



"THE ELSIE ITEM"

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

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AUGUST 2008

ISSUE #64

LCI HISTORIANS UNCOVER GREAT PHOTOS IN THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES!

(See Page 16)



Photos obtained by Dennis Blocker from the National Archive (See key to photos, inside cover)

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. Affiliate 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, preferably by email (cummerj@bellsouth.net) or by regular mail to 302 Pinewood Cottage Lane, Blythewood, SC, 29016

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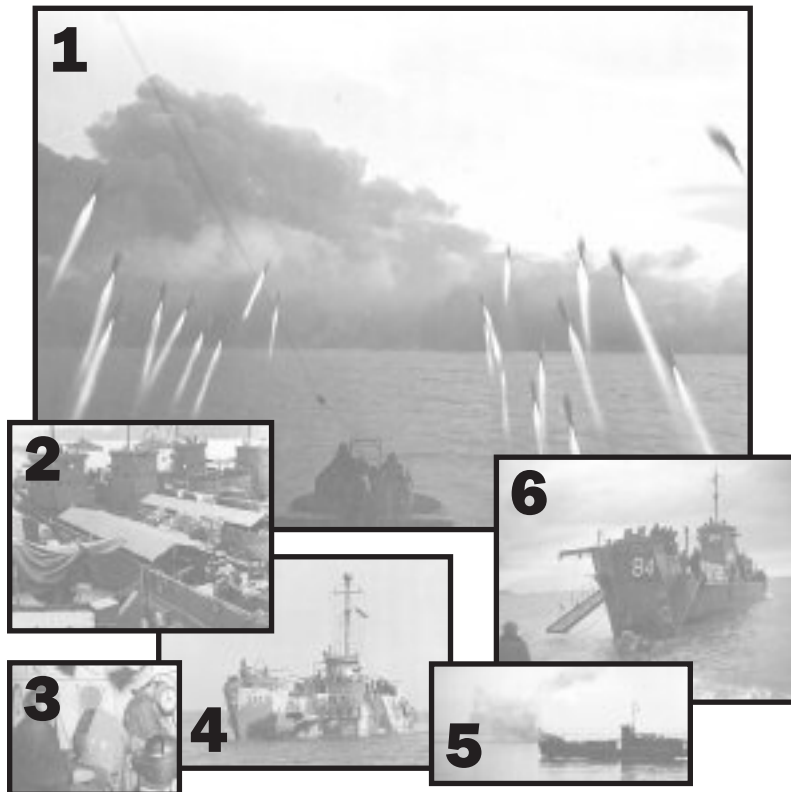
www.usslci.com

Our own website

www.amphibiousforces.com

For information on the 713 and Tiny's Ships Stores

About Our Cover



- 1** LCI(R)-338 rocketing Balikpapan Philippines
- 2** 28 May 1944 Biak Is. in the Schoutens picture from the supply ship of these LCI(R)s which are left to right the 73,34,430 and 31
- 3** LCI Sailor LCI-10 at Binnacle receiving instruction from officer--course towards Cherbourg, Normandy
- 4** LCI(G)-580
- 5** LCI(R)-341 pounds Leyte beaches with rockets
- 6** LCI(L)-84 D-Day training in England

Photos obtained by Dennis Blocker from the National Archive



A Word from the Editor

First, our apologies for the lateness of this issue. Without going into a litany of reasons and/or excuses, let us just say that we regret the delay and will do our best to keep on schedule for future issues.

It's been a busy time! The Mobile reunion, though not as heavily attended as some of the ones in the past when our membership numbers were considerably larger, was one of the most enjoyable that many of us recall.



Throughout this issue you'll see pictures and read about some of the developments growing out of the reunion.

We've also spent some time in discussion with the folks in the LSM/LSMR Association about our possible future together. LSM President David Miller reports their membership and future consideration as just about like our own, so the possibility of joint reunions is attractive. The LSMers will be meeting for their reunion in Savannah, GA, September 8-11. I will be meeting with them for discussion of these plans. If agreement is reached, it is possible that we could be meeting together in 2010. One of our differences to be settled is that their group has always had fall meetings while we have met in the spring. We do not anticipate that this will be a major obstacle.

Now a word about this issue: Our feature article is one that we think is appropriate and inspiring. It is a speech given by LCDR Jim Howe, grandson of an LCIer at a reunion of LCI Flotilla 24 reunion in November, 2002. Though it was given just as the action in Iraq were commencing, we think you will find it still relevant and worth reading. It emphasizes the bonds that exist between the Navy in which we served and the Navy of today.

And, of course, we've got a couple of good sea stories to share with you!

Amelia Earhart! The perils of underage enlistment! Read on!

Our best wishes to you all

-John Cummer



REMEMBERING MOBILE: ANOTHER GREAT REUNION!

Thanks to Hal Bleyhl for providing us with these great photos!



From our hotel we looked across the busy port of Mobile with the USS Alabama in the background



John Blair, LCI 1084, enjoyed showing off his uniform and entertaining our tour guides as we visited the Naval Air Museum, Pensacola



New board member Steve Dudrow and his lovely wife Gwen enjoy the banquet



Roy Langer, LCI 741, tries his hand at one of the 20mm guns aboard the USS Alabama

OUTSTANDING RESPONSE TO “NEW BEACHHEADS” CAMPAIGN!

The “New Beachheads” campaign authorized by the Board at its meeting in Mobile has produced a most heartening response with the results that our membership numbers and our finances are in a much improved state.

Life members were asked to make a donation equivalent to annual dues and all members were urged to purchase affiliate memberships for their sons, daughters, grandkids or anyone else they desired.

The results were outstanding:

- Life Members donated a total of \$6,850!
- Members gave 161 affiliate memberships bringing in \$4,025!

Processing the more than 400 pieces of mail that this campaign generated meant a significant increase in the services performed by Nehemiah Communications, Inc. for which we are very grateful. Our contract with them does not call for this kind of special effort and it was accomplished only by putting in many extra hours.

“These results truly show the commitment of our members to our Association and to the goal of continuing our fellowship just as long as possible,” commented President John Cummer. “It gives us added incentive to make the newsletter as good as possible, to plan for outstanding reunions, and to offer quality services to each of our shipmates.”

Additionally, during the past 60 days, we have received \$2,128.77 in revenue from the Mobile reunion, \$86.47 in income from our Certificate of Deposit investments and \$3,300 in regular membership renewals. Total income from the “New Beachheads” campaign and these other sources amounted to an impressive \$16,390.24.

“We want to express our deep gratitude to each of those who stepped up with special donations and to all those who worked hard to make the mail-out a success,” said Cummer.

In addition to the improvement to our finances, the enrollment of so many new affiliate members builds a solid basis for recruiting their continued membership beyond this year of gift membership. “We will make special effort to encourage each of them to continue with us,” said Cummer. “It is hoped that receiving the newsletter will persuade many of the value of maintaining this link with the World War II service of their loved one.”



A VERY SPECIAL "WELCOME ABOARD!"

We are especially delighted to welcome aboard these 161 new AFFILIATE MEMBERS!

Devon P. Alexander	Matthew Dumenigo	Charles Johnson Jr.
Jack Appleby	Steven Dumenigo	Abbie Jones
Cassandra Arndt	Wayne Dumenigo	Marilyn Jones
Peter Baker	Maree Eng	Robert E. Jones
Loren Balsam	Eric Essinger	Darci Jordan
Mat Belsito	EARL J. ESTEP	Rick Judemann
Randy Benton	Kevin J. Evans	Jacob Ketchum
Joseph Martin Brady	Kelly Flynn	Jill Kidder
David Brower	Louis L. Flynn	Conny Klausner
Dennis Brower	Todd Flynn	Fred Knight
Peggy Brusco	Ruth P. Foroyce	Cliff Koeller
Lansing Burns	Eric France	Jonathan Koppel
Bruce Caldwell	Gerald France	Frederick W. Langston
Keith Caldwell	Maureen France	Glenn P. Langston
Marilyn Comisky	Martin J. Gilbertson	Kathleen M. Langston
David Cook	Jim Griffin	Scott Langston
Carolyn Covell	Kenneth B. Hall	Judd H. Lees
David Crandall	Janette Hansen	John P. Leffingwell
Steve Crandall	Gary Heath	Marc Levine
Diane Cronin	Jeff R. Heath	Peter S. Little
Samuel Todd Culpepper	Michael Heath	Joseph Lo Guidice
Nancy Davis	Thomas Heath	Charles Lo Guidice III
Lance C. Deviney	Arthur P. Hermes	Charles Lo Guidice Jr.
Mark C. Deviney	Time Hewitt	Scott Ludwigsen
Robert D. Deviney	Brad Hicks	Douglas Lupsha
Robert D. Deviney Jr.	Gregory J. Higgins	Barry B. Mason
Susan A. Dillman	Dr. Michael Hilz	Jordan May
Jacquolyn Dodt	Alicia Jane Hofelich	Trevor May
Pat Dolan	Martin John Hofelich	Denise McClanahan
William C. Dubois	Wilfred W. Hoffman	Robert L. McCreary
Brian Dudrow	Harry E. Hunter	Miriam McGranahan
J.T. Dudrow	William Q. Huppmann	Richard McGranahan
Daniel Dumenigo	Mylisa Johnson	Robert McGranahan
David Dumenigo	Wesley Johnson	Ronald McGranahan

A. Brownlee McMahon
Marshall Metoyer
Patricia Metoyer
James Mettee
John A. Mettee
Robbert Mettee
Tom Mettee
Julie Meyers
Michael M. Murphy
William J. Murphy Jr.
Steve M. Nance
Ed Nelson
Ervin Nelson
Linda Neyman
Salvatore A. Noce
Gayle A. Oglesby Jr.
Ryan Oliver
Aimee M. Parsons
Donna D. Parsons
Ivor R. Parsons

Bernard S. Philipp
Robert E. Philipp
Bill Phillip
Heather P. Pike
Dennis C. Quinn
Sean Reardon
Dean Reid
Todd Rietmann
Patrick Roberts
Frank Schmidt
Gerard Schumeyer
Rita Scruton
Carol Secoy
Lisa Sherrill
Daniel Lee Shults
Dan Smethurst
Jared Smethurst
Paula D. Smith
Preston F. Smith
Lea Sorrells

Alan Stern
Paul Stern
Robert W. Stern
Susan A. Stern
David Swift
Tom Swift
Jack Tanz
Elinor L. Tawney
Gary L. Trautman
Taylor Unger
Kristen Van Sickle
Catherine Vastartis
Chris Wakild
Perry Warden
Eben Weber
David S. Yeater
Glen A. Yeater
John F. Yeater
Julie O. Yonge

JOHN FRANCE ELECTED VICE PRESIDENT

John France was unanimously elected to the office of Vice President at the business meeting at the Mobile reunion. Already serving as one of our LCI Historians, John is the first affiliate member elected to office in the Association. He joins Affiliates Joe Flynn and Steve Dudrow who previously have been appointed to the Board of Directors.

France is a Border Patrol sector commander in charge of one of the longest and busiest sections of the Mexican border. He has had 32 years of service with the Border Patrol.

He has had a long-time fascination with the history of LCIs and the men who served aboard them, fueled in no small part by his admiration for the service of his father, Frank France, aboard LCI 540.



PROUD AND HONORED: OUR NAVY AND THE NAVY TODAY

By
Lieutenant Commander Jim Howe,
U. S. Navy



LCDR Jim Howe Addresses Veterans of His Grandfather's LCI Flotilla

Frank Ruxlow, LCI 710, of Arnold, MO, shared with us this address given at the reunion of LCI Flotilla 24 in Clearwater, FL, November 9, 2002.

LCDR John Howe, an active duty Navy flier, eloquently paid tribute to the LCIs of World War II and expressed his great pride in the Navy in which he serves. LCDR Howe's remarks, given while the events of 9/11 were still fresh, still have significant impact for us today and are well worth reading now. They also speak to the importance of the bonds that we have with each other as shipmates.

LCDR Howe was introduced by his proud Grandfather, John Howe, who served as Commanding Officer of LCI 700.

Frank Ruxlow served in Flotilla 24 and was present in Clearwater to hear LCDR Howe. With his assistance, we have tried unsuccessfully to track LCDR Howe down in order to receive his permission to reproduce his speech. The best we have attained is to find a Navy news release telling of the last squadron to transit from the F-14 fighter to the new F-17. In it, a LCDR John Howe is identified as the skipper of this squadron. Since he gave the speech at the request of his LCI grandfather and since copies were made for Frank and the others present, we feel safe in assuming that LCDR Howe would not object to our sharing his comments here with other LCIs.



Gentlemen, let me begin by saying what a profound honor it is to be invited to speak tonight to such a distinguished group of patriots. I can't tell you how excited I am to be here and, in light of current world events, fortunate that the Navy's plans for Iraq are still just that!

As I prepared my speech for this evening, I had a very tough time deciding on a subject that would prove either entertaining or informative. Trust me, I will settle for one of the two – both would be too much to hope for! I finally decided on discussing a subject near to all of our hearts – The United States Navy, where we've been, where we are and what's in our future. But please realize that this will not be a history lesson. That was one of my many poor subjects at Annapolis. Instead, this will be more of a philosophical discussion with some factual tidbits thrown in for dramatic emphasis. Additionally, I'd like to add that, since my expertise is limited mostly to carrier aviation, the "what's in our future" portion may be weighed heavily that way!

In order to understand my audience better, I did a little research into the track record of LCI(L) Flotilla 24. Gentlemen, your history is truly illustrious. But, before I continue, a quick disclaimer, please: blame the U. S. Navy Historical Center for any inaccuracies!

Here we go: Between November 1944 and July 1945, Flotilla 24 participated in combat operations in the Maipia-Asia Islands; Leyte, P.I.; Mindanao and Sulu Seas, Mindoro, P.I.; Mariduque, P.I.; Luzon, P.I.; Cebu and Masbate, P.I.; Mindanao, P.I.; Sulu Archipelago and Borneo.

Your operational record is even more astounding:

- 864 Allied wounded were evacuated during combat operations
- 11 Allied ships were salvaged from bombings, fire or beachings
- 6 Allied pilots were recovered
- 374 Allied Army and Navy personnel were rescued from sinkings at sea

- 18 Enemy aircraft were destroyed
- 16 Enemy troopcraft were destroyed
- 65 Enemy mines were destroyed – until 21 July 1945 (apparently mines destroyed after that day were not important enough to count!)
- 1,094,030 total miles were cruised between July 1944 and July 1945.
- and finally, and certainly most impressively, 1,131,909 U. S., New Zealand and Australian troops were transported in forward and combat areas – with NO loss of life at sea!

Simply extraordinary!

With this record in mind, let's begin our discussion. It all began officially in October, 1775, when the second Continental Congress appointed Ezekiel Hopkins as Commander of the Continental Navy. The true fighting spirit of this new Navy would, however, come from a different man – a daring young Scot named John Paul Jones. Now, since I promised that this would not be a history lesson, let's fast forward to the Navy the men in this room are more familiar with – The U. S. Navy of World War II.

Our country was embroiled in a bitter World War. After letting an unchecked Nazi threat grow in the East and a greedy Japanese Empire expand in the Pacific, we were finally drawn into World War II after a cowardly and unprovoked attack on a sleepy Sunday morning in December, 1941. It was a day that shaped our history like no other.

The Navy of World War II played the most vital role in armed conflict of any Navy in history including up to the present day! The Battle of Midway in June, 1942, proved to be the turning point of the war in the Pacific. The Imperial Japanese Navy would spend the next three years tasting defeat at the hands of men like Halsey, Spruance and Ramage. The final surge took place with this very Flotilla in the center of the action. The Battle of Leyte Gulf would prove to be the final undoing of the Japanese



Empire. The Philippines would soon again be ours and now we were within striking distance of Japan itself.

World War II ended officially on August 14, 1945, (the day Japan announced the surrender), but the surrender document wasn't signed until September 2, 1945. The signing occurred on the battleship USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay. The same flag that had flown over the capital in Washington, D.C. on December 7, 1941, now waved over this tremendous battleship. The nine members of the Japanese delegation were formally dressed and were led onto the ship. General Douglas MacArthur, leader of the Pacific war, was there on the battleship to sign the document.

Some of the men in this very room were also there to witness this truly historic moment.

Over 400 B-29 Superfortresses flew over Tokyo and later some 20,000 troops were ashore in Japan. President Roosevelt proclaimed September 2, 1945, as V-J Day. Emperor Hirohito of Japan ordered his people to take in the Americans.

People all over the world celebrated. The war was over. One of the most disastrous, innovative and destructive of wars had come to an end. There was finally peace. And our Navy and Marine Corps were the vital element in this achievement.

I'd now like to continue forward to our present day Navy.

The Navy of today is, in a word, unparalleled. Never has there been a sea-going force that could change the world as the U. S. Navy of today. From our nuclear surface and subsurface Navy to the centerpiece of our Navy – the aircraft carrier – there has never been a force with such complete mastery of the sea and air. Even the mighty Spanish Armada of the 16th century and the Royal Navy of the 18th century never ruled like our Navy of today. Even after some serious draw downs during the previous

administration, our Navy remains all powerful and morale is high. We are ready for the challenges that loom on the horizon.

I'd like to share with you a story about my personal decision to be a part of this Navy.

It all began on Westover Road in Pittsburgh, PA, my father's childhood home. In reality it truly began sitting in my grandfather's lap. As a small child nothing fascinated me more than listening to my grandfather's stories of this Flotilla's action in the Pacific. I think all children are fascinated by things they can't truly fathom, and war is certainly something very few have ever comprehended.

I would make my Grandpa tell these stories over and over, always mesmerized by the same tales. As I grew, the questions would evolve also. From the simple, "How long was your ship?" and "How many men were in your crew?" to "Did you ever kill any Japs?" (that was the proper term during this particular war?) to the more complex "What was it like being away from Grandma and Uncle Jack for so long?" The answers to those questions never left me.

Jump forward with me to my early teens. I was watching the Army-Navy football game with my Dad and Grandfather who happened to be visiting at the time. Now, before I relay the rest of the story, it's important for you to know that my other Grandfather served nobly in World War II as well – but in that "other" service, the U. S. Army. He was a tank commander who saw action in the Battle of the Bulge and was there for the liberation of Dachau. Naturally there were some ties to the Army as well.

Anyway, it was near the end of the football game. I'm not sure who was winning. I'd like to think it was Navy. In any case, the game was in the final seconds of the fourth quarter and the TV cameras were panning along the Corp of Cadets. Even as a young man I was appalled. They had their coats and uniform tops off and were swinging them over their heads (OK – so maybe they were winning!) Then the cameras



turned to the Brigade of Midshipmen and I noticed they were standing stoically (more evidence of a defeat!) in the same uniform I'm wearing this evening. Then Grandpa said something that stuck with me: "Gentlemen to the end!" This event planted the seeds that eventually culminated in my decision to attend Annapolis and serve my country in the same Navy my Grandfather served.

It is impossible to speak of the Navy of today without some dialogue in regards to the events of last year and what may be in front of us. Gentlemen, many parallels have been drawn comparing what happened December 7, 1941, to the tragedies of September 11, 2001. When comparing horrific events of our past, trying to assign a quantitative value to them is petty. What is important is the big picture. The world has changed forever after September 11th, just as it did after that Sunday in 1941.

I think that a retired Marine Master Gunnery Sergeant says it quite eloquently in this open letter to his fellow Marines. If you'll allow me, let me read it to you:

I sat in a movie theater watching "Schindler's List" and asked myself, "Why didn't the Jews fight back?" Now I know why.

I sat in a movie theater watching "Pearl Harbor" and asked myself, "Why weren't we prepared?" Now I know why.

Civilized people cannot fathom, much less predict, the actions of evil people. On September 11th, dozens of capable airline passengers allowed themselves to be overpowered by a handful of poorly armed terrorists because they did not comprehend the depth of hatred that motivated their captors.

On September 11th, thousands of innocent people were murdered because too many Americans naively rejected the reality that some nations are dedicated to the dominance of others. Many political pundits, pacifists and media personnel want us to forget the carnage. They say we must focus on the bravery of the rescuers and ignore the cowardice of the killers. They implore us to understand the motivation of the

perpetrators. Major television stations have announced they will assist the healing process by not replaying devastating footage of the planes crashing into the Twin Towers.

I will not be manipulated.

I will not pretend to understand.

I will not forget.

I will not forget the liberal media who abused freedom of the press to kick our country when it was vulnerable and hurting.

I will not forget that CBS anchor Dan Rather preceded President Bush's address to the nation with the snide remark "No matter how you feel about him, he is still our president."

I will not forget that ABC TV anchor Peter Jennings questioned President Bush's motives for not returning immediately to Washington, DC, and commented, "We're all pretty skeptical and cynical about Washington."

And I will not forget that ABC's Mark Halperin warned if reporters weren't informed of every little detail of this war, they aren't "likely, nor should they be expected to, show deference."

I will not isolate myself from my fellow Americans by pretending that the attack on the USS Cole in Yeman was not an attack on the United States of America.

I will not be appeased with pointless, quick retaliatory strikes like those perfected by the previous administration.

I will not be influenced by so-called "anti-war demonstrators" who exploit the right of expression to chant anti-American obscenities.

I will not be softened by the wishful thinking of pacifists who chose reassurance over reality.

I will embrace the wise words of Prime Minister Tony Blair who told the Labor Party Conference, "They have no moral inhibition on the slaughter of the innocent. If they could have murdered, not 7,000 but 70,000, does anyone doubt they would have done so and rejoiced in it? There is no compromise possible with such people; no meeting of the minds; no point of understanding with such terror. Just a choice: defeat it or be defeated by it. And defeat it we must!"

I will force myself to hear the weeping, feel the helplessness, imagine the terror, sense the panic, smell the burning flesh, experience the



loss, remember the hatred.

I sat in a movie theater watching "Saving Private Ryan" and asked myself, "Where did they find the courage?" Now I know.

We have no choice. Living without liberty is not living.

Signed,

MGySgt. Ed Evans, USMC (Ret.)

*Not as lean, not as mean, but still a Marine!
Semper Fi!*

I feel this emotional letter accurately says many things. For one thing, God bless the Corps! Since they are officially under the umbrella of the Department of the Navy, we can safely bring them into our discussion. The United States Marine Corps is the most elite large scale fighting force in the world. It always has been and always will be. I have many good friends, Academy classmates and respected colleagues, who are Marines. Marines don't do politics; they do war. And they do it better than anyone.

Many people don't realize it, but Marine fighter squadrons deploy on Navy aircraft carriers right along with the Navy squadrons. And they do it well. And they do camaraderie well. Camaraderie, after all, is why we are here this evening.

Many people have asked me why I decided to stay in the Navy when I could have gotten out five years ago. And I won't lie – after my first two deployments, one failed marriage, and a general lack of respect for the Armed Services flowing from our capital, I was ready to hang it up. I even went so far as to get my airline pilot's license. But as I wrestled with my decision I realized something that I'm sure everyone in this room realized at one point as well. I was surrounded by the best people in the world.

These people would be captains of industry, professional athletes and community leaders if they weren't busy with the noblest vocation of all-serving one's country. I would later realize something else while I was manning my F-14 one night on a mission 200 miles into Iraq. I

know I would give my life for my wingman. And I knew full well that he would lay down his life for me. As much as I love my country, it is this bond that keeps one going. This kind of connection is found only in the armed services. It's the same bond that brings the men in this room together year after year. It is not cheaply attained and it is a union that is nearly impossible to explain to someone who has not experienced it. It is also a wondrous feeling to know that you are an important part of something greater than yourself. It gives you strength when you are weak, courage when you are frightened and fortitude when you are timid. It makes you better than you are. It is this feeling that courses through your Navy now during these turbulent times.

Gentlemen, your Navy is ready for war. We proved this unequivocally in Afghanistan, and remain vigilant in the Arabian Gulf for whatever may come to pass. I would also like to add that, contrary to media reports, no one I know is eager for war. It'll be our skins on the line and the men in this room understand that better than anyone. I've always found it ironic that the most vocal objections to war come from the people with the smallest chance of actually being impacted by it! The media and academics continually second-guess and question our senior leadership from the shroud of safety provided by the very people they are criticizing. But we are ready and we will win!

In closing, I would like to say thank you. The courage displayed by the men gathered here tonight when your country needed you most is the stuff of legends. It is only through your gallant sacrifices that our country continues to enjoy the freedoms we all hold so dear. It is my pledge to all of you, as a representative of my generation, that the lessons of your generation, the generation Tom Brokaw correctly knighted "the Greatest Generation," will not be forgotten. Thank you so much for having me here this evening. It was an honor I'll never forget.

Thank you.





*From the photos found in the National Archives:
Rear Admiral John J. Hall, aboard LCI 94 shouts encouragement to other Landing Craft*

1091 Volunteer Signs up for US Navy

By
Joe Flynn

Russell Alber, a 19 year old volunteer restoring the USS LCI(L)1091 in Eureka, CA, enjoyed that taste of the Navy so much that he has enlisted in the US Navy for four years. He was sworn in aboard the 1091 on June 7, 2008, and is now in basic training in Great Lakes Naval Training Center.

Russell was piped aboard the 1091 by Bos'n Herb Wall, who at 83 can still fit into his 1945 tailor-made Blues. Capt. Mark Nisson, USNR, and Board member of the Humboldt Bay Naval Air/Sea Museum, conducted the swearing in ceremony. Navy Recruiters David Stone and Jaime Ascencion were on hand to witness the occasion.

According to Capt. Ralph Davis, who donated the 1091 to the Museum, Russell is a good worker, who can weld, cut, and paint with the best of them and is a hard worker. He has been a regular volunteer for the past six months. His experience should help – he intends to go into the Seabees.

“He may have it all over other new sailors when it comes to chipping paint”, commented



L toR: Herb Wall; Navy Recruiters Jamie Ascencion and David Stone; Russell Alber and Capt Mark Nisson, USNR

Joe Flynn, “but old timers present for his swearing in ceremony advised him not to volunteer!”

“We will keep you posted on Russell’s address when he gets his duty station,” added Joe, “because we all remember mail call was the highlight of the day– especially if you got mail.”



"WE'RE GOING TO PORTLAND" SAY 1091 RESTORERS



LCI Board Member Joe Flynn, who has been serving as liason with the 1091 restorers for the LCI Association, reports that, undaunted by possible expense problems, LeRoy Marsh, board member of the Humbolt Bay Naval Sea and Air Museum, is optimistic about the possibility of LCI 1091 sailing to Portland for the 2009 LCI Reunion.

Tentative plans call for the 1091 to sail to Coos Bay, OR, on May 1, 2009 for haul out / drydock work on the bottom, which is estimated to take one week with an ETA in Portland of May 12. Earlier costs for yard work were around \$37,000. The shipyard at Coos Bay has worked on the 1091 before so has the advantage of familiarity with the vessel.

Discussions are underway about the possibility of LCIs or Affiliates to serve as crew members for the voyage. There are many concerns to be taken into consideration about such a plan so no definite announcements can be made at this time. More definite plans and details will be included in the next issue of *Elsie Item*.

Major expenses for the voyage would be for the diesel fuel needed and for some necessary work to be done on the bottom.

Doc Davis, former owner of the 1091, estimates they will need about 6,000 gallons of diesel fuel for the trip. Marsh reports that they have about 4,000 gallons aboard. As for the remaining 2,000 gallons of fuel, Marsh said they are working with a local fuel supplier who has agreed to send a brochure along with future billings requesting that customers "over-pay" their bill to provide fuel for the 1091 trip to Portland.

Other fund raising efforts will obviously be necessary. Our LCI National Association will be involved, but donations from individual members are also encouraged. They should be sent to

Humboldt Bay Naval Air Sea/Museum
Attn: LeRoy Marsh, Project Director
USS LCI(L) 1091
P.O. Box 111
Fields Landing, CA 95537



LCI Historians Hit a Gold Mine in Great Photos

"It was a gold mine!" exclaimed Dennis Blocker as he told LCIers at the Mobile Reunion of the results of the foray he and Roger Grey made on the National Archives in Washington, D.C., in search for LCI photos.

Acting on the suggestion of LCI Pacific Area Historian Dennis Blocker, the Board authorized funding for the search and the results far surpassed expectations.

"There in a room big enough to hold a banquet for about two hundred people was row upon row of index card files containing reference numbers for pictures on anything you could imagine," said Dennis. "We were pleasantly surprised to see that the Navy had such a large quantity of LCI pictures."

Armed with scanners, Blocker and Grey spent three days scanning as many pictures as they could. They left the Archives with almost eight hundred pictures of LCI's from every theater of operations. Time prohibited them from searching dozens and dozens of other files. The Board of Directors will consider funding future expeditions to the Archives.

"What is amazing is that we just scratched the surface," said Dennis.

The objective in this search was to retrieve and index the pictures for our archives and to make them as available as possible to LCIers. Plans are still being worked out for ordering photos through "Tiny's Ship's Stores", at the Amphibious Forces National Museum, but for now, Dennis is offering to send requested photos for \$2.00 to cover postage. LCIers with computer availability will be in the best position to obtain pictures via disc, but a method for making hard copy photos available will be worked out. For now Dennis advises that the best way to get pictures is to write to him directly telling him:



***Seeing Photos they have never seen before!
At the Mobile Reunion, LCIers are fascinated
by photos from the National Archives.
Standing, l to r Royal Wetzel, John Reulet,
Kay Erwin, J. R.Reid, Dean Reid
Seated: Lewis Moyle, Dennis Blocker,
Jim Aydelotte***

- What LCI's you served on.
- What invasions you were in on. (In the event they do not have your particular LCI they may still have pictures of your invasion.)
- If you would like nice shots of anonymous LCI's at sea.
- What medium you would like for your photos—disc or hard copy.

Dennis can be reached at this address:

2847 Cedar Plain
San Antonio, TX. 78245
(210) 673-8854

Photos from this source will be also be featured in future issues of *Elsie Item*..



FRED LANGSTON, QM1C

AN INDOMITABLE LCler!

You who have access to the internet may have received emails entitled "The LCI Net" ,from Fred Langston who served as Quartermaster aboard LCI 405. In addition to news and comments that he has collected on his own, Fred also gives great coverage on our national association, drawing from items in our newsletter. We've been grateful to him for this service. Fred has been off the internet for some time but recently came back on and, along with his usual informative and cheerful comments, made explanation for his absence. As we read it, we were moved by his courage and spirit as he has faced some of life's greatest challenges. We pass this on to you in salute to Fred and as inspiration to all the rest of us. May we reflect his great heart and indomitable courage as we face whatever trials come our way.

Fred writes:

"A personal note from the Ships's Log: The USS LCI net has been in dry dock for quite some time. There has been a lot of rocks and shoals in the main channel for your editor and the buoys have not been well marked. Moved from Washington State back to California to be near family ... Lost our home in the San Diego County wildfires. (She burnt right down to the keel). Ships Company (my wife and I and our little dog) just cast off and got underway in our car with just the uniform of the day we had on after church ... tied up to a dock in an uncomfortable port-of-call for R&R in San Diego ... stayed in that port awhile and then

got underway back to our home port (Ramona, CA) where our crews quarters was a small apartment ... then on April 26, 2008 (her birthday) my lifetime shipmate (57 years) took Leave of Absence to be with the Lord with the agreement that she will be on the Quarterdeck to pipe me aboard when I show up for that last Roll Call. I hope to signal to all hands that the USS LCI Net will be steady on course and "all engines ahead standard" for the duration of the next cruise, and/or as long as I can figure out how to operate this PC contraption. Please advise me of those who would like to be on the LCI.Net so that I can provide a copy to each person's home port. Again, your participation in the LCI.Net is invited. Fred, QM1C, USS LCI(L) 605"

Should you wish to reach Fred, his email address is: fredlangston@cox.net; mailing address is POB 955, Boulevard, CA 91905. Telephone 760/504-5888



BOB PETIT'S STORY: THE TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS OF AN UNDERAGE LCI SAILOR!

We're indebted to Vaughn Hampton for passing on to us this story of a very young LCler.

Vaughn received the full story of B L. Petit's WWII experience from Vito Colamussi, of LCI (G) 77 and felt that, since his story includes sailing in an LCI in the Pacific, our readers might enjoy the account.

Bob's story is long and full of lots of interesting detail, but the part about how he enlisted at the tender age of fourteen and his struggle to get his just deserts after returning from combat aboard LCI 750 is what we want to share with you. Bob is now retired and living in Leesburg, Virginia.

Here, abbreviated and edited, is Bob's story :

I was born in Houston, Texas, in 1928. In 1942, I falsified my age to get into the U.S. Navy, something that was not uncommon at that time. I went from Apprentice Seaman at the age of thirteen to Electrician's Mate First Class when, at the end of World War II, I was unceremoniously kicked out of the Navy at the ripe old age of sixteen.

In 1942, I was still in junior high school when a friend of mine, Richard Jenke, who was fifteen years old, and I got the idea that we would like to enlist in the Navy. Richard, who was a little bit older and a little bit bolder than I, went down to the Post Office in downtown Houston, enlisted and was shipped off to San Diego. I started thinking that, if Richard could do it, I could do it. After all, I was bigger than Richard by a long shot. At thirteen, I was 5-feet, 8-inches tall and weighed 143 lbs. So on 22 December 1942, I went down to the Navy recruiter,

The recruiters had me fill out some papers and told me to have my parents sign them. With my father being dead, the only person who could sign was my mother. When I told her what I had done she was reluctant to sign. However, I figured I could win her over, so I quit school and was really doing nothing, mostly to encourage her to sign the papers. She consulted with two of my uncles. Between the two of them they advised her to go ahead and sign the papers, which she did. They probably thought the Navy would quickly become aware of my age and send me home.

I received my orders in January 1943, and was sworn into the Navy with a large contingent of other boys from Houston, most of who were quite a bit older than I was. We filed out of the Post Office into the middle of the street and marched to the train station. All along the way the street was lined with people clapping and waving. We boarded the train and hung out of the windows talking, laughing and joking until we finally got underway.

Our train arrived in San Diego on 8 January 1943. Busses took us to the Naval Training Station where we would do our boot camp. Recruits who were already there greeted us with, "You'll be sorry! You'll be sorry!" That first night we were put in a large barracks and throughout the night you could here the sniffles of boys who were a long way from home and probably had never been away from home before.

I wasn't bothered by that because I was too excited and was looking forward to the next



day. I wasn't homesick then, but I did experience it later when I went home on leave, and then had to go overseas.

While I was in boot camp, I took an aptitude test but, with only an eighth grade education, I didn't do very well. So instead of going to a school after boot camp, I was sent off to a ship. In the long run it didn't matter, because once I got aboard ship I got the necessary books, studied them and, before I left service, was able to move up to Electrician's Mate, First Class without the school.

After boot camp and five days leave plus travel time, I returned to San Diego. Along with some of the boys who were in my company in boot camp, I was sent to San Pedro, California, and transferred on 9 April to the *USS Tallulah, AO-50*—a fleet oiler. Within thirty minutes of reporting aboard, we were underway, headed for the South Pacific.

My first assignment on the ship was to take the hawser lines that had tied the ship to the dock and coil them down in the forward hold. I was down there with some other seaman coiling these lines when we passed the breakwater in San Pedro. I felt the ship surge up, then down, up, then down, and I started getting seasick almost immediately. Of course, I didn't know you were supposed to go to the lee side of the ship to throw up. I went to the windward side, and it all blew back in my face. I was so sick I wanted to die. I was laying on the cargo deck with water breaking over me, hoping I would die. But after about the third day I started feeling better.

(Editor's note: Petit served about the USS Tallulah from April of 1943, until June of 1944, making several crossings of the Pacific and participating in combat operations in the Marshall and Gilbert Islands.. Wanting more of a direct combat role, he had been trying to get re-assigned to a destroyer, but the needs of the Navy decreed otherwise, so he was assigned to an LCI)

While at Receiving Station, San Diego, I received orders to report aboard USS LCI (L) 750. I reported on board on 1 June 1944. By war's end, LCI 750 had won two battle stars for participating in operations in Western New Guinea, Moritai Island, and the landings in the Philippines. But because she wasn't a destroyer I wasn't too happy about my new assignment.

After I went aboard, we took on supplies, made various repairs and made practice landings on beaches around San Diego. My beaching station was on the stern, where I was responsible for operating the stern winch which was used for dropping and taking in the stern anchor. This anchor was needed to pull the ship off the beach after the troops were ashore. On 12 June 1944, we took on ammunition along with some Navy personnel for transport to a Receiving Station at Pearl Harbor. We spent a few days at Pearl before leaving on 7 July for the South Pacific to participate in the invasion of the Philippines.

After the invasion, we continued to move troops and supplies around the Philippines throughout June, and in July we departed the Philippines for Pearl Harbor with LCI Flotilla 8, Division 45. We arrived at Pearl Harbor on 5 August 1945, and tied up at West Loch. Our captain, LT. White, was detached from the ship, and LTJG L.M. Collins assumed command. He was formerly the executive officer.

On 8 August, we were underway for San Diego. On 14 August, our ship's log read, "Official: V.J. Day! War with Japan is over." On 19 August, we entered San Pedro Bay, California. I was given twenty-seven days of leave and returned home to Houston. - a sixteen-year-old Electrician's Mate First Class with combat experience!

After returning from our leaves, most of the crew was transferred to receiving stations for further assignment. In September, we took on a new commanding officer, Lieutenant, Junior Grade C.A. Simmons. On 7 October, the remain-



ing crew, including myself, was on the way to San Francisco.

I started thinking about getting back home and going to school, but I didn't have enough points for discharge. I didn't want to sit around San Francisco Bay doing nothing, so I started thinking of ways I could get out. It occurred to me that if my underage enlistment were made known, they might just go ahead and discharge me.

I wrote to my mother and asked her to send me my birth certificate. When it arrived, I took it to my commanding officer and presented it to him, telling him I was only sixteen years old. Even though I was an Electrician's Mate First Class and had served almost three years in the navy, I was not yet old enough officially to be a member of the United States Navy.

The skipper was taken aback but said he would consult with the powers that be on Treasure Island. I told him I wanted this kept confidential because I didn't want any of the crew to know about my age. Mr. Simmons consulted with the Navy personnel ashore with the result that on 29 October 1945, I was transferred to the receiving barracks on Treasure Island. From Treasure Island I received orders to report to Camp Wallace, Texas, which was a separation center. I didn't know what my orders said. I was just hoping that I would be discharged and nothing would be said about my age.

Upon arrival at Camp Wallace, everything seemed to be going fine for a day or so. Then, when I was in line with a bunch of other guys waiting for the mustering out physical exam, an enlisted man came down through the ranks looking for Bob Pettit. I said, "I'm he." He said, "Follow me. The lieutenant wants to talk to you."

I went up to the Lieutenant's office, and he had my orders in front of him. He was very nasty and very irate that I lied about my age to get into the service. He cussed me up one

side and down the other, and said he couldn't give me a discharge. He said all he could give me was a letter that said I had served for two year, ten months, and some odd days, and had achieved the rank of Electrician's Mate First Class, and that my enlistment was null and void. That was a disaster, because I knew I would not get the G.I. Bill, mustering out pay or anything. He just wanted to dump me out, and that would be the end of it.

He even wanted to take my uniform away from me, but I said, "Then I'll have to go home naked."

He said, "Okay, wear it home, but send it back to us when you get home. Everything else in your sea bag you'll have to turn over to the Shore Patrol."

The Shore Patrol drove me out to the gate and I started hitch hiking to Houston. I arrived home with no discharge papers but determined to go to college some way. Within a day or so of leaving the Navy, and while I was still in uniform, I answered a Western Electric Company employment ad in the paper. I had an interview; mind you I was still in uniform. I told the interviewer my story and what my experience was, and he said, "We would really like to hire you but the problem is we can't prove that you are in the service or that you are not in the service. So our hands are tied."

I went home with my problem and discussed it with my Uncle Dock Pettit, who had been in the Navy in World War I. He said, "Why don't you go to the County Servicemen's Center and talk to Jesse Caveness?" (Mr. Caveness, the service officer, was a friend of the family. He attended the same church as my family.) I went to see Mr. Caveness and told him what had happened to me. He was irate that the Navy would do what it had done, and got busy on the problem.

Mr. Caveness wrote a letter to the Bureau of Naval Personnel citing my story. In addition, he notified all the newspapers and our con-



gressman, who at the time was Albert Thomas. The newspapers flocked to this story and spread it nationwide. As a result, I was getting phone calls from everywhere, but mostly from young girls. I even got money from groups who said, "If the Navy won't send you to college, maybe we can help."

I couldn't walk down the street without people recognizing me. It took a little while, and there were ongoing stories in the newspapers as to what the status of my situation was. Then I got a call from a couple of oilmen in Houston and they asked me to come and see them.

"Don't worry about it", they told me, "We are proud of what you have done and, if you don't get the GI Bill, we'll see that you go to college." I thought it was great that they would take an interest in my situation.

Then I received a telegram from Congressman Albert Thomas. He said he had taken my case up with the Navy Department, and that they had promised to do something about it. Later, I received another telegram from Congressman Thomas, saying he was sending me an honorable discharge signed by none other than Vice Admiral Lewis Denfield, Chief of the Bureau of Naval Personnel. So with the help of Jesse Caveness and Congressman Thomas, I got my honorable discharge and was able to go to college on the G.I. Bill.

I started to high school even though I had never graduated from junior high school. Even though there were other veterans there, the girls singled me out and I got a lot of attention while trying to be a student. Then I realized that I was using up too much of my G.I. Bill going to high school during the day, so I enrolled in evening classes, which I paid for out of my own pocket, and got a job during the day working for the Houston Lighting and Power Company. I continued that for about three years. I graduated from high school in 1948. I was accepted to Texas A&M University and started classes in the fall of

1948.

At the time, Texas A&M was all male and military. I chose not to be in the cadet corps, having already been in the military. I was studying electrical engineering and needed all the study time I could get. I graduated with a BS. Degree in Electrical Engineering in May 1952.

After graduation, I received a number of employment offers, and selected Western Electric, the company that couldn't hire me when I got out of the Navy because I didn't have a discharge. I worked for them as a Field Engineer helping the Navy install and maintain radar gun fire control systems aboard Navy vessels. I also taught radar and wrote training manuals for Navy instructors. I was sent to the U.S. Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean for six months, to go from ship to ship, making sure the equipment was functioning properly.

I joined a couple of other companies after that and went to Texas Instruments in 1959. I left them in 1972 and returned in 1982. I retired from Texas Instruments for good in 1991.

My time in the Navy was the most rewarding of my life, with the possible exception of the four years I spent at Texas A&M University. I adjusted very easily to Navy life during the war in spite of my age, but I now understand how much more difficult it must have been for the older sailors who had wives and children. I learned so much so fast. Having risen to the rating of first class petty officer by the age of sixteen gave me a real sense of accomplishment and a very high degree of self-confidence that has helped me greatly throughout life. I am honored to have served in the U.S. Navy, and am proud to consider myself a member of the Navy family. I have continued to work with the Navy throughout my career, highlighted by those six months with the U.S. Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean as a Western Electric Electronics Field Engineer on radar gun fire control systems.



Jim McCarthy Sails for His Final Home Port

Though space considerations prohibit publishing obituaries of all our deceased shipmates, we do want to honor one who has made significant contributions to our Association.

James E. McCarthy, one of the founding members of the USS LCI National Association and long-time Director for California, passed away on April 6, 2008, at the California Veteran's Home in Chula Vista, CA, at the age of 82 - distributing LCI calendars to the end!

Jim was born in Plymouth, PA, and after graduating from high school in 1943, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy and had his basic training at Sampson, NY, followed by amphibious training in Little Creek, VA, and Solomon, MD. Assigned to LCI(L) 685 in Boston, MA, Jim sailed with the ship through the Panama Canal to Bora Bora to take part in the Pacific Campaigns.

His ship was in the initial invasion of Leyte on Oct. 20, 1944, landing Infantry from the Army and Marines. Later the 685 took part in invasions of all the major islands in the Philippines. For his wartime service, Jim received four Bronze Battle Stars, the Philippine Liberation Medal, China Service Medal and Asian Service Medal with clasp.

Discharged from the Navy, Jim made his home in California where in 1948, he met and married Sharmel Mickelsen. They had four sons, Joe, Tim, Pat, and Dano. In civilian life, Jim pursued a career in safety engineering for the next 55 years. During that time he was Resident Safety Construction Engineer for many of San Diego's prominent high rise buildings. The achievement, of which he was most proud, was the fact that there were no fatalities during construction on any of the buildings where he served as Safety Engineer.

In 1995 Jim was instrumental in having the USS LCI(L)1091, sail from its home port of Eureka, CA, to San Diego for a national reunion of LCI sailors. The ship made the 900 mile voyage under Captain and owner Ralph Davis of Eureka and crewed by WW II LCI sailors. During the open house in San Diego, the 1091 hosted over 6,000 visitors.

Jim will also be remembered for the many reunions he arranged for LCI sailors in Eureka, CA; and for the annual luncheons in Oceanside, CA, to commemorate Pearl Harbor Day.

One of his outstanding contributions was production of LCI calendars which he researched, developed and printed along with LeRoy Olsen (LCI 966) of Boise, ID. Beginning in 2002, the calendars featured photos of LCI's in action along with dates and locations of all amphibious invasions and dates. They made special note of when LCI's were lost to enemy fire.

Jim is survived by his sons Joe of Olathe, KA; Tim, of La Mesa, CA; Pat, of Mountain View, CA; and Dano, of La Mesa, CA; eight grandchildren and numerous great-grandchildren.

Donations in memory of Jim may be made for the restoration of the USS(L)1091, the Flagship of the USS LCI National Association, at the Humboldt Bay Naval Sea/Air Museum, P.O. Box 111, Fields Landing, CA, 95537.



IN MEMORIAM

*"Almighty and eternal God, from whose love we cannot be parted, either by death or life;
hear our prayers and thanksgiving for those whom we here remember. Grant unto
sorrowing family and shipmates the blessing of your peace that passeth understanding"*

LCI 22
Dean Shipp

LCI 362
Patrick R. McCabe

LCI 638
John W. Nicks, Jr.

LCI 24
Ronald H. Smith

LCI 441
Robert P. Laclede

LCI 638
Grant V. Waldo

LCI 31
John R. Colli

LCI 452
John J. Wilkes

LCI 685
James E. McCarthy

LCI 31
William Harrison

LCI 465
Charles W. Martz

LCI 702
Arthur A. Corarito

LCI 31
Wilber Pace

LCI 474
Timothy J. Sullivan

LCI 740
David Schell

LCI 46
Kendall L. Vinton

LCI 484(F)
Ronald Macomber

LCI 784
Orrin W. Perry, Jr.

LCI 131 and 412
George A. Lynde

LCI 511
Gordon J. Kus

LCI 795
Francis A. Partyka

LCI 209
Donald F. McCrossen

LCI 542
James Lazarus

LCI 802
Marion D. Carbiener

LCI 222
Alfred E. Warm

LCI 598
John Richard Curry

LCI 814
Jesse Grantham

LCI 340
Benjamin Hunter

LCI 613
William H. Miller

LCI 950
Jesse A. Meeler

LCI 344
Paul L. Thompson

LCI 638
Joseph D. Graham



Did an LCler Meet Natives on Saipan Who had Seen Amelia Earhart?



***Clyde Melton's ship, the 463, sits high and dry in Buckner Bay, Okinawa,
after the great 9 October 1945 typhoon***

Well,. Shipmates, here's a sea story for you to yarn over a bit!!

Tom Melton of Cross Plains, Texas, and the son of Clyde Melton, who served aboard LCI 463 passed on to us his recollections of stories his now-deceased father told. If they could be substantiated, they would add more fuel to those interesting theories you have undoubtedly heard about what really happened to Amelia Earhart. What Tom told us was rather vague as he was not able to recall exactly what his father had told him, but he wanted to check it out to see if any of his Dad's shipmates could recall anything like it.

You undoubtedly remember the intriguing and mysterious story of how famed aviatrix Amelia Earhart and her navigator, Fred Noonan, disappeared on July 1, 1937, as they were somewhere in the vicinity of the Phoenix Islands southwest of Hawaii. No wreckage or other trace of the fliers or their airplane has been found to date. One theory is that they – or at least Amelia – survived the crash and were taken to Saipan where they were held prisoner by Japan. This theory ties in with another that they had been recruited by the U. S. Government to fly over Truk and other Japanese bases to obtain photographic intelligence con-



cerning those highly secret places.

Clyde Melton told his son Tom that, while on Saipan, he had spoken with natives who told him they saw and spoke with Amelia Earhart. The natives described the lady they talked with as having light hair.

Tom also sent a print-out of a website (<http://www.cnmi-guide.com/history/ww2/amelia/mainamelia.html>) dealing with Earhart's disappearance. In it is this reference to natives purportedly seeing her:

"Forty years after the disappearance of Amelia Earhart, four Chamorro women were interviewed on Saipan by a Catholic Priest in November 1977. Their names have been intentionally omitted from this brief summary for obvious reasons. Their comments and recollections of the late thirties were provided to a U. S. Navy Admiral on Guam for forwarding to Washington. Summarizing the interviews, one woman stated that when she was a young girl, sometime around 1937 or '38, a foreign woman, thin in stature with brown hair - cut short similar to that of a man, would sometimes pass her house and on one occasion, looked "sickly" with one side of her body and one hand burned. The foreign woman, with whom the Chamorro lady could not communicate as she did not speak English at the time, was believed to be staying in a nearby building referred to by the local people as a hotel. This woman gave a ring with a "white" stone in it along with some pleasant smelling balsam to the young Chamorro girl. Later, two Chamorro girls were asked to make two wreaths and, when asked why - the girls were told that the "American" had died of "amoeba" (dysentery or diarrhea).

The Chamorro woman related that when the foreign woman was alive she was guarded. The other Chamorro woman recalled that as a child she remembered hearing that a plane had crashed "southwest of us" and the pilot was a woman. The Chamorro recalled that the Japanese were "very startled" because she was

piloting the plane.

Still another Chamorro woman, when interviewed stated, "It could be 1939 or something like that when I first heard there was a woman spy who came to Saipan but they said she was most likely killed. But I did hear that an American woman was caught spying".

Still another Chamorro woman when interviewed recalled, "Hearing about a plane that crashed, the topic of conversation in Saipan. I remembered going to church, I wanted to light a candle for my husband because a battleship was scheduled to come into port about 10 o'clock in the morning. The plane was exhibited and that was when the Japanese made an announcement to all the people that those who wanted to see an airplane may come and see it. That was the year 1937 or 1938."

"There were talks (sic.) about the plane having fallen down (sic.) in the island south of us in Micronesia. I know of a ring that belonged to that woman. I don't know what ever happened to it".

In an attempt to find some sort of corroboration for this vaguely-recalled memory of what Tom's father had told him, I tried contacting the two members of the LCI Association who are listed as having served aboard the 463. I was able to talk to one, Manuel Perez of Sacramento, California. Manny remembered Clyde—particularly that he was underage "about 14 or 15"—and that he was discharged and sent home sometime after the 463 was on Saipan. As far as meeting natives who claimed to have seen Amelia Earhart on Saipan, Manny said that he had not heard that story before. Attempts to locate the one other crew member of the 463, Bernardino Rossi, of Ardmore, Pennsylvania, have not yet been successful.

For the record, the website of the Naval Historical Center, Washington, D.C. has this to say from official Navy records:



On July 2, 1937 at 0000 GMT, Earhart and Noonan took off from Lae. Their intended destination was Howland Island, a tiny piece of land a few miles long, 20 feet high and 2,556 miles away. Their last positive position report and sighting were over the Nukumanu Islands, about 800 miles into the flight. The U.S. Coast Guard cutter USCGC Itasca was on station near Howland, assigned on short notice to communicate with Earhart's plane and guide her to the island once she arrived in the vicinity.

But it soon became evident that Earhart and Noonan had little practical knowledge of the use of radio navigation. The frequencies Earhart was using were not well suited to direction finding (in fact, she had left behind the lower-frequency reception and transmission equipment which might have enabled Itasca to locate her), and the reception quality of her transmissions was poor. After six hours of frustrating attempts at two-way communications, contact was lost.

A coordinated search by the Navy and Coast Guard was organized and no physical evidence of the flyers or their plane was ever found. Earhart and Noonan's fate has been the subject of many rumors and allegations which were

never substantiated. Modern analysis indicates that after passing the Nukumanu Islands, Earhart began to vector off course, unwittingly heading for a point about 100 miles NNW of Howland. A few hours before their estimated arrival time Noonan calculated a "sun line," but without a successful, radio-frequency range calculation, a precise "fix" on the plane's location could not be established. Researchers generally believe that the plane ran out of fuel and that Earhart and Noonan perished at sea.

Whether or not this recollection of the son of an LCler has any merit, it is beyond dispute that Clyde Melton's LCI was a veteran of many hard-fought engagements in the Pacific. According to the listing of war records of all LCIs, contained in Volume II of our USS LCI National Association Yearbook, the 463 participated in actions at Kwajalein and Eniwetok Atolls in the Marshall Islands and Saipan, Guam and Tinian in the Marianas between 31 January and 28 July, 1944. In September/October of that same year she participated in the capture and occupation of the southern Palau Islands. Between 11 September 1944 and 2 December 1945 she was part of the occupational forces in China.

Welcome Aboard, Chaplain Mike Gatton!

We're happy to announce the appointment of "Mike" Gatton, son of John L. Gatton, LCI 96, as a second Chaplain to serve alongside veteran David Cox.

"I'm happy to serve in any way I can", was his reply when President John Cummer approached him during the Mobile reunion about serving alongside Cox.

Earl Henshaw, Bainbridge, GA, served for many years as our second chaplain until forced to step down due to ill health.

Mike serves a congregation of the Church of Christ in Louisville, KY.

He accompanied his father and other LCler on the trip to England and France celebrating the 60th anniversary of D-Day in 2004.



UPCOMING STATE AND LOCAL REUNIONS

OHIO

State Director Jim Aydelotte announces the 2008 Ohio reunion to be held at the Ramada Plaza Hotel, Columbus, Ohio, September 9–11.

With the able assistance of Alisa Pusateri, Secretary, and Diane Churchill, Treasurer, Jim has planned for a hospitality suite featuring videos of LCIs in action, other activities such as shopping tours, an auction of LCI items, and a gala banquet.

A block of rooms has been reserved at the price of \$79 per night. “A good deal these days!” says Jim.

Reservations can be made at the Ramada Plaza Hotel, 4900 Sinclair Road, Columbus, OH, 43229. Telephone (614) 846-0300, Be sure to tell them you are with the LCI group.

CALIFORNIA

State Director Joe Flynn announces that California is having two reunions plus a luncheon.

In view of the length of the State and the cost of fuel, it has been decided to have the Eureka LCI Reunion, September 23–25, 2008 as per usual as well as a second reunion in San Diego, September 9–11.

At the Eureka reunion, attendees will have lunch aboard the 1091 and will be able to check on the restoration in progress. If you are interested in attending, contact LeRoy Marsh, P.O. Box 111, Fields Landing CA 95537

For the San Diego reunion, plans are being made to tour the carrier *USS Midway*, have a San Diego bay cruise and a dinner. The Midway now has handicap access to the hanger and flight decks. For further information and to indicate that you will be attending, contact Joe Flynn, 627 El Cajon, CA 92019, telephone 61/588-7078

And on December 6th, the Pearl Harbor luncheon will be held. Contact Joe Flynn for details.



***A great shot of LCI 342;
Taken from an unknown LCI***



CONNIE MULHERIN: MASTER SEA STORY TELLER!

Connie Mulherin loves the Navy!

There's no doubt about it, particularly after reading his beautifully written, extraordinarily detailed account of his career in the Navy during WWII. He tells it all – from boot camp to service school to service aboard LCI (G) 561 to playing basketball for the Navy! We'll be sharing more from Connie's tales in future issues, but this one is just too good to wait.

The scene is Key West, Florida, and the 561 is on her way to the Pacific.

“The (Key West Naval) base was a beautiful place, primarily because of the easy access to the pool and basketball courts, but I thought there surely must be more to see in the area. One night while on liberty I decided to check out the town, but after walking about two blocks into Key West made a “U” turn and returned to the base, because I felt it was definitely more attractive...

“The adjective ‘attractive’ includes the fact that we were moored with our bow facing a Waves barracks. As I returned from my aborted liberty, I found the entire duty section was up on the bridge atop the conning tower so I climbed the ladder to find out what was going on. What I found was a large group of my shipmates studying the WAVE barracks with binoculars and our one long ‘spy glass.’

“The Waves were turning in for the night and these guys had been up in the conn all evening watching them. Quite naturally, a pair of these binoculars found their way into my hands and, since they had miraculously appeared within my grip, I decided I might as well have a look if only to see what these guys had been up to.

“As I commenced my study, the slight rolling of the ship blurred my vision somewhat, so I steadied myself by placing my elbows on the gyro compass. At the same time, in order to further steady myself, I gripped the base of the stand with my knees. Now I could see! But what I saw was a big disappointment. One girl in a housecoat such as your mother would have worn, walked by the open window and pulled down the shade just as all the lights in the barracks were extinguished. That was it for me.

“Leaving the conn in total disappointment, I soon discovered that I had a bigger problem. My white uniform was covered with jungle green paint! The gyro stand had been painted that afternoon and, in steadying myself around it, I had ruined a perfectly good set of whites! UGH!

“What a disgusting end to a liberty!”

More to come in future issues!



More Reunion Photos:



Our banquet began with the posting of the colors by the color guard from Naval Air Station, Pensacola. Very impressive!



Treasurer Hal Bleyhl proudly escorts his wife, Florence, to the banquet.



The "Coasties"—John Gatton, LCI 96, Ray Jennings, LCI 84, Al Green, LCI 94 and Warren Hotard, LCI 84—are joined by their families for the banquet.

Lewis "Chick" Mason, LCI 49 was the very happy winner of the drawing for the LCI model built by master-modeler Carl Chapple



Your Officers and Board of Directors

Please feel free to contact any of the officers or directors listed below for whatever comments or questions you may have. If the person you contact does not know the answer to your question, he will direct you to one that can. We're here to serve you!

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Please send information or questions about membership, dues payment, address, email or telephone changes to:

Nehemiah Communications, Inc. • 101 Rice Bent Way, # 6 • Columbia, SC 29229

Please send information concerning the death of an LCI shipmate to:

James E. Talbert • 12238 Woodland Trail • Council Bluffs, IA 51503

Please send any communications concerning *Elsie Item* to:

John P. Cummer, Editor • 302 Pinewood Cottage Lane • Blythewood, SC 29016

USS LCI NATIONAL ASSOCIATION APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

If you served aboard an LCI, you are eligible to join our Association as a regular member.
If you are a relative of someone who served aboard an LCI or if you just have a desire to have a part in remembering those who so served, you are invited to join as an Affiliate.

DUES ARE \$25.00 PER YEAR, June 1 through May 31.

Please complete this form and mail it to the address indicated below with your first year's dues.

I. For Application as a Regular Member:

Name _____
LCI Served On _____ Rank/Rate _____
Address: _____
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
Phone (_____) _____ E-Mail address _____
Date of Birth _____
Occupation or Former Occupation _____ Wife's name _____

Help, please! As a precaution we'd like to have an alternate name and address that we might contact in case we can't reach you:

Alternate Name _____
Address: _____
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
Phone (_____) _____ E-Mail address _____

II. For Application as an Affiliate:

Name _____
Address: _____
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
Phone (_____) _____ E-Mail address _____
Date of Birth _____
Occupation _____ Spouse's name _____
My _____ (father, grandfather, uncle, etc.) whose name is/was _____
served on LCI Number _____ (If unknown or if you did not have a relative who served on an LCI, leave blank)
My Occupation _____ Spouse's name _____

Help, please! As a precaution we'd like to have an alternate name and address that we might contact in case we can't reach you:

Alternate Name _____
Address: _____
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
Phone (_____) _____ E-Mail address _____

Privacy notice: Information solicited in this application for membership will be used only as needed for official business within the Association. No information will be released outside the Association or its agents without the consent of the member(s) concerned

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

Send Application and Check to:
USS LCI National Association
c/o Nehemiah Communications, Inc.
101 Rice Bent Way, #6
Columbia, SC 29229

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WHAT REUNIONS ARE ALL ABOUT!



Royal Wetzel and John Reulet, who served together on LCI(G) 70, meet for the first time in 63 years and try their hands out on a 20mm aboard USS ALABAMA!

Make your plans now for our 2009 reunion in Portland Oregon, May 13-16, 2009!