



"THE ELSIE ITEM"

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

AUGUST 2005

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ISSUE #53

Honoring "The Amphibious Man"

**Solomon's Island,
Maryland,
remembers the
Amphibious
Training Base and
all the men who
trained there**

(see Page 29)



"THE ELSIE ITEM"

Number 53

August 2005

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

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

In This Issue

Our cover features "On Watch", an eight-foot tall bronze statue commemorating all 68,000 of the men who trained for amphibious duty there during WWII, rightly giving that base the title of the "Cradle of Invasions".

We're happy to be joining forces with the Calvert Maritime Museum (home of our LCI Archives) and the folks of that area who are now in the final stages of raising the funding for this memorial. See page 29 for details on how our Association and members will be involved in this project.

Continuing our focus on the closing battles of the Pacific during WWII, we wind up two accounts begun in the last issue. Some interesting insights into how a young engineering graduate solved problems in practical and innovative ways are related in the closing portion of Richard Maconi's account of life aboard USS LCI(L) 17.

You'll also find the conclusion of Robert O'Connors wartime diary, as transcribed by Jim Nance. Among other interesting accounts, you will read of the capture and treatment of Japanese prisoners and their confinement aboard and LCI.

And then, of course, we have quite a bit of reporting to do concerning the great reunion we had in New Orleans and developments growing of that. It was a great affair and we wish all of you could have been there, but since that wasn't possible, we want to show you a bit about what went on.

Then there are a few other goodies - how the famous "Quad" which propelled our LCIs was developed as a "mechanical monstrosity"; a bit of humor about some guys who got really creative about painting their ship; the inspiring tale of an LCI Captain who put his ship "in harm's way" to save hundreds of Marines.

And yes, this issue is about a month late.

We sincerely regret that and can only ask your forbearance. It was just a matter of being "OBE" - Overcome by Events!

First, there was the transition of officers, but that didn't really slow things down that much. What did it was the Editor's marriage July 2nd in Orlando.

No blame attaches to my lovely bride, Patricia, though! What did slow the production of this newsletter down was my move from Orlando to Colombia, South Carolina. What I found out was that things like files and computers and email operations tend to go haywire when you try to move them! I won't burden you with all the details, but it's taken some time to get up and running again.

Oh yes, and there was a bit of distraction with the first days of marriage! Several of you have been quite kind in granting me a bit of excuse for delays and for that I'm quite grateful.

We'll do our best to be prompt in the future.

Hope you enjoy this issue!

The Editor

"SEA CHANGE" AND "STEADY AS SHE GOES"

Some Thoughts from the New President



At one time or another I'm sure you've all heard the expression "Sea Change".

Coming from its nautical background where it was used to describe those situations when tide, wind, currents, all changed so drastically that the entire mode of sailing had to be re-

assessed and decisions made about what kind of changes needed to be made.

The term was more widely adopted to apply to personal or business situations undergoing significant change. So, as I thought through the changes we are undergoing as an organization and the changes that have occurred in my personal life, that the term came to mind and it stuck with me as a pretty good term to use to describe where we are and where we want to be going.

LCI National Association Sea Change

Of course, the first surge of "sea change" came when faithful, hard-working Jim Talbert made his decision to resign. Jim, with characteristic thoughtfulness, felt that he wanted to give others an opportunity for leadership, noting that in the history of our organization there have been only two presidents - himself and the late Bob Weisser, of fond memory.

We're all grateful to Jim for his services and, with a bit of dismay, we accepted his resignation and began planning for a "change of command". I've been privileged to work with Jim as his Vice President and am honored now to take over the helm. I'm pleased to report that Jim has agreed to stay on as Chairman of the Board, so his wisdom and experience will still be with us. I'm also grateful to Rod Scurlock for agreeing to accept our invitation to stand for Vice President. And of course, it just would not be the same if we lost the services of dedicated Treasurer "Tiny" Clarkson and Secretary Bob McLain, so I'm very glad that they

stepped forward and agreed to stay on watch.

So, the watch has changed, but the ship is still "steady as she goes". We're all thinking of good years yet ahead for us and many more opportunities to continue to enjoy the great fellowship we have with our shipmates. The promise of the new "watch" is to do all we can to make this an organization that does further those ends and continues to serve all of its members as efficiently and effectively as possible.

As we've assessed this first sea change it seems apparent that no great, drastic changes need to be made in how we do our business or where we are headed. Enjoyable reunions, both national and regional, and as good a newsletter as possible will still be of major concern.

We'll still be pleased to have the fine professional help of Ted Dey and Armed Forces Reunions, Inc., as we plan our national reunions.

We will still be looking for worthwhile projects with which we can identify and offer support, financial and otherwise - such organizations as the National D-Day Museum (already designated by Congress to be enlarged to the official museum for WWII), the Navy Memorial in Washington, D.C., and the Calvert Marine Museum, Solomons, MD where we have established the LCI Archives and where the campaign is now on for final funding of the bronze statue of "The Amphibious Man" to be erected at the site of the Amphibious Training Base there, of "fond" memory. You'll read more about this in this issue.

We'll also certainly want to be in support of the new Amphibious Forces Memorial Museum in Astoria, Oregon, where the 713 is berthed.

State and Regional Directions

There is one area in which we feel that new direction and invigoration is needed - that is in the strengthening and support of state and regional reunions and other activities. The ones that have been functioning - California, Michigan, Ohio, and the Southeast - have all offered enjoyable reunions and the expressions of gratitude from those who have been in attendance have shown their worth. Now, we want to see such activities expanded to other areas.

I'm very happy to report that Vice President Rod Scurlock and National Director Hal Bleyhl have volunteered to organize and administer a new effort to recruit new state directors and to offer vigorous and effective support to them. Rod and Hal have drafted a proposal for such support, including utilizing National Directors as special supervisors and aides to State Directors in certain regions. The possibility of offering direct financial aid to state directors to enable them to get organized is being considered.

The Scurlock/Bleyhl proposal will be carefully considered by the Board of Directors and, when adopted, will be announced in *Elsie Item*. Hopefully that will be possible in time for inclusion in the October 2005 issue.

More Help Needed!

As we welcome such invigorating effort from Rod and Hal, we want to make the plea - I should say offer the opportunity - to many more of you to step forward and become active in our Association. As state and regional activities increase, I hope you'll be right there to offer help and support. It may involve something like serving as a local arrangements chairman for a reunion, or just helping with a mail out.

Then, I think also of *Elsie Item*. I've enjoyed serving as editor, but have often wished that there was a staff of regular contributors or specialists in copy layout that could make the newsletter even more interesting and informative. For instance, I have some great, but quite lengthy memoirs that have been sent in. A good editor, looking through these could select and edit so that the length became more manageable and could be shared with others through the newsletter. Then, if there is someone out there skilled in one of those software programs designed to make newsletters and brochures more physically attractive, I'd love to enlist their services. If any of you have talents or aspirations along the line of editing, writing or producing written material, I'd certainly like to hear from you.

Personal Sea Change

Along with this Associational sea change, I have

experienced considerable change in my personal life. In some ways it does affect my service with the Association, so I hope you'll indulge me a bit here.

Many of you know of the death a couple of years ago of my wife of 53 years. The support and prayers of LCIers across the country meant a great deal to me at that time. Now, I'm delighted to let you know that God has graciously provided me with a lovely lady to be my life's companion and I've begun a new life in - or rather, near - Colombia, South Carolina.

That's quite a bit of sea change!

Many of you met Patricia in New Orleans. She joined me there for our Reunion and it was a great experience for me to introduce my then bride-to-be to my old Navy buddies. She loved them and they loved her, so I felt I had all the blessing I needed to proceed with the marriage!



We were married July 2nd in Orlando, Florida, and it was a great pleasure to have two of my LCI friends there with their wives Connie and Hanna Mulherin drove over from

Titusville, FL, and Glen and Barbara Yeater of Orlando to be there, so your Association was well represented.

We've decided to make our home here in South Carolina because Patricia has family here. So, a physical move from my home for the past thirteen years was another bit of sea change.

That affected my performance as Editor of *Elsie Item*, because, with all the packing and unpacking, changing to a new email service, getting new phone service up and running, etc., etc - plus, of course, some very enjoyable first days of marriage, the July issue has become an August issue! As far as contact with other officers of the LCI National Association goes, I literally dropped off the radar scope!

More sea change!

We have a bit of work to do in getting copy to our printers, etc., but we think that can be handled, so, at least for the time being, Pro-Tech Printers of Orange City, FL, the printers with whom Jim Talbert made arrangements will continue to be our printers. We are indeed grateful for the quality of their services and their desire to help us put out as good-looking a newsletter as possible.

“Steady as She Goes!”

So, we’ve adjusted the helm as necessary. The winds seem to be fair and the seas following, so we think we’ve survived both associational and personal sea changes and we’re steady on course again.

Let’s stay the course!

John Cummer



SOUTHEASTERN U.S. LCIers,

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**Southeast LCI Reunion, Charleston, SC
January 19-22, 2006**

We’ll be staying at the Holiday Inn, Mt. Pleasant, SC (Home of Patriot’s Point featuring the USS Yorktown and other Navy Ships. Memorial Service and Luncheon aboard the USS Yorktown. Further details coming from Connie Mulherin, LCI(G) 561,1520 Sea Gull Drive, Titusville, FL 321/268-1713.

**MARK YOUR
CALENDARS
NOW!!**

**2006 Reunion will be
held April 18-23,
2006 in Norfolk,
Virginia**

**2007 Reunion will be
held May 15-20, 2007
in Branson, Missouri**

OHIO LCI REUNION

September 28-29, 2005

**Midwestern Hotel and Convention Center,
4900 Sinclair Road (I-75 and Morse Road)**

When you make your reservations, make sure you let them know you are with the LCI Group. Any questions? Call me at 480-871-2425.

Jim Aydelotte
Ohio LCI Director

Welcome Aboard!

Once again it's great to see a list of shipmates who have joined us since our last newsletter - and to congratulate those who have decided to become Life Members. We also take great pleasure in listing sons, daughters and other relatives who have shown their support for "their" LCler by becoming Affiliate Members.

New Members:

Robert F. Hartman, LCI(G) 78
904 Pineland Drive
Rockledge, FL 32955
321/633-9948
rhartman1@cfl.rr.com

James C. (Jim) Barrett, MoMM 3C, LCI 227
2114 Venice Drive,
South Lake Tahoe, LA 96150
530/542-1433

Elmer G. Michel, S1C, LCI 320 (USCG)
12203 Cypress North Houston Rd.,
Cypress, TX
281/469-8201

Verlin Creed, MoMM2c, LCI 444
950 Stanford Drive,
Englewood, CO 80110
303/789-9872

Robert D. Gibson, LCI(L) 508
5754 Shadow Pines Court
Lincoln, NE 68516-5221
402/328-9399
rgibson@neb.rr.com

Robert J. Ascherl, MoMM1c, LCI (L) 584
22304 Old Siler Logging Road,
Snohomish, WA 98296
402/328-9399
RJSBAshrl13@msn.com

John P. Morrissey, Marine and Navy Officer,
Amateur Historian
2621 Stamford Drive
Vestal, NY 13850

New Member, Signing on as Life Member:

John C. Price, LCI 20
1800 NW Hughwood Ave., Apt. 217,
Roseburg, OR 97470-5596

New Life Members:

James I. Poore
LCI 22

Antonio (Tony M.) Preciado
LCI 23

William H. Bertsch,
LCI 64

Bernard Trifoso.
LCI 94

Ralph E. Gallant,
LCI 346

Alpha E (Edward) Peden
LCI 457

Raymond S. Quintavell
LCI 457

Harold S. (Hal) Radcliffe
LCI 475

Jack B. Claiborne
LCI 492

Peter J. Fantacone,
LCI 492

William K. Fulmer,
LCI 545

Cleon J. Egan,
LCI 598

Jack E. Boyce,
LCI 651

James O. Newman.
LCI 663

New Life Members (Cont.)

Charles Daniels,
LCI 707

Clifton Killinger
LCI 765

Earl F. Swain
LCI 804

Leonard B. Finestone,
LCI 961

William H. McCracken
LCI 1030

David C. Potter,
LCI 1090

Louis A. Johnson,
LCI 1091

New Affiliates:

Josie S. Wise, Las Vegas, NV
Granddaughter of John D. Coombs, LCI 544

Linda Kelley, Owings, MD
Commissioner, Calvert County, MD
Membership paid by Dr. Charles E. Crandall,
LCI 568

New Affiliates Signing on as Life Members:

Kenneth A. Fulmer, Fairfax VA,
Son of William K. Fulmer, LCI 545

Susan Burr, Lewiston, ID
Daughter of Byron Drew, LCI 638

E-Mail Changes/Corrections

LCI Name/Correct E-Mail

31	Harold E. Mac Combie mac9619@aol.com
226	O. Landon Miles selimlo226@cs.com
334	Charles J. Chatterton cchatts@earthlin.net
352	Carlton R. Meyers cm1281@aol.com
398	Colin Hil colinnat@verizon.net
449	John H. Nimeskern jmimes@aol.com
466	James Stanfield jimbesslulu@aol.com
502	John P. Cummer cummerj@bellsouth.net
571	Maurice Kalfus kalfus52@netzero.net
618	Thomas Clements tomclements83@msn.com
638	Ms. Susan Burr welovecandles@cableone.net
665	Thomas D. Burns burns@lev.com
693	Albert Warren jackmacack@aol.com
702	Orvis L. Smith pathfinder48@earthlink.net
714	M. Brendan Fleming fleming@uml.edu
716	Robert L. Burns thpburns@sbcglobal.net
872	Ralph M. Keenan rbkeenan@msn.com
949	Dale Clinkman clinkm7@aol.com
994	Linwood Lowell llow994@comcast.net
1091	Louis A. Johnson lci1091@webtv.net
000	Carl V. Batzkall checkmateforty7@comcast.net

New Orleans in May! Another Great Reunion!



Steamboats! Dixieland Jazz! Cajun Cookin' Riding the St. Charles Avenue Streetcar! Sightseeing! It was all there plus great fellowship with old shipmates as the USS LCI National Association gathered for its 2005 reunion last May 19-21 in the "City that Time Forgot". A near-record crowd of over 400 LCIs and their family members showed up to enjoy such things as dinner at Mulate's Cajun Restaurant, a dinner cruise on the Creole Queen, guided tours of beautiful homes, parks and plantations, and, for the ladies, a visit to a genuine Creole Cooking School.

Perhaps the outstanding feature of our reunion was the visit to the National D-Day museum with its impressive display of the war that we all know. Though the museum began as one specifically for the June 6, 1944, landings in Normandy, it has expanded to contain all other landings, including all of the Pacific landings. For LCIs it was a memorable visit.

The LCIs did a little business - including electing a new President (pro tem), and Vice President. They also approved the Board of Directors recommendation that our 2007 reunion be held in Bronson, Missouri.

We remembered fallen shipmates in an impressive memorial service and topped the reunion off with an excellent banquet with great food and entertainment. Outgoing President Jim Talbert was especially remembered at the banquet.

Look for more details on all these happenings in the rest of this newsletter. Right now, we'll share some photos with you that we're sure you will enjoy and will bring back happy memories to those who were in New Orleans.



A nostalgic sight! Streetcars on Canal Street.

New Orleans is one of the very few places in the United States where you can ride on streetcars that are an integral part of the operating transportation system.

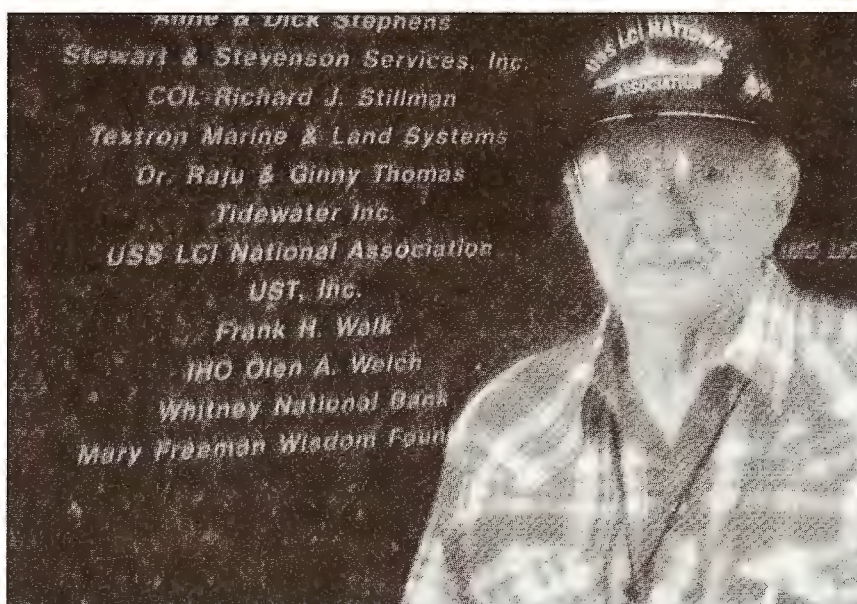
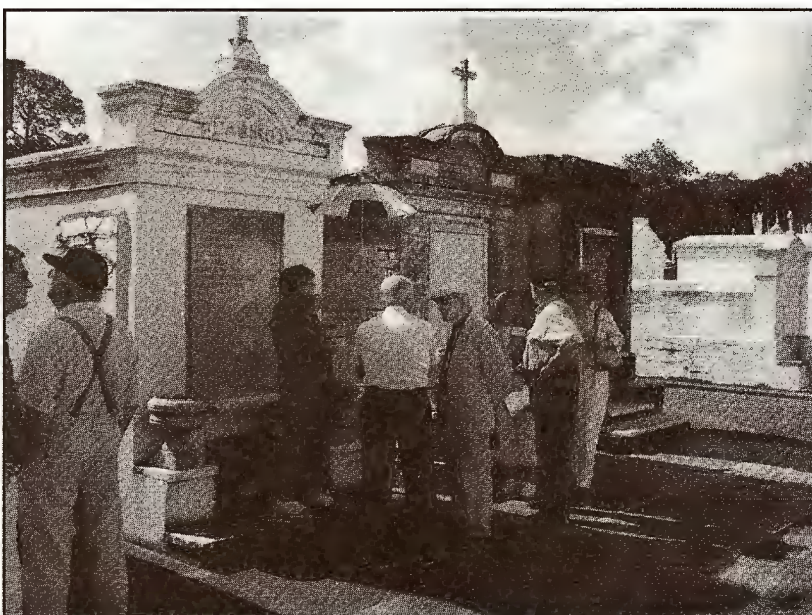
Riding through the beautiful Garden District was a great treat for LCIers.

LCIers were serenaded with traditional Dixieland Jazz as they waited to board the *Creole Queen* for their dinner cruise.



Jack Boyce, LCI 651, of Santa Rosa, CA, was one proud father with his two sons Jim and Mike . . . and Jim and Mike were even prouder of their Dad.

An informative and entertaining guide explains the rather unusual burial customs of New Orleans to a group of LCIers.



Visiting the National D-Day Museum, Out-going President Jim Talbert proudly stands before the granite memorial recognizing major donors to the museum, with the name of the USS LCI National Association prominently displayed.

r/

Incoming President John Cummer presents the flags of the *USS Independence* and *IIN Nagato* to the National D-Day Museum.

The flags, from ships which opposed each other at the Battle of Leyte Gulf, were entrusted to the USS LCI National Association by the Commanding Officer of the *USS Leyte Gulf* with the request that a permanent home be found for them.





In recognition of the visit of the LCIs to the National D-Day Museum, two models of LCIs which were lost at D-Day were brought out for special display.

The Models are of USS LCI (L) 91 and USS LCI (L) 497.

At the Memorial Service, incoming Vice President Rod Scurlock and Chaplain David Cox read the names of shipmates who died during the past year.



... and at the banquet, our favorite British sailor, Derek "Jim" Camping proudly displays his badge demonstrating that he has attended six of our reunions!

Seated are Treasurer "Tiny" Clarkson, his wife Janet, and Patricia Breivik, the lovely lady who on July 2nd became the wife of John Cummer!

Outgoing President Jim Talbert Honored at New Orleans Reunion



Incoming President John Cummer makes presentations to Jim Talbert and his wife, Jean in recognition of their outstanding service to the USS LCI Association

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An enthusiastic crowd of banquet attendees applauded loud and long to say thanks to outgoing President Jim Talbert for his long and faithful service to the association. With his wife, Jean, at his side, Jim was presented with a ship's clock, mounted in a walnut helm.

"We want Jim to remember us every time he looks at this", said incoming President John Cummer. "And we want him to know of our gratitude for the leadership he has given us for so many years."

Jim was also presented a special plaque from the Northwest LCIers. The plaque featured a picture of Jim and Jean in front of the conning tower of the 713.

Jean was presented with flowers and, to symbolize her "rule" in the Talbert household, a genuine bosn's pipe to be used to call Jim to his duties!

Jim's many friends did not let him escape without a bit of "roasting". Incoming Vice President Rod Scurlock kept the crowd laughing with a series of zingers, starting with a long pause when he pretended to be trying to think of something good to say about Jim!

The event left no doubt as to the affection and respect that LCIers have for their shipmate, Jim.

The Next Generation Steps Forward!

Sons of LCIers Produce A Fine Tribute to their Fathers



Roger Gray (L) and Dennis Blocker (R) delight LCIers at the New Orleans Reunion with an outstanding exhibit of photos and other memorabilia honoring their LCI Grandfathers

It was the surprise hit of the New Orleans Reunion!

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LCIers flocked to a room just off our hospitality room where an outstanding display, organized by two young men who are very proud of their Grandfather's service in LCIs during WWII.

Roger Gray, of Austin, Texas, whose Grandfather, T. H. Mixon, served aboard USS LCI(G) 454 and Dennis Blocker, San Antonio, TX, whose Grandfather served aboard USS LCI(G) 449 started with just a few photos and plunged into an impressive research effort to locate as many photos, documents and mementos as possible to tell the story of their Grandfather's service aboard LCIs. As they extended their search, they located shipmates of their fathers who were able to add even more to their collection..

Assembling it all into a professional-quality display, the young men drove to New Orleans just for the opportunity to share what they had found and to interact more with other LCI veterans.

"We are absolutely delighted with the efforts of these young men and are very happy that they have become active affiliates with our Association", said incoming President pro tem John Cummer. "We look to young family members just like Roger and Dennis to keep the story of LCIs and their contribution to victory in WWII alive".

Roger and Dennis indicated that they intend to continue their involvement and look forward to being at future LCI Reunions.

California LCIers “Liberate” Eureka!

A first hand report from
Joe Flynn (LCI (R) 347, El Cajon, CA



*Young Jonah Schneider sings “Let There Be Peace on Earth”
at the Banquet*

Twenty five LCI's of the California USS LCI National Association, led by our Flagship USS LCI(L) 1091, landed, invaded and liberated the beautiful coastal city of Eureka CA. The victory celebration lasted three days, June 23, 24 and 25.

Th 25 LCI's represented have a distinguished battle record collecting, as a group: Three Silver Stars, 94 Asiatic-Pacific Bronze (Battle Stars, 15 Philippine Liberation Bronze Stars, 6 Presidential Unit Citations, Navy Commendations, and service in Normandy, China, Korea and more!

The 1091 Goes to A Museum

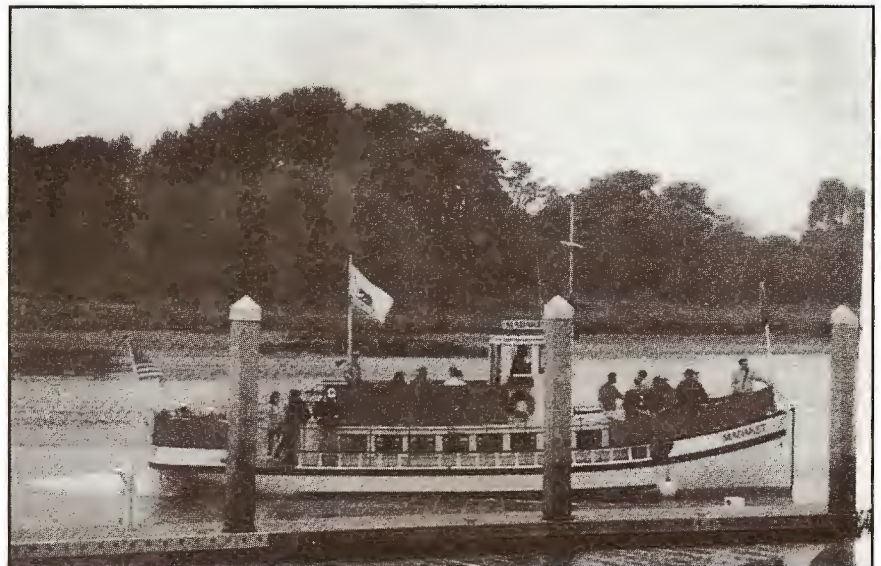
At the LCI Reunion Banquet, Captain Ralph Davis announced that he was donating the USS LCI(L) 1091 to the Humboldt Bay Naval Air/Sea Museum. Leroy Marsh, Director of the Museum was present to accept the ship and express his deep gratitude. He said that the 1091 would be placed in an accessible location open to all visitors as a permanent public display and naval museum.

The Association presented Captain Davis with a telescope so that he can keep an eye on the 1091 from his porch!

Sea Duty!

On Friday, members and guests were treated to a bay cruise aboard the *Madaket*, which, at 95 is the oldest passenger ferry on the West Coast. Even though it was ship shape, one of the members said he “worried about being on a boat that is older than I am”.

We all arrived safely at the 1091 and spent a few hours walking the decks and swapping stories. The *Madaket* picked us up later to go back into town for liberty.





Busted!

Speaking of liberty - Jim McCarthy and Jimmie Prime (LCI 373) were busted for racing in the halls of the Red Lion Hotel!

Their “guilty with explanation” was “We were just trying to re-create the liberty scene from the movie *Mr. Roberts*, Sir!”

All in all, it was a great gathering of friendly people and we plan to do it again next year if we have fair winds and a following sea.

The “Quad” -A Mechanical Monstrosity?

This one is especially for you old Motor Macs! But I’m pretty certain that other LCIs will enjoy it as well, for we all, at one time or other have told the story of how they took bus engines off the shelf, linked them together and made engines for LCIs. It’s a good story of how ingenuity was applied and I often think it is symbolic of the way we were, figuratively speaking, “pulled off the shelf” and made into crews for LCIs.

Anyway, the story of how a man made Dilworth came up with the engineering that defied conventional wisdom and made the Quad possible is fascinating in its own right so I want to share it with you.

It came to me from Russell Hetz, Tucson, AZ, who served as a Motor Machinist Mate, Third Class aboard LCI 1004. Russell just copied a chapter called “Engines of War” out of a book that obviously detailed the creative feats of a man made Dilworth who worked in the Automotive industry prior to WW II.

Hoping that someday I’ll learn more about just who Dilworth was, here’s the story and I’m sure you’ll enjoy it: JC.

who Dilworth was, here’s the story and I’m sure you’ll enjoy it: JC.

After describing an earlier attempt to get the bugs out of a light-weight diesel wanted for Navy subchasers, the author tells of their next attempt - linking two General Motors bus and truck diesels, known as the 6-71, together. When this seemed to work, the suggestion was made to try linking four engines together.

Even though Dilworth was able to develop a functioning model, the Navy did not feel it would work. Dillon set out to prove that it would work,

The problem was in the gearing necessary to link the four engines together. Here is Dilworth’s account”

“So I threw together a gearbox that would take four 6-71 engines pumping into one big bull gear which turned the propeller shaft. The gearbox was welded out of such plate as we could find, the gear was roughly cut . . . the whole thing was a pretty crude job. Got it together in about five weeks, so you know just how crude it was.

"The only virtue of the whole thing was that each engine fed into the gearbox through a clutch - an automobile disk clutch. The main idea was that if an engine failed it could be uncoupled from the rest, but actually the clutch had a more important function than that. Trying to get four six-cylinder engines to work on one shaft was a problem. If the engines didn't work at precisely the same speed, or if the four crankshafts were at slightly the wrong angle, violent torsional vibrations could be set up. We put the clutches in to take care of that. As soon as the vibrations started, the clutches would slip a little, change the angle of the crankshaft, and the vibrations would stop. They acted as flexible couplings, that allowed the engines to adjust themselves so they didn't quarrel".

The Navy looked at the engine and said it wouldn't work. They were sure it would shake itself to pieces. They set out to prove this was true.

"They sent up Commander Den Hartog, an expert on engines, and he came along with two carloads of instruments and a whole crew of technicians. Den Hartog would keep the engines shut down for a while, then clutch them at the exact angle that he thought would give the worst vibrations. Then he'd start the four engines all at once.

"There was an immediate vibration that he could see on his oscillograph. But unfortunately, in order to get it recorded on a tape, he had to flip down the cover of the opening he was looking through and push a button, and while he was doing that the vibrations would disappear. He tried for a month without catching the vibrations.

But the Navy still felt it was unworkable. In the meantime another engine was developed for the subchasers.

So, says Dilworth, "... the mischievous Quad engine that should have been bad but wasn't, was shoved under a bench and forgotten"

But men from Dilworth's plant went to Washington, DC and found a use for their "jury-rigged" Quad.

The Navy was looking for a propulsion unit for the LCI, then under development. Dilworth, somewhat ungenerously from our point of view, described the LCI as "... a clinker-built boat forward, a Japanese sampan amidships, and a Kanawha River mud boat aft".

However inelegant, it still needed an engine.

"...so the Quad was pulled out from under the bench and made the official engine for the LCI. I think some 3,500 of those Quad combinations were made and installed and used during the war".

Dilworth never thought much of his gearbox and the clutches that enabled four engines to work in harmony.

He thought it was just one of those things that had to be done in war. So he was much surprised when a "brass-bound admiral" showed up at the end of the war, and with much ceremony, handed him a certificate of commendation for his engineering achievements for the Navy. He thought it was for his work on the 567 engines used to power the large LSTs, something in which he took great pride.

"When I looked at the certificate", said Dilworth, "and found it was on account of the Quads, I brought it home without ever showing it to anyone at the plant.

Waving reluctantly to the wall, Dilworth said, "That's the certificate there. The side that tells what it's for is turned to the wall. When you have to let a clutch slip to get rid of vibrations, you have a mechanical monstrosity!"

So, there you are, Gents - our beloved LCIs were powered by a "mechanical monstrosity". However, I believe we would all agree with the final comment of the unknown author of this book which Hetz found,

"It may have been all of that, but it worked. It enabled mass-produced truck and bus engines to be used in seagoing craft and thus provided power for war when it was needed".

In Memoriam

*We remember these Shipmates who have entered their final harbor and pray for God's
comfort and peace for their families*

James Mc Dowell
LCI 17

Glenn Dye
LCI 36

Roy Barnes
LCI 80

"Buzzy" Greenberg
LCI 80

Christopher Kaciell
LCI 80

Lee C. Wittke
LCI 94

Alexander Marian
LCI 229

Anselm B. Bradley
LCI 235

Charles M. Rogers
LCI 330

Walter Miller
LCI 338

William O. Turnbull
LCI 338

Jerrold Bomberg
LCI 346

Walter Staback
LCI 365

William O. Barnes
LCI 412

Clifford Lemke
LCI 449

Robert C. Love
LCI 454

Thomas Mixon
LCI 454

Kenneth Cooper
LCI 455

Dr. Warren Laneville
LCI 456

Robert F. Wood
LCI 481

Philip Cospers
LCI 481

Robert C. Hart
LCI 489

Irvin R. Knoepfler
LCI 526

Robert H. Rudd
LCI 591

Joseph Black
LCI 599

Ward P. Shute
LCI 644

William Van Scoy
LCI 658

Henry M. Kerr
LCI 664

Calvin Bogart
LCI 672

Ted Federko
LCI 686

Phillip Walesby
LCI 699

Albert F. Eckelmeyer
LCI 764

Maynard Champsers
LCI 801

Edward Weibel
LCI 819

Jack Hartman
LCI 819

George Schurman
LCI 819

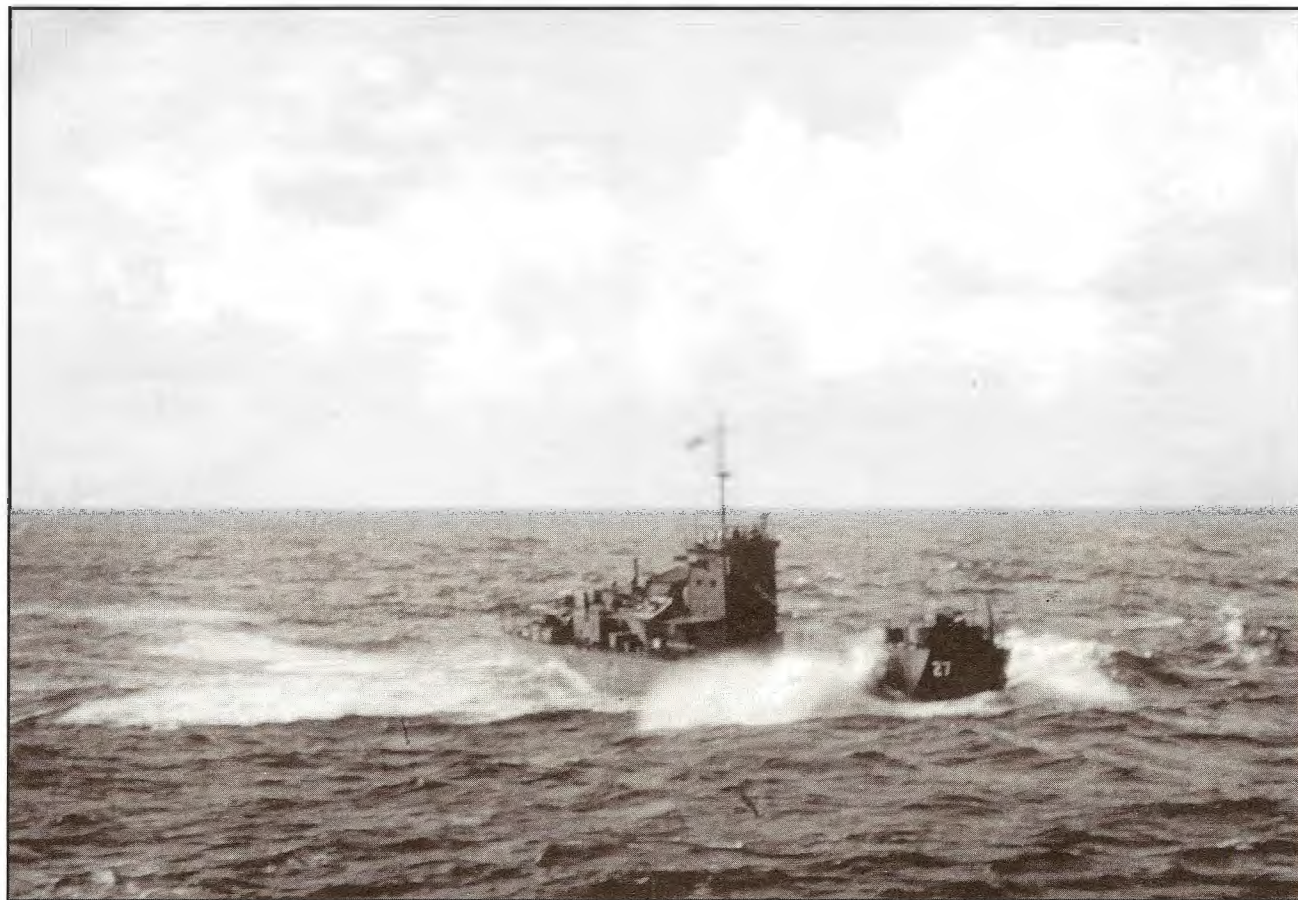
Robert C. Sellers
LCI 989

Chester Randolph
LCI Unknown

Roman Drake
LCI Unknown

MIT MEETS LCI - PART TWO

The continuance of the story of Dick Maconi, who as a young MIT grad was assigned to LCI 27 in the far reaches of the South Pacific.



Dick Maconi's LCI 27 plows its way across the Pacific

In our last issue we carried excerpts from Dick's memoirs covering the time from his commissioning to the time when the 27 was being converted to an LCI Gunboat Supply ship. Because they had to operate independently, going wherever the gunboats needed support, the 27's officers and crew along with the ship were brought up to the highest states of readiness possible. We pick up Dick's account as they are finishing their stay in Manus, Seeadler Harbor in the Admiralty islands.

To continue our conversion, our fresh water piping, although not the internal cross section of the piping had been reduced about one half, was not replaced. I designed a drinking water pressure tank and full pressure system which, with my insistence, was installed, and it worked very well.

I recall that several months later in a sister ship having

similar water flow problems, her skipper had told his engineering officer to "fix it like the 27". He did install a pressure pump, but neglected to design and install a true pressure tank. One evening our poker game was interrupted by an explosion from their ship - it was their water tank which exploded as it was being pressured up. Chalk one up for MIT!

I also recall that as we were crossing the Pacific returning Stateside at the end of 1945, the watch reported to me that there was a crack rapidly developing across the deck. In the conversion, the main structural deck beam had been cut and sections were removed to permit installation of larger cargo hatches, and vibrations and "working" as the ship plunged and twisted through heavy seas; resulted in fatigue cracks in the old steel. Another engineering problem!

My solution this time was to get the largest drill we had aboard out and have holes drilled on the projected crack line at each end to relieve the concentrated stress; then I had those holes plugged with wooden plugs. It worked!

And so we entered into an extended period of independent cruising as we performed our duties in supplying the LCI gunboats - from Manus we cruised to Hollandia, joined a convoy to Leyte Gulf and then returned to Manus. I note on my shellback card that Equator crossings included February, 1945 and returning 10 March.



LCI 27 in Drydock in San Pedro Bay

Note the imaginative use of standard 5x8x5 "cubes" bolted together to form a drydock. They were also used to form docks or other assemblies as needed.

After unloading in San Pedro bay, we made a delivery to an advanced base at Pandurucan, on the island of Mindoro. We transited Surigao Strait over the sunken Japanese warships sunk in the battle of Suragao Strait, only a few months earlier. The islands and the coasts that we passed, particularly Mindinao, were still being fought over, and would not be free of warring and raiding Japs until well after the war.

As we returned eastward through Suragao Strait, we had a sudden and total stoppage to our port propeller shaft. We proceeded on the starboard shaft to San Pedro Bay and entered a floating drydock to find that a plate on the inboard side of our port outboard skeg

had broken out to foul the propeller. It was obviously due to metal fatigue from the constant pulsations of the rotating propellor blades on this old ship that was supposed to last through only a couple of beach landings.

Convoy Duty

A wartime ship convoy is indeed a tedious and sometimes harrowing experience. Position keeping was prime importance, particularly in foul weather or at night. The watch had to keep a constant eye on ships forward, aft, and on either side. Any changes in convoy course or speed of advance were always by prearranged signal, usually by flag hoist and/or at night by mast signal light combinations. Execute! was only signaled after about 15 minutes, so that all ships merchant marine, Navy and Coast Guard ships had time to wake up their skippers, find the signal book, get the current code page for the day and hour, tell the underway watch, and be ready to "execute".

It should be a piece of cake, but at "execute", all hell broke loose on one miserable night. An emergency turn had been signaled. EXECUTE! We had to dodge a large Liberty ship; to starboard which headed directly toward us and another to port. It took hours to straighten out the convoy mess. Thank God there were no actual collisions. These emergency course changes were only needed in enemy presence - air, submarine or aircraft - was detected or suspected. Hence, infrequently!

Another time. during extremely rough weather, convoy course, relative to the seas, was such that our flat-bottomed LCI was experiencing a hard time, rolling to extremes in the heavy seas. The Convoy Commander would not change course, nor allow us to proceed independently. I had the "conn", when the ship rolled to the extreme to port and "hung there" seemingly forever. It must have been for the good part of a minute. My hand was on the alarm; as it seemed that we were likely to continue and roll over. I do not recall if we were detached to cruise independently, or if the convoy changed course to ease our situation, but that moment was indeed a character builder!

And so the young Engineering Officer grew in confidence and ability as the LCI 27 plied her way through the South Pacific - Hollandia, Biak, Morotai, back to the Philippines - and there came more opportunities to apply his MIT engineering skills . .

Operating internal combustion engines with sea-water intercoolers in the Philippine waters is difficult. The sea water is full of organisms and minute shellfish and the temperature makes for ideal growing conditions. Intercoolers of each individual engine had to be cleaned with a hacksaw blade through each saltwater passage every week to avoid blockage and engine overheating.

Reminders of the Battle of Leyte Gulf ... and a Visit to Manila.

On one passage to Manila we were reminded of the recently-fought great Battle of Leyte Gulf. We proceeded through the Sibuyan Sea en route Subic Bay, passing Luzon Island and the entrance to Manila Bay to our left. We were able to take pretty good azimuth sights on the prominent perfect point top of Mayon Volcano on southern Luzon. Transiting Sibuyan Sea we traveled right over the Japanese super-battleship Musashi, which had been torpedoed, bombed and sunk by Third Fleet aircraft only a few months earlier.

As we were to stay at Subic for a couple of weeks, and as the rapid forward push of the war front was easing, then skipper Al McGoogan gave me orders for a few days off the ship, officially to carry out ship's business, but unofficially to give me a chance for a bit of sight-seeing in Manila.

I traveled to Manila in LCI(L) 328. An embarrassing moment for the XO of the 328 came when the ship was ordered into the Passig River. The skipper was on the beach and had never trained his officers to conn the ship in close quarters, only at sea. The XO, fearing for his lack of skills, asked me to conn his ship into the river - a piece of cake for by that time I had earned the reputation of being the best conning officer on the '27.



Wartime Manila, as seen by Dick Maconi

It was a very humbling and thoughtful experience as we passed Corrigidor to starboard and Bataan to port, with the severe fighting, sacrifice and humiliation of our forces experienced there early in the war.

Eggs Come First!

A few days later, as the '27 departed Subic Bay to return to San Pedro Bay for further orders and to take new on new cold weather clothing and to prepare the ship for the final battle, the planned invasion of the Japanese home islands. As we departed, in company with other ships, we sighted an allied cruiser force on the western horizon, practice firing their AA batteries on aerial towed targets.

We were enjoying fried fresh eggs, just received from a "reefer" (freezer) ship at Subic. Our total enjoyment was broken by several near splashes (within 100 feet) from the falling spent five-inch rounds from that cruiser group. Our immediate decision was to hold speed and course, and indeed not let our eggs get cold! If we did take a hit, it would have exploded and we would have sunk instantly, so . . . (Meanwhile our watch signaled madly with blinker, semaphore and radio). We survived to enjoy our eggs!

More Engineering Problems

One afternoon, as we were underway, I had the conn, of course, when we suddenly lost all power - everything, main engines, and generators - and we

just drifted! We subsequently found that a new motor machinist mate striker had forgotten the twice a day chore of draining accumulated water from the bottom of the diesel day tanks which fed all engines. (Diesel fuel was pumped daily from the main bottom diesel tanks to the day tanks to allow water and impurities to settle out, and then be pumped out.) As a result of this oversight, all diesel fuel injector tips had been blown off, stopping all eight main propulsion engines and the on-line generator. In five “eternal” minutes, our engine room crew replaced the eight injectors on one engine on each propeller shaft and started the standby generator so that we were able to regain control of the ship. (LCIs had four diesel engines individually clutched onto a “bull gear” for each shaft - really nice because the ship could proceed with 1, 2, 3, or all 4 engines on each of two shafts, permitting economical cruising and also permitting repair of an engine while another turned the shaft).

THAT five minutes seemed like an hour, as we drifted silently and helplessly in the narrow channel, with fenders at the ready! Our excellent Black Gang by changing those injectors on one engine on each shaft plus one generator broke the silence and we again had power!

The Atomic Bomb Changes All Plans

As we were readying ship for the final invasions of the Japanese home islands, we received the news of the dropping of the atomic bomb. Then the war's end was announced and the huge San Pedro Bay anchorage went wild with gunshots and flares. Quite a celebration!

We knew about the total Japanese suicide dedication to battle, and from the accounts of close friends who had actually seen the brutal killing and destruction of previous combats, we just knew that those landings would have been even more brutal than those through New Guinea, the islands, and the Philippines, to both allied landing forces and the Japanese people. Their entire population, military, aged, kids and women would have been forced into the cauldron! The atomic blasts were indeed a blessing to all, despite the protests of the history revisionists.

Guam, and I Assume Command

With these changes of plans, we received orders to proceed to Apra Harbor, Guam. On arrival we were directed to beach the ship in the inner harbor alongside the “Marine” highway, near the Naval Supply Depot. The inner harbor had only recently been cleared and was still very shoal. We grounded temporarily en route and cleared after a time of differential maneuvering with the engines to proceed and beach.

A great event as it turned out. I received orders to assume command of the ‘27. A great event indeed! After we exercised the ship's crew at stations, and researched and accounted for all publications and orders, the full crew was mustered on deck where I read my orders and relieved Al McGoogan as Commanding Officer of USS LCI(L) 27. Al was a fine officer and had been a close friend for those past 14 months. He, of course, departed stateside. To this day, I have not been able to locate him. He was going home to marry Sherrill, as I recall.

“When in all respects . . .”

All ships were told to make maximum use of Guam's recreational forces, so we all enjoyed swimming and loafing on the fine sweeping beach of Tumon Bay, with coconut palms bending over the beach (just like in the movies!)

Eventually, we received those long-awaited orders that began our long journey back to CONUS (Continental United States). “*When in all respects ready for sea, proceed. . .*” In our preparations we found that our main transmitter radio was inoperable and our radioman could not fix it. We tried to get a new set at the Naval Supply Depot, but found that , although there were several brand new sets, crated, in stock, they had been consigned to be given the “deep six” - dumping them in deep water - and that the “paper work” had been completed. Even the old wartime ways of bartering and bribery or “borrowing” would not work! They would not even consider exchanging ours for a new one and “deep sixing” the old set in the new box with papers!
NO WAY!

With no other alternative, and with ship's orders in hand to proceed Stateside, nothing would prevent or delay our getting underway!! Sooo - I put on my MIT thinking cap, and, though never having any radio training, with diagram in hand, I traced the wiring and indeed found an inoperative relay. I found that the transmitter would work if the relay was pushed in manually while transmitting. We were lucky, because in those days, vacuum tubes were in use, and were extremely susceptible to damage due to humidity, bumping, and just wearing out - and the set was full of them. The relay was, after all, just an electrical switch, not electronic. As a result, we were "in all respects ready for sea"!

Homeward Bound - and One More Engineering Problem!

Finally, our LCI group was ordered stateside via Eniwetok Atoll and Pearl Harbor. LCI(L)'s 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 62 and 328 left Guam, Apra Harbor as a group in column. At Eniwetok, a careless line handler nearly did us in.

This line handler on the next inboard ship carelessly dropped a five inch mooring line in the water as we were backing down, which was drawn into our starboard screw, tangling itself and breaking our steady rest bearing, which braced the shaft, abaft the propeller. We tried to make believe that it didn't happen, and continued out on our departure, but the vibration of the unbarred and "whipping" shaft was too severe, and could only lead to disaster. After less than an hour, we returned to the Eniwetok anchorage.

On returning, we found a floating dry dock fortunately not occupied and we were permitted to enter. As the ship came out of the water, and we went under the ship, the problem was very apparent. We had found that most of the ships in anchorage were waiting for spare parts. We were offered the opportunity to stay in drydock but only until Monday morning, when another ship was scheduled to enter. We were quick to accept. But the admonition remained - come Monday we were going back into the water, ready or not! We were also told that we could expect no assistance from the drydock crew.

I was a mechanical engineer and my XO, Dick Lund, was a graduate architect, and we did have a superb Black Gang. We scrambled everyone to the "beach" to see what could be found to fabricate a workable steady-rest bearing to get us to Pearl! The Drydock CO, also an engineer, emphasized to us that he had the overall responsibility and that it would be HIS decision, and his only, as to the suitability of our repair.

We found various small boat LCM parts, the "traditional" bailing wire and tape and, most importantly, a piece of lignum vitae - technically wood and used for stern tubes, but sooo hard that it had to be machined as metal!

Somehow, and with a last bottle of bourbon (from the "freak" storm in Leyte Gulf), we created a "repair", went into the water and got underway pronto before anyone could change their mind, for Pearl Harbor!

On a wooden shaft bearing!

What a great sight it was to see Oahu rise out of the sea a couple of weeks later! A slow passage because we were super-careful not to "push" the structural integrity of our temporary shaft bearing fix.

Although assigned to anchorage in the distant west loch (Siberia!) we were delighted to be there. On that first night there as many of the officers and crew as could be spared were given liberty to "hit the beach".

I'm not really sure that the ship could have gotten underway, if ordered! A group of officers went to "lousy chow's (Lao Lee Chao?) Chinese restaurant for a great twelve course meal. Wow! It was great to eat shore base food - salad, milk, dessert, etc - after fighting the war up the New Guinea coast and through the Philippine Islands. It had been a year and a half in "SoWesPac" for me.

(Continued on page 26)

Okinawa Remembered: The Wartime Diary of Robert O'Conner, USS LCI(M) 1059

Part Two

Transcribed and Submitted

by
Jim Nance,
Carlsbad, CA
LCI(M) 1059



Japanese prisoners aboard an LCI?

*Yes, and here is a photograph of two of them
aboard LCI!*

In the April 11, 1955 entry of his diary, Robert O'Conner told of crewmen from the 1055 who, while ashore surprised these two Japanese men working on a crash boat, took them prisoner; "liberated" the crash boat and took the two Japanese out to their ship as prisoners. And this is the photograph of the two prisoners aboard the 1955.

How did it come to be in the Elsie Item?

At the New Orleans convention, a former crewman of the 1055 came up to John Cumber; excitedly told of reading the article, recalling this photo and wanting to share it with Elsie Item readers. So here it is.

You may recall that Bob recorded that Robert wrote that one of the prisoners was wounded in the foot (it can be seen in the photograph) and they decided to play doctor:

" . . they took what they thought was sulpha drug for the wound and it turned out to be tooth powder – damn near killed him!"

So much for the medical skills of the average Pacific-area LCIer!

We resume Bob's diary with the entry for May 20, 1945. entry. Stationed off Ie Shima, Bob had noted that Japanese subs were making the effort to raise havoc with the invasion ships.

May 21, 1945

Well, the Jap sub disappeared. Where it went, we don't know. At noon had GQ. A plane came out of the clouds dead ahead. Ships were told that there are some friendlies in the area, too, but when she came out of a cloud right overhead at 2,000 feet, CG27 let go. Being on the steady grind is bound to make one trigger happy. Anyway, that was what the ships were waiting for. That poor devil never had a chance. A 5" burst took his wing off and he rolled and took a deep six. As the wing came fluttering down, we could see the star on it. We had shot down one of our own Hellcats. Well, nothing in the world could make you feel worse than that. All that could be found were a few arms and legs, etc. I could have cried right then and for sure the fellows felt terrible. We were clear, though, because the skipper ordered no fire. Can't describe how everyone felt. We heard before that a Hellcat had flashed 2 Zekes out in the same area he was coming from. Maybe it was this guy.

It's just 1500 now and I've taken a shower, getting ready to go on radio watch again. The day is far from over. Went to GQ at 1835. Starting to rain a little and it's plenty rough. Can't see any planes, although they have been reported in the area. Hope we don't have any business tonight. Getting awfully sick of all this. Wish this would hurry up and be over. It seems that it's going very slow, but sure. Hope that England comes over sometime like they said they were. Haven't seen them yet. Only one Corvette so far. Lightning pretty bad. Hit the sack at 2244.

May 22, 1945

No outstanding events.

May 23, 1945

At 2300, a large force of Jap planes came over; could hear them and was waiting for something to pop. Boys over on the beach got five with their 90s. Things are getting hot now that their long awaited night bombers are in operation again.

May 24, 1945

They are roaring over again tonight. It seems to be all night work now that they can't get by our fighter screen in the daytime. A Jap bomber hit a fuel dump over on the beach and it really lit things up. Saw a Jap plane go down in flames tonight. Some sight, when they get caught in the fingers of the search lights and radar controlled 90s open up.

About 0400, a string of bombs were dropped about 100 yards off our fantail. Wish we could get out of this place. This is the most advanced place in the war and here we are. (Ie Shima). Raid continued through the rest of the night.

May 25, 1945

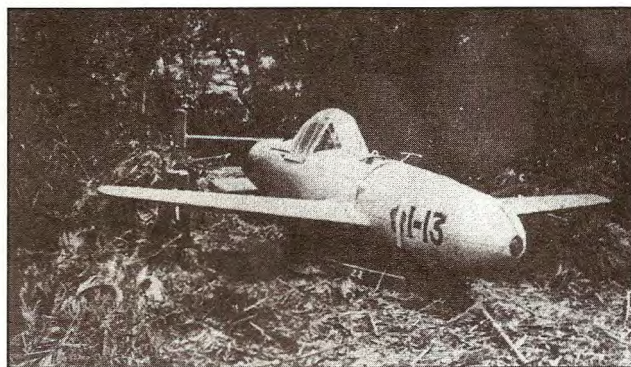
Our friends are back this morning, stronger than ever. A Jap flew over us this morning and crashed into a YMS. We got some good hits on it. Another came over but pulled out. LSM 135 went over to pick up survivors from the burning YMS. A plane sneaked around the time of the island and crashed her. She was pulled up to the reef. Out of some 45 guys, there were only 9 saved. One of our friends was killed. The smoke going up from her darkened the sky. With the rain and the smoke you can't see much. Delegate (sic) has reported the shooting down of a huge amount of planes. A Betty was shot down that had a Baka Bomb attached. Sure hope that they don't start using those. 54 Japs shot down today.

May 26, 1945

Still heavy raids. Several more Jap planes shot down on the beach.

May 27, 1945

Destroyer sunk today as a result of a couple of crash dives. Another brought in by a couple of tugs - bad shape. This Ie Shima is getting to be an awfully hot place; things aren't going so good. Sure hope that the prayers at home hold out.



A Baka bomb.

"This little horror was a one-way glider with three rockets as boosters, only 20 feet long with a wing span of 16 1/2 feet and a warhead carrying 2,645 pounds of tri-nitro-anisol"
Samuel Eliot Morrison, Victory in the Pacific, p. 224

May 28, 1945

Damn near didn't make my 19th birthday today. Went to GQ early this morning. After a bit, saw 4 Corsairs come over the island. They made some funny actions, then we saw a twin engine Betty was above them at close range to them. They were swooping on her, but she kept going. All of a sudden she started down. All I could see was a perfect head-on view of her. They say when you see that, she is heading directly at you. The F4U started down on her tail and their 50's were spitting up the water all around us. I was so - don't know the word to use - that I just stood there and watched. Everything that happened is indelibly in my memory. I thought she was going to hit us for sure and I just sort of gave up. Hope I never have that feeling again.

We were pumping lead into her. So was every ship, but she kept on coming. She wasn't to be stopped. The *Brown Victory* was off our port beam. Just as that bomber went over head, her port engine caught fire. His wing span looked as wide as our ship was long.

If she had been a couple of feet lower, she would have taken our radar off.

She hit the *Brown Victory* on the aft well deck. The explosion at such close range was terrific. The entire ship was engulfed in flames and we could feel the heat on our faces. The gun crews fired right up to the last second. Six guys were burned and one got blown into the water. He just fell apart. Just had to let him go adrift to Deep Six.

Tonight the *Brown Victory* left for Okinawa. This was the worst day for us. If that Betty had taken a direct hit and gone out of control, she would have hit us for sure. There would have been rivets from here to hell. I came close to not making 19.

And so Robert and his shipmates on the 1059 and the other ships on that advanced line continued to withstand the kamikaze attacks day after day. Some ships endured the longest sustain combat of any ships during the entire war:

Finally, the dark clouds of war began to life for the battle-weary LCI and its crew. Eventually, the homeward journey began.

June 13, 1945

Got extra duty for sleeping late today, so I worked all day as a result. Guess we are going back to Pearl Harbor. That's entirely too good to be true. Getting rid of our war material, so I guess we are going to sea soon.

June 14, 1945

At 1300 today, we got underway with 34 other LCIs. We are seaward bound. Guam is the destination at the present. From there, we don't know, but we think it will be Pearl Harbor. We are definitely going to a well-earned retirement area.

Jun 15, 1945

All day at sea

June 16, 1945

Midwatch tonight. Am listening to the Hit Parade, etc., from the States on the TCS. Really makes me homesick. Buddy just brought me two hamburgers. The night is beautiful, the moon is bright and the sea is calm. There are large white clouds. Combined, all these things make you love the sea.

June 17, 1945

Course doesn't put us in the direction of Guam. Believe we are going to Saipan.

June 20, 1945

0400. See lights of ships in the harbor now. Will soon be there. Coming around the edge of the cliff where all the Jap people jumped. Pretty rugged. Lots of ships and B-29s.

June 21, 1945

Today I saw lots of ships and old buddies from service school again. Saw my first movie since Pearl. Received mail, too. Beautiful island here.

June 22, '1945

Got underway at 1730. DESTINATION PEARL!

It's very good to feel that you are heading towards home again, even close to it. Last night they had a test air raid and 45 Japs thought it was the real thing and came out of their caves. Result: 45 prisoners.

The B-29s are coming in now for raids on Japan. Have counted 90 so far and they are still to be seen in the distance.

Somebody's leg floated by the ship today and a body floated by yesterday.

July 9, 1945

Arrived today at Pearl. This is the life for me! I want no more of war for the present.

Found Rich on the deck of a sub. This was something I had longed for. Dick and I went to the beach Friday and spent the day.

We've been in dry dock. Ship completely reconditioned.

August 13, 1945

A few minutes ago, the news came that the WAR IS OVER! The celebration started immediately. The sky was completely lighted with search lights, fireworks, and flares. The sirens, fog horns and GQ sounds, etc, were and still are raising a heck of a racket. Everyone is laughing and wholly happy.

The old man rolled out a box of aged cigars and passed them around to a bunch of elated guys. I only wish that I had a camera to photograph the celebrations that are being carried on at this minute, but I will never forget it as long as I live nor will anyone here.

I'd give a million dollars to be home right now, though. I hope they get us there by Christmas. Expecting official word from Washington in a matter of hours. Now for a convertible and a woman!!

I am just going to forget that I was ever in the Navy and ever out there. At this very moment, I can hardly visualize that the things I recorded on the previous pages really happened. It seems more like a movie that you would see which would leave an impression on your mind, and then at a later date recall it again. Then you realize that it was just something you could take or leave. You were going into it again, but at the same time acknowledging the fact that you are kidding no one other than yourself.

MIT Meets LCI

(Concluded from page 22)

A day after our arrival at "Pearl", we went into drydock. It was indeed gratifying to see the dry dock and base engineers and crew call out for all to come and see what a jury rig we had worked out to pass as a steady rest bearing. It worked!

I Meet My Brother

Mother had written me that my brother Norman was proceeding to the Pacific as an Electrician's Mate striker, and asked me to be sure to keep an eye out for him; indeed, a needle in a haystack event. But, shortly after our arrival, I went to the Receiving Station at Aiea and found him!

His records had been lost by the ship in transit to Pearl, so they could not send him further, nor could they pay him, but they did give him a bunk and meals! The Lord must have been involved, indeed, for me to find him like that!

As a Commanding Officer, I was authorized to "sign" for him, and took him to my ship, then in dry dock. We spent a great several days together. My crew was very tolerant, as I fitted him out in one of my uniforms and took him to the Officer's Club where we had a great time swimming, eating

and relaxing. I suppose that we could have gotten ourselves into a sack of trouble with Norm "out of uniform", "masquerading as . . ." etc., etc., but with my crew looking the other way and with Norm's great personality, all went well. As I recall, he slept in a rack in the crew's quarters, the only rack available at the time. He messed, of course, with me and my officers. We had a great crew, so no problem.

Several days earlier, we reserved a telephone call to be set up so that we could talk to mother and dad. In 1946, telephones were not very technically advanced, and what lines existed were jammed as servicemen returned from the Pacific Theater. Our call traveled a zig-zag course to and through the states to Hamden, Connecticut, which the telephone companies had to plan in advance for a very specific calling time. It was all worth it.

Home - At Last!

The last leg of our stateside journey was to San Diego, with me as OTC (Officer in Tactical Command). We carried several officers and enlisted men transiting stateside in our "available space" as we had also done from Guam.

We made landfall, raising San Clemente Island and the Channel Islands, then the USA itself. It took all day since our first island sighting, to finally turning turn north, entering the channel around San Diego's Point Loma and be "welcomed home" by blinker and flag hoist from the station on our port side.

As we proceeded through the turn and to the Navy yard, we were abruptly welcomed back into the real world as a ferry dashed out and crossed our bow, very close aboard, violating all rules of the road and usual considerations! It was really a kind of a sad and emotional moment as I refused an offered push-in by a yard tug into our assigned alongside berth. I maneuvered with our own engines and gave the final orders:

"Double up and secure all lines; Secure the main engines"

Our war was over. We were home!

Echoes from the Past; Two LCI Tales of Humor and Heroism.

We're indebted to John R. Cox of Oregon City, Oregon who served aboard LCI 551 for digging into his files and finding some newspaper accounts about LCIs which were written during or immediately after World War II. One reflects something of the wacky things that happened and the other is a record of a heroic deed. John didn't identify the source of these two tales, but they were so good that I felt I should share them with you even though they could not be properly documented.

The first is a column from an unidentified newspaper and was written by Jerry Lane of La Crescenta, CA, who served aboard LCI 646z(R). Jerry's is the funny story:

I. Another Tale from the Pen of a WWII Vet

I am not a war buff. I have had my fill and then some. But even in the most dreadful circumstances, man has a way of forgetting the death and the danger around him and finding something to laugh at.

During World War II, ships going into the forward combat areas had to remove all stored paint because of its fire hazard. Now this rule caused few tears among members of the deck crew who were the ship's painters. But there was always some Chief Boatswain Mate who would hide a few gallons of paint below decks to "patch the rust spots on the outside of the hull."

I was assigned to an LCI that was only 153 feet long and 23 feet wide and had been converted into a mortar boat. And our crew increased from 23 to 60; we were a small ship with a (necessarily) close knit crew. We had been in the forward zone for some months having one assignment after another for support of troops on the beaches. And to keep us busy during the daylight hours we went out on the picket lines to help defend the ships in the anchorage during air raids. Since we also had a smoke generator on board we were often used to protect the ships in the harbor by

making clouds of white bellowing smoke.

During a lull of several days, old "Boats" looked over the side of the ship and drew a horrified gasp; he saw how badly our paint was rusting. In that moment he remembered where he had the paint. He ordered a scaffold built, then told four seamen to go over the side to remove rust and paint the spots.. All afternoon we could hear the "bang, bang, scrape, scrape" as they removed old paint spots and cleaned up the rust.

As we moved through the anchorage towards our evening smoke station, we passed our flagship when shouts of "How much?" greeted us. Cheers and yells came from anchored troop transports and finally as we passed a heavy cruiser that had just anchored for anti-aircraft protection, high up on the bridge came the roaring "How much?" amplified by a bull horn. No one could understand what was happening, so "Boats" looked over the side of the ship and made out huge seven foot letters painted on the hull – "For Sale - Cheap"

Needless to say, "Boats" was determined to put an end to the joke, so during the night he had the men responsible for their little stunt put over the side to paint out their words.

For days, we went around the anchorage to our smoke screen station, going out on bombardment assignments, out to the early warning picket line, and back into the anchorage at night with the word "Sold" emblazoned on the side.

Shortly afterwards, Tokyo Rose in her morning broadcasts, said ". .to the members of the ship 'Sold' we want you to enjoy this music because when you are dead, you are dead for a long time."

The side of the ship was never repainted so fast!

Then one evening during an air raid while making smoke to cover the anchorage, we heard a small voice call out to us from a small landing craft, "Can you help me? I have a load of ammo and I am sinking." Just then a bomb came whistling through the air and exploded near us. It caused no damage, but it certainly did fray our nerves.

"Either sink a little faster or get the hell out of here!" called our Chief Boats.

No matter what the situation was, someone would crack a joke, make a snappy remark, or sing a silly song. It was enough to make us laugh and believe that we were going to get through it.

II. Captain Courageous

Written while the war was still going on, this piece from an unidentified magazine describes an heroic action by an LCI Skipper equal to any. Perhaps some reader who served on the 468 will be able to tell us more about "Captain Courageous", LT G. D. Mayo of Somerville, Tennessee. The article is credited to Gail M. Raphael.

LCI's - Landing Craft Infantry = were among the smallest fighting ships in our Navy; hence, whether used to land troops on hostile beaches or converted into rocket-firing gunboats, they were among the most expendable. This is the story of a "spitkit" which sacrificed itself to save another, more precious ship - one of those many gallant exploits in the Pacific which didn't come to light until long after they happened.

An amphibious flotilla, en route to Guam, was surprised at sea by a Jap torpedo plane, and one of the aircraft culminated a beautiful run by launching a torpedo at a big LST on the outside of the formation. The torpedo knifed through the water directly at the lumbering craft, which was jam-packed with hundreds of marines.

Aboard was PFC Frank Brown of Grand Rapids, Michigan, now back home with a Presidential Unit citation, the Bronze Star, and a flock of battle ribbons. He says that not even the memories of bloody Iwo Jima are stronger than those of the terror of that awful moment at sea.

"That torpedo had only a couple of hundred yards to go," he recalls. "It was sure to hit us, because an LST is too unwieldy for quick maneuvering. We knew what it would do to a thin-skinned ship that had plenty of gasoline, oil and high explosives

aboard. But what we didn't reckon on was one of those tiny LCIs which was just about a hundred yards off our starboard side, and the split-second thinking and heroism of its skipper.

"That little gunboat was carrying high explosives, too, but it had only a handful of men aboard as compared to the hundreds we had. Sizing up the situation in a flash, the skipper headed his ship straight toward that torpedo.

"The missile had traveled about half its distance to us when the LCI intercepted it. There was a flash and a roar, and the little craft went up in smoke.

"I heard later that everybody in the forward part of the gunboat was killed, and most of the others wounded. But our troopship was safe. It all happened so suddenly that most of our men figured they had been saved by a freak accident."

"I also learned later that her skipper was Lieutenant G.D. Mayo, USNR, of Somerville, Tennessee. He is alive - was recently tracked down at Rice Institute, Houston, Texas, where he was doing a tour of stateside duty as instructor in the training corps unit. He doesn't talk like a hero.

"I really don't know whether intercepting that torpedo was intentional or not" Lieutenant Mayo asserts. "You see, at some time during the action I received a head injury, and there is a blank space in my memory covering the interception period. I remember ordering the guns of our ship, the LCI(G) 468, to bear on a plane I was making a run in our direction. The next thing I can recollect is lying in a pool of blood on a bunk in another ship. Naturally, I supposed I had been unconscious and had been relieved of my command by my Executive Officer, Ensign Edward Rubin. But surviving members of the crew said that following the torpedo hit, they picked me up off the deck of the conning station and I said I was all right.

"According to them, I observed we were in a sinking condition, and my orders for handling the situation were so entirely rational that Ensign Rubin didn't see fit to assume command. That's the story; you'll have to figure it out for yourself."

“On Watch”

68,000 men who trained there and went on to assault the beaches of North Africa, Guadalcanal, Luzon, Sicily, Bougainville, Anzio, Iwo Jima and Normandy. Chief sponsor of the memorial is the Calvert Maritime Museum, where the USS LCI National Association has established its official archives and where an LCI Model donated by the Association is prominently displayed in the exhibit commemorating the Amphibious Training Base.

Major Support from the Maryland Legislature

Major support for the project came in the form of a \$50,000 grant from the Maryland Legislature due to the efforts of Calvert County Commissioner Linda L. Kelley who almost single-handedly mounted the campaign to persuade the legislatures to fund this memorial so important to the people of the region and to the thousands of veterans who trained there.

An additional \$40,000 is needed to complete the project.

Commissioner Kelly, now an Affiliate Member of the USS LCI National Association, has long-time personal and family connections to the Navy and the Marine Corps has become an enthusiastic sponsor of the project since being recruited by Calvert Marine Museum staff member Karen Stone.

“At one of our annual ‘Cradle of Invasion’ celebrations, they asked me to emcee the 1940’s style show - costumed as Mae West!” Somehow that hooked the enthusiastic commissioner and she has gone on to work strenuously for the completion of this project.

“As the war years retreat further into the past,” said Kelley, “and the people who experienced them leave us in increasingly large numbers, preserving the memory of those years becomes ever more urgent.

“Amphibious Training Base Solomons played a major role in preparing the United States for its role in the war, and should not be forgotten. The majority of World War II celebrations focus on the European



Eyes fixed on the distant horizon; binoculars at the ready - The “Amphibious Man” will stand at the site of the Amphibious Training Base, Solomons Island, Maryland, the “Cradle of Invasions”

The eight-foot tall bronze statue, designed and executed by Maryland sculptor Tobias Menendez, will remind generations to come of the significant part played in the winning of WWII by the over



A memorial brick, commemorating your military service during World War II, has been placed on the veteran's plaza at the site of the WWII Amphibious Training Base memorial statue, "On Watch." This memorial brick is inscribed as follows:



**CPO WL Shiflett
U.S. Navy
1942 – 1945**



Please accept the thanks of a grateful Nation for your service to the United States of America by answering your Nation's call during that perilous time. We salute you!

Commemorative Brick Certificate

Theater, but ATB Solomons sent just as many people east as it did west. Therefore, "On Watch" will serve as a tribute to both theaters and all of the amphibious units and their work throughout the war, and will keep the memory of this piece of local history alive.

"Amphibious operations are still an important part of the armed forces and it all began here in Solomons - "the cradle of invasions"

Individual Veterans to be Remembered

Surrounding the bronze "On Watch" statue, will be a Veteran's Plaza featuring 1,000 commemorative bricks, each bearing the rank, name branch of service and beginning and ending years of the veteran's military service during WWII. The cost of each memorial brick will be \$100. Bricks may be ordered by downloading the application blank from the following website:

www.calvertmarinemuseum.com

and click on the "On Watch" link.

Certificates similar to third will be given to each purchaser of a memorial brick:

LCI Association Support for "On Watch"

When the Solomon's Island memorial to amphibious men was first announced, the USS LCI National Association was one of the first to offer financial support. President Jim Talbert presented the Calvert Maritime Museum with a check for \$1,000. Now, as the project nears completion, the officers and board members have voted to donate an additional \$3,000 to support the project.

Dedication of the memorial is planned for August, 2006.

Your Officers, Board of Directors, and State Directors

Time for some changes! Quite a few, in fact, so we thought we'd give a bit more space (and type size!) to the Officer's Page this time so that you can check out all the changes a little easier. Here's the new lineup:

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USS LCI NATIONAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION FORM

If you are not a member of the USS LCI National Association and would like to join, please complete this form and mail it with your first year's dues as indicated below:

Name: _____ LCI Served On: _____ Rank/Rate: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
Date of Birth: _____ / _____ Telephone: _____ E-Mail Address: _____
Occupation/Former Occupation: _____
Wife's Name: _____
Dues are \$15.00 per year, June 1 through May 31. Life Membership: \$75.00

Make Check payable to:

USS LCI NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

Send to:

Howard Clarkson, Treasurer
73 Grange Road
Troy, NY 12180

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