



“The Elsie Item”

**Official Newsletter of the
USS LANDING CRAFT, INFANTRY, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, INC.**

September, 2001

Newsletter #38



A Bunch of Old Salts Talk Business at Reno!

LCIers take time out from seeing the sights and telling Sea Stories to do a little business
(See stories and more photos inside)

Photo by Edward F. Carson

"THE ELSIE ITEM"

Number 38

September 2001

Official Newsletter of the USS LCI National Association, a non-profit veterans organization. Membership in the USS LCI National Association is open to any U. S. Navy or U. S. Coast Guard veteran who served aboard a Landing Craft Infantry. Associate Membership, without voting privileges, may be offered to others upon approval of the Board of Directors. See Page 31 for a list of all officers and directors.

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John P. Cummer, Editor

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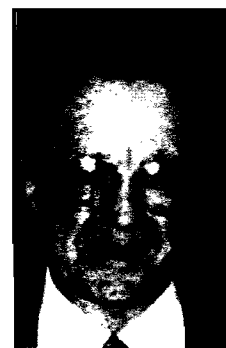
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From Jim Talbert's Desk:

Well, another Reunion is history and in most part everyone seemed to have a great time and are looking forward to next year in San Antonio.

The trips were great and, of course, the gambling was everywhere. You couldn't go anyplace out of the Hotel without going through the Casino. I guess they built it this way on purpose so that, when you were going out, you might stop and throw in a couple of bucks. Some of us were lucky and some weren't. Myself, I won a little and lost more!



You know, shipmates, I hate to have to bring this up but we can no longer carry on business as usual. We must get your cooperation with paying your dues, or we will have to give it all up. Some of you have not paid your dues since 1998 and are still getting *The Elsie Item*. This we must stop. PLEASE, if you have not paid your dues, PLEASE do so at once. I know some of you just forget and let it slide by. We can no longer afford to let this happen. These things cost us over a dollar each to have printed and mailed.

We also know that some of you do not pay your dues but still show up at the Reunions. This, too, will have to stop. If you are not interested enough to help us keep the Association going by paying your dues, then you can no longer expect the ones that do pay to support you. After this year, if your dues have not been paid, then I must ask Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. to refund your money and application for San Antonio and you will not be welcome at the Reunion. If you can afford to go to the Reunions, then \$10 a year for dues isn't all that much. I'm really sorry if this sounds hard nose, but I know I have the majority of the paid membership behind me.

I hope before this goes to press I have something more pleasant to write about!

Again, I want to thank you for your vote of confidence in me by electing my as your President. I will try to uphold in every way the high standard that Bob Weisser has set for this office. I know I can't replace him but will try to carry on for him. Bob is now Chairman of the Board and he will be around to guide me.

As you know, we need all the members we can get, so if you know someone out there who was on an LCI, talk to them about us and tell them all about our Association. There are still a lot of our shipmates out there who have never heard of our Association. If you need any of the last two Elsie Item newsletters to share with a prospective member, or if you just want them for yourself, I still have a few left that I can send you.

May the sun hit you in the face every morning with a resounding "BOOM"! Bless you all my friends.

Jim Talbert



Tired of Flag Desecration?

Flag Amendment: Senate Joint Resolution 7 has 51 co-sponsors. House Joint Resolution 36 has 250 co-sponsors. These resolutions would give Congress the authorization to prohibit physical desecration of the U. S. Flag.

The House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution approved House Joint Resolution 36 by a vote of 5-3 on May 24, 2001, and sent the Constitutional Amendment to the full Judiciary Committee for their considerations. The full House Judiciary Committee voted 15-11 on June 20, 2001, and sent the bill to the full House for consideration. The House and the Senate must pass this resolution with a two-thirds vote each. (House is 291 and Senate is 67). If the two-thirds vote occurs, the resolution is then sent to all 50 states and three-fourths (38) of the state legislatures must approve to become an amendment to the U. S. Constitution.

Let your Senators and Congressmen know how you feel about this issue!

A Note from the Editor

Well, here we are again! The third issue of the Newsletter "under new management" and we're still feeling our way around, trying to see what works - enjoying the challenge and, at times, getting frustrated at our slow learning curve! I'm finding it a real delight to read the many submissions we've received, or which were in the files when we took over, but I'm really challenged by trying to decide what to use and what kind of balance to maintain. We want to cover all areas where we served - Normandy, the Med, the South Pacific, etc., and to include accounts that are as interesting as possible. If you're writing hasn't been used yet, please bear with us - we'll try to use all that we can.



I do want to stress one thing: Photos! They really make the story, but they must be of a quality sufficient to permit us to reproduce them. I had some great photos taken from old newspapers, but they just wouldn't work. I'm stretching it a bit on photos about the LCI Gunboats at Iwo Jima in this issue because they were so dramatic, but well, we'll see. And, too, pictures of yourself - as you were and as you are today, are great!

This issue we're beefing up to 32 pages and are using color for the covers and for the center-spread of pictures from Reno. There was a lot of material that needed to be included so the extra four pages seemed justified. I'm sure Jim and Tiny will yank my chain if this costs too much! All of us do believe, especially after hearing comments in Reno, that the newsletter is the lifeblood of our organization so we want it to be as attractive and entertaining to you as possible.

I'd love to hear from you with suggestions and/or comments. And I especially want to hear of more outstanding achievements you've achieved so that we can share them in our "Bravo Zulu" section.

Best wishes to all of you! We look forward to seeing some of you in Solomons in August, in New Orleans in December, and a lot more of you in San Antonio next April!

John Cummer

RENO REUNION BOOKS

Orders are being taken for the Memory Book from the Reno Reunion. The book will include photos from the events at the reunion and a directory of shipmates' addresses. They will be mailed to shipmates at the end of September 2001. The cost, of the book, is \$15.00. It's available while supplies last. To order please send a check payable to Memory Makers at 3233 Grand Ave., Box N-172, Chino Hills, CA 91709. Please call with any questions (909) 597-3349.

RENO REUNION A GREAT SUCCESS

Almost 600 members of the USS LCI National Association gathered at the Silver Legacy Resort and Casino June 4-8, 2001, for one of the most successful reunions held. Enjoying the renewal of friendships and retelling stories of life aboard LCIs was the great pleasure of the reunion, but the facilities, group tours and an outstanding banquet all added to the pleasure. (See Pages 16-17 for photos)

One hundred forty seven different ships were represented by at least one crew member. The strong bonds that have been kept alive by members of LCI(G) 455 showed once again as 19 crew members and 14 spouses showed up to carry away honors for the most attending from one ship. Other ships with significantly high numbers were the 336 with 9 crew members and 6 spouses; the 366 with 10 crew members and 4 spouses, and the 726 with 6 crew members and 6 spouses.

Scenic and enjoyable tours were taken to Carson City and Virginia City; Reno City; Lake Tahoe and the Ponderosa Ranch. Dinner and a visit to the Harrah Automobile museum and an entertaining evening at the "Carnival of Magic" show also drew accolades from those attending.

Once again, however, the hours of visiting, yarning, greeting old shipmates and listening and singing to Jack Crocker's music in the hospitality room seemed to be the great favorite. At least one member commented, after hearing John Cummer's rendition of "Bell Bottom Trousers" that, with a voice like that, he should have been a Bosn's Mate!

Scrapbooks, old pictures, and other memorabilia were much in evidence. Carl Chapple's beautiful model of an LCI drew much attention.

At the business meeting, Jim Talbert and John Cummer were elected President and Vice-President respectively and expressed their desire to serve the Association to the best of their abilities. Reports were heard from Treasurer "Tiny" Clarkson indicating that we are still in a stable financial situation.

After a presentation of options by Ted Day of Armed Forces Reunions, Inc., the Association voted to select Washington, D.C., as the site for the 2003 reunion.

On Thursday evening, prior to the banquet, members remembered their comrades who have passed away during the last year. The names of the 168 deceased were displayed and they were

remembered with the playing of "Taps" and a tribute from Chaplain David Cox.

All hands seemed to agree that the banquet was outstanding with an excellent meal and some of the greatest '40s swing music heard at any reunion provided. The dance floor was filled with couples proving they haven't forgotten all those great moves and dips!.

With fond memories and rolls of pictures, LCIers and their wives left for home on Friday morning already looking forward to next year's reunion in San Antonio. (Pictures on pages 16-17)

LCI ASSOCIATION MAKES GRANTS TO 713 AND 1091



Association Treasurer "Tiny" Clarkson visits with 1091 owner "Doc" Davis in Reno.

Upon recommendation of the Board of Directors, the membership voted, at the business meeting in Reno, to award grants of \$1,500 each to "Doc" Davis, Owner/Skipper of the 1091, and Walter James, owner of the 713, in recognition of their efforts to preserve the heritage of LCIs and of their outstanding support of the USS LCI National Association.

Readers have seen stories concerning the renovations underway on the 713 by Walt James in the last two issues of the newsletter and those who were in attendance at the San Diego reunion will never forget the sight of the 1091 steaming up and tying up for visitors to board. The saga of the voyage of the 1091 to San Diego is told elsewhere in this issue.

"Doc" Davis grew up in the northwest fishing industry and always yearned to be captain of his own vessel. After service in the Army during the Korean War and a successful career as a dentist, he achieved his dream when, after extensive investigation, he located and was able to purchase the 1091. Since then he has done extensive refurbishing, including different engines, and has used the vessel for fishing cruises and other recreational

uses. He has always welcomed all LCIers aboard his command and has been most generous in support of activities and gatherings of LCIers in the northwest.

Walt James' 713 is something of a different story. After years of sitting on the river bottom in Portland, Oregon, she was re-floated and a long and arduous process of restoration began. Her engines are gone, so she is no longer operable, but James' aim is to refurbish her in appearance so that she can be shown to the public and possibly even given space for permanent exhibit somewhere. The exterior appearance, with restoration of the gun tubs and extensive chipping and painting has resulted in an LCI that is immediately recognizable by vets visiting her. She is a bow door model as shown on the cover of Elsie Item #36.

BOB WEISSER PRESENTED WITH PLAQUE



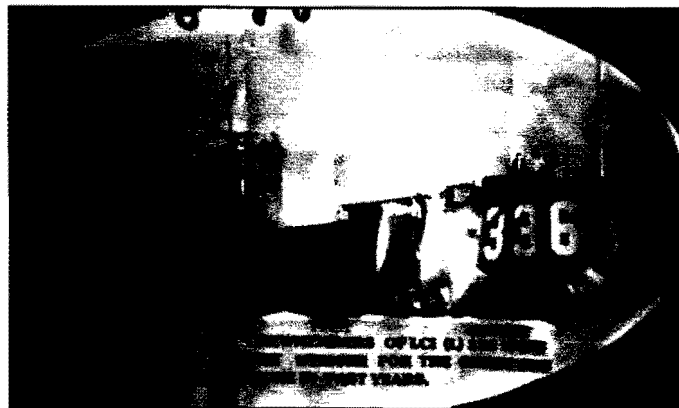
Association Secretary Bob McLain presents former President Bob Weisser with the plaque honoring him for his service to the Association.

Bob Weisser, who had to resign from the presidency of the USS LCI National Association for health reasons, was unable to make the Reno reunion, but Secretary Bob McLain took the plaque home with him and made the presentation in person. Bob expressed his gratitude to the Association for the honor and for the support offered to himself and his wife Shirley as they have battled with health problems.

Bob was not without recognition at the reunion itself. In addition to announcing the plaque award to the membership at the banquet, his name was often cited

by friends as they remembered his faithful service.

One LCI crew went out of their way to pay special tribute to Bob. The crew of the 336, known for their closeness through the years and for their fine newsletter, displayed this banner featuring their ship and honoring Bob.



The crew of the 336 Pays Tribute to Bob Weisser



The Amphibians Are Coming! by William L. McGee

A biographical history of the revolutionary World War II landing craft and the brave men who manned them. McGee's exhaustive research, hundreds of live interviews and a point-blank writing style combine to capture the very essence of amphib assignments in the WWII 'Gator Navy. One critic called the book "a must read!"

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SHIPMATES MEET AGAIN AFTER 55 YEARS



After 55 years George Doyle (left) and Jim McCarthy (right) meet at the Reno Reunion. George and Jim were engine room watch mates on the LCI 685 for the years of 1944 through 1946. Doyle is a retired police officer from Boston, now living in Pompano Beach, Florida. McCarthy, California State Director for the LCI National Association, is a retired safety engineer now living in Oceanside, California. Neither had changed much - at least that's what they told each other at the reunion!

COMING NATIONAL REUNIONS

National meets Next Year in San Antonio

LCIers look forward to meeting again next year April 17-21 at the Four Points Riverwalk Hotel in San Antonio Texas. Armed Forces Reunions, Inc., has begun the planning for this event which again promises to be outstanding. Ted Day, of Armed Forces Reunions, Inc., says that a visit to the Nimitz Museum in Fredricksburg, Texas., will be one of the highlights of our visit there.

Washington DC selected for 2003

As noted elsewhere, the membership voted at the business meeting in Reno to select Washington, D. C. as the site for the 2003 reunion. The reunion will be held April 24-28, 2003. The hotel will be the Double Tree Hotel in Crystal City, which is just across the river from downtown D.C. and is immediately adjacent to a subway station with links to all of the attractions. Events could include visits to many of the naval attractions in the area such as the Navy Yard Museum and the Navy Memorial. A trip to visit the Naval Academy at Annapolis is also a possibility.

LCIers RETURN TO NEW ORLEANS FOR OPENING OF THE PACIFIC WING, NATIONAL D-DAY MUSEUM

With memories of last year's great celebration of the opening of the National D-Day Museum in New Orleans still fresh, LCIers are responding enthusiastically to a return visit this December when the museum will open the wing dedicated to all of the Pacific Invasions.

The celebrations, scheduled for December 6-9, 2001, will include, in addition to the dedication of the Pacific wing, military parades with veterans of Pacific operations being honored as were veterans of the Normandy Invasion last year; port visits by naval vessels, re-enactments, symposiums with veterans, a USO dance and memorial services in St. Louis Cathedral.

LCIers will relive one of their most enjoyable times on Thursday evening, December 6th, when they gather at Michaud's Cajun Restaurant for a great meal and festivities. Cal Galliano will again serve as our local host and is making arrangements for this event.

Registration for these celebrations begins with a telephone call to get on the mailing list. Brochures and registration materials will be sent out to those registering. From the New Orleans area, the number to call to register is 504/410-0221. From anywhere else, the number to call is 1-800-273-4463.

Those planning to attend should also notify John Cumber who is serving again as events coordinator. He may be contacted by mail (20 W. Lucerne Circle, #615, Orlando, FL 32801), telephone (407/843-3675) or e-mail (cummjhn@aol.com). He will need to know how many will be coming with you, how many reservations you want for the dinner at Michauds, and whether or not you are a veteran of Pacific invasions.

The St. Charles Inn will again be our own hotel. A small, homey place located on historic St. Charles Avenue with the great old St. Charles Street Car passing right by the front door, it was found to be very convenient and comfortable last year. We were only able to reserve twenty rooms as another group was already booked and most of those rooms have already been taken, but a telephone call to the St. Charles Inn (1-800-489-9908) will let you know if any are still available. If none are available, they will make a recommendation to you for a nearby hotel.

FLORIDA LCIers TO MEET AT ORMOND BEACH

Florida LCIers will resume their state meetings, with a gathering slated for November 13-14, 2001 at the Surfside Resort, Ormond Beach, FL. LCIers visiting in Florida are most welcome to attend. An informal program of talk sessions, displays and a banquet are planned.

Ormond Beach is located just north of Daytona Beach, offering all the amenities without the crowding. It is easily reached from I-95. Exit 88 will take you east on Route 40 to A1A and a right turn there will take you to the Surfside Resort in approximately one mile.

LCIers desiring to attend should contact one of the two Florida Co-Directors for registration materials. They are:

Earl Minner	Harry Gatanis
33 Cypress in the Wood	280 Putnam Ave.
Daytona Beach, FL 32119	Ormond Beach, FL 32174
ermpemAol.com	904/673-4683

The Surfside Inn has recently undergone complete renovation. All rooms face the ocean with individual balconies.

Reservations for the Surfside Resort may be made by calling 1-800-227-7220. Be sure to ask for one of the rooms reserved for the LCI Association.

RETURN TO SOLOMONS - THE "CRADLE OF INVASION"

For many LCIers, the unthinkable is happening even as this issue of the newsletter is hitting the post office. They will be returning to Solomons, Maryland!

Remembered for its primitive conditions, isolation, lack of liberty and crowding, the site of the Amphibious Training Base, Solomons Island, Maryland, is now a beautiful resort area. Memories of its service as one of the most important amphibious training bases in the country will be invoked August 10-12, 2001, when the Calvert Marine Museum sponsors a celebration entitled "Cradle of Invasion 2001: The Return of the Ships.

With short notice, it was difficult to get the word out about this occasion except to those in attendance at the Reno

reunion, but it looks as though the USS LCI National Association will be well represented.

Full report of the festivities will be made in the next issue of "The Elsie Item". Events scheduled include a special dinner at Stoney's Seafood House of Broome's Island, parades and exhibits, re-enactments of amphibious landings, cruises into the surrounding waters so well known to those who trained there, and a USO dinner dance.

Plans are being made to present a replacement model to the Calvert Marine Museum during these celebrations.. The first LCI model presented by the USS LCI National Association was made there in October of 1994 but John Cummer, the builder, feels that significant improvement has been made in later models and has offered to donate an improved replacement.

There is a special reason for the visit to Stoney's Seafood House at Broome's Island. When there in 1994, "Tiny" Clarkson made navigating history by getting the party totally lost in the woods trying to find the place. It should be noted that measures are being taken to make sure that this classic journey into darkness is not repeated!

BRAVO ZULUS TO SHIPMATES!

"Bravo Zulu" - the traditional Navy signal hoisted to commend outstanding performance - is offered now to these LCIers for notable achievements.

"LUCKY" YOH DISTINGUISHES HIMSELF IN TENNIS

It's nice to know, when so many of us are only too familiar with canes and walkers that there are some of the old crews who are still out there making great moves. Carl "Lucky" Yoh, of LCI 524 and a resident of Chambersburg, Pa, recently reported an outstanding achievement as he sent in his annual dues to "Tiny" Clarkson. Carl wrote:

"Just finished the Pennsylvania Senior Olympics Yesterday. Got silver and bronze in both tennis singles and doubles in the 75-80 age group"

Carl modestly adds, "There's always one or two 'jokers' who are a little better than me, but it's fun and I'm thankful to be able to move around."

Congratulations, Carl! We'll make you the official LCI Association Tennis Representative. Anyone want to challenge him for the honors?

CLIFF EDGCUMBE DOES HIS CIVIC DUTY

Cliff Edgcumbe, of Newton Square, Pennsylvania, who served on the USS LCI(L) 681 received special recognition from the State of Pennsylvania for his voting record. He turned 21 shortly after his discharge from the U. S. Navy in 1946 and has voted in every election since then. Cliff was inducted into the Pennsylvania Voter Hall of Fame and received the following citation, signed by Tom Ridge, Governor of the State of Pennsylvania:

"For having voted consecutively at every November election for the last 50 years; for having demonstrated commitment to democracy, and for trusting and supporting the electoral process of this commonwealth and the United States of America"

Congratulations, Cliff - that's a great record!

COLLECTOR LOOKS FOR JAPANESE AIRCRAFT GAUGES AND PARTS

At Reno, the Editor was approached by a young man with a rather unusual - and interesting - request. He gave me his request in writing, so I pass it on to you:

"Top \$ for Japanese Aircraft Gauges /Parts

"I am a retired USAF Flight Test Engineer with a lifetime interest in aircraft. I am currently researching the technologies and manufacturing processes the Japanese appear to have copied from US aircraft instruments and controls. In order to complete a comprehensive study/report I need a variety of items.

"Most Japanese aircraft equipment is valuable and too unique for antique dealers to appraise accurately. Individual gauges (altimeter) in good condition are generally worth over \$150 each and others (clock) may be worth several hundred dollars each. I would very much appreciate an opportunity to make a credible cash offer on any items you may want to give up or get a value assessment on.

Please accept my appreciation for your success in protecting the USA and our freedoms, and thanks for the great stories I have heard at the USS LCI Association meeting in Reno. God Bless and give you good health.

Jim Underwood, Jr
355 Blue Spruce Road
Reno, Nevada 89511
Telephone (775)849-0326
junderwoodjr@earthlink.net

I told Jim I thought there was little likelihood of a bunch of old WWII sailors having Japanese aircraft instruments, but"

Flotilla 10, Group 29 Cited 57 Years Later

It took a bit of time, some politicking, the help of Congressman Phil Graham, and the persistence of LCler Elmer Carmichael of Crescent, Oklahoma, but the exploits of Flotilla 10, Group 29, Division 57 were finally recognized with the awarding of the Coast Guard Unit Commendation for their gallantry on D-Day, June 6, 1944.

The citation was presented at a Flotilla Ten reunion in Albuquerque, New Mexico, by Admiral Riker, of the U. S. Coast Guard..

Signed by Admiral James M. Loy, Commandant of the U. S. Coast Guard, the citation recalls the almost incredible heroism of the LCIs as they battered their way ashore on Omaha Beach. In particular the exploits and sacrifices of four LCIs was recognized. The citation reads in part:

"...Through out the invasion, 4 of the LCIs, Numbers 85, 91, 92 and 93 were lost while distinguishing themselves in the heat of battle. LCI- 85 was one of the first to ram its way through sunken obstacles and successfully clear a path to the beach before being hit by an 88mm shell that penetrated the hull and exploded in the forward troop compartment. After unloading troops to smaller landing craft, LCI-85 struck a mine and was simultaneously struck by 25 artillery shells. Listing badly, LCI-85 returned to CHASE and unloaded its wounded before it sank. LCI-91 and LCI-92 were both struck by German shells shortly after reaching the beach and both burst into flames. The crews fought the fires while unloading troops... Further down the beach LCI-93 successfully delivered its first load of troops, but grounded on a sandbar during their second delivery and took 10 direct artillery hits."

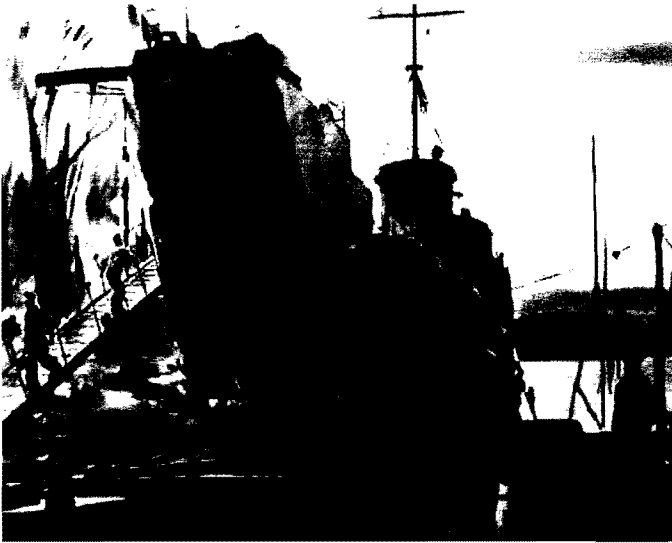
The citation also recognizes the services of other LCIs in the group, noting that over 400 injured allied personnel were rescued by them.

Our congratulations to the gallant men of Flotilla Ten!

Semper Paratus!

NAVY MUSEUM ARTISTS REMEMBER NORMANDY - AND THE LCIs

The Navy Historical Center, located at the Washington DC Navy Yard is currently displaying a collection of art dealing with the Normandy Invasion. These pictures, lifted from the website (www.history.navy.mil) are by watercolor artist Dwight C. Shepler who features LCIs in many of his paintings. These selected examples will bring back many memories to LCIers who were in the various English Channel ports - Dartmouth, Fowey, Plymouth, Weymouth, Southampton, etc.



"The Battered Amphibian - Dartmouth Amphibious Base"

LCI(L) 493, broached in attempting to rescue a sister ship, the 498, from the rocks during a practice operation, has her wounds dressed at the Waddleton shipway in the sequestered estuary of the Dart River. This painting has special significance to the editor as he was with the group of ships involved in this incident. His ship, the 502, was also broached but suffered no damage.



"The Coast Inhabitants Wondered"

Time and again during the months preceding the invasion, the weird craft of modern amphibious warfare stood out through ancient harbor mouths of Devon and Cornwall, laden with troops and tanks. Mariners, too old for the sea, and women and children always watched, wondering if this could be the day. Here an English family watches as LCIs put out to sea from Dartmouth, passing the historic castle at the river's mouth.



"When is 'D' Day?"

Off-duty sailors and an army sentry are shown on the bluff above Dartmouth Harbor discussing what was the principal question on the minds of Allied soldiers and sailors. Note the LCIs anchored in the harbor.



"Uneasy Peace - Fowey"

The tiny port of Fowey on the southeastern coast of England was frequently visited by LCIs. Here artist Dwight Shepler shows LCIs anchored in the river. In the foreground is the old church where the editor recalls attending Easter Sunday services in that spring of '44.

THE LCI GUNBOATS AT IWO JIMA: TWO ACCOUNTS OF ONE OF THE BLOODIEST AND BRAVEST TESTS OF THE LCIs

Two different accounts of the performance of the LCI(G)s at Iwo Jima came to the editor's attention at the same time. The events they recount are so intense and informative of the extraordinarily bravery of these vessels that it was felt they should both be printed together. With the opening of the Pacific Wing of the National D-Day Museum in New Orleans, attention is properly shifting to the exploits of the men who fought there in some of the bloodiest conflicts of the entire war.

With the mission of protecting the Underwater Demolition Teams as they went in before D-Day, as well as providing in-close fire support to marines as they landed, the LCI(G)s took heavy casualties and stayed to slug it out toe to toe with Japanese shore batteries. The first of these two accounts gives an overall picture of the operation as viewed from a flotilla flagship.

Iwo Jima as Viewed from LCI(FF) 995

submitted by
Warren Gillum, USS LCI(FF) 995
Jacksonville, Florida

The following remarks are excerpts from the War Diary of the flagship of ComLST Grp Eighteen during the month of February, 1945. A total of 70 ships operated under this command throughout the month.

On this "D" Day we were suddenly awakened from our light sleep, a sleep with all our clothing on, so we could spring immediately to our stations, and our "D" Day was officially on. It was up the ladder from the forward compartment of the LCI into the cold, dark atmosphere of a morning, much looked forward to but not particularly desirable. Sleep had been practically impossible, rather a form of dozing, with all hands ready to jump at a moment's notice.

On deck the atmosphere was electrifying, though damp and chilly. Visual distance, less than three feet, and we were to go alongside the destroyer to take off our Commander and several Staff Officers. Nosing the ship through the darkness and avoiding the other ships present was in itself a hazardous job, but to actually put the ship alongside another on the high seas was another thing. Our skipper was adept at such maneuvers since he had made two transfers on the high seas away from a staging port. At approximately 0445 we were alongside the destroyer with the seas tossing the LCI from ten feet below the destroyer's gunwales to five feet above. It would also shy away as far as ten feet and then slam back into the destroyer, shredding fenders as though they were strings. The transfer was effected without any injuries and there was a great feeling of relief when the two ships parted company.

The chill, cold grey dawn was upon us at 0620, and then to general quarters. There was not a sleepy head on hand. All were alert. At 0645, though Iwo Jima was not in sight, in the far distance the shelling of the beach and the flares gave one the impression of a huge Fourth of July display of fireworks. But it did not lend itself to celebration. There was a clammy calmness about all of us. The flares lit the area for miles around, with the possibility of enemy aircraft being around which led to apprehensions by all crewmen.

Soon we could hear as well as see the heavies, battleships and cruisers in the cold morning light. They were a welcome sight for they represented strength in capital letters. It could be seen that our LSTs were coming in fine formation, being equidistant apart, and plunging ahead with bones in their teeth. The little LCIs and LCSs were whipping to and fro doing their assigned tasks.

Soon all ships were in position near the line of departure. The bow doors of the LSTs opened and, as if with a vengeance, the tongue-like ramps of the LSTs protruded, and immediately thereafter the LVTs began crawling out, ready to go to the beach. Small boats appeared as if a magic wand had been waved; others had already been "reved" up before they hit the water from davits.

As one peered toward the island the beach being broached appeared to rise evenly inland and was roughly two miles in width. On the right flank it soon became impossible to land due to crags and rough beach areas. The left flank looked even more formidable with its inactive volcano, Suribachi, looming tall against the sky with more caves and crannies than one could count. Many of them contained well protected gun batteries which were near impossible to knock out with distant fire. Though the island had been blasted by intense gunfire and bombs for the past three and one half days, there was still heavy fire coming from that wicked looking mountain. That fire had to be suppressed or the upcoming landing would be in peril. The LCIs and LCSs moved toward shore to aid in suppression with tirades of rockets blasting forth. It was almost unbelievable to think that anything could withstand the fire and punishment dealt Suribachi that day.

The first wave of LVTs and successive waves of small landing boats, flying the American flag, set sail for the beach. As they left the line of departure, our dive bombers saturated the beach with devastating bombs. All colors of smoke issued from the sheets of flame created by the dropped explosives. As the planes cleared the beach the heavies resumed their shelling of inland targets. When the Marines in the LVTs and LCVPs first reached shore, intense bombardment continued all around them.

The Japs fought back. Shells landed all around our ships also, one landed approximately 75 feet off our starboard bow. Much too close for comfort. The fire to shore now became more direct and it was as though the ships were for the first time striking at targets directly under instruction from the beachhead.

For the rest of the morning hours the fire was intense and seemingly well directed. Tanks and armored vehicles started their purposeful climb up the slope. Flame throwing tanks went into action against pillboxes and other defense positions. Return fire from the beach was now directed primarily at our troops and it could readily be seen that the enemy was far from demoralized but rather that he was putting his all into the fight. Still shells were landing among the ships, occasionally coming too close for comfort. About 1430 it was announced that our forces were in the vicinity of Motoyama Airfield and the beachhead was fairly well established. So far the progress, though costly, had been good. The Navy had delivered the troops, had done the initial bombardment, and the Air Force and Infantry were to take the island.

D PLUS FOUR - IWO JIMA

At 1033 this morning a large American flag was placed on the top of Suribachi Mountain by a group of Marines, thus indicating the fall of Iwo Jima, or at least the part of it we held. In the afternoon a U. S. Navy Hospital Ship arrived; from our position it appeared in the foreground of Suribachi. The whiteness of the ship with its red cross was in stark contrast to the dark, foreboding mountain and reminded all of the price paid for that piece of real estate.

At 1925, while at general quarters during an air raid, a shell, estimated to have been 3 or 3.5 caliber, hit beneath our Number Two Gun Tub and penetrated the Commander's cabin (port side) in a corner and ended up in the Captain's bunk (whose cabin was just aft of the Commander's). In its trip through the cabin it came within three feet of the Commander who suffered superficial wounds as the shell entered the ship. Needless to say, the shell did not explode. It was, after 30 minutes or so, thrown over the side.

From History of U. S. Naval Operations WWII, Vol. XIV:

Though the copy of the following article received by the editor indicates that it was previously printed in the LCI Newsletter, a search of available copies did not reveal when that might have been. However, accompanied as it is with excerpts from the deck log of

LCI(G) 450, it is felt that it is well worth re-printing.

D-day minus 2, 17 February 1945

The attempt of LCI(G) flotilla to cover UDT reconnaissance provoked an unexpected reply from the enemy. The four UDTs were embarked in destroyer transports *Bull*, *Bates*, *Barr* and *Blessman*. Seven destroyers provided cover at the 3000-yard line where the APDs launched their LCP(R)s carrying the swimmers. As the landing craft headed for the 500-yard line, where the swimmers would make the plunge, they were followed by seven LCI Gunboats under Lt. Cmdr. Willard V. Nash, USNR, firing 20-mm and 40mm guns at the beaches and preparing to launch 4.5" rockets. Soon after these gunboats passed the 1500 yard line, mortar shells began falling among them; and a little later, as they were beginning to launch rockets, they came under intense fire from the flanks of the beaches. A heavy battery casement at the foot of Mount Suribachi joined in with the mortars, automatic weapons, and small arms, all aimed at the swimmers and LCI(G)s, but the heaviest fire came from a hitherto unrevealed battery in the high ground just north of the beaches.

As Admiral Rogers reported, "These batteries had remained concealed through over two months of softening preparation. Because of their peculiar nature they could be neutralized only by point-blank fire."

Around 1000 the seven LCI(G)s advancing in line abreast, began to take hits, but pressed on to support the swimmers until forced out by damage and casualties. Others dashed in to replace them, to be hit in turn, time after time. LCI(G)s 471, 438, 441 and several others, although hit several times, gallantly returned to the fray after retiring just long enough to extinguish their fires and plug holes in the hull. After closing destroyer *Capps*, LCI (G) 474 had to be abandoned and went down.



*LCI(G) 474 is sunk by gunfire from the destroyer *Capps* (Picture supplied by Bob Harker, Terre Haute, IN, who served as Engineering Officer aboard the 474).*

LCI(G) 409, after going in twice and sustaining 60 percent casualties, closed destroyer *Terror*, removed wounded, and took on board officers and men to help damage control. In all, 12 LCI(G)s took part and all were hit, but they stuck to it until the swimmers were recovered and clear. Their courage and persistence inspired everyone who watched these vessels. John P. Marquand, the novelist, who was gathering material on the battleship *Tennessee*, thus describes LCI(G) 466 coming alongside:



*The 474 takes heavy casualties at Iwo Jima
(Picture supplied by Bob Harker)*

"There was blood on the main deck, making widening pools as she rolled in the sluggish sea. A blanket covered a dead man on a gun platform. The decks were littered with the wounded. They were being strapped on wire stretchers and passed up to us over the side. The Commanding Officer was tall, bareheaded and blond and he looked very young. There was a call from our bridge, 'Can you proceed under your own power?'

'We can't proceed anywhere for three days', the CO said.

They had passed up the wounded, seventeen of them and then they passed up five stretchers with the dead".

Accompanying this excerpt from the official U. S. Naval Operations History, was a portion of the deck log of the USS LCI(G) 450, one of those gallant gunboats involved in the action at Iwo Jima. It serves as an impressive conclusion to this story of bravery unsurpassed by the men of the LCI Gunboats:

Deck Log of the USS LCI(G) 450, 17 February 1945

0000-0400 - Steaming as before, fifth in column astern of LCI 466, course 022 degrees

0400-0800 - Maneuvering at various speeds and various courses Iwo Jima, Kazan Retto. 0630 Reville

0800-1200

0920 General Quarters. **1030**-Commenced fire support run on beach area. **1050**-Commenced fire with 40mm and 20mm guns.

1055-Received two (2) hits in forward head, starboard side. Damage: holes five (5) foot and one (1) foot in diameter. Lost bow anchor, forward winch shattered with shrapnel, fire started.

Wounded: Tripp, G. E., GM2c, and Musselman, J. H., S2c. **1057**-

Two hits (2) in forward head portside. Holes three (3) and one (1) foot in diameter. Damage: destroyed all wiring and junction box; winch and engine total loss. Fairhead destroyed' forward

hatches received shrapnel holes one (1) and two (2) foot in diameter. Also in companionway; two (2) cracks, one (1) hole six (6) inches in diameter on port side of boatswain locker. **1100**-

Secured gunfire. **1102**- Fired Range rockets. **1103**-Fired rockets.

1105- Antenna destroyed **1106**-Began firing. **1107**-Received hit in Captain's cabin, hole three (3) foot in diameter. Damage:

shrapnel holes of various sizes all through mess and life lines; hole in blinker glass. Wounded: Coggins, R. N., S2c; Cognac, K. W., S1c; Kingsley, R. G., Ensign. **1110** - Received two (2)

hits in well deck setting off 20mm in ready box. 14 rocket launchers destroyed, first 3 banks rendered useless, Holes two (2) foot in diameter in bulkheads; 6 inch to one (1) foot holes in ramp

supports. Supply vent to forward magazine rendered inoperable. Schmidt, E. D. S1c, wounded. **1115** - Flooded forward

magazine to prevent fire from spreading. **1117**- Hit on portside, Captain's cabin. Hole four (4) foot diameter rendering 40 mm

useless. **1120** - Left beach at greatest possible speed. **1130** - Moored alongside APD-11 to transfer wounded. **1135** - Cast off

all lines.

1200-1600

1245 - Fire put out.

1300-Report of wounded: Coggins, R. C. S2c 641-82-89 USNR. Shrapnel wounds one 2 inches below left clavicle; complete avulsion of right hand outer aspect. Left elbow inner aspect cutting

brachial artery: serious. Musselman, J. H., S2c, 554-76-149 USNR. Shrapnel wound two (2) inches below right nipple chest, serious. Ens. R. G. Kingsley 394594 USNR, Shrapnel wound

over third left rib. Cognac, K. W. S1c, 943-12-619 USNR, Shrapnel wound between web third and fourth finger. Tripp, G.E., GM2c 886-43-169 USNR. Shrapnel wound left leg two (2) inches

above patella.

1315- Report on fire equipment: Eight (8) lengths of hose destroyed due to shrapnel; lost one (1) Handy Billy.

1600-2000

1945 - General Quarters. **2040** - Secured General Quarters

2000-2400

2100-Taps

W. A. Brady, Commanding

The Picture Gallery!

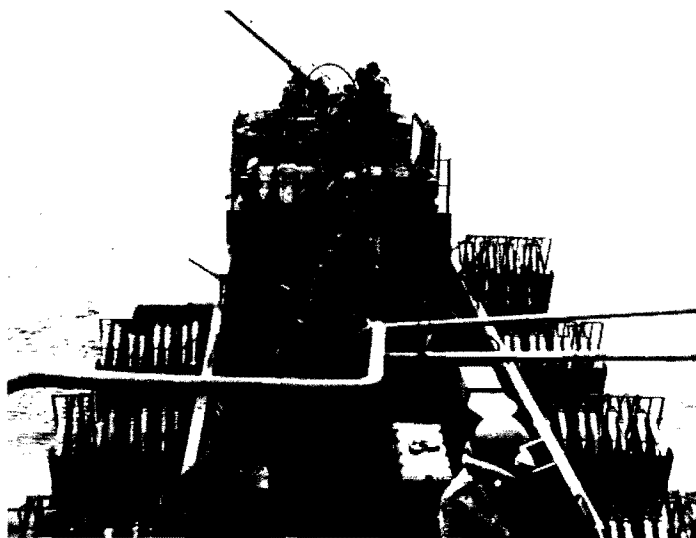
Here's where we put together interesting photos we've received that are not necessarily tied to any particular story. They're intended to bring back memories and, perhaps, inspire others to submit others that our members might enjoy.



This picture of the crew of USS LCI(L) 1026 was taken at her commissioning in Portland, Oregon, June 19, 1944.. It was submitted by Bob Norris of Santa Barbara, California, in response to the editor's plea at Reno for good photographs. Bob identifies himself as the "very youthful-looking Ensign at the far right. Bob would love to hear from other members of the crew of the 1026 and identifies them in this photo as follows: LEFT TO RIGHT SEATED: Jesse Henry, StM; Nat Ligouri, RM; Victor Smart, F; Ray Berry, S; Dan O'Herron, SM; Chas. Simmons, MoMM; FRONT ROW, STANDING, LEFT TO RIGHT ENS David C. Johnson, Eng. Officer; ENS Robert Hood, Exec.; Bernard Williams, S; James Blalock, S; John Boesch, Cox.; Harold Schmitz, MoMM; Hoyt Sanders, Cox.; James Carroll, BM; LTJG John B. Ferrar, CO; ENS Robert M. Norris, Comm.; REAR ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT Ray Ballard, SC; Clarence Post, PhM; Moncie W. Falls, SC; Herman Shoemake, S; James Bosson, S; Raeford Roosevelt Hockaday, SM; William Singley, MoMM; John Giarrusso, WM; Dan Herald, GM; Marvin Skaggs, MoMM; Joe Desveaux, EM.



You may or may not have looked this sharp; when you stood your in-port watches, but Jerry Adams of Midland, Michigan, certainly looked like a Navy recruiting poster when he had this picture taken aboard his ship, the USS LCI(L) 542 back in 1944.



Here's one you can use to explain to non-LCIers what the business end of a LCI(G) looked like! That's Connie Mulherin of Titusville, Florida, sitting in the trainer's seat of the forward 40mm and it's to him that we are indebted for the photo.

A VOYAGE OF THE 1091

By now Doc Davis' 1091 is pretty well known to the membership of the LCI National Association. In the spring of 1995 he and a crew of other old LCIers sailed her from Eureka, California to San Diego to show her off at the annual reunion of the LCI National Association. Every old LCler who boarded her there was thrilled just to be standing on the deck of an LCI again and to remember . . . and remember!

Wives were a bit different. Their most frequent comment was, "It's so small!"

The Association is eternally grateful for Doc Davis and his labor of love in restoring the 1091. Now, through the good work of Leon Fletcher, former communications officer of LCI(R) Group 20 and one of the old hands who helped sail the 1091 to San Diego, we have this interesting and informative account of this "Voyage of the 1091".

Leon begins by introducing his readers to LCIs, their design and the role in amphibious operations. He then describes the 1091 as she was when originally commissioned at Bay City, Michigan, on September 24, 1944, and what changes have been made in her. The crew is introduced one by one with pictures and short biographies of their LCI careers as well as what has occupied them for the rest of their lives.

With these preliminaries out of the way, Leon then launches into the day-to-day log of the 1091 as she made her way down the California coast. This was no difficult task for him because he was the official log keeper for the voyage itself!

The southbound leg of this voyage, which this log covers, began on Sunday, April 23, 1995. It concluded on Tuesday, April 25, 1995, as the 1091 nosed into the dock at San Diego at 1925 to be greeted by a large and enthusiastic crowd from the LCI reunion.

Following the log of the southbound voyage, Leon reprints several newspaper articles concerning the voyage

It's a great read and you may have your own copy by ordering one from our reprint service (see page 28).



USS GAMBIER BAY SURVIVOR THANKS LCI 337



USS Gambier Bay (CVE-73) is sunk off Samar during the invasion of the Philippines

Rescuing downed pilots might not be a regular event for LCIs, but there is one pilot who is very grateful that the USS LCI 337 did just that.

Buzz Buckner was a pilot on the USS Gambier Bay when she was sunk on October 25, 1944, in the battle off Samar during the invasion of the Philippines. **Buzz** was picked up by the 337 after his plane went down and he remains grateful to this day.

Almost 57 years later, rescuers and rescuee were reunited at our **Reno** reunion. **Buzz** was the guest of George Feliz and Norman St. Jermain, members of the crew of the 337.

During our business session, George and Norman introduced him and he was giving a hearty welcome. When he got to the mike, he made the day for all those old LCIers when he said,

"As far as I am concerned, the LCI is the most beautiful ship there is!"

Buzz stayed to be a guest of the surviving members of the LCI 337 at our banquet and the fellowship was great. Afterwards he shared the picture of the sinking of the Gambier Bay, shown above, with us.

We thank **Buzz** for thanking us! And we'll be pals with anyone who thinks an LCI is beautiful!

Navy Lingo - Explaining it to Landlubbers!

Norm Whyte, LCI 513, now living in Sterling Heights, Michigan came across the following column written by Blackie Sherrod of the Dallas Morning News. If you ever had trouble talking to a civilian, you'll understand!

"Take G.I. Jane with a Pinch of Old Salts"

"It has come to my attention that us old salts have been violated; and I intend to take major umbrage.

"There is a new movie that has aroused the hackles of the U. S. Navy which traditionally has more hackles than the normal government allotment. In this film, Miss Demi Moore plays the role of a Navy Lieutenant joining the SEALs, a rather perilous arm of the fleet.

"Admittedly, I am not qualified to judge this plot, not having personally witnessed any Navy Lieutenants with the particulars of Miss Demi Moore. However, I am qualified to join the Hue & Cry against those who would ignore Navy traditions.

"The Navy bristled over the idea that one of its minions would be referred to as 'G.I. Jane,' the name of the picture. Our admirals were so incensed at the nomenclature and improbable plot that the Navy refused to cooperate in the filming.

"As perhaps you know, 'G.I.' is a term associated with the Army, not the Navy. 'G.I.' is Army lingo for 'government issue' and is slang for the common soldier. To employ the term in connection with the Navy is indeed a *lapsus linguae*, as they say over there at the university place and maybe an insult if your nautical skin is thin. Mine is.

"The Navy has its personal language and is immensely jealous of same. No other service speaks in such traditional code. It is possible for a civilian to hold a 30-minute conversation with a sailor and not understand one sentence.

"The primary rule of Navy code is never to call a ship 'a boat.' A boat is carried on a ship, buster, and don't you forget it.

"The universe may measure speed in miles per hour, but the Navy uses 'knots.' One knot is the speed it takes your vessel to travel 2,025 yards, which is a nautical mile instead of the 1,760-yard mile recognized by everyone else, in an hour. The Navy scorns the normal clock; it goes by bells. One bell every half -hour, accumulatively. One o'clock: two bells.

"Further code: it's not a rope, it's a line. That's not a wall, it's a bulkhead. Even if you are quartered in a barracks on dry land, it is still a bulkhead. You walk on a deck, not a floor, and you clean same with a swab, not a mop. Above is the overhead, not the ceiling, and you walk down the passageway, not the hallway. You open a hatch, not a door, and you don't go up a stair, you climb the ladder.

"You don't go to the bathroom, sailor, you go to the 'head.' You sleep in your sack or bunk. You eat in a chow hall, where spinach is sea weed, ketchup is red lead, and other dishes have code designations that defy family newspapers.

"Ahead of you is forward, and to the rear is aft. Right is starboard, and left is port. You don't stop something, you belay it. If you want a cigarette, you wait for the loudspeaker message, 'The smoking lamp is lit.' You don't eat candy, you eat pogeey bait and/or geedunk (ice cream).

"A sailor does not go on vacation or furlough like other humanity, he goes 'on leave.' He keeps his shaving gear in a 'ditty bag' and next to his skin he wears skivvies, not underwear.

"A Navy ship doesn't get torpedoed by the enemy. It 'takes a fish.' If something needs a temporary repair you jury rig it. If you're ailing, you report to sick bay. Should your ship or your plane go down, you're in the drink. If you don't survive, you deep-sixed it.

"A battleship is a wagon, and the commanding officer is the old man. A tin can sailor serves on a destroyer. An airdale is on a flattop. If he is a member of a flight crew, he is a hooktail, and his plane is handled by a deck ape.

"Navy code is not kind to other services. Soldiers are dogfaces, Marines are bellhops, and Coast Guard are freshwaters.

"There was one attempt to sabotage tradition. Two decades ago, reformists tried to destroy the code. Official Navy bulletins decreed that, henceforth, the chow hall would be referred to as 'the enlisted dining facility' and that the brig would be out and the 'correctional facility' would be in. A ship would be an 'it' instead of a 'her.'

However, 15 years ago, Navy Secretary John Lehman junked the reform movement and reinstated the old code. This is what the movie makers violated, and they're lucky if they don't get themselves keelhaunched, and what that means, you don't even want to know!"

RENO REMEMBERED –

Sight Seeing



Jim Talbert checks out the sights in Virginia City



Frank and Rita France pay their respects to a local institution!

The Hospitality Room



(Above) Al "Wimpy" Rimby and John Cummer, Shipmates on LCI(L) 502 meet for the first time in 57 years



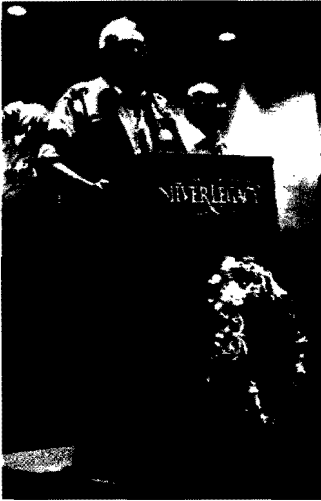
(Left) Herb Yantis handled himself well!

(Right) Jack Croker's music kept the hospitality room jumpin'!



- OLD FRIENDSHIPS RENEWED!

The Business Meeting



Tiny tell us that we still have a couple of bucks left in the treasury!



"Chick" Mason exhorts us to "round up missing crew members". Jack Croker and Doc Davis wait their turns at the mike.

The Banquet



**(Left)
The Colors are presented by a local Naval Junior ROTC Unit**

**(Right)
Newly-elected President Jim Talbert, Vice-President John Cummer and old-hand "Tiny" Clarkson clean up pretty well!**



**(Left)
Great swing music from the '40s drew many couples to the dance floor**

LCIs in China - 1945

As the war in the Pacific drew to a close, LCIs found themselves tapped for a multitude of duties. In November of 1945 The Shanghai Herald, a newspaper published in English, carried the account of the part USS LCI(L) played in capturing five Japanese ships on the Whangpo River. Robert Zudell, State Director for Ohio for our Association, sent a copy of the article to former editor Walter Kopaz. We share it with you now as another interesting LCI Story to be remembered. Regrettably, the quality of the newspaper picture of the 614 was of too poor quality to permit its being reproduced here.

From the *Shanghai Herald*, November 18, 1945:

The LCI(L) 614, a little jack-of-all trades landing craft now tied up to a Whangpoo River dock here has had so many unusual assignments the past 15 months that her story reads like a Jules Verne novel.

Assigned to Service Division 101, a part of the American Navy's famed Service Squadron Ten, the LCI(L) 614 was a unit in the naval group which prevented, early in September, the attempted retreat of five Japanese ships which were fleeing out of the Yangtze from capture by Chinese Government Forces. As a result of this action, the Chinese Navy has been increased by two more cargo ships, a large landing craft, a tugboat, and a gunboat.

Captained by Lieutenant William E. Hodges, Jr, this landing craft has been in and out of Shanghai several times since the war's end. One voyage was to Tsingtao, another to Fusan on the southern tip of Korea, while a third was to Jinsen, a main Korean seaport.

Foremost assignments for the "614" since the hostilities has been to operate with minesweepers and to lay buoys marking swept and safe channels. Being among the first to have entered several formerly Japanese-held ports, this landing craft is an old hand at edging through dangerous waters and past exploding mines.

Prior to the end of the war, her job was that of a troop-carrier and she participated in several amphibious operations in the Southwest and Central Pacific.

Working northward with the Allied forces as they drove the Niponese back to their homeland, the "614" started playing her role in the war at Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides Islands. Following this port of call, her log picked up stops at Manus in the Admiralties, Lae and Hollandia in new Guinea, Cape Gloucester in New Britain and Biak - all while carrying troops, supplies and mail.

Last February saw her join eight other vessels in escorting nearly 50 troop-laden landing craft to the invasion of Leyte in the Philippines. While there, she was on constant alert against enemy aircraft and was assigned to lay smoke-screens during daylight hours.

Early in March, after completing her Leyte assignment, the "614" was sent to Subic Bay, Luzon, and later participated in Allied landings at Legaspi, Polloc and Mindanao - all against enemy fire.

Standing by for further assignments by Service Division 101, the LCI(L) 614 claims she is "ready for anything for we've seen about everything."

Her quartermaster, John Henry Bettencourt explained: "We've hauled troops all over the Philippines, tracked down mines from Guam to Korea, prowled up and down rivers and chased Japanese tugboats - anything new would come just as an anti-climax."

The Nineteen Month Odyssey of LCI 644

by James H. Erngren, Alpena, Michigan
edited by Shelby Smith

Here is another of those accounts of the training and deployment of an LCI. You will find certain similarities in the other accounts, but you will also find those things unique to each.

The comments of Jim Erngren, who served as a Gunner's Mate aboard the 644, are interspersed with the account.

The LCI(L) 644 was built at the shipyards in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, and commissioned 18 July, 1944. She was decommissioned on 19 February 1946 at San Pedro, California.

After picking up supplies at the piers on the Hudson River in New York City, she sailed to Virginia for the customary beaching exercises in the area. Assigned to the Pacific Command, the 614 left for the west coast via the Panama Canal. When stopped for provisions in Key West, Florida, the crew observed their first water spout.

Upon arriving at the Submarine Base in Coca Solo, the ship underwent welding repairs to the hull. The crew was given liberty while there.

"A very rough town"

Once through the Canal, the ship proceeded without incident to San Diego, California.

"...shooting sharks as a pastime"

The crew was then schooled in fire fighting and gunnery at San Diego and San Pedro. After some work on the ship, she sailed to San Francisco.

In San Francisco, the LCI(L) became an LCI(R). A 40mm gun replaced the 20mm on the bow and rocket launchers were added. On 1 January 1945 the newly converted ship set sail for points west; first stop, Pearl Harbor. While in Hawaii the ship took part in various maneuvers off Oahu. By 2 February 1945, the 644 stopped at Eniwetok for provisions before moving on the Saipan in the Mariana Islands, arriving there on 10 February 1945.

The ship left Saipan on 15 February 1945, arriving at Iwo Jima in time for the D-Day invasion on 19 February. In the two hours prior to H-hour, LCI 644 fired 1,000 rockets. Later in the day she fired another 250 rockets. Once the foregoing was accomplished, the 644 was assigned to supplying ammunition, making smoke, and radar jamming.

From 26 February to 2 March, the 644 was en route to Saipan.

"I was transferred to USS Argonne for Malaria ... only a mild case. Transferred back after four days"

Thence, to Leyte, PI, making landfall on 9 March. The ship participated in maneuvers in the area from 14 March to 19 March.; then readied for a sea voyage to Okinawa beginning 26 March.

On 1 April 1945, the ship fired 500 rockets 30 minutes before H-hour, then served as ammunition ship for the rest of the day and made smoke during the evening hours. In the following days, the 644 was an ammunition supplier, patrolled for escaping small boats, and made smoke.

"General Quarters all night, weather is swell"

During that interval, until 8 May, the Communications Officer received a shrapnel wound in his leg and was transferred to a hospital ship.

"One of the Skippers in our Flotilla got burned when a smoke pot exploded, third degree burns on 40% of his body."

"Seen a movie, second since the states"

From 8 May through 29 May, the ship was dispatched to nearby Kerama Retto to assist the Army in "mopping up" on various

islands in the atoll. The atoll served as an anchorage for various cargo and Naval vessels, including ships which had been hit by Kamikaze planes. It also served as a seaplane landing area.

While supporting the Army, an Army Captain was aboard coordinating movements with other Army units. Eighteen Japanese surrendered to the crew during that time.

"We go back into the little channels and straff the hills. Fired 420 rounds on the 40 mil this morning. Japs on the island."

"Picked up some Army men and went in with two other LCIs and shot a hill that had Japs all over it. They were counter attacking with about 100 men. We fired every gun we had."

In support of various activities, some 1,200 rounds of 20mm and 420 rounds of 40mm ammunition were fired. On 30 May, the 644 sailed to the east side of Okinawa to relieve another LCI on "making smoke" station.

While patrolling on 2 June, the ship struck a reef and suffered three holes under the bow. The next day a kamikaze plane dove at the ship, but veered off to try to hit another nearby.

"...closest we ever came to getting hit ... sure is a funny feeling."

The kamikaze hit neither.

The 644 went into an LSD (Landing Ship, Dock) on the 12th and 13th to scrape the hull. A repeat visit was made on 25-26 June to repair the holes in the bow.

June 30, 1945 found the 644 in convoy with approximately 28 other LCIs headed for Leyte, PI, arriving there on the Fourth of July.

"See movies every night. Every other day ashore with two cans of beer on every Liberty."

The ship was off Leyte until 30 August, doing a great deal of scraping, painting and general "fixing up". The ship also paid a return call to another LSD for repair and painting of the hull.

In preparation for the invasion of Japan, she was given six .50 caliber and two .30 caliber machine guns. These, added to her one 40mm gun, four 20mm guns, and a 72 rocket capability made her a formidable weapon indeed. She had storage facilities for 1,000 rockets.

"Looks like the next push is going to be rough."

At 2100 on 10 August 1945, the crew of the 644 heard the news

that the Japanese were making peace overtures following the dropping of the atomic bombs.

"We had a big party and fireworks. It sure was good news"

The 644 was ordered to Japan.

"I always wanted to see Japan anyway."

En Route to Tokyo on 30 August 1945, in convoy with ten LCIs and a Destroyer Escort, the 644 had to take a circuitous route to avoid a typhoon. .

"September 2nd - VJ Day. We all had one can of beer. We are about half way to Tokyo."

"September 4th - Today all censorship of personal mail has stopped."

The convoy reached Tokyo Bay on 7 September. LCI(R) 644 remained in the Yokahama area until 18 October when, in company with two other LCIs, three LSTs, and an APD, they set sail for Guam to wait for orders to return to the United States..

An unexpected and most unwelcome delay came when the 644 backed into a reef.

"October 27th - NAVY Day, and the other ships left for the U. S.. We are waiting to go into Dry Dock for a new port screw. Don't know when we will leave now. That was a tough break."

With repairs finally completed, the 644 set sail for her final ocean crossing on 3 November 1945. With stops at Eniwetok and Pearl Harbor, she reached her final port, San Diego, on 8 December 1945.

At 0900 on 19 February 1946, the LCI(R) 644 was decommissioned at Pier 2, Naval Docks, Terminal Island, San Pedro, ending her nineteen months and one day of duty with the United States Navy.

And Jim concluded:

"That's the END of the FIGHTING LCI(R) 644)



HE WASN'T REALLY A BAD GUY!

This one may surprise you - a new perspective on "Old Blood and Guts"

Submitted by
Joseph Callery, SM1C
USS LCI(L) 237

After July 10, 1943, the Boss of Bosses in Sicily was Gen. George Patton and make no mistake about it; he knew if a mouse burped; if not, he wanted to know why he wasn't told about it.

Our story starts on October 27, 1943, when the USS LCI 237 struck a mine in the Bay of Taranto while on a British Commando Operation. We were in the company of three other LCIs. We were seriously disabled and needed immediate aid to remove the wounded and the living troops in that order. Finally, the LCI 192 removed most of our crew leaving eight people aboard as shipkeepers. In the morning we were taken in tow between two LCIs and taken to Catania, Sicily.

There was no one to report to in Catania, for we heard that our crew had been sent over land by truck. We tied up to a pier; then our sister ships sailed about their own business. The Chief Bos'n set up a fore and aft watch with rifles, as stealing from bodies and looting was the norm at that time. A week or so later, two American Navy Officers arrived in a jeep, began taking measurements and consulting blueprints. Days later the British Army came aboard to take His Majesty's possessions, which included arms and the bodies of the dead and other gear. This took a few days, but at last the LCI 237 was in American hands.

Again in limbo, we speculated about the ship's fate. Was she going to be scuttled, or just abandoned and stripped of her guns and munitions. Late one morning we received a blinker signal from the *USS Hopi* saying she was going to take us in tow after shoring up the number three bulkhead. We were towed through the Straits of Messina toward Palermo. This took about four days, stopping at night to avoid E-Boat attacks.

We were tied up to the quay on the inner harbor. Needless to say, the banged-up LCI created a small crowd, with eight happy sailors aboard. A short time later, a Dodge staff car flying three stars on a red field came down the road. It stopped and everyone stood at attention. We could not see the General from our angle, but a short while later, a full Colonel exited the car, came aboard, saluted and said he was in charge. The Colonel asked if the crew had "Thanksgiving Dinner". The Chief replied that we had forgotten what day it was and, no, we had not eaten yet. With a final salute, the Colonel told us to have the men ready for a 1600 pick up.

We were cleaned up and ready when the pick up came. It delivered us to a mess hall, specially opened just for us and were fed a "soup to nuts" turkey dinner!

It never made the newspapers, but a group of LCI sailors were very grateful to General George Patton on Thanksgiving Day, 1943.

LCI(G) 70 Earns a Presidential Unit Citation the Hard Way

Elsewhere in this issue, we have shared something of the bravery and gallantry of the LCI Gunboats at Iwo Jima. Time and again those tough little craft with firepower that put them in the class of true combatants carried the brunt of the fight to the enemy. When the idea of converting LCIs into gunboats first came into play there were some highly unusual configurations tried out utilizing whatever was on hand. One of the most unusual was mounting 3"50 guns on pedestals over the well deck of square conn LCIs, such as was done on the LCIs 68 and 70s.

Recently, Leo Janetis, who served on the LCI(G) 68, sent us a copy of the Presidential Unit Citation earned by the LCI(G) 70 on which his friend John Reulet served and we now share that with you.

The LCI(G) 70 participated in the Bougainville Landings from November 5 to November 10, 1943, and in the Lingayen Landings, January 5 to 9, 1945. It was in the Lingayen Landings that the 70 earned her Presidential Unit Citation. The story is told in the citation:

"For extraordinary heroism in action against enemy Japanese aircraft and shore batteries. Operating in contact with the enemy and under numerous attacks, the USS LCI(G) 70 performed her many varied duties in a courageous and efficient manner. The USS LCI(G) 70 particularly distinguished herself at Bougainville where, under repeated attacks by enemy bombing and torpedo planes, she shot down two planes and assisted in the destruction of two others and at Lingayen when crash-dived by a Kamikaze plane with great material damage and with one fourth of her personnel killed or injured, the USS LCI(G) 70 continued to provide close-in fire support to the Underwater Demolition Team operation and the initial landing, during which time she shot down three enemy planes. Her courageous determination and effort were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

Another courageous story of bravery under fire that we share proudly with you.

"Well Done, 70!"

Welcome Aboard, Shipmates!"

Hey, where have you been? We've been waiting for you!

Here are our shipmates who have joined since the last newsletter was published:

J. Keith Cooper, Lafayette, TX; served as MoMM2/c aboard LCI(M) 351

Charles E. Corriveau, Concord, NH; served as SM3/c aboard LCI(L) 589

Joseph A. DiStefano, Brooklyn, NY; served aboard LCI 237

W. Russell Hughes, Burlington, NC; served aboard LCI 950

William J. Marsoun, Moline, IL; served as MoMM2/C aboard LCI(L) 91

Anthony Mollingo, Washington, NY; served aboard LCI 530

John A. Postley, Los Angeles, CA; served as Ensign aboard LCI(M) 355

Anselmo (Sam) Siri, Brentwood, CA; served aboard LCI 16

Edward W. Spencer, Gettysburg, PA; served as MoMM1/c aboard LCI(L) 90

Jere E. Sullivan, Lexington, KY; served as Staff Sgt, U. S. Army, rode an LCI into Dog Beach, Omaha

Donald E. Tisch, Cuyahoga Falls, OH; served aboard LCI 604

THE PERSONAL WAR NOTES OF ADM L. S. SABIN; - A BATTLESHIP SAILOR ORGANIZES LCI FLOTILLA TWO

In June of 1942 a U. S. Navy Commander serving as Staff Gunnery Officer for Commander, Battleships, U. S. Pacific Fleet was ordered to report to Commander, Landing Craft, Atlantic Fleet for duty in Amphibious operations. Thus did Lorenzo S. Sabin become one of the very few battleship officers who ended up commanding a flotilla of Landing Craft, Infantry.

With the Battle of Midway behind him, Sabin reported to Norfolk, Virginia, for his new assignment. To our great benefit, this young regular Navy officer kept what he called "battle notes" throughout the time he organized and led LCI Flotilla Two through the North African in Sicilian invasions.

The 44 page document makes fascinating reading. This article will excerpt some interesting anecdotes from the account, but anyone desiring a copy of the entire document may order it through our reprint service. (See page 28)

As he opened his account, Sabin commented:

"I was one of a very few regular navy officers ordered for command duty in this force of very strange and totally unorthodox little ships who were later to write a new page of glorious history for the United States Navy in the invasions of enemy territory all over the world. Except for the very few regulars who were to command Flotillas of these ships, all other officers and the greater percentage of men were reserves who never before had seen deep blue water."

As the account continues it is obvious that Admiral Sabin (to give him the rank he was later to acquire) is obviously very proud of the accomplishments of the men and ships under his command. In these notes, he says:

"...in testimony to those magnificent young Americans whose initiative, imagination, character and courage more than offset their lack of experience as military men and their unfamiliarity with the sea."

From October through December of 1942, Sabin was busy with a multitude of organizational problems. He was ordered to organize and train the flotilla by Christmas of 1942, a seemingly impossible job with only 24 of the ships built and six more to come later.

Early in his notes, Sabin notes, with obvious irritation and questioning, receiving notice that his flotilla, originally designated Flotilla One, had been re-designated Flotilla Two.

Shuttling between Solomons Island, Maryland and Little Creek, Virginia, he noted that he had only one officer besides himself who had been to sea before. The ships he describes as:

"...in bad shape materially. The navigation equipment is crude. Calibration of magnetic compasses is hampered by inexperience and ignorance. Gyros are mercury cup affairs which are no good because the mercury spills out every time the ships put to sea"

As he fought a multitude of problems and the sailing was necessarily delayed until they could be addressed, he noted one difficulty concerning loading that was really giving him headaches:

"We are being loaded until we look like submarines. Just a few weeks ago I tried to work out some data from stability curves. I got some fantastic results. Enough to worry me. Asked for constructors from the yards to verify our load factor. They refused to commit themselves but said informally it didn't look good. Made a special trip to Washington and saw BuShips people who told me that under no circumstances to put more than 85 tons excess load in those little ships or we'd capsize in the first heavy sea. We were averaging about 105 tons."

Sabin returned to his command and put his skippers to work reducing their loads to a maximum of 85 tons.

Flotilla Two finally sailed from Norfolk on February 15, 1943. The weather was bitterly cold with the temperature standing at 10 degrees above zero with a biting wind. Some of Sabin's descriptions will bring back vivid memories to other LCIers who made that Atlantic crossing:

"Men are beginning to get sick; ships are making heavy weather. The bridge is open and it is almost impossible to stay up there for more than an hour without extreme discomfort. Have on woolen socks, flannel underwear, khaki heavy coveralls, arctics, face mask, woolen gloves (mittens), heavy weather leather gloves and sheepskin coat. Still cold. All stoves out in the ship. (I knew this was going to happen and begged BuShips to do something about it before we departed. They piddled around but did nothing effective."

Admiration for the LCI came through clear as Sabin commented: *"This ship, a little spit-kit 150 feet long and about twenty feet beam, is tough. Lays over on her side and cracks back like a ship. Rides up the crest of a wave and falls into the trough, shaking and quivering. No leaks as yet."*

Toughing it out through the Atlantic winter storms, the flotilla finally reached Bermuda on February 18, 1943, and had a period of respite and repair before tackling the rest of the crossing.

After a short time of social amenities, including paying calls on Viscount, Vice Admiral Curtis, R.N., Commanding the British Station, preparations got underway for sailing in convoy. At convoy conferences some senior officers expressed doubt and concern about whether or not LCIs could make it across the Atlantic. With some experience now to back up his optimism, Sabin notes:

"... (I) told them to stop worrying and let us do it for them - worrying I mean. We'll make it. These little spit-kits are tough - - and the personnel are tougher!"

Sabin's confidence was borne out. The LCIs performed well during the hectic, stormy twenty day crossing. Citing many difficulties and, in particular, troubles that other types of ship were having, he notes:

"I was proud of these kids in the LCI(L)s. Not one was behind to the extent that the convoy was turned around. Maybe they wouldn't have turned around for an LCI(L). But they didn't have to. Not one LCI(L) has given the convoy any trouble. The kids have repaired their breakdowns as they went along and have kept plugging".

On the 21st of February, the Convoy Commander asked Sabin if he would like to proceed on his own with the LCIs. Enthusiastically accepting, Flotilla Two left the seven knot convoy to strike out at twelve knots for Gibraltar. Sabin was very proud to receive a final message from the Convoy Commander:

"Safe passage of convoy largely due to handling of LCI(L)s and good judgement displayed"

On the 23rd of March, with Gibraltar in sight, Sabin, recognizing that his flotilla was the first flotilla of American landing craft to make the Atlantic crossing under their own power, decided to make his entrance in grand style:

"... I decided to give them a show. Formed the ships in column and told them to hoist at the gaff the biggest American Ensign they had. They looked good - and I was proud of them."

Full of pride in his "spit-kits", Sabin made his official call the next day on Admiral Lewis, Senior British Naval Officer in Command at Gibraltar. Lewis was full of questions about the LCIs and, after hearing Sabin's replies startled Sabin by saying:

"Quite frankly, we never expected you to make it with all your ships. It is an amazing accomplishment and one that speaks much for the adaptability of your people as seamen." And then he

shook his head slowly and said, half to himself, "And with all those inexperienced people!"

The proud American commander of Flotilla Two did get a bit of a comeuppance, when he asked the British Admiral what he thought of their entrance into port.

"A jolly good show," the Admiral replied, "but not so wise!"

I was a little taken aback and said, "Why, sir?" "Well," he replied, "I would have expected you to bring them in at least three or four abreast. But you had them in tandem thereby giving every spy in Algieras, Spain, a perfect count of your numbers!"

Perhaps somewhat hopeful, Sabin notes that the comment was made in good humor and with a touch of laughter.

Filled with similar detailed and well-recounted anecdotes, Sabin's notes make for most interesting reading. With frankness, candor, and a bit of humor he describes relationships with seniors as well as juniors. In addition to preparing Flotilla Two for action, he was given temporary additional duty as Commander Eastern Bases and Training Group. It took all of his administrative and leadership skills, as well as more than a little butt-kicking and relieving incompetent officers to get the bases functional and well-run.

Our modern day "political correctness" is entirely missing in his account of dealing with the native population and with the French. The Royal Navy does not escape his scorn as he relates an incident where incompetence on their part led to the sinking with casualties of a French submarine destined for important secret work.

Sabin's notes conclude with fascinating and detailed accounts of the invasion of Sicily. Perhaps one of his most moving and vivid description is that of LCI(L)1 at Sicily.

"Lieutenant (junior grade) Robinson, the skipper, came in through the darkness for his landing with nearly two hundred troops. A short distance from the beach an enemy shell exploded in the pilot house killing the engine-order telegraph man and seriously wounding his helmsman. As the dead man slumped over, he pushed the engine order telegraph to full speed ahead. The engine room, not knowing a dead man had given the order, responded. So with no rudder control and making full speed the ship hit into the beach. She swung broadside to, she lost both ramps, broached and sat cradled between two rocks. As she lay there helpless, she was subjected to a withering fire from machine gun nests, pill boxes and 88mms.

"Her forward 20mm guns were the only ones which could bear. They went into action. Bullets and fragments everywhere. For over an hour she fought. She knocked out two machine gun nests

and two pill boxes and so effectively did she cover the landing of her troops that less than twenty percent were killed or wounded.

"Some of the experiences were miraculous. The little radio room was peppered with holes. Yet the radioman, sitting frozen at his key was unharmed - except for shock. Bullets passed in front of him, in back of him, over him, beside him and under his legs. Not one touched him. The performance of the gun crews was equally inspiring as they kept up a steady fire under the pressure of bombs and strafing from the air and bullets from the beach. I have recommended the ship for a Presidential Unit Citation, an honor she richly deserves."

Action, fascinating anecdotes and touches of humor abound throughout Admiral Sabin's notes. After all of the action and his orders to move on had come, Admiral Sabin found an order from COMINCH that no personal notes or diaries would be kept. We can all be thankful that Sabin thought otherwise::

"I shall not destroy them because all the events herein are past and they could be of no value to the enemy if I should be killed and they fell into his hands. I shall keep them in the confidential locker with provisions for their destruction in case - -! But there will be no more personal notes. Whatever lies ahead of me in this war must remain in the official records only".

Admiral Sabin closes with one of the finest tributes ever paid to LCI sailors:

"Nothing would please me more than to continue with Flotilla TWO. They are a fine bunch of sturdy little fighting ships with an inspiring bunch of fighting American men. Big men in little ships. We don't have all of them we started out with. We knew we wouldn't when we started out - - Somebody has to get killed in a war. But our losses have been amazingly light percentage wise. One ship lost and not more than twenty out of a total of 30 ships with approximately 205 officers and about 800 men. I mean MEN!

"We've come a long way since the days of our organization back in Chesapeake Bay. The lawyers, the accountants, the soda jerkers, the bookies, the professors, the bankers, the clerks, the machinists, the laborers - all of them are sailor men now. I had to leave them and I hate it, but I have orders to other duty. We are fighting the war in other places, too"

Thank you, Admiral Sabin.

Seamanship 101!

One of the great things about going to reunions is hearing great stories, some of which might just be true! If you listen to enough of them at an old sailors reunion, especially if they were amphibious sailors, you begin to realize that all those episodes of the old "McHale's Navy" TV series weren't so far fetched after all. I picked this one up from my friend Urton Anderson and I'm sure you'll enjoy it, too:

It was up at Pier 42, New York, where so many of us went for outfitting before sailing down to Chesapeake Bay for shake down. You may recall that there were LCTs there, too. Well, seems there was this very youthful and totally inexperienced young Ensign trying to bring his LCT in to the dock. Standing on the pier was this wizened old Chief with gold hash marks up to his elbow watching the efforts. What he saw was a Seaman on the bow, holding the bight of a 4" mooring line, trying to lasso the bollard on the pier!

Finally the Chief yelled,

"Don't you have a heaving line?"

To which the Seaman replied,

"What's a heaving line?"

The old Chief, almost unable to believe his ears, shouted back,

"It's a light line with a knob on the end of it!"

And the Seaman replied,

"Just a minute and I'll find out"

He ran aft to the young Ensign commanding and asked,

"Sir, do we have a heaving line?"

The Ensign asked,

"What's a heaving line?"

And the Seaman explained,

"A light line with a knob in the end of it"

And the Ensign said,

"Oh yeah, we had one of those, but we cut the knob off it and used it to tie down our washing machine!"



The War Diary of LCI Flotilla One

As a companion piece for Admiral Sabin's highly personal and informative "War Notes" detailing his experiences in organizing and commanding LCI Flotilla Two, we are fortunate, through the good offices of LCler Ken Stern to have a copy of the official war diary of the "final" Flotilla One. As noted in the review of Admiral Sabin's "Notes" his Flotilla was originally designated as Flotilla One, but for some reason, and one decidedly not popular with ADM Sabin, that designation was taken away and his flotilla was re-designated Flotilla Two. [I would love to hear from anyone who has insight on why that designation changed!]

Ken Stern, who served as Skipper of USS LCI(G) 41, and a life-member of our Association, procured the War Diary of Flotilla One from the National Archives and made the document available to the editor and to share with others. His LCI was attached to Flotilla One so the account is especially meaningful to him, as it would be to any other sailor who was there.

The 83 page document details activity of the Flotilla from 28 February, 1943 when Commander John H. Leppert, USN, assumed command until 26 July 1945 when the staff was disbanded. There is a three to four page entry for each month the Flotilla was in commission.

Crossing the Atlantic

Two of the three groups in the Flotilla, plus 6 LCIs of Admiral Sabin's Flotilla Two who were not ready when he sailed in February, left Little Creek, Virginia, on 19 March 1943. The remaining group, under the command of a LT Gore, was to leave later in the month.

It was not a propitious start. Thick fog caused problems with LCI(L)s 39 and 233 colliding and another, LCI(L) 35, running aground. With those ships left behind, the convoy finally formed up and sailed for Bermuda.

After repairs in Bermuda, the Flotilla sailed from Bermuda on 27 March 1943. In contrast to the graphic description Admiral Sabin gave of a rough crossing, the war diary of Flotilla One laconically comments:

"The crossing was entirely uneventful . . . The formation in general was conducted intact. . . . Weather was in general good to excellent".

Passing through the Straits of Gibraltar on the night of April 11-12, the Flotilla was split up between the ports of Beni Saf, Tenes, and Cherchell. Commander Leppert found Commander Sabin waiting for him at Tenes where he was serving as Commander of Eastern Bases and Training Group. Leppert was subsequently

given temporary additional duty as Commander, Western Bases and Training Group.

In North Africa

The Flotilla entered immediately into training and preparation for the coming invasions. As the formation of Task Force 81 drew near, the LCIs were moved to more easterly ports. Upon formation of this Task Force, Flotilla One ceased to be an operational unit. Three divisions of LCIs were assigned to Task Force 81 as part of what was known as DIME ATTACK FORCE. The fourth division of Flotilla One was assigned to Task Force 85 as part of CENT ATTACK FORCE.

The DIME LCIs were designated as Task Group 80.6 and Commander Leppert was its Commander. The group moved to Algiers on 16 June 1943. Leppert took on additional responsibilities as Officer in Tactical Command (OTC) for this movement.

Sicily

The War Diary of Flotilla One details the extensive movement and training preparing for Operation BIGOT-HUSKY, the invasion of Sicily. A certain amount of caution seems to have governed some of the training. In describing one practice exercise, the diary notes:

"To prevent possible damage, LCI(L)s did not beach".

While detailing the movements toward Sicily, including the loss of the tug Redwing to a mine, the diary gives no detail on the landings themselves, noting:

"The period from D-4 (July 6) until D+5 is covered in Appendix III, CX.T.G. 81.4 report of Operations BIGOT-HUSKY."

Following the Sicily landings, the LCIs of Flotilla One were occupied with a variety of duties including escort duty, troop movements and general repair and maintenance.

The first part of August of 1943 found the Flotilla engaged in escorting and carrying troops to Gela, Licata and Palermo in Sicily. Then after further training, repairing, drydocking and stripping ship in preparation for future operations, they were engaged in rehearsal operations for Operation BIGOT AVA-LANCHE, the landings in Italy.

Italy and Southern France

Interestingly, the diary does not identify landings by names easily recognizable but by their code names as indicated above. Details of the landings are not given, but, as in the example of Sicily given above, refer only to other documents which detail the operations. We do know, however, that the LCIs of Flotilla

One were in the thick of the fray at Naples, Anzio, Southern France.

Seldom operating as a unit, the LCIs of Flotilla One were engaged in practice landings, actual operations, escort duty, ferrying troops as well as in drydocking and repair activities. The picture one gets as the entries for the summer and fall of 1943 are read is one of intense activity with many demands placed on them for their services.

Commander Leppert was relieved on October 18, 1943 by Commander O. F. Gregor USN. No significant changes seem to have followed this change of command and the Flotilla continued its far-flung operations. Entries for the following months detail all of this activity. Palermo, Bizerte, Naples, Taranto and other ports became well known to the sailors of Flotilla One. For several months, the War Diary writer is kept busy tracking which LCIs are where - or at least where they are supposed to be.

In January of 1944 the Flotilla participated in landings at Anzio, Italy and then settled into a routine of ferrying troops to Anzio for the following two months. April 1944 was spent in routine repair and training activities.

On 20 April 1944, the command of Flotilla one passed to Lieutenant Commander M. B. Brown. Brown was formerly Commander of Group Two of the Flotilla.

Though busy with their duties in transporting troops and escorting other amphibious vessels, the LCIs of Flotilla One were frequently reported as engaging in anti-aircraft fire through the following months. In June they were again engaged in an amphibious assault when they participated in the landings on Elba Island, famed in previous centuries as the residence of the banished Emperor Napoleon until he escaped and resumed his war-like activities.

In August of 1944 it was the beaches of Southern France that received the attention of Flotilla One. Encountering no opposition in these landings, the following weeks were again filled with such duties as ferrying troops, training, repairing, and escorting.

Though not needed in combat operations, the LCIs found their services in continual demand. One activity that lead to lots of cruising was that of delivering mail around the Mediterranean (See "Good and Tough Times in the Med: A Skipper Remembers", *Elsie Item Issue #36* for reminiscences of one LCI's participation in this service).

Though there is no War Diary entry confirming it, it is apparent that LCDR Brown was relieved sometime in either December 1944 or January 1945, for the signature of Lieutenant Commander Ray D. Anderson, U.S.N.R., appears on the diary for the month

of January 1945. By this time the amphibious operations in the European Theater, except for the Rhine crossings by smaller craft, were over. However, the higher command seems to have found plenty to occupy the LCIs for the diary is replete with reports of constant sailings in and out of ports in Africa, Italy and France. Finally, it is reported that all ships were "undergoing extensive repairs for extended voyage".

Homeward Bound

On 21 June 1945 all LCI(L)s were reported as having departed Palermo, Sicily, enroute for Oran. With a short stop there for minor repairs and supplies, the Flotilla left on 26 June 1945 for their homeward voyage. Arriving in Horta, Azores Islands, on July 2nd, they took on fresh water, a few more supplies and made a few more minor repairs before the big jump across the Atlantic to Bermuda.

The arrival of the Flotilla in Bermuda on July 11th, signaled the beginning of its breakup. On July 14th, six vessels - the 48, 47, 44, 38, 188, and 221 - departed for Norfolk while the remainder left the next day for New Orleans. Four more LCIs - the 194, 953, 954, and 39 - were detached from the convoy en route and sent to Hampton Roads, Virginia.

With these departures, the Flotilla was down to twelve vessels. For the record, they were the 236, 36, 169, 191, 37, 235, 530, 45, 237, 18, 76, and the 40. Enroute to New Orleans they received dispatch orders on July 20th to proceed to Orange, Texas.

Arriving in Orange, Texas, on July 23, 1945, the ships were stripped in preparation for converting them into LCI(G)s. On July 26, 1945, Lieutenant Commander Anderson made his final entry in the War Diary of Flotilla One:

"LCI(L) Flotilla One Staff disbanded. Staff personnel sent on leave with orders not to return to Commander LCI(L) Flotilla One"

And with that, Flotilla One passed into history.

This summary may whet the appetites of some who were there with the Flotilla to read the entire document. We will be glad to send a reprint to those requesting one. (See the Reprint Request Form, Page 28.)



In Memoriam

We pay our last respects to our Shipmates who have sailed into the sunset on their final cruise. Let us not forget how proud we are to have served with them in our country's time of need. Let their memories guide us on our final missions.

*"Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
And the hunter is home from the hill."*

Robert Louis Stevenson

Burmeister, Earl	LCI 8
Mueller, Glen	LCI 15
Perlinger, Roth E.	LCI 33
Comisky, Thomas G	LCI 62
McConnell, Charles E.	LCI 96
Ashfield, Joseph	LCI 195
Mailman, George	LCI 213
Goalsburg, Lambert	LCI 220
Elliott, Harold F.	LCI 360
Carnes, Floyd	LCI 372
Wilson, Richard L.	LCI 372
Hesse, John	LCI 405
Martin, F. Richard	LCI 435
Craft, Charles E.	LCI 439
Qualey, Richard R.	LCI 449
Lawton, Leo	LCI 454
Fugee, Francis, J.	LCI 455
Bukovinsky, Joe	LCI 455
McElroy, Francis M.	LCI 465
Waine, Gilbert F.	LCI 496
Thompson, James T.	LCI 551
Giles, Melvin G.	LCI 595
Covell, Dave	LCI 624
Shoemaker, William W.	LCI 632
Willar, James J.	LCI 632
Lee, Alfred	LCI 648
Bostron, Phillip	LCI 653
Burke, John J.	LCI 687
Hatfield, Fred	LCI 707
Grant, William	LCI 742
Focht, Wesley F.	LCI 772
Wylie, Cleyburn M.	LCI 808
Yankovich, Nickolas	LCI 808
DeGregorio, John	LCI 959
Bartmen, Robert	LCI 977
Dailey, Louis	LCI 1010
Knoblauch, Harry C.	LCI 1030
Hazelett, Harold G.	LCI 1062
Railsback, David W.	LCI 1096

Book Review

Bright Star by Gene Januzzi

Published by Vantage Press, Inc., 516 West 34th St.
New York, NY 10001

A couple of years ago, we were privileged to have as our banquet speaker, Gene Januzzi, author of a novel whose central character is the young skipper of an LCI. Though many of our members may have read the book, I thought it might be helpful to let others know about it.

Gene, who served as Skipper of LCI(L) 41, wrote the book in 1945, just as he was winding up his Navy service, but was not able to get it published at that time, so put it away while he got on with his productive years like the rest of us. And, like the rest of us, retirement brought a bit more time and a lot more desire to renew those old bonds forged so strongly aboard those tough little ships on which we had the privilege to serve. Fifty two years after it was written, Gene decided to publish it.

Gene's story is of Edward Shaw, a young Lieutenant commanding an LCI who is severely wounded as his ship hits a mine after landing troops on Utah Beach. While in the hospital recovering, he receives a "Dear John" letter from the girl with who he had formed a somewhat tenuous relationship before leaving his college studies and joining the Navy. An Army nurse and an English wife whose husband is off to the wars provide some consolation for the young Lieutenant before he is shipped back home and, in the final pages, reunites with his first love.

Gene's description of the Dartmouth, Fowey, Saltash, Torquay area was great for the memories they conjure up for those of us who were there. Scenes came vividly back to mind as he describes things with which we became so familiar as we sailed in and out of those channel ports.

My disappointment in the book was that there is a good deal more love interest than LCI life. He introduces a couple of enlisted men from the Lieutenant's ship who have significant adjustment problems but, except for those two, we learn nothing about the rest of the crew. His second in command, for instance, is referred to only as the "Exec".

I would have really liked to have seen more character development of the other sailors, because, for those of us who are the most likely readers of the book, it is the memory of men and friendships that we treasure.

Maybe, too, there could have been a bit more about the ships themselves. I think of Herman Wouk's *Caine Mutiny* and Richard McKenna's *Sand Pebbles* as Navy novels where we

really get to know the ships as well as the men. I would have liked to see Gene do the same thing for the LCIs.

Gene does give us at least one other character with some significant development - his friend Alan Mawman, the Skipper of another LCI in the same flotilla, with whom Shaw shares wartime experiences and liberties, particularly a couple of times when they really tie one on. Maybe that will awaken a few memories to some of the old salts who read it!

Sometimes, I'm afraid, I got lost in Gene's prose. Here, for instance, is a sentence that may leave you, as it did me, shaking your head a bit:

"The immutable duplicity of their lives was a poignant thing, yet it was a separated, a projected duplicity, and the impossibility of merging the one with the other into substantial perfection vexed his spirit"

Uh - yeah..

But, to balance that, there are some really good passages that will ring the bell with we old LCers. How about this one as the young Lieutenant lies in the hospital and longs for the return to shipboard life:

"Edward longed to return to those times. They were good masculine times, times of judgment and decision, when respectful eyes looked toward the bridge to see what the captain was doing, hard times, times when it seemed they could bear no more, but somehow they had come through to a self-respect that they could never tell, and no one who was not with them could ever know. He had that, and it could not be taken away from him. It was no flimsy edifice of emotion and lies and lost faith. It was the substantial fact of courage and devotion, the man-world of danger and duty and beyond-duty. He longed for those times out of the misery of his soul's darkness. He wished for the sea, where time is the rhythm of the sun and stars alone, punctuated by eating and the endless changing of the watch, where there is no past, but only the future, the lovely sight of land whose promontory should appear at a certain time, according to the crossed lines of the stars on the chart and does."

For words like that, I'll forgive Gene his love scenes!

I do appreciate Gene's effort. He tells a good story that brings back many memories. I hope he sells enough copies to make us all proud of our old shipmate.

Oh yes, the title - well, I'll just let you read the Keats lines that Gene includes in his frontispiece and see if you remember that English Lit course you took so long ago!

Reviewed by John Cummer

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For your assistance in contacting any of the officers or directors of our Association, we list them here with addresses, phone numbers, e-mail and telephone. Don't hesitate to call on any of them if you need information or assistance. We will do our best to be of service to you.

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