Shilts?"

"Me?" said Shilts "...Me...I'm going straight 'to the brothels in Orchard Road". As he said it he pushed his pelvis forward, and clenched his quivering fist in the pose of a south-paw boxer.

As he struck this pose one could see quite clearly that each finger and thumb was tattooed with a single letter on each digit which together read "I...LOVE...MY...MUM."

Big Shilts then asked Dinga where he was going. "I'm going to the brothels but I'm

going to get Brahms and Lyzt first". Someone shouted "You pair will be having the umbrella treatment in the New Year"

"Ooooh... Cobblers" Bib Shilts replied.

He then turned to me and said "and where are you going Bunts?"

I replied "First I'm going have a nice cool couple of pints, and then I'm going to Church".

"CHURCH?" he bellowed "CHURCH... ..YOU are going to Bloody Church.. and there's all this lovely crumpet waiting for the Royal Navy"....then he turned round and shouted for all to hear. "Hey Fellas"....."Bunts is going to bloody church....what enjoyment is there in going to bloody Church Bunts? what the hell are you going there for?"

"You can't extract the urine as much as you like Shilts" I said "But I'm going to say "Thank You".." "Thank you for bringing me safely through this war." With that a most unusual hush fell over the mess deck. Utter and complete silence.

After a couple of minutes which seemed like an hour, the Wireman sidled up to me and said "Can I come with you Bunts?" "Sure, Wires of course you can"

A minute later 2 Seamen came to ask me the same question. "Certainly.. you are more than welcome.

Eventually all the port watch, except Shilts, came to ask if they could come, and in due course we went ashore, calling at the Cathay Bar first for a couple of pints. About 10:30 we decided to make our way to the Cathedral As we got nearer the Cathedral the crowds became more dense.

There were British Pongoes, Aussie's and New Zealanders, Canadians, RAF bods and some Wrens together with other mate lots and civvies. I don't know how many were there, perhaps a thousand, maybe two thousand or more I don't know. But what I do know is, as the Cathedral came into view I realized there was no way we would be getting inside.

I could make out fellas on ladders fixing up a sound system and floodlighting so the service could be relayed outside.

In the hustle and bustle our small party got split up..I found myself standing by a low wall about 18 inches high. I realized it must be the perimeter wall to the Cathedral grounds which at one time earlier had iron railings on it. With the swaying of the crowd I was forced over this wall, standing shoulder to shoulder with this cosmopolitan multitude when the strains of Hark the Herald Angel Sing came blaring out of the sound system, to be picked by the multitudinous throng who raised their

voices in unison till it sent a shiver down my spine.

As the service continued on this warm and tropical night my mind wandered back to home... to thoughts of frost and snow..to holly and mistletoe..to caroling in biting winds..to mince pies and Christmas pud and a great roaring fire.

The service over the crowd began to disperse...I looked down and saw I was standing on a flat stone set adjacent to the low wall, and on it were the roughly engraved words..."British Airman...1942". My mind went back to those dark days of the war, when Singapore fell to the Japs. I thought of the remains of this young man beneath my feet...I closed my eyes and said a prayer for him and his family. With my head still bowed, I opened my eyes and saw the toe caps of 2 size 12 boots protruding over the edge of the grave. I felt a heavy hand on my shoulder, and as I raised my head my eyes past a great hand with a single letter tattoo on each finger and thumb, which read..."I LOVE", and when my eyes met his giant tears were rolling down his cheeks. "Now I understand Bunts" said Shilts"...Now I understand..." ☺

From R.& E.. Dean, 10 Furze Way,
Orchard Hills, Walsall WS5 3DG - Phone
(01922) 33760

Dear Robert:

USS LCI(L) 220

Thank you for your letter welcoming me to the USS LCI National Association and for the two Newsletters you enclosed.

I feel privileged to have been accepted as a member of this fine organization. Peter O'Flaherty, Seaman 1/c, Gunner's Mate Striker LCI(G) 220, suggested that I should apply for membership.

Peter and I became very good friends while I served as a civilian employee on the LCI 220 in Shanghai in the early part of 1946. However, we lost contact with each other, but 50 years later, in April of this year, Peter located me in San Francisco and we quickly renewed our friendship. I survived the 2nd war in Shanghai, China, where my parents and I, after escaping from Germany in 1940, were interned as enemy aliens by the Japanese in Hongkew. In February 1946 I became a civilian employee on the LCI and served her for 3 months. During that time we, that is, the LCI 220, LCI 514, LCI 517 and LSM 155, made a pioneering voyage of 1,000 miles up the Yangtze river, taking medical supplies for Chinese Nationalist troops to inner China.

We were warned that we may encounter Japanese resistance as there may be some military groups who are not aware that the war is over.

We were well prepared for such eventualities. Fortunately this did not occur.

I have very fond memories of the 3 months I spent on the LCI 220. Later on I served in the US Merchant Marine also, during the Korean War I was drafted into Army, but those experiences cannot top my memories of the LCI 220. ☺

Sincerely, Bud Zimmermann, 815 - 29th Ave. San Francisco, CA 94121

TO: BOB KIRSCH, Editor
USS LCI(L) 1008

LCI 1008 was commissioned in Orange, Texas, and outfitted in Galveston. I was Engineering Officer. We operated with the 44 ships of LCI Flotilla 24 in the South Pacific. The 1008 was awarded the Asiatic-Pacific ribbon with 2 battle stars and the Philippine Liberation ribbon with battle star. Our sea duty ran from June 1944 to VJ Day plus the long trip back to the States.

There have been a lot of interesting battle stories . printed in the Elsie's Newsletter. We had our share of battles but I would like to present some of the non-battle things that I still remember.

At Galveston, we completely outfitted the ship and then engaged in training, general ship operations and maneuvers. During maneuvers we hit a submerged object (unmarked) that tore a long gash right under the engine room. Within 5 minutes we had to completely shut down the engine room. It was flooded to halfway up the electrical distributor. All engines, electrical generators, pump motors, and other gear were under water. We had to be towed back to dry dock. One month later we were ready to go, thanks to round the clock work by base employees.

We took off for the Panama Canal and I found I was as sea sick as they come. We were heading into a fairly rough sea. The LCI would rise up on the wave, then bang down as though it had been dropped on cement. The entire ship would shake, rattle and roll. What a trip. The Skipper even stood 2 of my watches. The Skipper offered to transfer me to a larger ship but also said he would like to keep me aboard. I stayed.

We had a group of nurses stationed at Coco Solo that asked if we would take them aboard so they could see the entire Canal. They were a delightful group and the day long trip ended too soon. As we

headed out into the Pacific, I got sea sick again but soon found out that as long as I was on the bridge, in fresh air, and could see the horizon, I was okay and could stand my watch without any problems. This continued through the entire war.

We left the Canal and headed for the South Pacific via a fuel stop at Bora Bora. For 18 days our Skipper and our Exec took morning star sights and then argued about who was right. After the 18 days of nothing but water, we hit Bora Bora right on the nose. Great navigating. After an overnight refueling we took off for Manus in the Admiralty Islands. After a 10 day trip we hit Manus head on. After a several day stay, we headed for New Guinea. Very early one morning, just off shore of New Guinea, we were challenged by a US Destroyer. He was coming at us a full speed and interrogating us by signal light for the I.D. Code of the Day. We apparently didn't have the correct identification. He apparently had realized we were not a Japanese gunboat. We very quickly sent "LCI 1008" which by this time he could verify visually. It sure raises one's blood pressure to see a destroyer coming with all guns aimed directly at you. He was less than a half mile away when he turned away.

We carried various troops during the war. American assault troops mostly but twice we carried Australians. The first Aussies we carried were assault troops. They were a good natured, rough and tumble group. The second time we carried Aussie technicians scheduled to get an airfield operational. We learned a lot about Australia from them - and also about Australian beer which they had for all their troops. Nice people, the Australians. If I remember correctly, they were the ones we landed in Borneo at Tarakan and Balikpapan.

Toward the end of the war, our group was given a small island for R & R. We beached the LCI's in groups of 3 with one gangway watch for the 3. It was great to be ashore. We also had picked up some movies at various supply stops and we showed these on a screen up by the number 1 gun turret. There were natives on this island, none of whom spoke any English. They were attracted to our movies and would paddle out to come alongside and watch the movies. As we showed different movies you would hear them jabbering away - talking to one another excitedly. They saw big cities, cars, animals, fields, John Wayne, mountains, Big Bands. They had never seen any of this before. It would

have been nice to understand their language.

As we traveled to Bora Bora, I would watch the Big Dipper constellation becoming lower and lower each night until it no longer rose above the horizon. Then the Southern Cross started to show above the horizon. From that time on until halfway thru our trip back to Pearl Harbor, the Southern Cross was there. I can still remember on that trip from the P.I. to Pearl when I first spotted the Big Dipper. It was just barely above the horizon. I turned to our Bos'n and said, "Fleck, look at that Big Dipper. We are heading for home. Let's celebrate!" He went below and brought up hot coffee and a sandwich and we celebrated. Each night that Big Dipper got higher and higher in the sky. What a warm feeling.

After VJ Day, a convoy of ships was assembled. This convoy consisted of types and sizes from LGI's to any other ships that traveled at or slower than 10 knots. We left Leyte P.I. in November '45, forewarned of a potential typhoon in our path. All empty tanks were filled with ballast and we prepared for the worst. Two days out we ran into the most violent storm I'd every seen. It completely scattered our convoy. The waves were like a series of mountains. When we were on top of a wave we could see forever. Down in the trough you could look up at what seemed like a 45 degree angle and see nothing but water. Our LCI rode up and down those waves like a cork. I was really impressed and proud of its seaworthiness. The next two days were spent getting the convoy together again.

Later that week, we lost the main thrust bearing on the port shaft. We dropped out of the convoy and stopped. Another LCI stayed with us. The replacement of that bearing was difficult and time consuming. The next day we were getting everything in place when I was informed they had completely lost track of the propeller pitch on that shaft. After some discussion, it was decided that the best approach was to have someone go under the ship and reset the prop. The sea had calmed down to a normal condition but no one volunteered to go. I had no problem with water and had been a Red Cross Life Guard so I went. I had a battle lantern, an air hose that was connected to our whistle air compressor, and a safety rope tied around my waist. As I was under the ship, I couldn't help wonder. "What the hell am I doing out here in the middle of the Pacific Ocean fiddling around with a propeller under-

neath a ship?" anyway, it only took a few minutes time and I was back on deck. We fixed up the engines and ran full speed the rest of the way to Pearl Harbor.

At Pearl we were put in West Lock. This meant that to get into Honolulu we would have to take a water taxi running an unknown schedule. The second day there, 6 of the crew came down the dock pushing a personnel carrier. It had been found in a Navy vehicle dump about a half mile from our dock. It only took the engine room crew one afternoon to completely check out everything and get it running. We still had a full barrel of 87 octane so we were in business. We would fire up the personnel every day for 2 round trips into Honolulu. This was a 40 mile round trip. It took the S.P.'s about 1 week before they stopped the vehicle and asked to see the trip pass. Since none existed, they checked the vehicle s/n and told us to drive it right back into the dump. We had it long enough so that everyone on board ship had gotten into town and called home.

There's more. On the way from Pearl to San Diego, we had one engine that could not be declutched from the shaft. This engine ran the full time of 7 days. We put in lube oil whenever we had to add to the other engines so it worked out okay. I am still very impressed with the reliability of those GM 6-71 diesels. Our Flotilla reported that each of the 44 LCI's in our flotilla traveled an average of 24,300 miles.

I'm very glad and very proud that I served in the Navy in a time of need. It was a real experience. ☺

From Robert V. *Rosenwald*, 30190 W Burlingame Lake Rd, Danbury WI 54830

DEAR BOB,

USS LCI 468 & 482

This being Veterans Day 1945, an appropriate day to recall some of the Pacific LCI's.

I was Exec. and one of the officer survivors of the LCI 468 which had been sunk by Japanese Torpedo Bombers, approximately 300 miles south of Guam - just prior to the invasion. George Douglas Mayo was the other officer survivor.

My next assignment was as replacement Exec. on the LCI 482 operating in the Marshall - Gilbert Island area. The regular Exec. had developed a case of Chronic *Mal-De-Mari*.

Eventually I became C.O. of the 482 - and

it was good duty - sailing the Atolls of the central Pacific on various missions. This continued until we had a new commandant of the area, and he became aware that in the Marshall's we had a bypassed island Atoll - Jaluit - still occupied by the Japanese troops. The Japs were forcing the local populace to gather food.

A task force was formed - its basics were the LCI's 392, 394, 479, 482, and 481. Their code name - Penrod - the command ship code name Bean Stalk. D.Day - May 6, 1945 Penrods were to land at separate points at night - put native scouts ashore. Penrods would then withdraw. Native scouts would pass the word that the Americans would be back at dawn to evacuate them.

I am enclosing copies of several messages from Beanstalk to Penrods to indicate how the operation went. Also, a great photo of Penrod 482 at the termination of event. This, I believe, to be one of the strangest disembarkations in the US NAVY'S history. Here is the LCI 482 starboard ramp in unloading position - no charging Marinas - only native families casually strolling ashore on to a peaceful Pacific Atoll.

MESSAGES BEANSTALK TI PEN-

ROD 482 052100 GR 57 BT

204 NATIVES ABOARD X SCOUTS
UNABLE TO CONTACT JALUIT
BECAUSE OF JAPANESE GUARDS AT
NORTH TIP X NATIVES REPORT 200
NATIVES UNDETERMINED JAPS
THERE X 10 NATIVES LEFT 9 JAPS
OOA X 100 NATIVES 9 JAPS GUARD-
ING AI X SUGGEST WE AND 394
OPERATE TOGETHER COVERING
PINGLAP THROUGH JALUIT BT
052100 OVER.

PEKING TI PENROD 482 052113 GR 30 BT

NATIVE POLICEMAN REPORTS
THREE SIX INCH GUNS X ONE
NORTH TIP EMIDJ X ONE SOUTH
CENTRAL EMIDJ X ONE NORTH
CENTRAL ENYBOR X ALL OPERAT-
ING X ALSO MANU FORTIES EMIDJ
BT 052113 OVER

FROM: ATOLL COMMANDER JAJURO
TO: LCI's 392, 394, 479, 482, 481

INFO: CTF 96

OPERATIONS SECURED X WELL
DONE X CONSIDER YOU ALL
PERFORMED EXCELLENTLY AND
RESULTS OBTAINED WERE BEYOND
THOSE NORMALLY TO BE EXPECT-
ED IN VIEW CONDITIONS ENCOUN-
TERED X OPERATING UNDER FIRE
AT ABOUT EVERY ISLAND 580
NATIVES WERE EVACUATED IN
SPITE OF AN ALERTED ENEMY X
PLEASE EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION
FOR A JOB WELL DONE TO
YOUR OFFICERS AND MEN X
072112

Submitted: Edward F. *Rubin* USNR (Ret),
Box 168, Cornwall NY 12518-0168

Dear Bob,

As a fairly new member of the LCI National Assoc. I have received about 3 "Elsie" Newsletters and find them exceptional! Keep up the good work.

In Nov. 1944 I turned 17 and immediately began begging my mother's permission to join the Navy, my Dad was already in the Navy having been drafted in 1943 at the age of 36, and she finally relented and signed forms in Feb. 1945. I went to boot camp at Sampson, N.Y. and upon graduation asked to be assigned to my Dad's ship, the Hospital ship USS Relief. I was turned down because of the new government ruling about immediate relatives serving on the same ship. Remember the 5 Sullivan brothers? They sent me to the Amphib base in Little Creek, VA for training and subsequently to Orange, Texas and duty aboard the LCI 76 which had returned from duty in the E.T.O. A new crew was assigned and we sailed to Green Cove Springs, FL to be outfitted as a water tender for ships in mothballs as they still had men aboard these nested ships as lookouts and fire watch.

We sailed from Florida to New Orleans, LA at the Algiers Naval Base, there to await further orders which finally sent us up the Mississippi River, in a convoy of other amphibious ships, LST's LSM's etc. where we finally ended at Keokuk, Iowa. Here we stayed for 2 weeks and had tours of the ship by the town folk. Then back down to New Orleans and finally to Galveston, Texas and Houston, Texas where we decommissioned her and were sent home, discharged on points. I'm writing this to possibly let her original crew know, through the newsletter, what

finally happened to her and to possible locate any of the crew who served with me.

After my arrival home I joined the Naval Reserves as a S1/c and stayed for a total of 38 years being finally discharged in 1983 as a Master Chief Boatswain's Mate. I loved every minute of my time. I'm also a retired Police Detective Lieutenant - 26 years. ☺

Sincerely, Peter G. Kohler, BMCN Ret.,
4620 Villate Street, Erie, PA 16506-1542
Tel.(814) 833-0079

Dear Robert,

I have just received Newsletter #15. I was interested in reading of more experiences of us Coast Guard who survived the several operations in Africa, Sicily, Italy & Normandy while serving aboard our LCI's. It is always saddening to think of all those who did not survive.

I was interested in Al Vernon's account of an experience, as I was a shipmate of his. Also, I was a shipmate, for a short time of Coit Hendley. They both were assigned separately to the 88 to replace an officer casualty.

I have worked closely with Ralph Gault here in the Chicago area to have a model of the LCI(L) 87, our Flotilla Flag Ship, made and placed in the Academy Museum at New London, CT in memory of our Flotilla Commander, RADM Miles Imlay.

Our skipper, Benny Rigg, was awarded both the *Silver Star* and *Legion of Merit*, as I recall. We suffered extensive damage in the invasion at Licata, Sicily and were forced to abandon ship on the beach, but later came back aboard to successfully repair the damage and get off the beach with the aid of a Navy tug. The Flotilla had written us off.

Our experiences at Normandy, Omaha, Easy Red were equally challenging with heavy damage and casualties. We were able to successfully withdraw from the beach, however, and return to England for repair.

Ralph Gault and I are currently communicating with a Mr. Kenneth Davey whose father was a member of the Navy Beach Battalion that we successfully landed. He is very interested in anything about the LCI(L) 88 as it may relate to his father, "Little Dr. Davey" and the landing on Easy Red, Omaha Beach, Normandy or the early morning of 6 June 1944. ☺

Thank you for remembering us.

Sincerely, John Kavanagh, Capt. USCG

THE LCI(L) 577 STORY

FLOTILLA 8

By Robert Steiner - CMoMM

Last year Albert Hollingshead a crew member of the 577, asked me to write a story about the 577. I have taken up the pen and will do my best to do a good job.

To start with I did my boot camp at Newport, RI for three months. A letter from my Dad told me that he had done his boot camp in barracks "B" in World War I. I had a good feeling about this event.

My next stop was in Richmond VA, at Diesel School for 13 weeks. My next stop was the Solomons in Maryland for training. Reported to Pier 92 in New York. I was the first crewman bus to arrive at Pier 92 with our skipper Mr. Edwin Morgan. I had the good luck to make several trips to Perth Amboy, NJ to watch some of the last phases of the 577 completion.

Next stop was Norfolk, VA. Painters were painting some LCI's with a blue and white paint. Well we figured we were going to England. Wrong, the next day painters show up with green and brown paint. We were headed for the South Pacific. A few days in Key West and onto the Panama Canal. I had a nice surprise when I met a neighbor that lived just four houses down from us back home in Binghamton, NY.

When we left the canal we had picked up some additional members of the 577. They included a Panamal monkey, two love birds and a dog. Sorry to say the two love birds died two or three weeks later. They were given full Military Services.

Mr. Mortan our Skipper was in charge of the three or four LCI's headed for New Guinea. Stopped at Bora Bora Island for fuel and some minor repairs.

One of the LCI's had major engine problems and had to go, I believe, to Tahiti. We ran into a bad storm which delayed us for one day. Arrived in Milne Bay, New Guinea, right on the button, June 16, 1944. Our stay at Milne Bay was to wait for completing the ships for Flotilla eight (8).

One of our important parts of the diesel engines were the fuel injectors. Ray Dearing and I took a hike up the short to

kill some time. We came across a large box in a field. We got it opened and behold it was full of water sealed injectors. I used a lot of them to exchange parts with other LCI's.

From here on we did a lot of moving around. I will try to highlight some of the events.

We received orders to leave Milne Bay in a hurry and after dark. Our Engineering Officer, Mr. Hodgson, and a seaman we're ashore getting supplies. Mr. Morgan said they could catch up with us later. As we left the bay we hit something and kind of rolled over it. All areas were checked and found no damage that we could see.

We went into floating dry dock at Finchaven and found gears had been jammed on the starboard rudder. Were underway the next day.

Arrived at Maffin Bay on July 22, 1944. Left Maffin Bay on July 27, 1944 with troops and convoy for our first invasion. Landed at Sansapor Penninsular on July 30, 1944. Not much opposition. Back at Humbolt Bay to Cape Cretain and back to Humbolt Bay. As we go through this story we will see just how much moving we did during these opeerations. Left Maffin Bay September 11, 1944 for second invasion at Morotai Island. Again, not much opposition.

There was a newsreel back home showing the 577 at the landing at Sansapor. Sent a letter to the Navy Group in Washington - they are looking for it.

It is very difficult to correlate things that happened when sometimes we did not know where we were going, and never knew where we landed. After making a couple of short trips, we ended up again at Sansapor. We had an ice-cream party, but was interrupted by an air-raid. Our next trip was to Cape Soudest on October 4, 1944. We landed at Ormoc on Leyte with reinforcements on December 15, 1944. Left Ormoc the same day and returned to Tacloban. As I recall a Japanese plane sneaked into the harbor and tried to bomb a ship - he missed his target and got hit in the tail of his plane an started to smoke. He then turned and went into a floating drydock where a destroyer was dry-docked. There were several dead sailors in the fantail and an effort was being made to retrieve their bodies. Several more sailors were killed as a result of the crash of the Japanese plane.

Fred Fisher, the electrician was working on

the galley fan when the plane dropped the bomb and Fred was soaked with water. Fred told me that he wouldn't work outside any more that day. Mike Brophy told Fred, "no eating today unless you fix the fan" - Fred continued to repair the fan.

Our next stop, and the big one was landed at Mindora. On the way we had some interesting things take place. The convoy had 6 to 8 destroyers and 1 or 2 aircraft carrier. The story we heard was that 50,000 people were involved

One day two Japanese planes came in and tried to bomb a couple of ships but did not hit their targets. Mr. Morgan, our Skipper, said they will be back. Surely they did return. General Quarters was sounded and I went to the fantail to get my jacket and helmet. The army cook had just finished feeding the soldiers a hot meal. Before we knew it a plane was coming right at us on the fantail. He got so close we could see the pilot. He made a sharp turn and headed straight to the LST off our starboard side.

The next thing was a loud explosion as he hit the LST right in the middle of the ship. The next thing I heard was the "SOB" got me. The cook had taken some shrapnel through his right knee. He wasn't too big a man and I managed to get him on the table in the mess hall. Doc Pratt took care of him in one of the Officers Quarters. The next day he was transferred to another ship back to the base.

On the way another major event was the shooting down of a kamikaze plane. Albert Hollingshead got credit for shooting it down. As told by an item in a local paper of Al's hometown was as follows: During the invasion of Mindora we were almost demolished by the plane. The pilot was doing his victory roll over us just prior to coming in when I shot him down with a 20MM anti-aircraft gun. It riddled his tail feathers crippling him. He dove into the water so close to our ship that water splashed on me. In the gun tub was Robert L. Lynch his loader. On watch was Neal Durdin, John Bauer and Joe Tennant and Jay Shiff.

We landed at Mindora December 22, 1944. The beach there took a real pounding by planes, rockets and the big ships with the big guns.

On the way back to Leyte, Mr. Morgan got orders to go aboard an LST that had taken a kamikaze plane in the fan tail and had to be abandoned. We had to go aboard at nighttime and with no lights. I went to the

Engine Room, Mr. Freeman and one seaman went to the Pilothouse, Mr. Hodgson our Engineering Officer, went to the After Steering Room. We all carried weapons. We had to climb the rope ladders in order to get aboard, and had to open most of the hatches as we moved through the LST. Soldiers had left many of their things on the bunks. We had a time schedule to do our job and get back to our ship on time. The Engine Room had about 2-3 feet of water on one side of the ship. The crew had put out an anchor to keep it going around in circles. As we finished and came back to top side, there was firing in the distance and Mr. Morgan said let's get out of here quick. We had to catch up with the convoy early in the morning or not have any escorts. We made it even though I had to replace an oil line break on one engine. Our purpose was to decide if the LST could be saved. The answer was yes and a crew would be sent out to get it.

Arrived back at Leyte December 24, 1944. we left Leyte on January 27, 1945. Had escorts during the day. They returned to Leyte because they had taken a lot of damage on the destroyers from mines in the area we were headed to. We landed at Nassugbu, Luzon during the early morning darkness. The operation was one that the landing was to be secret, no shooting of any kind. At daylight the troops went ashore. All personnel except one officer and one seaman stayed on the ship. We had to dig foxholes on the beach and stay there. There was a lot of shooting going on a short distance from the beach, along with a lot of other activity. A Japanese soldier and a Filipino girl were killed as they came out of a beat up sugar mill a couple hundred yards from us. I picked up a Japanese rifle and bayonet on the beach. Later on in certain areas I used it for target shooting. I still have the rifle today. That night we went aboard our ship and headed back to Leyte. Escorts picked us up the next day. I can't remember who was in charge of the operation, but he did send ice cream to all the ships that took part with a JOB WELL DONE.

The next stop was Subic Bay to pick up troops on March 7, 1945 and arrived at Corregidor on March 8, 1945. We were taking off paratroopers that had jumped on Corregidor a few days earlier. While we were loading and unloading a bomb came in very close and everyone went for cover. Just off the starboard side was the famous tunnel where the last American troops finally surrendered. I have a record of the

last message from there by radio by those who survived the long march.

The paratroopers had a rough ride back to Subic Bay. As they departed from the LCI's the language was not their best. It didn't bother them to jump from planes, but the sea got to them.

We made two trips from Mindora to Bulalampo and a trip to Calapan.

The next operation was unique in a way. As I remember there had been a very active Navy Battle in Saurigao Straights and some Japanese Officers and deck hands had somehow got to shore near the town of Romblon. They were hiding in the woods and coming into the town and creating some nasty conditions. The LCI's #'s 577, 544 and the 746 were to take 600 troops there to clean out the Japanese. (Before I forget, I have a picture of the three LCI's at the dock at Romblon. If anyone of these LCI's are interested I would be happy to make you a copy. I also have a copy of so-called "headhunters" from the woods who had offered to lead the soldiers to the Japanese. We left the next day and arrived back at San Jose, Mindora.

The next three trips included Cuyo Island (Palawan group,) Leyte and Morotai.

Left Leyte May 4, 1945. Arrived at Morotai Island May 7, 1945. Getting ready for the invasion at Borteno at Brunie Bay, June 11, 1945 with Australian troops. They were on board ship for six days, the longest any troops had been on board. They were a real nice bunch of guys. They were constantly cleaning their guns. One fellow gave me his address in case I ever got to Australia. A couple of problems came up, one was a shortage of ammo for the landed troops and the other was that the Japanese were sending small boats loaded with explosives on a river into the Bay. Only one small boat with a red lamp was allowed in the water at night. Anything else that moved was shot at. There was a lot of power being thrown at the back area. They were going over our ships. LCI Rocket Ships were also pounding the beach, plus large ships were firing into the landing areas. We were anchored in the Bay for 6 days. We left Boreno on June 25, 1945. Returned to Leyte June 29, 1945.

LEFT LEYTE JULY 10, 1945 - ON OUR WAY HOME. We had special flags flying as we Flotilla weaved it's way out of the Bay.

ADDENDUM:

On one operation I was sleeping on a cot during the night wedged between the gun tub and the railing by the pilot house. We had a bad storm and I took my mothers pillow and blanket and was heading through the pilot house and down the ladder to the main deck. Half-way down, something hit us on the starboard side and I went head-over-heels. I picked myself up and went to the mess hall area and the bow of the ship was right inside the mess hall. Our crewmen quickly covered the damaged area above the hole which was 3-4' above the waterline. Checked on damage and my cot was in 3-4 pieces.

One day in Leyte I was making a wind scoop for one of the Officers,.. A fellow tapped me on the shoulder and there stood a fellow I worked with at IBM, Endicott, NY. We worked just about 20 feet from each other. I spent three days on his ship doing some special training.

On our way back to the States we made stops at Ulith Island and Eniwetok Atoll. Prior to landing at Pearl Harbor we had to give Pancho, the monkey, to another LCI(L) which was replacing our group. No animals could be brought in. Left Pearl Harbor August 8, 1945.

NOW FOR THE GOOD NEWS

The Japanese accepted our Peace Terms on August 14, 1945.

Arrived at San Pedro, Long Beach California. After half of the crew took their 30 day leave, I took mine.

Before leaving, I had a nice interview with Mr. Capanella, the Engineering Officer taking over for Mr. Hodgson. I tried years later to contact him through a movie list of stars, but had no answer from him. He was in the movies, television and did the Mopar Auto Parts commercial.

The last I saw the 577 was on September 27, 1945. I was on my way home with three shipmates.

After my leave I reported to Pier 33 in Brooklyn, NY. I was in charge of de-commissioning LST's that had been lent to England. Was good duty, Two Officers reported each day to see that a number of crew would be sent to Lido Beach for discharge.

I did two four year hitches in the Inactive Navy. Had two children then, and it was long enough.

Discharged February 8 1946 four days before my birthday.

Basically we made 10-13 invasions and landings, 4 to 5 of those were very active operations.

Will close now with the hope that some of the crews on the LCI's in Flotilla 8 might enjoy this story. I am sure it will bring back some memories.

I have accounted for 25 of the original crew, 16 are deceased, 10 are alive (I keep in touch with them), and have not been able to locate our Engineering Officer, Mr. Hodgson and three crewmen. I will keep looking for them.

As I stated earlier, I have a picture of the 3 LCI's at Romblon, the 577, 544 and 746. If anyone is interested contact me and I will send you a picture.

NOTE: I also have a picture of the Skipper of the LCI(L) 750. If anyone is interested, please contact me.

Sincerely, Robert D. *Steiner*, Box 203, 40 McGregor Ave. Maine, NY 13802

Dear Bob,

The following is a story of possible interest for the LCI Newsletter.

On the LCI(L) 357 we had Christmas dinner on 25 December 1944 anchored in Joteffa Bay, Hollandia, New Guinea. We then departed for Aitape Roads, an overnight run, to take on rockets and detonators to support the invasion force for the landing in Lingayen Gulf.

I was the C.O. and had written in the Night Order Book that I was to be called to the bridge if expected foul weather developed. It was my custom to unscrew the light bulb in my cabin in order to open the port for ventilation and not violate the black-out condition

. About 0130 I was awakened by rainwater pouring in the open port hole. I waited briefly and was not called to the bridge; I dressed and went topside. All hands were accounted for, two in the Pilot House, OOD, Signalman and Lookout on the Bridge. We were the last ship in the Port column and neither the ship ahead nor the column to Starboard were in view. Inexplicably the OOD did not know where we were! The rain was driving in sheets and we could barely see our Forecastle; only the Group Flagship had radar which was either inoperative or "blind" astern. I

assumed, and the OOD assured me, that we had been on station when he relieved on deck. My query to the Helmsman revealed that we were almost 180 degrees off course! There was little time for debate, I relieved the OOD, assumed the Watch and kept him there. I reversed course, turned on the running lights and increased the speed. As luck would have it, the day dawned very gloomy, but we were only about a mile astern of our position in column. Many of the other ships were on the horizon astern of us! That afternoon at the the C.O.'s meeting with the Group Commander, he allowed as how our station keeping the night before was lousy. He pointed out that my ship had not been so flagrant: if only he had known! In response, I allowed as how with the bad weather, I thought it prudent to drop back a bit.

The sequel to this story is that with my luck as a 23 year old LT(jg), I stayed in the Navy for 30 years and retired as a Captain USN in April 1973.

Best regards, Nelson W. Craw, 16913 Doolittle Circle, Riverside, CA 92518

Dear Bob;

Just a line for the newsletter as Bob Weissner requested.

From the Corner of the Assistant Chaplain:

As always I come from the Reunion with mixed feelings. I am always overjoyed to see the guys that I served with and had so much in common for nearly two years.

Then I am always sad to know that some have sailed into the safe harbor of God.

It was a joy and privilege to speak to you and to think how time and circumstances change one's life....

It is still hard to imagine my life as a United Methodist preacher after "you know what", but I do not feel estranged from the guys, just the way of life....now 45 years.

There is a closeness of shipmates that can never be forgotten or destroyed.....An understanding that we have, that others, that others only dream about...

I have some dreams as I sometimes not often, think of what I will leave behind. A LOVE for God and Country and a Life Filled with Love for my Family...I want to

be remembered as a Patriot not ashamed to say: SAY IT OR ACT IT. I trust you have shared your feelings with your kids and friends... and you will remember that we live in the Greatest Country in the World even with its faults.

Bob: You are much appreciated....You are doing a super job!

Until next time smooth sailing and God Bless.

Assistant Chaplain David M Cox (Coxswain)

From the Port Gun Tub on the 633(M), Oh Yes, "from the Gun Deck."

Sometimes I get a letter worth passing on to you. This one is in part:

I probably have a different viewpoint on LCI duty, or any duty taking one away from a wife and a child.

LCI living is close living. A crew confined is a small space in which to eat and sleep. Men of different habits to the point where some seem to refuse to bathe and tension builds. It is not two years of living at the Hilton and salt water shower are not enviable.

So it is a tribute to the men who handles it gracefully and honorably. There are those who need to so accept it, and must be taught to do so. It is a tin can afloat and anyone who romanticizes it must have been on a bigger ship in his mind.

How anyone can enjoy loading young soldiers to land on a hostile beach and can recall it with anything other than sorrow is a sadist. Men and ships were not intended to land on foreign shores to face enemy fire and gain pleasure from it.

There was heroism shown by each who fought and overcame the fear within him so he could carry out the duties assigned.

Each of us participated in a small conflict related to a greater one. So our view of experiences we have are related to a very small part of the total picture.

Suffice to say each did his job and as we survived and lived on we had to answer to ourselves if we deserved the accolade "Well Done".

The crew I served, as an officer, made it worth while.

From: California LCI Veterans Newsletter, James McCarthy, Editor

EDITORS NOTE: Leon Fletcher has contacted and said he will make another try at writing a book about the LCI Rocket Ships. Leon can't do it alone, he needs all of the help that you can give him with your experiences as a crewman of a LCI Rocket Ship. Let's let the world know about the trials and tribulations that we experienced during WWII.

ANYONE FOR ROCKETS?

by Leon Fletcher

If you served aboard an LCI rocket ship, you should get in touch with association member Leon Fletcher, formerly of the LCI (R) 71, in the next week or two.

He's a full time professional writer with 12 published books, and is now collecting material for a new book about the men who served on rocket-firing LCIs

Whether or not the book will be published will depend largely on how much information Fletcher collects. He has three chapters written and an agent interested in handling the book. It would not be a book for members only, but would be sold in bookstores across the nation.

Fletcher is seeking your answers to such questions about life on your rocket ship as these:

What was your most memorable moment?

What were your best and worst experiences?

What was your daily routine?

Where did your rocket ship(s) operate?

What were you doing before joining the Navy?

What did you do after the Navy?

What are you doing now?

You don't have to answer all questions--just the ones you want to. Try to be specific--with dates, places, names, and such wherever possible. Add any further information you'd like. Photo copies of your diary, log, notes, letters, or such would be especially helpful. Neatness, spelling, grammar, etc. are not important: Fletcher will do any polishing that may be needed.

You can contact him at 274 Webster Drive, Ben Lomond, CA 95005, phone (408) 336-3214; E-Mail: Leon-Flet@aol.com; FAX; (408)-438-8427 ◆

EDITORS NOTE: The following poem about a race between a destroyer and cruiser is a reprint from newsletter 13.

HOT ROD RACE

(PACIFIC STYLE)

PAGE 18

Now, me and my buddy and a guy named Joe,
Took off on a can from Sasebo.
The chow was poor and the fuel was low,
But that old can could really go....

Now, along about the middle of the night,
We were steaming along with all our might.

When a cruiser behind us blinked his light,
Blew his whistle and pulled into sight....

We had twin screws on this old can,
Which might have you think we were in a jam
And to you swabs who don't dig this jive
That's sixteen boilers and overdrive....

Now we can-men likely knew,
We would race all night till something blew.

That fantail was deep from the turn of the screw,
But through the waves we flew and flew.....

The Exec, was pale and said he was sick,
But to us old can-men he was just a hick.
But why should we worry, for what the heck,
We and that cruiser were neck and neck...

Over that ocean we did glide,
A'flying along with throttles wide.
The skipper screamed and the crew they cried,
But we and that cruiser stayed side by side.....

We looked over the fantail and heard something coming,
We thought it was a jet the way it was humming,
It was coming along at a heck of a pace,
We knew right then it was the end of the race...

As it streaked by our side we looked away,
And the crew of the cruiser had nothing to say.

For there going by was a Reserve (JG) Guy, Pushing a hopped up LCI.

Submitted by Porter H. Grimes, LCDR,

LATEST LCI VIDEO TAPE

It consists of footage from the various invasions involving LCI's. I have seen a copy of the invasions and it is well put together. Bill Brinkley said that he is going to add finishing touches to the take before he places it on sale.

The price of this tape is \$20.00 plus \$3.00 shipping. Total price \$23.00.

Bill has put together several other tapes involving LCI's in Europe, plus several training films on how to conn a LCI in various sea and wind conditions. Very interesting tapes. They bring back a lot of memories. Contact Bill for the price.

=====

I received a copy of book titled SANDSCRAPERS by *Griffin Garnett*, it is a 422 page book with illustrations. Paper Back \$14.94 including shipping. Brandyane Publishers
PO Box 261
White Stone, VA 22578
(804) 435-6900 voice of fax
(800) 553-6922 (free)

The story is fiction, it centers around the crew of the imaginary LSM 460.5. Being in the Aphibs, you can relate to the LSM 460.5's problems. The places they visited and invasions they participated in are all real.

=====

**FROM THE DESK OF THE VICE
PRESIDENT, *Walter Kopacz***

***"THIS MAY BE YOUR LAST NEWS-
LETTER"***

We have mailed 3,740 copies of this newsletter #17 to all members, 89 widows of former members, 26 foreign LCI crewmen, also non-members living in the surrounding states of our reunion site in Cherry Hill, NJ (Philadelphia area)

Our newsletter is our most costly item, \$3000 + to publish and mail each newsletter. It is unfair to our membership that have paid dues on time each year to have to carry those who choose to ignore requests for Membership dues payment.

As of May 31, 1996 we have 5,098 officers and crewmen on our computer files, of these, 2,922 are members that receive our newsletters. Of 2,922, 430 **HAVE NOT** paid their 1995 membership dues. If your 1995 dues are not paid by the time #18 (September) newsletter is published, your name will be **REMOVED** from our mailing list. You will no longer receive our newsletters until your dues are brought up to date. ☺

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**UNIFORMS WORN AT THE
BANQUET**

During the banquet we had a nice showing of uniforms being worn for the occasion. I would guess that 30 or more participated.

HOW TO PURCHASE UNIFORMS

**FROM THE
NAVY EXCHANGE SERVICE
COMMAND.**

They required that those who were not career service persons would have to qualify by sending a copy of their honorable discharge (DD214--Navy code of honorable discharge). Additionally, one letter from a service organization would hurry the approval to purchase a uniform from them.

After I met these requirements, it was clear sailing with about a three day shipping time.

I chose whites because most of the activity would be in the summer and I found whites were much less expensive than the blues. In fact, they were great bargains: Jumper-\$8.95; pants- \$12.65; white hat-\$4.05; Rating Badge \$4 Hash Mark \$1.50 and, would you believe shoes- \$20.85. I would suggest T-shirts from them because the neck cut is regulation. The blues, as a set, are roughly \$125.00.

I thought that I would use my old hash mark and crow on the new uniform. It was a bad idea because new improved texture of the material did not match.

The mailing address is:
**COMMANDER
NAVY EXCHANGE SERVICE
COMMAND (R-CS)
3280 VIRGINIA BEACH BLVD.
VIRGINIA BEACH, VA 23452
800-368-4088 EXT 3086**

This should help the membership meet your challenge to turn out for the 1997 banquet in uniform. ✱
E.C. "Mac" McCoy, 32070 Grand River
#77, Farmington, MI 48336

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**HOW TO LOCATE FORMER CREW
MEMBERS**

The first thing that I suggest that you do, is send for your ships muster list and the officers next of kin from the deck log. There is a reason for this, most likely you have a black book list that most likely does not include a middle initial, or possibly you spelled the last name wrong.

Make a check payable to **CASHIER (NJC)** in the amount of SEVEN (\$7) dollars and mail it to **NATIONAL ARCHIVES TRUST FUND c/o CASHIER(NJC), WASHINGTON, DC 20408.**
PH (202) 501-5170

Ask for the muster list on 16MM film for your LCI and also the OFFICER's NEXT of KIN from the DECK LOG. Usually takes about a month to receive the film

back.

Remember, you will not get any crew members address, but what you will get is the correct spelling of a name, the full name first, middle and last. In most muster lists you will have a place of enlistment, which is most likely his home town. Also you will have a rate/rank and service number which will help in locating crew members through the Veterans Administration.

When contacting the VA for a name search, give them the full name, rate rank, ship served on, home town or place of enlistment. Put about 10 names on a list with the above information. The VA will notify you if they have a good address of if your shipmate is deceased. If they have an address, send them an a stamped envelope with your shipmates name only. No return address on the envelope. Place a letter inside and tell your shipmate that you do not know his address, he will have to get in touch with you. **DO NOT** seal the envelope.

When the 16MM film comes back to you, take it to your local library and ask to use the machine that will make a hard copy for you. (on paper). My library charges 10 cents a page. If you live in an area that has no libraries, send me the film. (Bob Kirsch) Most ships muster lists run about \$10 including postage. (around 70 pages)

Next make a list of 10 to 15 names you want a computer search of addresses and phone numbers. Walt Kopacz and Bob Kirsch will run a computer check for you. Enclose a dollar or two to cover postage.

We have several other members of our association that have the computer search capabilities, but haven't come forward and offered their services. If and when they do come forward, I will let you know.

For a good computer search, give us the first name, middle initial and last name, also home town limits the search. Often if there is no name listed, I can search home towns and give you a list of possible relatives. This only works in small towns.

Don't fall for those magazine ads that say they will search for your buddy for \$10 and up per name. Most likely they are using the same program that Walt and I are using.

Another muster list source is **NATIONAL PERSONNEL RECORDS CENTER c/o NAVY RECORDS, 9700 PAGE BLVD. ST. LOUIS, MO 63132.** I have had reports that they don't take as long as the Archives.

NEWSLETTER #17

IN MEMORIAM

DECEASED LCI CREW MEMBERS

*KILLED IN ACTION (KIA AFTER NAME)

BEVER, Bernerd W.	1	DONNELLY, Richard H.	5
LONARDO, Michael	12	BAILEY, William W.	13
EATMON, Burrus	21	VOSS, Aquilla	21
BARKER, Earl W.	21	STOLTZ, Donald L.	26
KNIPES, Edward E.	48	MOSES, Alfred	48
LAPPHOLZ, Louis	48	HOFFMANN, Robert W.	62
TURNER, Harry P.	66	LEWIS, Donald E.	89
O'DAY, Hal	337/408	CLAYTON, Robert L.	365
BROWN, G.J.	365	STANLEY, Edward P.	365
THOMPSON, William N.	365	HORWATH, Stephen J.	365
MURRY, Joseph J.	365	SEHOUTEN, Clayton E.	365
MILLS, George E.	365	GIFFIN, Arthur A.	370
BOATSMAN, Aubry L.	404	BOYD, Jack O.	404
BEEHLER, Paul	420	BUNKE, Paul K.	420
ESPOSITO, Edwin	420	CONNER, Arol D.	420
FINK, Warold W.	420	PENCER, Ted	420
GALLAGHER, John B.	420	SPAULDING, John F.	420
JOHNSON, Ralph J.	420	LATSHAW, Kenneth W.	420
McGALLAGHER, Clarence	420	MISHOW, George M.	420
SEVERSON, Elmer M.	420	OSTRANDER, Norman	420
DUFFY, John P.	436	BRESNOHAN, Edmund	436
MERIMAN, Russell	436	HUTKOWSKI, Martin A.	438
HILL, George A.	439	YEAGER, Joseph L.	439
LANGE, Harold F.	439	COOPER, Leslie J.	439
BARKER, Jay O.	462	WOLFKIEL, Richard	464
BERKLE, Richard	469	WALSH, William J.	474
BOWLIN, Houston L.	493	EAKIN, Edward/CO	561
BAILEY, Doyle	561	<u>THOMAS, George C. (KIA)</u>	<u>588</u>
MICHEL, Robert J.	655	ALABAN, Richard N.	656
PIERCE, Howard E.	656	ROBERTS, Robert J.	656
COX, William T.	656	JENSEN, Allen C.	656
TOLIVER, Walker	656	GORDON, Harold	656
BUNKLEY, Jewel	656	SIDDLE, William E.	656
COOPER, Kenneth A.	656	STANTON, Richard A.	656
LYSTER, Walter	656	NOTVEST, Kenneth	656
PHOLSON, Roy E.	656	SHAFFER, Jay H.	656
*CALLAHAN, Richard D.	658	AMISS, Roy W.	658
BOWMAN, Richard E.	726	KANE, Harry W.	726
KOHOUT, Paul R.	726	<u>COMPTON, Robert A. (KIA)</u>	<u>726</u>
<u>PRUCHNIESKI, K.I. (KIA)</u>	<u>726</u>	WEYSHANE, M.M.	726
MULLADY, William F.	726	BIVONA, Leo R.	726
MIANTE, James	726	ZWEBEN, Julius	726
MAKI, Eugene S.	726	SHEETS, Thomas E.	765
SUTTON, Darl	765	SCOTT, John R.	948
MOORE, Jack C.	1019	WILLRATH, Glenn	1021
STUMBO, Donald M.	1096	KAISER, Russell H.	1096
LOGAN, James B.	1096	MATHER, Emerson E.	1096
MINER, Theodore	1096	ROOSLET, Albert G.	1096
RUSHTON, Albert L.	1068		

*CALLAHAN, Richard D. LCI 658 was wounded seriously when his 20MM gun cooked-off (exploded) during the Luzon invasion.

MEMORIAL SERVICE: Each year the USS LCI NATIONAL ASSOCIATION holds a memorial service during the reunion. We pay honor to members who have passed away since our 1996 reunion. Part of the service is to announce their name and rate/rank and ship number.

Editors Note: Each issue of the ELSIE Newsletter, I receive names of shipmates **KILLED IN ACTION (KIA)**. To date I have listed **76 names**, I'm quite sure there are more names to be added to the **KILLED IN ACTION** list. In a future newsletter I will print all of their names, listing ship, date they were killed, rate/rank, place killed and home town as a tribute to our shipmates that have made the supreme sacrifice. Some **KIA** listing I only have a ship and last name only, nothing else. I would like to have the first name, rating or rank, home town if known. If you would like to know what information I have on the **KIA** crew members, send a **SASE** and I will **SEND** you a print out.

DO YOU NEED HELP???

CONTACT ANY ONE OF THE FOLLOWING OFFICERS

President: WEISSER, Robert 134 Lancaster Ave. COLUMBIA, PA 17512
PH (717) 684-4785

V. President: KOPACZ, Walter 155 Main St., PORT MONMOUTH, NJ 07758
PH (908) 495- 0672

Treasurer: CLARKSON, Howard 73 Grange Rd., TROY, NY 12180
PH (518) 279-3846

Secretary: KIRSCH, Robert 643 Callery Rd., EVANS CITY, PA 16033
PH (412) 538-8151

Editor: KIRSCH, Robert 643 Callery Rd., EVANS CITY, PA 16033
PH (412) 538-8151

Chaplain: HENSHAW, Earl PO Box 781, BAINBRIDGE, GA 31717
PH (912) 246-3350

Assistant Chaplin: COX, David 13 Tupelo Way, NW, Birmingham, AL 35215
PH (205) 854-6229

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AGE, Roy E. 606 Julie Lane, BRANDON, FL 33511
PH (813) 689-5102

LIFE MEMBERS Continued from Newsletter #16

A LIFE MEMBERSHIP IS AVAILABLE FOR \$100 DOLLARS

MOORE, Alvy P.	731	MORRIS, Maxi R.	630
POWELL, Thomas A.	365/605	FRICK, Robert L.	566
CARR, Norman	982	JOHANNESSEN, Robert C.	495/1090
DANVILLE, Carlos	72/74	ALAI, Edward B.	565
STREHLOW, Wm Monty	495/1090	GRIER, James N.	480
HALL, Robert E.	783	JACOBSEN, Raymond	412
**BIVONA, Mary Lee	726	GRAZIANO, Philip	463
RICHARDS, Pat L.	707	CARR, Norman R.	982
GREENE, Samuel L.	982	HENSHAW, Earl,(Chaplin)	537
LENNOX, Thomas N.	466	GAUNT, Robert H.	348
VAN SCOY, William R.	658	ERLANGER, Stuart	222
WISWELL, Gordon R.	266		

** Mary Lee BIVONA wife of deceased Leo BIVONA, LCI 726

HILTON HOTEL CHERRY HILL, NJ INFORMATION

ADDRESS: 2349 W. MARLTON PIKE
CHERRY HILL, NJ 08002

PHONE: (609) 665-6666

ROOM RATE: \$78.00 PLUS TAX

Our back up hotel has been selected. It is the Holiday Inn, Cherry Hill, New Jersey .

NEXT NEWSLETTER, SEPTEMBER 1996

USS LCI NATIONAL ASSOCIATION TREASURER'S REPORT
April 1,1995 - March 31,1996

April 1,1995 checking account \$ 2037.39

Income:

Dues 1.	20565.00
Donations	295.50
Reunion '95 2.	12887.96
Reunion '96 3.	9736.00
Merchandise 4.	9859.82
Miscellaneous	100.00
Transfer from Acc.#15133	4000.00
Transfer from Acc.#14869 12.	1000.00
Interest	194.16
	<u>58638.44</u>

60675.83

Expenses:

Reunion '95 5.	2349.91
Reunion '96 6.	3258.90
Refunds	15.00
Postage 7.	7295.39
Printing 8.	9786.69
Telephone 9.	2561.81
Supplies 10.	1667.68
Merchandise 11.	10761.29
Contribution 12.	6500.00
Miscellaneous	1009.16
Transfer to Acc.#15133	4000.00
	<u>49205.83</u>

Balance March 31,1996

11470.00

March 31,1996 Balances

Checking Account:	\$ 11470.00
Memorials and Educational	
Savings Account #14869	2248.41
Life member 13.	
Savings Account #15133	24500.52
	<u>\$ 38218.93</u>

1. Annual dues - does not include Life memberships
2. Registrations and dinner overages at '95 Reunion(San Diego)
3. Registrations and dinner overages at '96 Reunion(St.Louis)to 3/31/96
4. Hats, pins, books, back issues Newsletters, etc.
5. Plaques, orchestra, snacks, etc
6. band deposit, hats, Arch Charms, plaques
7. Postage for 4 Newsletters, Memberships and mail order merchandise
8. 4 Newsletters, ship pictures, copies, membership cards, etc.
9. Between officers and membership development
10. checks, tapes, computer discs, envelopes, packets, etc.
11. caps, pins, etc.
12. Contributions to Sampson + Nimitz Museum + LCI 1091 fuel
13. Up to \$20,000 to be transferred to CD's.

Phil G. Goulding

Address to LCI ASSOCIATION CONVENTION

St. Louis, Missouri April 13, 1996

Thank you very much.

By January, nine members of the crew of the 506 had signed on for this convention.

Then word spread that I was speaking tonight... Six of the nine canceled their reservations, four of the six resigned from the Association and two of the four issued statements denying that they had even fought in World War II.

Well, I want to thank the rest of you for coming.

But I must also share with you the reaction of a dear friend in Washington who was my secretary for 16 years before I retired, now a young woman in her late forties. When I told her how proud I was to be asked here, she said: "Maybe you're the only one who can still stand up straight."

She just doesn't know LCI people.

But this is a great honor for me and I re-wrote the speech several times to make it just right. Then I put a final draft into a computer which had been programmed to evaluate convention speeches.

The computer instantly printed out the following message:

"Your speech is both good and original."

Perfect. I was pleased. And then the computer added a second comment:

"The difficulty is that the part that is good is not original.... and the part that is original is not good."

So I went back to the drawing board.

In seriousness, I did have a problem deciding what to talk about tonight. Should it be about Bosnia or Vietnam or the dangers today of nuclear terrorism or the role of the media in wartime, with or without censorship, or maybe even about politics and who's going to be the next President of the United States.

But our Association officers told me: "Just talk about

LCIs".

So that's what I'll do. Now it should be easy to talk just about LCIs at an LCI convention, but it gets a little complicated for two reasons.

One is that this is such a mixed audience. Most of us left the Navy right after the war, but some stayed in for a career, some served only in the Amphibs and some were in that **other** Navy either before or after Amphibious duty. And, of course, many were in the Coast Guard.

Last night within five minutes I met one man whose entire Naval experience was to ride an LCI through the Panama Canal and another who spent 42 years in the Navy.

Some of you served on ships that took heavy casualties from kamikazes and other enemy action, and many of you won Purple Hearts and other commendations. I'm told that your speaker a few years ago was an LCI Congressional Medal of Honor winner, which puts him in his own class.

The second problem is that I'm not an expert on all LCIs. Most of you were in the Pacific where you had many types I had never heard of before reading Bob Kirsch's excellent news letters and chatting with you these past three days. And some of you even had mustangs and warrant officers aboard.

So in talking about LCIs, as the late President Nixon used to say: Let me make one thing perfectly clear:

Although I had a short spell blowing up mines off Japan on the LCS 111 before we brought it home for mothballs, ninety nine percent of my Amphibious experience was on the LCI 506 in Europe. If I am to follow instructions and talk about LCIs, inevitably I must concentrate on that single LCI. **I cannot, do not, would not and dare not speak for any other LCI or amphibious cousin, of any size... on any sea.**

With that disclaimer, no other members of this association should be hurt... or angry... or resentful... or otherwise offended when I make the following solemn declaration:

The LCI 506 was a screwball ship.

It was weird, indeed bizarre. It deviated from the norm of the Conventional Navy, the Traditional Navy, the Career Navy, the Big Ship Navy.

Due in part, but not in full, to the uncaged spirit of its Skipper, it was a screwball ship from the time we were training in the Chesapeake in late 1943 until we signed off in

Jacksonville nearly two years later.

Of 25 enlisted men in the crew, none had operated outside of U.S. territorial waters. The original crew had no chiefs or senior petty officers to teach us. But at least some of the **enlisted men** were trained in the skills of their trade, either from civilian life or by the navy. Some motormachs, for example, knew something about motors and engines. Our pharmacist mate knew something about the human body. The Quartermaster and Signalmen had had a little training. There wasn't a great depth of professional knowhow in the crew, but there was a start.

No such statement could be made of the four officers.

We were truly a sad lot. Hollywood or television should have made movies about us. Now I'm not admitting even here among friends that we were dumb. But I must acknowledge that we were ignorant.

Several of my shipmates are sitting over here. Just corner any of them after the banquet and put the following question to them:

"Would you agree with the speaker tonight that your officers basically were downright, flat-out ignorant?"

If they deny it, they aren't the same crew I knew 50 years ago.

I speak for no other ship. On the 506, we took pride in our ignorance of that strange other United States Navy. In later lives, as a Washington correspondent covering national security and in the Pentagon as a Defense official, I cruised deep in the ocean in nuclear-powered submarines and sailed north of the Arctic Circle with Carrier Task Forces and saw destroyers fire surface-to-air missiles in the Mediterranean and watched Anti-Submarine Warfare exercises in several seas and visited ships in Korean waters and other ships in the Gulf of Tonkin and had the privilege of personally christening one naval vessel.

But nowhere since our war ended have I found the likes of the Amphibious navy in which I served.

Remember, I'm not talking about the Amphibious navy in which **you served. Maybe it was the essence of spit, polish, orthodoxy and normality.**

Let me begin with the morning I reported aboard the 506 in New York city in late 1943, as the fourth officer. I was a 90-day wonder. I had joined the V-7 program while still in college, attended summer school to speed up graduation and then gone off to Midshipmen's School at Columbia University.

I was 22 years old... and six feet tall... and weighed 129 pounds. That morning was, and remains, the most frightening of my life. Three weeks earlier I had earned my shiny gold ensign's bar and I wore my one gold stripe on my new dress blues.

For three months in school we had saluted anything that moved and, as I walked down the New York pier, I encountered an old Chief from a destroyer, with gold hashmarks up to his elbow. I'd never seen those before but I wasn't taking any chances. I saluted him, and he smiled and shook his head sadly and saluted back.

I can still remember every moment of the stark terror of my approach to the 506. I made it up the gangway, and saluted the gangway watch, and asked to see the Executive Officer, as we had been taught in midshipman's school.

The Exec took me to that little wardroom. At Midshipman's school we had learned BattleShip Navy. Lick and polish Navy. By-the-book navy. I stood at the door at rigid attention, saluted, and stammered out: "Ensign Goulding, reporting for duty sir."

The three officers already on board were, of course, in khakis. No ties. Open shirts. I'd never seen an officer like that before. Two were ensigns; the skipper, Herman Joseph Albers, was a j.g. He was an old man. Thirty-one. He looked at me and said:

"Goulding, do you know anything?"

"No sir," I said. "I just got out of midshipman's school. I don't know anything at all."

Al Albers smiled. He pounded the wardroom table with his open hand. "Thank god for that," he said. "Nobody on this ship knows anything and I was afraid those idiots were going to send me someone to spoil it. Siddown and have a cup of coffee."

He turned to the others. "By God that's great", he said. "He doesn't know anything. By God that's great."

Please remember once again that I speak only of the LCI 506. I don't disparage any other Amphibious ships, either in the ETO or in the Pacific, whether they carried infantry or mortars or rockets or three-inch fifties or other guns. I have mixed with you here for three delightful days, hearing bosun's pipes and overhearing sea stories, and I would not dream of suggesting **your** LCI's were strange.

But am I not **reasonably** correct that at the beginning **most** of you in this room had **reasonably** similar experiences? At the

start, did you encounter Battleship Expertise and Naval Seasoning and professionals from whom you could learn, or did you find yourselves surrounded by others as amateur as you were?

And would some of you agree with me that that was the remarkable, the implausible, the inconceivable, the incredible...and indeed the marvelous thing about the war we fought in Amphibious ships?

Most of us were civilians. Some had useful trades, but most were civilians. Most of us wanted to be home just as much as any soldier or sailor or marine or airman in Korea or Vietnam wanted to be home. All of us were there for the duration.

None of us knew how long that was going to be. None of us then knew about a Holocaust or the horrors of Japanese prison camps. Most of us weren't really there to "save the world". We were there because our country had been attacked and being there simply was the place to be.

In my time in the Pentagon in the late 1960s, during Vietnam, I often heard people say: "But it was different for all of you. You knew what it was about. You were dedicated and committed. You were glad to be there."

Not hardly... Speaking for the LCI 506, we were civilians, we were laymen, our country was at war, we had no honorable option and we went where they told us to go, living strange new lives and doing strange new things in a strange new environment under strange new rules.

And at the beginning we didn't know much.

Especially the officers. I don't know about the Mediterranean or the Pacific. In our flotilla, we officers were kids.

Oh, our engineer was a practical sort of fellow, but we knew nothing of management, of motivation, of command, of training, of how to build a team, of the difference between necessary discipline and arbitrary dictatorship.

In summers between college I had been a soda jerk and the guy who sprinkled and rolled tennis courts for 15 cents an hour. My biggest job was driving a Cleveland taxi. The skipper was older, and wonderful, and the soul of our zaniness, and he became a great ship handler, and I loved him, but he was as much an amateur at command as the rest of us.

At the beginning, in early January of 1944, the 506 left Norfolk in a convoy of 86 ships. Ten days later, on a dark and stormy night, 84 of them got lost. They just plain disappeared. Just like that. Gone.

Certainly no fault of ours. We had spent the night keeping station on the SS Gideon Wells, dead ahead of us, and when dawn came she was the only ship in sight. Loaded with high explosives. In German submarine waters. With no escort. No one aboard our LCI could then really navigate and anyhow we were too seasick to try. "Follow me", blinked the merchant skipper, and we did--so close we could almost touch his stern anchor.

Some days later the destroyer escorts found us. They came up in the dark and we thought they were German submarines. And then we panicked and gave them the wrong recognition signal. But they led us back to the convoy and to the Azores. Incidentally, it was in the Azores that our crew spent the Monopoly money ashore, and we left port just ahead of the local sheriff.

From the Azores to England, we traveled only with our sister ship, the 505. The swells were so high we could scarcely communicate by blinker light.

We exchanged results of our noon sun lines, drew a course to England from our compromise position--and then moved the course ten degrees north so that if we had figured wrong we wouldn't make a premature invasion of France. ((We had never heard of radar.))

But it was **not** a miracle that six days later when we sighted land we were only a few miles off. **Already, little foul-up by little foul-up, we were learning how to do the job we were asked to do.**

So after the first three months we knew more. On the 506 we still were a zany ship, but we knew more. And after another three months we were getting ready, practicing in big mock invasions, screwing up a little less each time.

In one tragic stormy rehearsal on an English beach many American lives were lost. Perhaps some of you were there.

But we learned. On all the 506s, kids from Kansas and other kids from Connecticut slowly became skilled signalmen, and the black gang became a co-ordinated unit, and our only gunner's mate taught us all to shoot, and the quartermaster and coxswains grew proficient and so did all the others on that layman crew with its untrained officers.

Very early on the morning of the sixth of June, 1944, the amateur-manned 506 invaded Normandy, at the right place and at the right time. We struck a small mine as we hit the beach, and one of our ramps was blown off, and a big hole was torn in the bow, but we unloaded our troops, on schedule, according to orders, and backed off the beach to clear the way for other

amateurs, and limped home to England.

This was Division Two of Group 31 of Operation Neptune, and the LCI's with us were the 499, 500, 501, 502, 507, 508, 509 and 512.

That was our only invasion. Many of you, I know, took part in several. And the records show that your LCIs also were there, on time, according to orders, performing your mission, fighting your war.

Unprofessional though we were, it worked. We went where they sent us. We crossed the oceans on those 157-foot flat-bottomed tubs and rolled in two-foot waves and endured that God-awful pounding as we pitched and tossed in real seas. A lot of us ran into one another like little Dodgem cars--although I like to think that was more LCTs than LCIs.

But it worked. That is the astonishing story of the Amphibious forces. It worked in North Africa and Sicily and Italy and Normandy and in all those Pacific campaigns. We were not, of course, the only amateurs of World War II. There were millions. But I know of no other branch of any of the services that put it together so much on their own and with so little help from the experts. Until, error by error, we reached an expertise of our own.

And we did it our way.

Now you may or may not consider my LCI to be a prototype. Many stories were circulated about it, some factual, some "ugly" unproven rumors.

It is a fact that the 506 struck a German mine on D-Day and spent several weeks in dry dock... and it is a fact that we collided in the middle of the English channel with another LCI and an LST and spent several more weeks in dry dock... and it is a fact that the day the repairs finally were finished a large crane dropped an LCVP on our fantail, keeping us in drydock for several weeks more.

(I learned just last night that our skipper and the skipper of the other LCI got together and rigged their logs to put all the blame for the collision on the LST. In retrospect, that seems to me a fairly reasonable thing to do).

But I caution you not to accept at face value many other reports which were spread about us by the Battleship Navy and other jealous and mean-spirited outsiders.

One story was that the 506 proudly painted on its conn the German mine which it struck and destroyed on D-Day, thus

emulating sister ships which had painted on their conns the silhouettes of enemy aircraft which they destroyed.

Another report said that on trips back from France the 506 sometimes would invade friendly English swimming beaches to discharge large liberty parties, thus putting the men ashore several hours before the ship arrived at its assigned docking space far up the river

A third rumor was that the 506 pilfered a jeep from the army, painted it Navy gray and kept it for its own until a surprise inspection by the group commander, a man with a questionable soul. ((We had no choice but to drop it overboard before he arrived))...

Some also would have you believe that the 506 once stole past the traffic-controlling Light Ship off the Isle of Wight by hiding behind a large merchant ship and then sneaked 20 miles up Southampton waters to a local mudflat, where it concealed itself for a fortnight for repair and recreation, its location unknown to higher authority.

And it even was alleged that the 506 on one occasion got underway shortly after midnight and moved 14 miles up a narrow winding English river, serving as a water taxi for two young ladies who had been brought aboard after a local hospitality dance for canned fruit cocktail and a sandwich, and had missed their last bus home.

I will neither confirm nor deny any of these unsubstantiated allegations.

And I'm confident that the LCIs on which many of you served were the victims of similar malicious Battleship gossip, even if Okinawa was a long ways from the comforts of England's south coast--malicious and unfounded rumors suggesting that **your** LCI's were somehow different from cruisers and destroyers and other ships of that other old-fashioned Navy.

It was because of my Pentagon experience that I was asked to speak tonight, so perhaps I should talk of it for 60 seconds.

First, on a human note. During my active service I peaked at lieutenant (junior grade) and in our Amphibious Navy had not come face-to-face with anyone higher than our group lieutenant commander. We had a four-striper flotilla commander, but I never was in his imperial presence. In fact, I never even saw him from a distance.

Then, twenty years later, I'm in the Pentagon, appointed by President Lyndon Johnson and confirmed by the Senate. Although an Assistant Secretary of Defense had no line authority, in my time

his rank was the equivalent of four and a half stars. One of my military assistants was a fine navy rear admiral named Shannon Cramer who accompanied me everywhere. But every time Rear Admiral Cramer came into my Pentagon office and addressed me as Mr. Secretary, I wanted to jump to my feet and salute.

I could work with the Army and Air Force chiefs of staff, and General Bus Wheeler, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, became a close friend, and so did General Westmoreland, and on a few occasions I met comfortably with the President of the United States... but all that gold braid on the sleeve of Rear Admiral Cramer still scared the hell out of me.

But I am exceedingly gratified by the years I spent in the Pentagon, where I was fortunate to enjoy an intimate relationship with two Secretaries of Defense. I had a seat with them at NATO conference tables and at the Commanding General's briefing room in Saigon. My final year I was one of three officials who met for several hours each morning with the Secretary, wrestling with all major defense issues. He called it his Inner Council.

I would not exchange those years for any in my life...but I do not weigh THEIR importance against the importance of the LCI world of OUR war. In both instances I was privileged to work with courageous men in dedicated service to their country.

And proud though I am of that Pentagon duty, I am more proud of my service on the LCI 506 and of the service of every member of our crew.

My memories of those men have not dimmed a bit. Will you permit me 30 seconds to take advantage of my place on the dais to name and honor the 25 men on the crew of the 506. Some we know are gone, but we lack complete information, so on this occasion I'll keep them all together.

Trahimowicz...Clifton...Janney...Petty...Day...Lembo...Crotty.... Hines...Walters...Stiehl...Hutchinson...Baker...Mascara...Spinks. .Lanning...Beyers...Hubsch...Perry...Valentino...Hayworth...Hicks ..Valentino...Kupelian...Cummings...Robeson...and Carlton.

Would you join me in applauding these men, and have that applause serve as tribute to all LCI sailors, wherever they may be?

Three of the crew of the 506 are here tonight. May I introduce them and ask them to stand. I'll use the ratings they had on our LCI, although one made a career of the Navy:

Signalmen First Class Eddy Beyers, and his wife Pat. Eddy stayed on, became a Chief Quartermaster and spent 20 years in

submarines.

Quartermaster Second Class Harold Hubsch, and his wife Jean;

Pharmacist's Mate First Class Jay Stiehl, and his wife Phyllis.

These men and all the rest of us in the Amphibs were not part of the battleship navy, and we didn't do it the way the battleships did it.

But hear this:

The battleships were not part of the amphibious navy, and they didn't do it the way we did it, either.

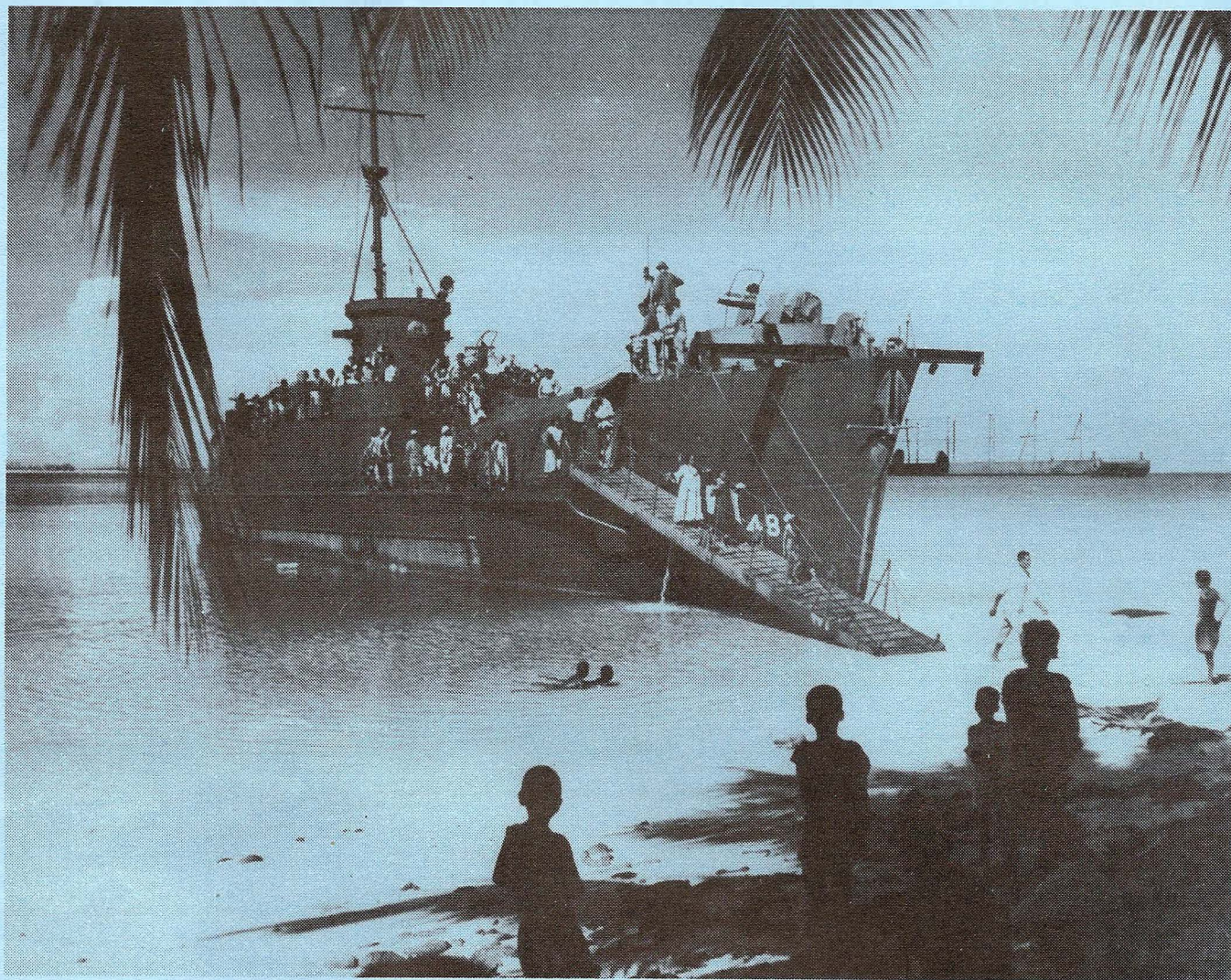
Too bad for them. I wouldn't change for a moment.

Two weeks ago I had lunch with a retired Air Force lieutenant general, whom I had known in the Pentagon as a young lieutenant colonel. He is an Annapolis graduate and a student of war. When I told him I was coming here, he made the following point about the Amphibious Forces. In earlier wars, he said, brave men with leveled rifles marched forward in a spread formation, not only into enemy rifle shot but into enemy cannon shot as well. In the trench warfare of World War One, brave men on command piled over the top and rushed into enemy machine gun fire. In World War II, said General Brown, nothing more approximated those kinds of head-on tactics than the beach invasions of U.S. Amphibious Forces. I had not thought of the General's comparison, but agree in full with it.

So I am especially proud and touched to be here with you tonight, with a roomful of other amateur civilians who quite simply did everything their country asked them to do...and who did it exceedingly well...and who quietly and courageously made an extraordinary contribution to victory in the war we were asked to fight.

And, of course, like all veterans of any war, we think of our shipmates who did not return, and of those who now are gone.

You do me great honor. I cannot thank you enough for the privilege of being with you.



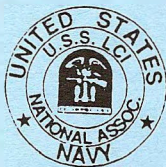
USS LCI(L) 482 UNLOADING NATIVES DURING OPERATION PENROD
SEE STORY ON PAGE 14 USS LCI 468 & 482

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