

ELSIE Item NEWSLETTER # 21

THE NAVY'S SECRET WEAPON DURING WWII

USS LCI NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

JUNE ~~1996~~ 1997

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*(**"Elsie Item"** --WWII voice code rendering of **"LCI"**: L-C-Item, Pronounced **"ELSIE ITEM"**)

1998 REUNION will be held at COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO

The dates are **MAY 13 to May 17, 1998**. We will be staying at the Sheraton Hotel in Colorado Springs. Our room rate will be \$85.00 per day plus tax. The hotel provides free airport pickup. Also there is free parking at the hotel.

Now we come to the question of your dues, did you or did you not pay your 1997/1998 dues. Which became due on JUNE 1, 1997. Just take a look at your mailing label on this newsletter. If you see on the top line **1997 dues** and a **NO** appears after 1997 dues, your 1997 dues are now due. Our dues are only \$10 per year. **We do not send out a notice when your dues are due.** it's up to you to take a glance at you newsletter's mailing label.

Send your dues payment to
**HOWARD CLARKSON, 73
GRANGE ROAD, TROY, NY
12180, PH. 518-279-3846**

Our 1997 reunion at Cherry Hill, New Jersey is now behind us. I have received a number of calls and letters stating that every one was pleased with the reunion.

A number of people have commented that they were quite tired with the back to back trips available to them. The various trips started out a 9AM and

returned to the hotel around 4 PM and then off on another trip about 6 PM and returned to the hotel around midnight and back on the same rat race the next day. I admit this is a overkill, but there is so much to see in the area, but at our age, you still need a little time to charge your batteries. The only thing that I would suggest is to assess your ability to stay in the fast lane for several days. Then sign up for the trips you will feel comfortable with and not be on the rat race.

Those of you that missed the reunion for one reason or another, all I can say is that we all had a fine time. My wife Fran insisted that we take the bus trip to the Atlantic City casinos. I tried to talk her out of the bus trip since I thought it would be too tiring for her as the bus wouldn't return until after midnight. Well you guessed right, she finally gave into taking our car to Atlantic City. Now when she gets tired we can leave. Needless to say, Fran did donate a few bucks to keep Atlantic City Casinos running. She won't admit how much money she left there. Me, I'm one of the high rollers, I headed straight for the 10 cent machines, and I must admit, those 10 cent machines were also very unkind to me. I do remember playing the penny machines while we were at our Las Vegas reunion. 20 bucks goes a long way.

Now get back to my story, I did receive one letter from Robert J.

Martin, LCI 455 from Ormond Beach, Fl. Who had a small complaint about the reunion, by the way Bob has attended all of our reunions except the first one as he didn't know about the LCI gang at that time

Dear Robert, (that's me)

CONGRATULATIONS!, to you and your fellow LCI National Association Officers. My wife and I, my LCI 455 shipmates their wives, all agree that the reunion in Cherry Hill, NJ was a great success. The banquet was good. When I read the program for the evenings entertainment, featuring the BIG BAND music, I thought that this was going to be a great evening.

After talking to several LCI members after the banquet, it was a concise of opinion that the band, and I use the word loosely, did not how to play the big band sounds the way we used to hear them. Some people expressed the opinion, this seemed like the first time they had played together, and they did not rehearse until they arrived at the banquet. I even heard the comment the singers were tone deaf.

As I stated above, with the exception of the band, the reunion was great. We are looking forward to next year in Colorado Springs.

EDITORS NOTE: In all fairness to the band, they had a number of electrical power failures. Their amplifiers were hooked into one

circuit, which was all that was available for the band to use. They kept popping the circuit breakers due to the overload. The panel started to smoke and signaled the fire engines. This may have some effect on their sounds. Looking over the band information sheet supplied in your packet I looked it over and thought we were in for a wonderful show, but then I soon came to the conclusion that they over rated themselves as far as the show went. They lead me to believe that they had some other type of entertainment for the evening. I wasn't really listening to the music as I was doing a lot of talking.

Fran got out of her wheel chair and we did have a couple of dances and the music sounded ok to me, but I'm tone deaf.

Our President, Bob Weisser selects the bands that perform at our reunions. It isn't easy to select a band music unheard. You have to go with what they tell you about themselves. Can they play big band music? That's anyones guess.

FROM THE DESK OF THE SECRETARY, Bob Kirsch

Your Board of Directors had a meeting during the reunion a Cherry Hill, NJ.

The meeting was presided over by Director Shelby Smith.

President Robert Weisser told us that the IRS would only allow the LCI Association \$25,000 tax free money. Anything above that would be taxable. He recommended that we give money away to the various non profit organizations.

President Weisser recommended that we give \$5,000 to the LSM Association to help them in their effort to get a LSM from Greece. The Board of Directors thought that this was too

much money, but did offer to give the LSM Association \$2,500 with the stipulation that we would not turn any money over to the LSM Association until the LSM reaches US soil.

We gave \$2,500 to the Cruiser Olympia association, they have a matching benefactor which matches the gift.

\$3,000 was given to the Navy Memorial in Washington, DC with the stipulation that it only be used to help purchase a new picture recording machine.

President Weisser asked that we turn over \$2,500 to the new owner of the LCI 713 in Portland Oregon. The board turned down this request as we knew absolutely nothing about the new owner or his intentions.

The new owner purchased the LCI 713 from the Art Raz estate. His name is Walt James, 10270 SW Boones Ferry Rd., Portland, OR, 97219 PH(503) 703-9535.

Since my wife Fran has come down with cancer of the back bone, I lost my typist so I purchased a computer scanner to allow me to copy stories without having to retype it. I asked the board of directors if the association would reimburse me for the scanner, they voted to reimburse me. Treasurer Howard Clarkson purchased a word processor, he requested reimbursement, the directors voted to reimburse him for the word processor.. At the annual meeting the board of directors offered to buy me a new printer since my old dot matrix doesn't make good copy anymore. I excepted the offer, you don't look a gift horse in the mouth.

EDITORIAL: Our reunion was a very pleasant reunion, the weather wasn't too harsh on us. Not as warm as we would like, but lets face it this has been

a very cool spring.

We had quite a large number of first time reunion attenders and all I have heard was how nice it was to attend. Several people said that they wish they had known how nice these reunions were and would have attended many years ago.

We have to give a lot of credit to **Ted Dey and Donna Lee of Reunions Inc.** For making each and every one of our reunions a great success. They go the extra mile to give us a wonderful reunion. Most of you don't know that Ted Dey started our LCI Association back in 1991 when we first met in Norfolk, VA. Without TED we may never have existed as a Association.

Also back in 1991, at the first reunion we had about 100 LCI crew members present, of the 100 we had four LCI crew members volunteered to put the organization together. Bob Weisser, Tiny Clarkson, Walt Kopacz, Bob Kirsch. We got together and after hundreds of hours of labor, we have put together the LCI Association as you now see it and enjoy it. We must not forget the ladies who have also put many hours into the Association. Janet Clarkson, Rose Kopacz, Shirley Weisser, and Fran Kirsch. Without them, we couldn't have done the job alone.

Since then we have added more very capable officers, to our Board of Directors. Shelby Smith, James Talbert, Sam Rizzo, James McCarthy, Donald McGranahan, Over Seerer, Roy Age, Chaplains, Earl Henshaw, David Cox.

During the reunion so many of you have come up to me and said how well you like the newsletters and to keep up the good work. This makes me feel very good with all the praise that you

have given me. I try very hard to give you a interesting newsletter. You must remember that I have a lot of help from you folks.

Of all of the 3000 newsletters I send out, I have had one reader with good eye sight. He noted that on the heading of newsletter #20 I have MARCH 1996 instead of MARCH 1997, make the change, this means we have two March 1996 issues. The heads will roll in regards to my proof reader, Fran.

But again, I didn't feel too bad when I came to page 22, at the top of the page, Donna Lee of Reunions Inc. Also goofed with 1996.

Rene Green, LCI 407 passed out in the hotel hallway, he was rushed to the hospital. He later died of a massive stroke. Our Chaplain Earl Henshaw took the situation in hand and stayed with Rene until his son and daughter arrived. We of the LCI Association extend our deepest sympathy to Rene's family.

Apology to Fred **CAIDEO**: I received a phone call from Fred CAIDEO who was CO of LCI 551, his name was mentioned not too kindly in the Slapton Sands article on page 7, newsletter #20. Fred noted that he did not kiss up to the army colonel that was aboard the LCI 551, in fact he locked horns with the colonel on several occasions and even seated him in the second meal setting in the ward room. He also stated that the order for the soldiers to run around the ship came from the colonel. The statements that were printed got by me. I would have deleted anything that could hurt one's feelings. He noted that it took a lot of responsibility to be a Commanding Officer of a Naval ship.

Something new has been added. Most of your officers now have a E-

MAIL number. If you want to communicate with any of us on the web site our call letters are located after our names in the officers directory page.

We use the JUNO E-Mail service as it is FREE, no monthly service of \$20 like the other on-line services, but this only gives us a mail box to sent and receive letters to each other. My local telephone number is a toll charge. I use a simple call name, **lcibob.juno.com**. If any of you would like to go on line with JUNO at no cost to you, CALL 1-800-654-JUNO and they will send you a copy of the program to enter into your computer.

System requirements is a 386 PC (or higher) running on windows 3.1 (or higher) 4MB RAM; 10MB free disk space; 3.5" floppy drive; VGA monitor (SVGA recommended); 9600 baud modem. If you meet the above requirements, **GO FOR IT!!**

REUNION NOTICES!!!

USS LCI(G) 442 "The Bastard Craft" will hold a reunion JUNE 1998 in Des Moines, Iowa. Contact **ART DILLON**, 1887 Morin Dr., Bay City, Michigan, PH (517) 893 3821

MICHIGAN MINI REUNION

September 8 & 9, 1997 at Grand Haven, Michigan. For further information contact **SAM RIZZO** 1700 Vernier Rd., Grosse Pointe Wood, MI 48236 (313) 886-5374.

COAST GUARD REUNION

Ships# 83, 84, 86, 88, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 319, 320, 323, 325, 326. The reunion will be held in TUCSON, ARIZONA, Oct 13 thru Oct 17, 1997 Contact; **Mary Jane Withrow**, 903 Vine St., St. Albans, WV 25177. Phone (304) 727-7817

USS CORBESIER, DE 438

Reunion will be held at Lake Chatyga Lodge, Hiawassee, Georgia, September 11 to 14, 1997. Contact **Stokley Martin**, 5475 Blue Spruce Dr., Blairsville, GA 30512, (706) 745-7450

USS LCI(FF) 786 REUNION

1997 Reunion will be held in Louisburg, Kansas. No date has been set. Contact; **Walt Shanley**, 194 Harvard St., Westbury, NY 11590, Phone (516) 333-4826

EUREKA CALIFORNIA MINI REUNION

September 12 & 13, 1997

This may be your last chance to visit the one and only LCI still in existence and running, **The LCI 1091**.

We are planning an informal pilgrimage to the beautiful community of **EUREKA, CALIFORNIA**. We will be staying at the **DOUBLE TREE HOTEL** formally the **Red Lion Inn** in Eureka. You must make your own reservations by calling (707) **445-0844**. Tell the clerk that you are with the LCI GROUP, your room rate will be 1/2 the regular rate, which will be \$65.00 single or double. The uniform of the day is **CASUAL**.

Friday afternoon we have a short tour scheduled to go to the Victoria Seaport, leaving at 1PM and returning at 5:30PM. Friday evening we will have a reception at the hotel.

9AM Saturday morning we will have breakfast at the Samoa Cook House

A bus tour of the Great Trees and Red Woods will leave 11AM Saturday. A picnic lunch under the red wood trees is included. You will return to the hotel at 4:30. Dinner will be at the Samoa Cook House at 7PM till ???.

Sunday the 14th we will have a fare well brunch at the Double Tree Hotel.

CUT OFF DATE IS AUGUST 12

We are taking in the following near by states, Washington, Oregon, Utah, Idaho, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico. And of course California. For more information, please contact Jim McCarthy, 9015 Langdon Lane, Spring Valley, CA 91977 PHONE (619) 463-1962.

WASHINGTON & OREGON MINI REUNION

Will meet in **BEND, OREGON** on **SEPTEMBER 18 & 19, 1997**. You will meet at the River House Inn in Bend, Oregon. For more details on this mini reunion, contact, Rod SCURLOCK, 4445 Mustang Dr., Boise, ID 83709, PH. (208) 362-4447.

WASHINGTON STATE MINI REUNION

Will be held in Washington State Reunion, the dates are not known at this time.

I have been trying to get in touch with Bill for weeks on end but his phone is still busy. I suspect that Bill takes the hook off his phone when he leaves the house.

For more information contact William E. Hedger, 54 E Mindy lane, Sequim, WA 98382, PH. (206) 681-3821

EDITORS NOTE: I have been in contact with all of these people running these mini reunions and I know it takes a lot of time and money on their part. Our LCI Association does not underwrite any group for a single penny. It costs a lot of money just for the mailing of your mini reunion information sheets. I ask these people if they requested any monetary help and they all say no. A couple bucks from you can go a long way to allow them to send out notices to more

people.

AT LAST, SQUARE CONN SHIP PLANS ARE NOW AVAILABLE

I received the plans of the square conn LCI. These plans are in detail and if you served on a square conn, it will bring back a lot of memories as to the lay out of the ship. The plan is 15" high and 30" long. In fact when I went to have copies made, I had to have the print copied on a blue print machine. If you would like to have a copy, send a **\$5 check** made out to LCI Association and mail to me Bob Kirsch. Address is on the first page.

I have been looking for a square conn blue print for years and out of the blue, I received this blue print from Bill Lawler, LCI 48, 135 Lawler Dr., Montevallo, AL., PH.(205) 665-2159

While we are on the subject of square conn plans, and thanks to Philip Buchanan, LCI 500, I now have a set of LCI square conn plans on 35MM positive film which is 130 inches long, so I would guess every nut and bolt is shown on the plans. I just have been too busy to take it to a library and have some hard copies made. Philip lives in Washington, DC and he goes to the Archives every time that I ask him to look something up.

THE BUILDING OF AN LCI BOOKLET IS NOW AVAILABLE THE STORY OF A NEW SHIP OF WAR

This is the booklet that the LCI ASSOCIATION had printed was given to all the LCI crew members who attended the reunion. I had extra copies printed as I know that you folks who couldn't attend the reunion would like to have a copy.

The booklet contains 28 pages showing how the LCI's were built. It contains several color pictures and a story about LCI's. I dedicated this booklet to all of the LCI crew members that were killed in action. This is a fine book to give to your children and grand children to let them know what a LCI is all about.

I had 1500 copies printed and we probably gave out over 500 copies at the reunion, in fact every one was so pleased with the booklet that they purchased extra books for their children.

At the present time about **900** copies remain, so if you wish to purchase a copy of this booklet make a check for **\$4.00** payable to the LCI Association and mail it to Bob Kirsch, 643 Callery Rd, Evans City, PA 16033.

Or to Treasurer Howard Clarkson, 73 Grange Rd., Troy, NY 12180. Who also has copies available, so if you are sending your annual dues to Howard add an extra \$4.00 for the book, but be sure to tell him what the money is for. He is no mind reader.

If you don't like the book, send it back and we will refund your money.

When these books are all gone, it is possible that we will not print any more booklets.

A MISUNDERSTANDING!!

After the memorial service two LCI Members approached Treasurer Howard Clarkson and asked him, "Why weren't two of their deceased shipmates not honored at the memorial service. Howard was perplexed as to why the names were omitted from the program. Their names appeared in newsletter #18, so Howard wrote me a letter asking my opinion as to why the names were missing.

I searched their names in our LCI

deceased files and found the answer. The two LCI Crew members had never took the time to join the LCI Association, so this would not qualify them for the memorial service. A long time ago we decided that dues paying members would be the only one's who we would honor. This information was mentioned in a past newsletter, but I don't expect you to remember the item. We honor LCI crew members that had died since the last reunion in St. Louis and were dues paying members. For next year's reunion we will honor those members that have died since the Cherry Hill reunion or any one that we have missed in previous years.

I hope that this information clears up the confusion about the memorial.

LCI(L) 639 was commissioned on June 28, 1944 and proceeded from pier 42 NYC, NY to drill and practice all the way to Guam and was ready to do what (L)s were supposed to do.

On April 7, 1945 we were ordered back to pearl and on May 29th left Pearl Harbor as a LCI(X), gray paint and all. From then on, we were always at sea alone going all over the Pacific never to stay more than a few days at any one place.

In all our travels we never saw another (X) and thought maybe we were one of a kind. Since your welcome letter mentions (X)s I guess there were other (X)s around----INTERESTING. So for the record, we started as an (L) and ended as an (X).

John Malinoski, SM 2/c

10472 Tilburg St.
Spring Hill, FL 34608
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DO YOU WANT A LCI MODEL?

Size 15 inches long, 2 inches wide, 6 inches to top of mast.

Three Styles: Square Con with side ramps, round con with side ramps and bow door round con.

Three Colors: gray, green, camouflage green.

Three prices (depending on fittings)

\$60.00

\$70.00

\$95.00 (Brass AA guns)

Send orders to: Louis Smith, 438
Utopia RD., Apollo, PA 15613

PHONE (412) 339-9096
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Dear Robert,

I read with interest the article on page 4 of Newsletter # 18 by Samuel Paskoff. He states that he believes October of 1943 was the first time a LCI was in actual combat. If he means LCI (M) he may be right, but certainly not other LCI'S. In early February of 1943, LCIs 327 thru 336 arrived at Guadalcanal in the Solomons. and from almost the 1st day of our arrival we were subject to the frequent air attacks by Japanese planes as was every other vessel in that area. In May, 1943, We took an active part in the last and largest Japanese air attack, involving over a 100 enemy planes. On July 1, 1943 We took part in the invasion of New Georgia in the central Solomons. On July 4th, 1943 we were attached by low flying Japanese bombers while landing troops on Rendova Island. LCI 332 shot down two Japanese planes and received damaged to the starboard side of the ship when the LCI to our starboard was hit

and sunk. We also suffered personnel casualties, mostly army troops in that same attack. In the next four months we engaged in all sorts of contact with the enemy, including dive bomber attacks at Vella LaVella and shore bombardment at Munda Airfield and mortar attacks while landing troops at Bougainville on Nov 1, 1943. In July and August of 1943, we also put ashore and later recovered companies of Marine Raiders from the 1st Marine Division.

Jack Boynton QM 2/c USS LCI 332.
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Dear Bob,

I am enclosing a bit of Flotilla Two History that was meant to go into a book that was being written some twenty years ago. The author died before completion and his notes and outlines have been boxed ever since. He was the flotilla's first Historian and after his death his notes were passed on.

This was written on July 3, 1978 by Don Lewis, former executive officer of LCI(L) 35. After reading it will remind you of that movie - "The Wackiest Ship in the Army."

We got the first LCI's with no training what so ever, we were pioneers in more ways than one. I guess that all of our mistakes were put into a training manual to show how not to do things. I have often wondered how we survived. Either plain dumb luck or fools rush in.

Peter Murray

497 Pacifica Avenue

Pacifica, CA 9404-2625

THE BRIDGE TOO NEAR

USS LCI 35

Some of the more memorable adventures aboard the good ship LCI(L) 35 during the

two years she carried us about the theaters of Hitler's war went right back to the beginning. By the beginning I mean the first time we boarded the ship as a crew of 24 assorted men with minimal naval experience, a green group of landlubbers swept into the relatively new and specialized amphibious operations. We assembled at a Philly Navy yard, moved aboard one of the new LCI's and were told to "take it away" meaning proceed to base Solomons, Maryland, for fitting out and training.

The old time navy types at the Philly yard must have had serious misgivings as they watched us moving out into the stream on our virgin voyage on our long way to war. Looking back over the inter-vening years I suppose our saving grace was an eagerness to learn and our pride in our ship, plus a merciful innocence. Like a driver with a new car we sailed away, testing all the levers, so to speak, practicing little twists and turns, the officers giving orders in nautical terms, the crew clumsy in eagerness to obey.

The initial journey to Little Creek, Virginia, involved certain trials and problems, one being the negotiation of the Delaware Canal. Now the canal is a long skinny body of water that to me did not appear wide

enough to take a ship our size. That was my judgment as I viewed the situation from the conning tower. Years later I was to travel the same canal in a vastly larger vessel of the Grace Line and the Captain whipped us through the canal at speed and a total assurance that would have been unbelievable to me on that first journey so long ago. So we poked along, barely maintaining steerage way. Taking frequent bearings to insure a course in mid-channel and anticipating crises every mile of the way. But we gradually gained confidence. It began to look easy. I remember we were greeted with friendly waves by observers on shore and we returned their salutes in a jaunty fashion.

Well, the emergency we dreaded, occurred in due time. There is a drawbridge carrying a highway across the canal there may be several but I only remember the first one. The bridge must be raised to permit passage of a ship. our charts indicated that three blasts of our hooter would cause the bridge to go up and no change of pace on our part was indicated. The right of way was ours. It was routine procedure....

Perhaps the first toots on the hooter were premature and may not have been heard at all, we were that far away.

Not to worry. Three more long blasts a few minutes later surely have alerted all the bridge-raisers within miles. Still no action. We moved forward to crisis point at a speed that seemed frightening. Three more blasts, then three more, signaled our panic. I braced for the collision that would de-mast our brand new LCI in a most ignominious fashion. Thinking over the event long afterwards, I suppose the man in charge of the bridge had a better sense of timing than we gave him credit for. Probably we could have sailed through at a steady rate, the bridge would have gone up in good time and gone down when we passed. But then we were not sure. Emergency action seemed indicated. Any subsequent board of inquiry would want to know what, if any, evasive action we had taken to avoid catastrophe. So the Skipper, following the axiom that one must do something in time of crisis, even if it's wrong, ordered full astern. I thought he would never get it.

Reversing any ship takes a little time. With a totally green crew in the engine room it takes a little more, and one should allow for it. In the mean time we moved relentlessly forward. Then with a roar of engines (there were eight of them) we got full speed astern and the

response was dramatic. Just a wee touch of reverse time would have done but we got the works. In no time at all we were moving back down the canal at flank speed and the bridge faded away forward. Before the command to stop engines could be carried out (no nautical terminology employed just ("stop the goddamn engines !!") we discovered that an LCI does not steer very well in reverse. We slewed crossways in the canal, and then as the counter order ("Jesus! give me full speed ahead!") filtered through the telegraph to the mystified engineers we moved forward again with great acceleration to slam into the opposite shore. It was our first beaching, quite unscheduled. I don't know who gave the order but anyway, at that point, the deck crew let go the anchor and confusion was total.

Then all action ceased and we began to sort things out, only our group pride was damaged. I remember noticing for the first time that the drawbridge was raised and a number of cars were parked on the highway awaiting our passage. Quite a few Spectators had gathered.. It was most embarrassing.....

In time we got straightened out, the anchor hoisted, the ship maneuvered back into the channel and facing in the

correct direction. As we passed under the bridge we got a great round of applause from the gallery.

In the two years that followed we were to survive a great many beaching operation in drill and in action, but none as memorable as the first.

Don Lewis (deceased)

Editor's Note:As I read the above story, I could visualize what went on aboard the LCI 35 when it was floundering around to get the ship straightened out and every move they made counter forces would take over and take them in the opposite direction as to where they intended to go.

Which brings me to a story about a modern day's war ship's worst scenario. One pitch black night last fall a group of navy ships were holding maneuvers. The atomic aircraft carrier was having engineering drills to test it's plants capabilities. The carrier would run at flank speed, probably around 48 knots. Now an atomic powered cruiser was following as it's plane guard trying to keep up to the aircraft carrier as cruisers are a lot slower than a aircraft carriers. Now unbeknownst to the skipper of the carrier the engineering department began holding these power plant drills. No one took the trouble to notify the carrier's skipper as to the beginning of the engineering drills. In return the carrier never notified the following plane guard cruiser that it was holding engineering drills. In the mean time the cruiser closed the distance to the carrier, slowed

down to seven knots to commence a electronic drill with the carrier. In the mean time the carrier's engineering plant **slammed** the carrier in **reverse**. The carrier was backing down toward the unsuspecting cruiser at 14 knots. Remember, the cruiser is now traveling at 7 knots toward the carrier, their electronic gear is now going through a casualty break down drill. When the XO of the cruiser was at the conn realized that he was closing fast upon the carrier which was backing down toward him, threw all engines in reverse and turned the helm hard port. The two ships collided, no one was killed in the accident. Now remember, the night was pitch black. Total damage to the two ships was several million dollars. The skipper of the cruiser was relieved of his command, the XO was reprimanded and probably will never get a command. The CO of the carrier wasn't relieved of his command. I read this story last October and some of the details I can't recall.

A neighbor of mine traveling down a highway and approached a car that was backing up, he missed his exit. Sure enough, my neighbor didn't realize the car was backing up and he rear ended him, broad daylight mind you.

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NEWSLETTER NAME

We finally have agreed on the official name of our newsletter during our annual meeting at Cherry Hill.

ELSIE ITEM NEWSLETTER
is the official Name.

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Hello Robert Kirsch,
Here is a story of a Paddle Board that went to war.

For six years before I went on duty in the navy and aboard the LCI 1077. I was a surfing enthusiast. When aboard the 1077 I talked to our Bos'n Mate about building a PADDLE BOARD and he agreed to do it.
It turned out fine and was a new addition to our swimming call.

During the latter part of the Okinawa operation was to try to get Japanese and civilians to surrender.

A prisoner of war TOJO would man the bull horn aimed at the cliffs and caves trying to talk the Japanese soldiers and civilians to surrender. We decided to drill a hole in the front of the paddle board and tie a rope to the board. We would attach the other end of the rope to the ship and pull TOJO back to the ship.

TOJO maned the paddle board and would bring one prisoner at a time back to the ship. On one occasion the 1077 got too close to the rugged shore and had to back down, pulling TOJO and the board completely under the water.

Lots of memories.
Larry Roth, RM1/c LCI 1077.

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REUNION PICTURE BOOK.

If for some reason you failed to purchase the reunion picture book that was taken at the Cherry Hill Reunion. **Send \$12 to Memory Makers, 3233 Grand Ave. #N-172 Chino Hills, CA 91709.**

Tell them that you wish to purchase the USS LCI Picture Book. Make a note of the check that you sent. Don't fool around, they will go to print shortly.

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JANUARY 1946 SMALL STORES

Purchased at a Navy Base on Saipan, January 1946 By Tom Griffith, 534 Newton Rd. Scranton, PA 18504.

4 Dungree Pants
1 Dungree Shirt
6 T shirts
2 pair low dress shoes
12 pair white wollen socks @40c
4 white hats
Total cost \$27.65.

Tom said, do you know that the "speed on inland waterways is rated in miles-per-hour, never in knots"

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December 9, 1994

Mr. Robert W. Kirsch,
643 Callery Rd.
Evans City, PA 16033

Dear Bob,

Attached is an "offering" of a different type about life aboard an LCI. Hopefully it provides humor, different, aspects of life on LCI(R) 706 as related through a talk to my invented Grandson, "George".

My hope is that if you are able to publish my letter it might cause many old time LCI men to close their eyes and reminisce about the 'good ole days' and imagine themselves telling their Grandson how it was

during WWII on an LCL.
Sincerely,
W. Donald Stewart, EM 1/c
LCI(R) 706

Dear Bob,

LCI(R) 706

Every old LCI man is busting at the seams to tell his story of his life aboard a LCI during WWII. I've elected a unique scenario which, to anyone reading it, might hopfull jog his memory and allow him to substitute his travel, action, funny incidents and general feelings in place of mine as he reminisces while reading. To tell my story I developed a fictitious grandson, I'll call "GEORGE", who many years ago got me to sit down and tell him about my LCI days during WWIL It goes like this:

"Grandpa, you promised once you'd tell me about your time in the Navy and being on an LCI during WWII. How about now?"

"Okay George, but this will take a while so I can give you a complete picture.

"Let's start with how things were in the U.S. before WWII. The attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941, came a little after 23 years since the WWI armistice was signed on November 11, 1918. For ten years prior to Pearl Harbor, we were a struggling country, going from great prosperity

after WWI to a crashing stock market, followed by a depression. We all had to scrape to get by. The CCC and WPA were formed. These were sort of an army for young men and older men. They both built projects like roads and bridges, etc. It gave these men something to do to stay out of trouble and support their families. With all this, George, we had little crime and no one locked their front doors. Mur-derers were promptly ex-ecuted. All criminals were dealt with severely by being given meaningful prison sentences. There was great respect for your elders. The only psychologist we kids knew growing up was the front or back of one of your parent's hands across your face (or bottom).

Europe was heating up. Adolph Hitler's German Armies were on the march, taking country after country and finally engaging England in a war. It was evident the U.S. would soon be involved.

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor stunned all Americans. Within minutes we began to militarize. Young boys, young men and even older men rushed to the recruiting stations to enlist. Some young kids even ran off with their older brothers birth certificates to join the service. It happened in my hometown.

YOU'RE IN THE NAVY

NOW

"By June, 1942, 18 year old kids were being drafted. On May 30th, my 18th birthday, I had to get special permission from my draft board to remain at my prep school for one more week until I graduated. Three months later I was off to Great Lakes Naval Training Center. A few months after that I was sent to an Electrician's School in Detroit, Michigan and from there to Solomon Islands, Maryland, which was an Amphibious Training Base, 60 miles outside of Washington, D.C. on the Chesapeake Bay. LCI crews were formed and trained here. Our LCI crew was formed here and along with another crew, we boarded an LCI training ship. This ship already had a crew known as "Ship's Company," so now there were three crews aboard. While aboard, as part of the 91 all of our personal bathing was done at a wash sink or by standing like a bird one leg at a time in a standard size bucket and washing half of your body at a time. LCI's had no capability for water, so we had to carry it and use it sparingly. When our ship was at sea, after seven days, we all got a shower. The boatswain mate handled the shower handles. "Ready" he'd say and you'd reply "Ready" and you got a blast of water. You soaped down and again

"Ready" with the echo "Ready" and this blast of water was to rinse off. No time for singing in the shower. At sea you could take a saltwater shower, but after it was over you felt as sticky as the back of a postage stamp. Once, while in the Chesapeake Bay, we were allowed to swim off the ship. Unfortunately the water was loaded with jelly fish and each nude swimmer was stung repeatedly. Luckily, we had a pharmacist mate aboard.

While on this training cruise, we did everything we would do in a normal day on our own, soon to be gotten, ship. We fired all small arms and fired 20MM guns at target sleeves towed by aircraft. After two weeks, we all breathed a sigh of relief when that "Pleasure Cruise" ended.

REST AND RECREATION

"George, before I go on let me tell you how nice the people in this country were to us servicemen. At U.S.O. young girls entertained and danced with the young men. There was no "hanky panky" as the girls were under strict rules about over fraternizing no outside dating no one being escorted home. Each U.S.O. had a bulletin board and people placed notices offering to entertain serviceman. One of the best Christmas Days I can ever recall

what took place at a home outside of Detroit, Michigan where I attended Navy Electrician School. Myself and two young army guys filled the places at the Christmas dinner table where the sons of the family normally would have sat one Navy two Army. Other family members came and treated us royally. My first Christmas away from home wasn't all that bad.

"At the U.S.O. in New York City, all the Broadway shows were advertised on a big board and each show had one or two "Serviceman's Rows" down front.

The whole country was behind this war, George. Once in Detroit, I was hitch-hiking back to town and a fellow in a cab had the cabbie stop and pick me up. He then took me as his guest to the Cadillac Hotel in downtown Detroit. His son was a Navy kid and I'm sure he missed him. It was very enjoyable for both of us.

"

GRANDPA WHERE DID
YOU GO ON YOUR
LCI?

"Well George, in June and July of 1944, our crew travelled to Boston, Massachusetts. We were quartered at a Navy facility there which served the best breakfast I had eaten since joining

the Navy September 3, 1943. Each day we travelled to the Lawley Shipyard where our ship was being finished. George, can you believe this. I recall at this shipyard it was LCI (L) 700 (or a number close to it) that was actually built in 7 hours for publicity for a U.S. Bond Drive. Every workman in the yard participated. An LCI (L) was not a particularly big ship. It was 154 feet in length and 23 feet wide. In our troop quarters we could carry about 200 troops for landing on a beach. Except for Marines into China after the war, we never landed a troop. Our main mission was firing 5" rockets at enemy positions. We carried 36 launchers.

"George, before I get into our ship's travels, let me tell you about the typical LCI crew. Including 3 officers, we numbered 28. Most of us were 18 or 19 years old. We had a 32 year old Pharmacist Mate. Our officers, except for the 32 year Captain, a cookie salesman in civilian life were 22 or 23 years old. Only one had any sea experience. He took Naval Officers training in college. Thank God for Jim Edwards. He was our Executive Officer, his seamanship saved all of our lives when we were caught in a typhoon off Okinawa after the war ended.

"I had been raised in Ventnor and Margate City on the same island as Atlantic City, New Jersey and grew up on the ocean. I was an ocean lifeguard for a few years before going into the Navy and could handle a lifeboat very well. In fact, I was the only one who could and was assigned to it when-ever it was needed. A few fellows raised on a farm brought the skills of operating and maintaining gasoline engines. One fellow was a radio repairman and later became my electrician assistant. It escapes all imagination how such a diversified group of guys suddenly takeover a ship of war, complete with 4-20MM machine guns and a bow 40MM gun."

"George, it seems when you ask some guys the time, they insist on telling you how to build a watch". Okay George, back to your question. On July 18, 1944 LCI(L) 706 was commissioned. After a few "shake down" local cruises, we got our act together and left Boston. We later put in at Norfolk, Virginia Naval Base. Here, we screwed up a few times. First, we narrowly missed ramming a ferry boat loaded with passengers, but we did successfully ram a parked railroad barge, greatly damaging our bow doors. After a week of so, with our new toy, less than 1-1/2 months old, we went into dry dock for repairs.

While in dry dock, part of our crew was granted three or four days liberty at a time. Upon my return, I saw our ship stuck in the middle of the river. This meant another trip into dry dock to repair our propellers. To say we wore out our welcome is the understatement of the year. Now, well behind schedule, we were hastened out of Norfolk. We were ordered to proceed down the East Coast to Key West and on to the Caribbean Sea, through this sea and on to the Panama Canal and thereafter north up the Mexican coast to our final destination, San Diego, California. The Navy will never learn. It entrusted the 706 to guide another LCI on the same trip. Somehow we managed to navigate both ships into extremely shallow water in the Caribbean Sea, necessitating a seaman to climb the mast and direct the ships from there into deeper waters. It was a totally tiresome journey. We did have one overnight liberty near the Panama Canal. At a nightclub there, three of us used the men's room, which was a single large urinal. One of our least popular officers appeared. He and our cook had a previous altercation. The cook was bent on throwing this officer into the three of us saved the cook from several years of potential brig time. Later, the relationship between the cook and the

officer greatly improved."

"Coming up the coast of Mexico, George, we ran into a school of very large sea turtles. We hoped to get one for turtle soup; however, after being hit with sub-machine gun and rifle fire, each turtle dove deeply. We dined on the usual rations that night.

"At last we arrived in San Diego. After a brief period there, because we were way behind schedule, we were detailed to Pearl Harbor, 10 days later we arrived in mid-October, traveled at the breath taking speed of about 10 miles per hour."

"George, Honolulu, Hawaii was beautiful so unspoiled then, as was the Waikiki Beach. We had many fine liberties there; however, all beer drinking ended at 3:00 PM and, without a special pass, all servicemen had to be back at their base or ship by 6:00 PM."

"While in Hawaii, we were converted to an LCI(R) which stands for Landing Craft Infantry Rocket ship. We got an additional 10 crew members now we numbered 39, as we also got one additional officer. After some training here, we were ordered to a neighboring island, Maui where we operated with a very early group of Navy underwater demolition swimmers. Today, this

very highly group of professionals are known as "Seals". In those days, they were called "Frogmen." To give them hazardous duty pay, various Navy enlisted rates were bestowed upon them. One of the team-4 an Electrician's Mate 2/c asked to see my switchboard. I remarked that he had probably seen many switchboards and now, why mine? Then he told me of the bogus rating system to provide hazardous duty pay." "Well George, the honeymoon was over. Shortly after re-turning to Pearl Harbor, we set sail on February 11, 1945 for Guadalcanal to rehearse our attack Okinawa. Guadalcanal, George, is where the U.S. Marines first landed and engaged the Japanese soldiers. This island was not yet secured, so for the first time we were in a battle zone. After a brief training period there, our Flotilla 16 steamed to Okinawa to make the April 1, 1945 Easter Sunday invasion of this island.

After we got out of shooting distance from Pearl Harbor, we were informed of the invasion of Iwo Jima was to take place on February 19th. I told one of the crew "See, if we hadn't screwed up earlier, we'd have been part of that deal." I added, "In the Navy, the screw-ups always come out the best." For example, before we left

Boston, one of the crew jumped ship. He did some brig time and ended up being stationed in Boston. A nice Christmas card, he sent in-formed us of same."

EN ROUTE TO OKINAWA

'We travelled in a large convoy en route to Okinawa. The trip got more and more tense as we approached Oldnawa. Prior to getting there, one of our crew, a gunner on the 20MM, had an appendicitis attack and had to be transferred to a larger ship. I was then immediately trained to take-over the 20MM gun. By then our cook was on the 40MM bow gun. Ironically, later during Air Raids, our Pharmacist paced the gun deck carrying his medical bag and a sub-machine gun."

"George, two days before we got to Okinawa, one of the seaman on an LCI ahead of us fell overboard. Because of the water shortage, it was not uncommon for one of the crew to stand nude on the gun deck, soap in hand, and get a free shower. Sometimes after being soaped down, you might have to wait until we passed under the next rain cloud. While in this position, his ship lurched and he slid off the deck into the sea. When our ship approached him, I dove overboard and rescued him. Six months

later, I received the Navy and Marine Corp Medal for my action.'

DID YOUR LCI GET INTO THE FIGHTING?

"George, I'm going to anti-cipate your question about did LCI (R) 706 do any fighting there. When dawn broke on April 1st, I was amazed at the huge, and I mean huge, assembly of all types of Navy ships. Where they came from, I don't know. We arrived in a large convoy, but not with anywhere near this number of ships. On April 1, 1945, all the fun and games were over, we ran within 100 yards of the beach and for several minutes, fired 36-5 inch rockets. from 8:00AM until 4:00PM on each attack. By midafternoon, all crew, who at different times, participated in loading rockets into the launchers, became so tired they had difficulty getting 12, much less 36 rockets, into the launchers. These rockets weighed about 75 pounds a piece and had to be carried from our magazine up a couple of flights to the gun deck."

Thereafter, each alternate night we were assigned to smoke generating or anti-suicide boat patrol. The former meant being stationed up-wind of a large naval vessel and, when the Japanese planes were nearby, we made smoke with our smoke generator and blanketed a ship so the Japanese

Kamikazes (suicide planes) couldn't detect the ship. On suicide patrol we sought out Japanese suicide boats, which loaded with explosives, would try to crash into one of our larger ships, preferably hitting the ship in the fantail to injure the propellers. As mighty as the ship might be, with its propellers damaged, it was like a legless man and had to be then towed to the Phillipines for dry docking and repair. We had a few floating dry docks, but they could only handle smaller ships."

"When we came across a suspected suicide boat, we would signal it by flashlight and expect an immediate confirmation signal. If not received, we opened fire with machine guns. That suddenly woke up some smart-ass guys who were too lazy to promptly confirm. Once we had a bonanza day. We surprised 11 Japanese suicide boats in a cove and it was like a turkey shoot we destroyed all of them."

"In the three and one half months at Okinawa, we endured nightly air raids, often lasting from midnight until 5:00AM. The moon, I soon learned, came up 10 months later each night and, just as its illumination

broke through, the Japanese Kamikazes were there. These planes flew 350 miles from Japanese territory and the Kamikazes were not fueled to return, so their mission was to crash into a Navy ship. One such Kamikaze smashed into the U.S.S. O'Neill a destroyer es-cort, anchored 100 yards or so from us. We pulled alongside, helped fight the flares, gave up our Pharmacist Mate to help the wounded onboard and took aboard several of their wounded for treatment. The Quartermaster and I treated all of the badly injured shipmates we boarded. We only had First Aid knowledge, but we used that and plus some."

"George, one night a would-be Kamikaze almost flew into us. As he was turning, we put a whole can of 20MM shells into his plane. He crashed and was killed. Shortly afterward we painted a Japanese flag on our conning tower symbolizing a downed plane. It was a great thrill shooting down this plane."

"On one late afternoon, while anchored near a destroyer, suddenly we saw two Japanese planes, ground hugging to avoid radar, popped over a hill. They headed straight for the des-

troyer near us. The destroyers guns fired several 5 inch shells and both Japanese planes were quickly destroyed. In this brief battle, another shipmate and I got hit by shrapnel from the shell bursts. Our Pharmacist Mate treated our wounds."

"I was really impressed once again by the sharp shooting of the 5 inch anti-aircraft gunners during this attack. I had also previously witnessed similar accuracy in the destruction of several other diving Kamikazes. It wasn't until 10 years later that as an FBI Agent I learned from another FBI Agent the 5 inch shells which brought down so many Japanese planes had a radio tube in the nose of the shell and, as the shell and the plane passed, the vibrations of the plane's engine set off the anti-aircraft shell, causing the destructive burst. Ironically, the FBI had learned that executed Atomic Bomb spies Julius and Ethel Rosenberg had also given this highly classified data to the Soviets."

Thirty-three years later, while I was reviewing some old material, I came across my copy of LCI(R) 706's Ship Log, which reported my wounding. I then wrote to the Navy Department, which verified my claim of being wounded. Soon thereafter, I received a Purple Heart.

Because of being very busy during war time, a lot of such deeds go by the boards. Our Pharmacist Mate was also the Ship's Yeoman and ship's storekeeper."

"Finally George, our ship got a reprieve and our ship was sent to Leyte Gulf in the Philippines. Here, we got some liberty. At one particular time each watch, one third of the crew, got to go ashore to a compound, like a school yard. Each of us was issued two cans of beer for this momentous outing. After the Captain afforded his signature to the chit, it was returned to the typewriter and "10 men" was re-typed to "40 men" so we got 80 cans of beer issued. All participants got drunk as "looney birds."

"Years later I learned from Joe GAIL our Officer aboard who became our last Captain of LCI(R) 706, that while in the Philippines, we were scheduled to get new rocket launchers and armored life jackets in anticipation of a later invasion of Japan.

George, I probably never mentioned it before, but Joe Gall and I later met in FBI Training School in Washington, D.C. in 1951 and extended our WWII friendship to date. Actually, each year up until a couple of years ago, we met when he and his wife vacationed in South

Florida."

"On the night of August 10, 1945, all hell broke loose in Leyte Gulf and from the noise, George, I thought we were having another air raid. We quickly learned all the excitement was over talk of the end of the war.

"About a month after the Japanese surrendered, Floatilla 16 was underway to Okinawa. Fivedays later we encountered a terrible Typhoon which would have sunk us if Jim Edwards, the Executive Officer, hadn't taken over the Con. His seamanship saved all of us. The waves looked like huge hill-sides. Some of the ships in our group had to abandon ship within the harbor at Okinawa after being driven aground. We, too, got into the harbor. It didn't seem right that, after surviving all the air raids, that we would end up drowning later in the harbor. Fortunately, good seamanship prevailed throughout the night and we endured."

"On September 25th we proceeded to Taku, China. Arriving there on September 29th, we took on a large group of the First Marine Division. The mission was to effect the surrender of the Japanese and establish order in North China. We proceeded up the Hai Ho (Peking River) and unloaded our Marine Troops at Tangku, China. During the trip up the Peldng

River, hordes of Chinese lined the river banks and cheered us for freeing them from their former Japanese aggressors. Before leaving this area, we boarded several former British prisoners of war who were trapped in Sinapore when it fell several years before. Some of General James Doolittle's flyers, shot down during their B-25 raids on Japan at the early stage of this war, were at the same prison camp. They were flown out. Our group was transported to large ships outside of Taku."

"George, now we returned to fun and games again. We enjoyed liberty in Taku and later in Chinwangtoa, China; however, in the latter town, fun and games came to an end a few days later. Our ship was ordered to join the U.S.S. Minneapolis and proceed to Shalutien Bank and recover a valuable dredge stolen by the Chinese Communist Army. It was left half submerged at Shalutien Bank, China. This mission required we replace all of our guns, previously stored, as we feared a possible attack by the Chinese Communist Army. We had air cover from the USS Minneapolis planes, so fortunately our mission was accomplished without incident."

"George, in mid-December, 1945, we began our voyage to the U.S. travelling some 37 days to get back

via Guam, Saipan, Pearl Harbor and on to San Francisco. It was like a luxury cruise coming home. Our lights burned brightly. Our hatch doors were opened and our radio blared. After finally arriving at San Francisco, we began to decommission our ship and prepare it for mothballing. Only about four of the original crew remained until LCI(R) 706 was officially decommissioned on April 15, 1946. Then we all headed for a 30 day leave and to a Navy installation to be discharged. My greatest birthday present of my life came on May 30, 1946 when I became 21 years old. It was on that date, coincidentally, I was discharged from the U.S. Navy."

"Come on George, I'm tired of talking. Let's get something to eat".

THE END

EDITORS NOTE!!

In reference to the proximity fuse on page 12 middle column the reference was that a tube was in the nose and received noise vibrations from the plane engines and this set it off. While I was a Gunnery Instructor stationed at Dam Neck, Virginia we tested the new proximity fuses day and night. They in fact had vaccum tubes in the nose and when it was fired a radio set in the nose would send out a signal, if by chance the projectile passed within

100 feet of an object, the signal would bounce back to the projectile and it would explode. I would guess that this is one of the reason several LCI's were hit by shrapnel as a Destroyer was following a plane down and firing close to the surface. This is one of the reason the navy ships were able to knock down so many Jap planes. I remember that this was a hush, hush, top secret wepon.

OPERATIONS IN NORTH AFRICAN WATERS

History US Naval operations
WWII Vol II

The assembly lines in the United States were already turning out LSTs, LCTS, LCIS, and the smaller ramped landing craft, in vast quantities.

Landing ships and craft were given Number One priority over destroyer escorts, aircraft carriers, and everything else in May 1942 when the next big operation was expected to be a cross-channel invasion of France. All available shipbuilding resources were turned to building them. Contracts were let in every section of the country, and the fine accomplishments of newly created "cornfield" shipyards was a revelation to long established shipbuilders on the East and West Coasts.

The first standardized United States Navy LSTs were floated out of a building dock at Newport News, Virginia, in October 1942. Such high priority had been assigned to them that the keel of an aircraft carrier, already laid in the dock, was hastily yanked out to make room for several tank ships to be built in her place. These diesel twin-screw vessels measured 328 feet in length by 50-foot beam and were capable of transporting a deadweight load of 2100 tons. The apparently irreconcilable demands of sufficient draft for seaworthiness on the high seas and low draft for coming up on a beach were achieved by employing the principle of diving tanks, as on a submarine. The loaded seagoing draft of an LST was 8 feet forward and 14 feet 4 inches aft. After blowing ballast on landing this was reduced to 3 feet 1 inch forward and 9 feet aft. If the beach gradient was right (and that was the catch), the LST could be beached close enough to shore to discharge tanks or vehicles by her bow ramp into shoal water. Another characteristic of the LST was its ability to transport as part of the deckload a fully found Landing Craft Tank (LCT), "next smaller tank carrier in the family of seagoing landing vessels"

The Navy in the Tunisian Campaign

The United States Navy LCT was not designed for ocean crossing, but it was a substantial triple-screw vessel about 120 feet long, capable of carrying either four 40-ton tanks, three 50-ton tanks, or 150 tons of cargo. It had a cruising radius of almost a thousand miles at 10 knots. The LCT could be transported to the theater of operations in three watertight sections to be assembled and welded on arrival at an Allied controlled port; but the normal method of getting it across was on the deck of an LST. Powerful cranes loaded it aboard, where it was secured on top of a system of rollers. When the LST reached her destination she was given sufficient list by manipulating ballast tanks so that the LCT launched itself over the side without any other assistance. In transporting them across the Atlantic it was not uncommon for the LST's deck-loaded LCT to have one or two smaller personnel landing craft stowed aboard, like Chi-nese nested boxes.

The first LCTS, completed in October 1942 before any LSTs were available, crossed the ocean on freighters that reached the Mediterranean in January 1943- One of them, deckloaded on the Liberty ship *Arthur Middleton*, was lost when that freighter exploded off Cape Falcon near Oran."

The third type of large landing ship-initially developed was the diesel powered Landing Craft Infantry, Large designed LCI or LCI(L). It's dimensions were: length, 158 1/2 feet; beam, 23 feet; draft 5 feet aft; to which a full load of 205 men and 32 tons cargo (in addition to crew and stores) would add 8 inches. Although lacking sufficient quarters and mess facilities to take care of this number of troops for more than 48 hours, the LCI was a seaworthy twin-screw vessel with cruising radius of 8,000 miles at 12 knots. Not designed to carry vehicles, she had a sharp bow without landing ramp. On hitting the beach, troops were disembarked by means of gangways hinged to fixed platforms on the bows, something like the "brows" of ancient triremes.

In May 1942 the joint Chiefs of Staff directed that a substantial fleet of LST, LCT, and LCI as well as smaller landing craft be completed in time to take part in the cross-channel invasion of France then scheduled for February 1943. Although that operation was postponed in favor of "Torch," landing ships and craft fortunately did not lose top priority in construction. They were badly needed, both in the Mediterranean and in the United Kingdom, and the sooner they came out, the earlier we could begin

training sailors to operate them and soldiers to use them.

In order to train crews to handle these hitherto untried types of vessel, as well as the smaller boats, Landing Craft Group AFAF was commissioned at Norfolk and placed under the command of Captain William P. O. Clarke of Admiral Hewitt's staff. He wrestled with the problem of training officers and men to handle vessels of radical design that existed only on paper so successfully that crews were ready to man the landing ships when they were delivered in the fall of 1942.

These big additions to the family of beaching ships made it possible to revive an ancient technique in landing operations, the shore-to-shore. Operations such as those that WC have described in Morocco and Algeria were known as "ship-to-shore assaults." Seagoing attack transports were escorted to pre-assigned release positions a few miles off the invasion coast, and lay to or anchored. Personnel landing craft were then swung out, lowered and moored alongside the mother ship, while troops crawled down into them by means of cargo nets slung over the side - guns and light tanks being lowered into other -waiting craft by the ship's booms. We have seen how precarious the ship-to-shore method was, especially at night, or in rough weather. Engines stalled and boats

drifted off in the darkness, blocks on the ships' davits jammed, and tackle fouled. Although ship-to-shore methods could not be abandoned for long ocean passages, or even for short ones that required a very large number of troops, the shore-to-shore method based on the use of the LCI, LST and LCT proved to be a most valuable revival. In shore-to-shore technique the landing ships load troops, vehicles, and supplies at a port of embarkation and steam directly to the target area, where they beach themselves as planned, and the troops and vehicles walk, roll, or splash directly ashore. This was the most ancient method of amphibious warfare as practised by ancient Greeks, by Norse Vikings, and by pirates generally. It was first employed Royal Navy in the attack on Pantelleria on 11 June 1942, and by the United States Seventh Fleet in the Pacific for the landing on the Trobriand Islands on 30 June. By that time Admiral Hewitt's staff had worked out a doctrine for shore-to-shore that was brilliantly vindicated in the landing of the 3rd Infantry Division at Licata in Sicily on 10 July 1943.

"Spitkit" Convoys'

As new landing ships were delivered to the Navy by East Coast builders they were manned and organized into flotillas at the amphibious training bases at Little Creek, Virginia, or Solomons Island, Maryland. Those built on fresh water were sent down the Mississippi and organized at New Orleans or other Gulf ports."

The first landing ship group to be commissioned in the United States Navy, "LCI Flotilla One," was organized at Little Creek in mid-December 1942, and had its designation changed to Flotilla on 1 January 1943. This was also the first group of United States Landing Craft Infantry to steam across the Atlantic.

Operations in North African " Waters

foretaste of what was to come. The flotilla kept good station through the day, but after dark the weather worsened and there blew up a heavy snowstorm from the NE which later turned into sleet. This was followed by dense fog which shut in so quickly that radio silence had to be broken to advise the fleet to reduce to two-thirds

speed. Commander Sabin was not sanguine in expecting his order to be followed, for his report Sabin wrote of the voyage contains the succinct statement: "I was fairly certain that only a few ships would get the message, especially because by this time about 80 per cent of the officers and men were seasick." And each little ship had a total complement of only 24.

When the fog lifted next morning, only eight of the LCIs were in sight from the flagship. The escort vessels were dispatched to round up stragglers, and after a five-hour delay the convoy was reformed. It had been under way for only half an hour when another heavy snowstorm set in, the wind increased to seventy knots, and the sea made up accordingly. Commander reported that on board his flagship the topside was untenable except in the pilothouse and on the conning station, but he described the ships as tough and sturdy, and warmly praised the spirit and resourcefulness of their crews, who twelve months ago had been "lawyers, accountants, advertising men, grocery clerks, soda jerkers and garage mechanics. Not so now. They're sailormen. They stick to it." The battered convoy stood into St. George's Bay, Bermuda.

Training Group, was located at Te'n'es. Commander J. H. Leppert took over the Western Bases and Training Group with headquarters at Beni Saf.

One member of the second lot of landing craft to cross the Atlantic," LCT-33, lost no time in distinguishing itself to Arzeu, she was attacked by a German JU-88, whose contempt for the little target caused its destruction. As the German bomber came in for a second run to rectify a near miss on the first, the LCT gunners found their mark and the Junker crashed in flames against a near-by mountain. The skipper, Ensign Jesse A. Anderson USNR, and his gunners received the warm congratulations of Admiral Hewitt."

other ships. This was a bad month in the North Atlantic for submarine attacks, but on 2 March 1943 the convoy arrived safely at Gibraltar without even having had a sound contact. The six United States LSTs and half of the LCI Flotilla were routed to Arzeu; the remaining LCIs proceeded to Mostaganem where they entered on a sustained training period in conjunction with the 3rd Infantry Division United States Army.

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By 26 May when the fifth landing ship convoy' arrived in the England. Admiral Conolly now had a sizable fleet of landing ships distributed among various harbors, Training Group, was located at Te'n'es. Commander J. H. Leppert took over the Western Bases

NEWSLETTER DELAY

Please excuse my delay in getting this newsletter out to you in a timely manner.

Shortly after we returned from the Cherry Hill reunion, my wife Fran went to the hospital for low white corpuscle count. This is caused by her kemo treatments. Then two more trips to the hospital after the first trip. Fran told the doctor that she had it and refused any further treatments, No more X-rays or tests of any kind.

At the present time Fran is in a nursing home. She insists that I couldn't handle her at home as it would drag my health down.

If any of you wish to send a card or letter to Fran, the address is as follows, **Fran Kirsch, Mariner Health Care, 194 Swinderman Road, Wexford, PA 15090.** Put your LCI number on the card so as Fran can relate.

I have been staying with her constantly so this doesn't leave much time for my other things. I have been staying up to 2AM working on the newsletter and getting up at 8AM to do other chores.

Dear Bob,

Remember me? I missed the reunion in St. Louis, and I am also going to miss the reunion in New Jersey due to a very bad back that may need surgery

I hope this finds you and Fran feeling better and able to cope with the housework and the cooking. I hope the Chemotherapy is helping Fran.

I have never read, in any of our newsletters, anything about LCI(L) Flotilla 15. We were attached to

the 7th fleet, 7th Amphibious Force which consisted of 36 ships, all LCI (L)'s and we participated in **eleven landings.** Our Commander was Captain Deutermann, and LCI(L) 972 was the flag ship. We also ferried Chinese troops from Ning Po and Foo Chow China to Formosa for the occupation. I only hope someone in our flotilla has kept records, because I didn't, much to my sorrow. **(Anyone out there that can help Tom remember his flotilla?)**

I realize that you are probably inundated with articles that people want to be included in your newsletters, and I realize that you have to make choices. Like I said before, You be the judge.

Thanking you in advance for your attention to this matter. I must add that our newsletters are getting better and better with each issue.

Thanks again: Tom Griffiths, 534 Newton Rd, Scranton, PA 18504.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

I have received numerous letters asking why I don't print storied about their ship or flotilla. The truth of the matter is that maybe I never received any stories about your ship or maybe they were in a format that says Feb 1 we were here and Feb 3 we went there and so on. This makes for very dull and poor reading except for those of you that sailed on that particular ship.

If you want instant press, send me a good story on one of the ships foul ups, such as the one titled "A BRIDGE TO NEAR" in this issue. These are cute stories and make for interesting reading. BOY if it's typed even more instant release.

When typing a story, **DON'T DOUBLE SPACE the story.** I scan the story into my computer and I can make changes, but double space makes for a lot of extra work. Also **don't capitalize all of the words** as I can't change the words back. A story with all capital letters make it hard to read. If you don't have a typewriter or a computer, don't despair, I accept hand written letters, but if you can print your story in block letters, fine. If you write in long hand, maybe I can read it and maybe I can't make out the words. Often this is very time consuming.

HATS & TOTE BAGS FOR SALE

I just received a new shipment of hat's and tote bags. We depleted the supply at the last reunion.

Hats come in **round con or square con style.** The hat is of a fine quality blue winter type baseball hat. Every thing displayed on the hat is of a fine embroidery. The ship is displayed in the middle of the hat and is in silver thread, square con ship or round con ship. In gold thread is **USS LCI NATIONAL ASSOCIATION** across the front. Now for the cost: \$10 will get this fine hat delivered to your door step. Now don't go away, Also some thing for the **CHIEF of the HOUSE:** we have a ladies TOTE BAG and on the front, it states in gold lettering **"USS LCI NATIONAL ASSOCIATION" "FIRST MATE"** (thats the Chief of the house). Also a side view of a round con LCI, We, square con guys got hooked. This fine tote bag can be your's for a fin, **(\$5) including postage.**

Send order to {me} Bob Kirsch.

**643 Callery Road
Evans City, PA 16033.**

Oh yes, I take phone orders also. Please make the check payable to the **USS LCI ASSOCIATION** and mark on the check as to what you ordered. By the way I don't except Visa or Master card.

BRITISH HUMOR!!!

I sent a letter to Jim Ellis, who lives in Pinchbeck, Spaldig, UK and unbeknowns to me he, had expired and went to the big LCI in the sky.

The humor of the mail man who checked off one of responses to why the letter wasn't delivered. It's a multiple choice slip. His choice was to check off "**GONE AWAY**"

Good Choice, but his other choice could have been just plain "**DECEASED**"

One thing we do know is that Jim isn't coming back.

BOOK FOR SALE

The Author and former Marine has published "**HOLD THE LINE**" it is about a raid by the 1st Marine Parachute Battalion and company M/3rd Marine Raider Battalion at Koiari, Bougainville on 29 Nov 1943.

This 162 page, spairal bound, 8 1/2" X 11 1/2" book details this little known but brutal day long battle, in which one in every six men was a casualty. It has sixty photos, three maps, two color plates of insignia, lists of medals and more. It Covers support provided by gunboats LCI(G) 21 and 23 plus has an LCI photo and illustrations and mentions LCI 328, 332 and 336.

Send \$24.00 to Ken Haney, 205

"B" Street, Jackson, TN 38304. Also has six USMC books and a Paratrooper video for sale.

1997 REUNION VIDEO FOR SALE

Bill Brinkley video taped most of the activities at the Cherry Hill reunion. You can get a copy for **\$12 including postage**. My copy of the reunion video is some what out of focus. First I thought my eyes were going bad, I went for my computer glasses but still out of focus. I did some adjustments on my recorder but I couldn't improve the image. My next thought was to try it on another recorder, so off I go to my daughter's house to try again, but still out of focus. I'm a bull head and wouldn't give up so off to my brother's home and tried it on his VCR but still no improvement. Possibly Bill's copying machine is out of wack. But all in all, you can relive the Memorial Service and take in the banquet and some of the dance band Music. Contact: **William Brinkley, PO BOX 247, Granet Quarry, NC 28072 or call him at (704) 279-2191**. Bill also has several other tapes on LCI tranning film, action in the Pacific and action in Europe. Give bill a call to see if they are still available and the price.

LCT & LCI SEA STORY

From the desk of David Jenett 2819 S. Canfield Ave, Los Angles, CA 90034.

On September 15, 1944 our LCT 824 was launched from the deck of the LST 559 for the invasion in the Western Caroline of the Palan Islands, mainly Peleliu and Angour

At our first beaching which was Angour, we were told not to drop our anchor when we hit the beach as the area was mined. The waves were coming in at an angle and sure enough our stern swung to the starboard and as the tide went out, we were high and dry.

The fighting was higher up on the beach and since we were lower the bullets were passing about 10 feet above us. The japs tried mortars and hit an American mortar shell dump about about 100 feet up the beach. The explosion sent me flying across the deck. Later that day an LCVP ran the bow anchor cable of a LCI to us and try to tow us off of the beach. The cable laid slack in the LCVP and also at a slight angle. When the LCI backed down the cable caught the poor seaman of the LCVP under his chin and as he grabbed the cable with his hands it picked him out of the boat and flipped him completely back over the LCVP. He made about two back flips and wound up in the water.

I'm ashamed to say that even with wounded on the beach, shooting and dead bodies in the water, I laughed and then applauded him when he swam back to his small boat. My next LCI adventure was to be escorted to an Island called Pula Anna.

The Island was about 300 feet round and situated about 250 miles south of Peleliu where 36 men manned a radio tower sending a signal to help triangulate the B24's back to Peleliu. Every month 12 men with a refrigeration trailer of food would relieve 12 men from the island.

After a thirty hour trip, early in the

morning the LCI showed us the small island with a radio tower and we would head towards it, about 200 feet from the beach, a group of small people with large helmets came down to the beach. I heard a scream "SH-T" they're Japs. I remember throwing the three clutches in reverse without throttling back the engines, we were doing about 1000 RPM's at the time.

This Island also had a tower but it was bent and since we hit the island straight on, we couldn't see the bent radio tower from our angle of sight.

When we found the right island, the army asked if we were trying to invade the Jap held Island.

The Army said they had some sort of an agreement, we don't shoot and they don't shoot. The Army officer gave us hell, We told him that this was our first run and put the blame on the LCI. Of course, I don't know the LCI number.

I have other LCI bits of more serious nature. I would like to hear from **LCI** and **LCT** crewmembers who spent some time at the Palau Islands. I was there for 17 months.

LCI(L) 26 & LCI(L) 689

First of all I want to congratulate you on your effort in producing a very fine newsletter. I have enjoyed every issue of the Elsie Item Newsletters.

Having had the opportunity to sail on (2) Two LCI's from the US to the Pacific Area, I would like to relate some of my experiences while on board these LCI's.

I reported on board LCI(L) 26 8 December 1942 at the Philadelphia Navy Yard. We had

to sail her to the Boston Navy Yard to have the top half of the conning tower put on. (Square) While taking her to Boston, we made our first landing. The ice on the river was so thick that our bow went up on top of the ice and wouldn't break. So we stopped there. We had to send for help from the Coast Guard. After about 6 hours a Coast Guard ice cutter arrived and we followed them into the Boston Navy Yard, needless to say, the uniform of the day was all of the clothes we could get on from our sea bag. The only heat on board was in the engine room and the galley.

After the conning tower was installed we were then transferred to Solomon Island, MD. To complete our training. This was known as "The battle of Chesapeake Bay".

On 5 Feb 1943 we left Solomons MD, and started our journey to the Pacific Area, by going south on the Atlantic Ocean to the Panama Canal, through the locks to the Pacific Ocean and on to Bora Bora then to Australia, then to New Guinea. While serving on board, we were part of a Task Group, landing troops in the occupation of Woodlark Islands. On the 29th of June to the 4th of July 1943. We were also involved in the Amphibious Operation, 12 miles east of lea, new Guinea on the 4th of September to the 6th of September 1943.

We also participated in landings at Cape Gloucester, New Britian, 26 Dec. 1943, and at Saido, New Guinea on 2 Jan. 1944.

We were ordered back to Carins, Australia where the LCI(L) 26 was converted to a Rocket Ship in Feb

1944.

On the 17th of March 1944 I was transferred to Solomons, Maryland I reported for duty aboard the LCI(L) 689 in Boston. Navy Yard. We were commissioned on 29 May 1944 and returned to Solomon Island for our shake down cruise. We traveled the same route the Pacific as the 26. About three days out of Panama, our starboard screw siezed up and we couldn't keep up with the rest of the Flotilla in convoy and were ordered to Bora Bora on our own.

Our crusing speed on one screw was about 4 to 6 knots when the convoy left us alone as they steamed over the horizon, I think that this is one of the most memerable and scaring situations of my Navy tour.

The Chief Electrician and I were the only two aboard who had been overseas.

It took us a total of 31 days to get from Panama to Bora Bora. By this time I had been promoted to BM 2/c (T) and my navigating abilities were not as good as I would like to have been. I was asked to take star and sun sightings, so that we could compare our latitude and longitude readings. By the time that we arrived at Bora Bora every one on the ship was an old "salt".

While aboard the 689, we participated in the inital assult landing at Parang, Mindinao, Philippine Islands.

Milton J. Curcio, 160 Blain Ave., Racine, WI 53406

**NEED A LCI PICTURE?
PRESIDENT BOB WEISSER HAS
OVER 300 LCI PICTURES**

His address is on page 21

**NEWSLETTER #21
IN MEMORIAM
DECEASED LCI CREW MEMBERS**

***KILLED IN ACTION (KIA AFTER NAME)**

##US ARMY (KIA) aboard LCI 32

#COMMANDING OFFICER

@LIFE MEMBER

BOBBITT, Heber B.	FLT23	BARKER, Earl W.	21
##RHOADS, Billy C. <u>KIA</u>	32	ADKINS, Dr Jack	320
GREEN, Rene	407	*SHIELDS, Arthur V. <u>KIA</u>	415
McKENNA, Frank	442	BRIGHTFUL, Joseph F.	454
CASSIDY, John V.	454	CAMPEN, Glendon B.	454
GOLDEN, Clarence	454	McGEE, Willie A.	454
PERKINS, Paul V.	454	POLISCHOK, Sam	481
COLE, Richard	561	BOYLE, Raymond L.	590/351
BRUNER, Peter M.	658	CLARK, William H.	662
STEWART, Dr Robert L.	709	STROTHER, Dr. George E.	753
HURDLE, Nat F.	764	RAMOS, Leo	764
QUERBES, Andrew	764	MORANO, Nickolas	764
PERUSSINA, R.E.	764	LINNS, J.E.	764
PHELPS, W.N.	764	McGLOIN, F.E.	764
CALHOON, William	764	ABERNATHY, R.H.	764
WILLIAMSON, J.	764	BUCCI, Robert L.	948
ROSENBERG, Maxwell	948	HARVEY, Charles J.	948
#LAWTON, William C.	976	TAKATCH, Frank	1076

MEMORIAL SERVICE: Each year the USS LCI NATIONAL ASSOCIATION holds a memorial service during the reunion. We pay honor to dues paying members who have passed away since our 1997 reunion. Part of the service is to announce their name and rate/rank and ship number.

DO YOU NEED HELP???

CONTACT ANY ONE OF THE FOLLOWING OFFICERS

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

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LIFE MEMBERS Continued from Newsletter #20

A LIFE MEMBERSHIP IS AVAILABLE FOR \$100 DOLLARS

KNICKREHM, Robert W. flot 27	URNEZIS, Richard A.	18/570
MAILMAN, George A.	STICKEL, Robert J.	399
LEBOVITZ, Manual	HUGHES, Dr David W.	456/1098
HAELLEN, John A.	KENDALL, John H.	537
ATHY, H. James	BEEKMAN, Walter	739
EGBERT, Robert L.	OLSON, Le Roy A.	966
SULLIVAN, Eugene J.		

NEXT NEWSLETTER, SEPTEMBER

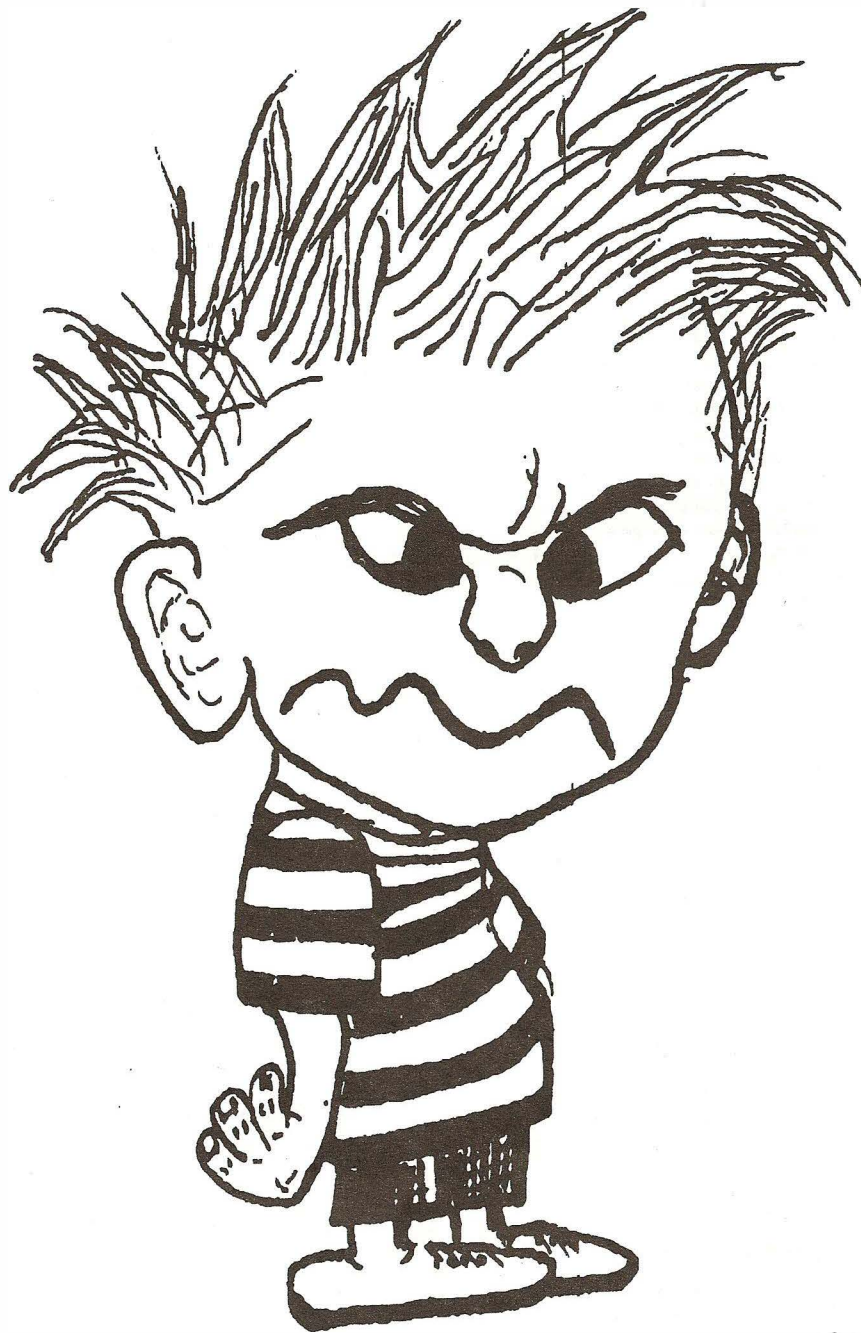
1997

SUN BIRDS FLYING SOUTH,

GET YOUR

**WINTER ADDRESS TO WALT KOPACZ,
155 MAIN ST., PORT MONMOUTH, NJ 07758
PH (908) 495-0672**





GOD PUT ME ON EARTH
TO ACCOMPLISH A
CERTAIN NUMBER OF THINGS.
RIGHT NOW I'M
SO FAR BEHIND,
I'LL NEVER DIE!

YOUR EDITOR AFTER A WILD DAY

JOIN 230,000 OF YOUR SHIPMATES IN THE NAVY MEMORIAL LOG



★ The Navy Memorial Log is a permanent register of naval service men and women—the only publicly accessible evidence of your service, proudly preserved in a national memorial.

★ Entries are displayed on video screens in the Log Room of the U.S. Navy Memorial Naval Heritage Center in Washington. Log entry will include name, branch of service, rate or rank, dates of service and date and place of birth. The Navy Memorial Log already holds the names of 230,000 naval personnel.

★ A tax-deductible \$25 donation is requested for each Logenrollment. A color or B&W photo may be added to the Log at any time for an additional contribution of \$25.

★ Anyone who has served in the Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, reserve components or Merchant Marine is eligible for inclusion in the Navy Memorial Log.

★ Fill out this form, mail with \$25 check to: U.S. Navy Memorial Log, P.O. Box 96570, Washington, DC 20077-7685.

JOHN F. KENNEDY		GEORGE HOSKCO	
	Service Branch: USN Rank/Rate: LT Service Dates: 10/1941 to 03/1945 Born: BROOKLINE, MA 05/29/17		Service Branch: USN Rank/Rate: RM1 Service Dates: 08/1941 to 05/1952 Born: ONEIDA, PA 02/22/22
Photo:		Photo: NTS GREAT LAKES, IL 1941	

NAVY MEMORIAL LOG ENROLLMENT

Name: _____

Address: _____
(Leave blank if deceased)

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Rank/Rate: _____ Corps/Specialty: _____

Birthplace: _____ Date of Birth: ____/____/____
Month Day Year

Photograph Enclosed: Date _____ Location: _____

Sponsor Name: _____
(If different from Log Entrant named above) First Middle Last Suffix

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Branch: (Circle one)

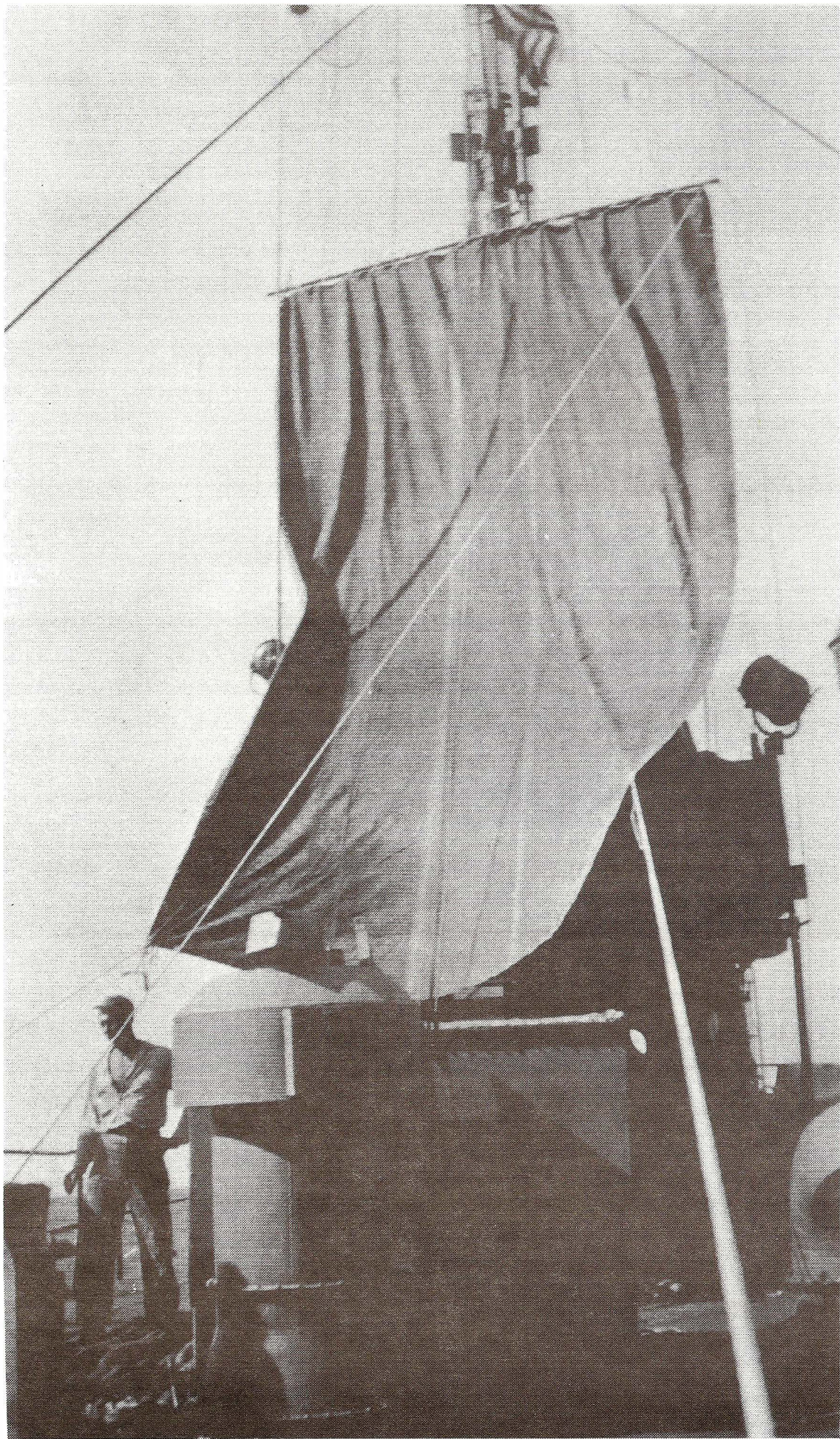
USN USNR

USMC USCG USMM

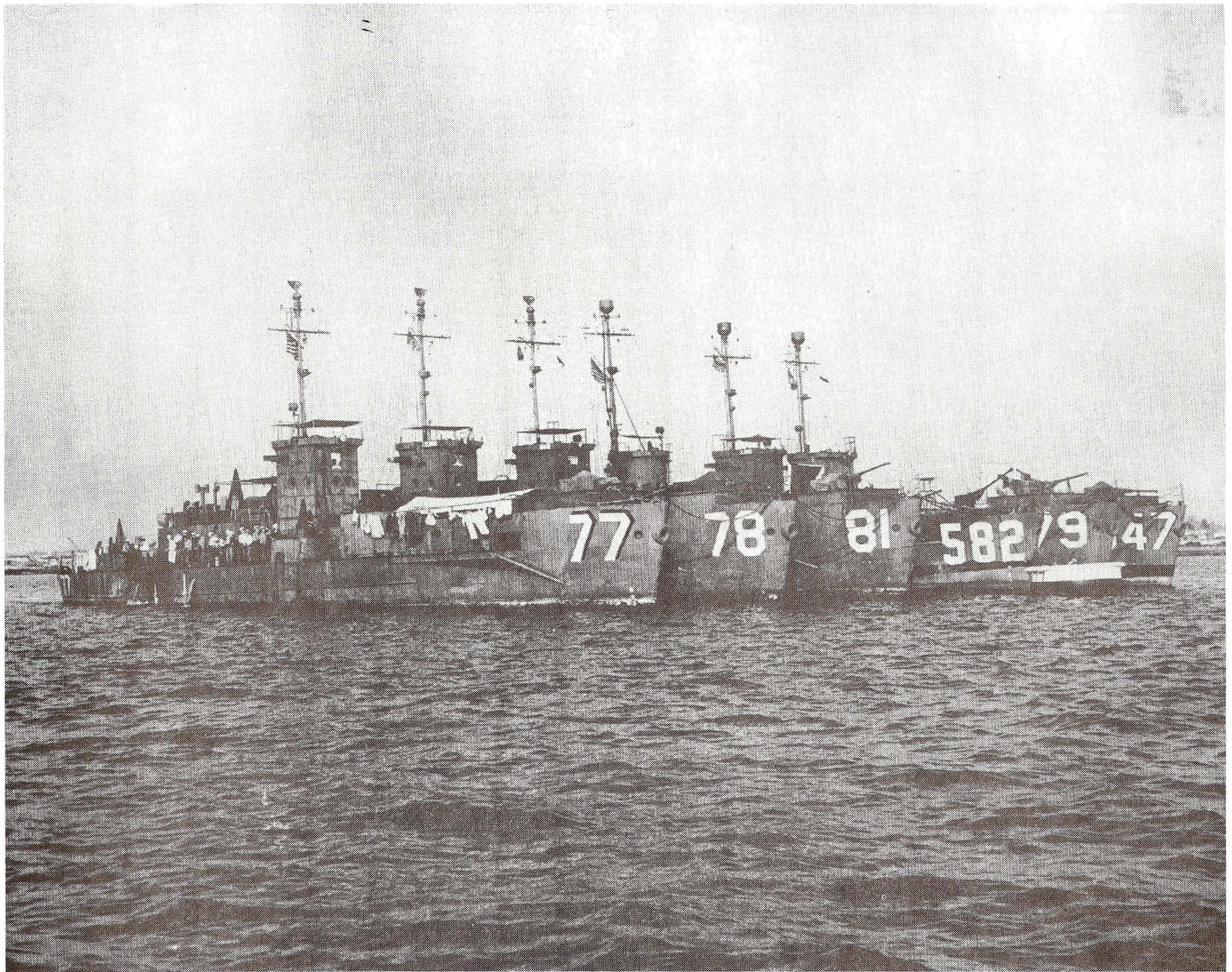
Service Dates:

From: ____/____/____
Month/Year

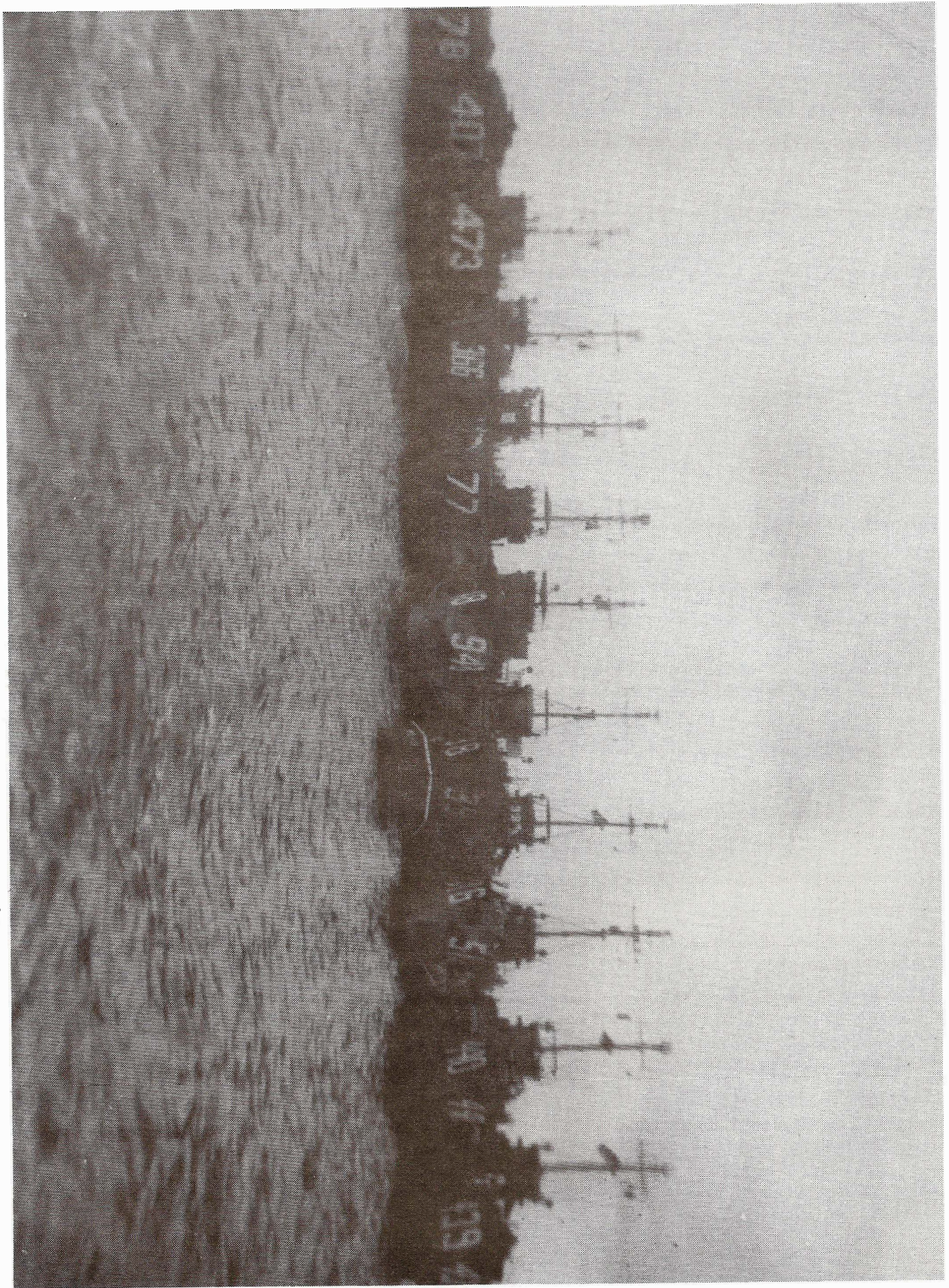
To: ____/____/____
Month/Year



LCI(G)726 Using a SAIL to Return to the States faster. PAGE24



LCI(G) 77,78,81,582,79 and 347. San Diego, CA. Oct. 17, 1945 PAGE 25



Pearl Harbor July, 1945



LCI(G)s 78,81,582,79 and 347. San Diego, CA Oct. 17, 1945. PAGE 27



USS LCI (L) 26

USS LCI NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, INC.

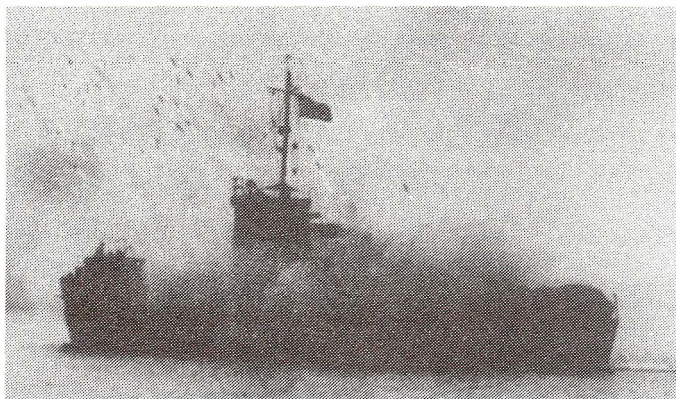
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