



# "THE ELSIE ITEM"

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

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ISSUE #68



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And More!

*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*

## **On the Cover:**

**With magnificent Mount Hood in the background, LCI 713 rests at the dock of the Red Lion on the River, Portland, Oregon. Photo by Joe Flynn**

## **CHECK OUT THESE WEBSITES:**

**[www.usslci.com](http://www.usslci.com)**

*Our own website*

**[www.amphibiousforces.com](http://www.amphibiousforces.com)**

*For information on the 713 and Tiny's Ships Stores*

## **YOUR DUES ARE DUE!**

**It's that time again! 2009–2010 dues for all regular and affiliate members are due at the time of our annual reunion.**

**Your support in keeping our Association going will be greatly appreciated by all your shipmates and their families...and we're sure you'll want to keep on receiving *Elsie Item*.**

**Annual dues are \$25.00. Please note: Beginning this year we are asking Life Members also to pay annual dues. (See page 9.)**

**Please make your check out to  
"USS LCI National Association "**

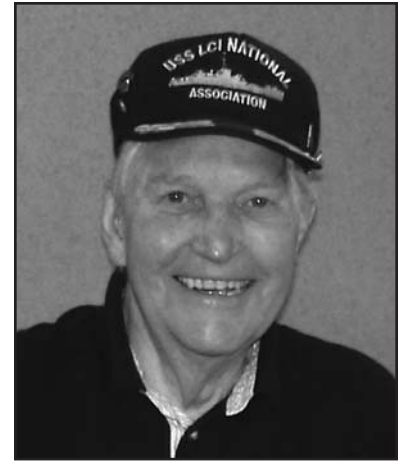
**and mail it to:**

**USS LCI National Association  
c/o Nehemiah Communications, Inc.  
101 Rice Bent Way, #6  
Columbia, SC 29229**



# From the Editor/President

Our Portland reunion was just about everything we wanted it to be—great fellowship with our shipmates, beautiful weather, beautiful scenery, the 713 right there at the dock, one of the most impressive memorial services we have had, vigorous and encouraging discussion at the business meeting with some sound plans being made for the future, and all of this was topped off with a great banquet. Attendance was good—275 registered. You'll find Joe Flynn's account and pictures of the reunion in this issue.



We were delighted at the number of sea stories submitted in response to our challenge to see if you could “top this”. You'll find a number of them in this issue. They will, we are sure, enforce the conviction we have that sailors are among the greatest story tellers in the world! We'll look for more from you.

On Tuesday, July 7th, our new Chaplain Mike Gatton and I met with Dave Miller, President, and Ed Stevens, Vice President, of the LSM/LSMR Association. We met at the Millennium Hotel in Cincinnati to work on plans for our joint reunion planned for August 25-29, 2010. It was a time of getting acquainted with each other and of working out details for our first joint reunion. We found that there were many similarities in our two associations and, as we worked out details, found it not difficult to come at agreement. We also met with representatives of the Millennium Hotel. They were most helpful and we believe that the hotel will be a very good place for our first joint reunion. I must add that Mike Gatton's extensive experience and commitment to our Association was a positive factor and I was very glad to have him there.

In addition to our sea stories in this issue, we have several articles that we think you will find interesting. Have a good read!

*-John Cummer*





# A Memorable Reunion



**LCI 713—The Star of the Show!**



**Boarding the Stern Wheeler for the  
Columbia River Gorge Cruise**



**...and boarding the Spirit of Portland for  
our Dinner Cruise**



**LCIers gather for the Memorial Service with the  
713 in the background**



**The Officers Prepare for the Memorial Service  
L to R: Steve Dudrow, Hal Bleyhl, Joe Flynn, David Cox, Jim Talbert**



**A beautiful day  
for a memorable  
occasion**



**Recipients of Presidential Unit Citation  
L to R: Dick Churchill, LCI 457; John Crunkelton, LCI 80; Robert Devinney, LCI 457;  
Rob Knutson, LCI 564; John Stilley, LCI 726; Royal Wetzell, LCI 70; Larry Hermes, LCI 471  
Dr. Charles Crandall, LCI 471; John Reulet, LCI 70**



**Piper Geoffrey Frasier plays "Amazing  
Grace" and "Flowers of the Field"**

# Portland Reunion – A Great Success!

By  
Joe Flynn

The USS LCI National Association Reunion in Portland attended by some 275 LCI sailors, wives, guests and family came off without a hitch. The weather was great; it rained a little on Wednesday when only the hospitality room was scheduled. Then it cleared, warmed up and hit a record setting 85 degrees on Saturday. This year the 713 was at the Red Lion dock visible from most rooms and had a steady stream of visitors.

Thursday, a bus tour headed up the Colombia River Gorge where guests boarded a sternwheeler for a round trip up the river to the Bonneville Dam. Then it was on to the bus and back to the hotel.

Authors Bill and Sandra McGee were in the hospitality room for most of reunion with a display of their books, *The Amphibians are Coming*, *The Solomon's Campaign*, and their new publication, *The Pacific Express*. The last book made its debut at the Reunion, and in a pre-publication special the McGee's and their publisher have offered the book to LCI members at a 30% discount.

The Thursday a meeting of Affiliates had a good turnout; 15 interested Affiliates willing to put their name on the line to get involved. John Cumber welcomed the group and told them they had the full backing of the Association, stressing the need for affiliates to take leadership roles in the Association. John France, Vice President and European Theater Historian, and Dennis Blocker, Texas Director and Pacific Theater Historian, shared their experience in covering gathering, and preserving LCI history –Joe Flynn, California Director and Board member spoke on efforts he has found successful for sharing LCI history through news articles and working with teachers and professors to et LCI history into the schools.

Friday the group toured downtown Portland and the Pearson Air Museum, a WW II Army Air Corps field across the Columbia River in Vancouver, Washington. In the evening a dinner cruise left from downtown Portland for another boat ride. We enjoyed a scenic cruise up the Willamette River, a great dinner and musical entertainment from the cruise crew.

Saturday was a busy day. The business meeting was well attended and a lot of key items discussed. (John Cumber covers this topic elsewhere in this issue.)

At 1 PM Saturday, the LCI sailors, wives and families gathered for a memorable Memorial Service outdoors on the riverfront side of the hotel with the USS LCI (L)713 at the dock. Flags were flying, behind the presenters and in front of the attendees. The ceremony opened with Amazing Grace played by Bagpiper Geoffrey Frasier. After President Cumber welcomed everyone the ceremony opened with a call to worship by Chaplain Mike Gatton and the invocation led by Chaplain David Cox. In keeping with Portland's recognition as the "City of Roses", Rev. Gatton created a ceremony of roses with each color rose signifying different qualities. Members of the Board took part in this ceremony.

Piper Frasier then played a traditional Scottish pipe tune played at memorial services, *Flowers of the Field*. This was followed by a litany of remembrance and a message from Rev. Gatton. We then honored the memory of our shipmates who have sailed west this year. As each name was read aloud the ship's bell was tolled and shipmates and family members stood in memory of their





loved one. As the reading of names finished, a bugler, stationed on the bow of 713, played *Taps*. Rev. Cox pronounced the final benediction as a wreath was placed aboard the 713. Many commented, "This was the best memorial service we ever had."

The evening banquet, a fitting climax to our reunion, was opened with the posting of colors by a color guard from Vancouver VFW Post 7824. Following a delicious meal, President Cummer and other Board members led us in the traditional toasts to the Commander-in-Chief, our fallen comrades and the United States Navy and Coast Guard. Special recognition was given to the volunteers who have been working on the restoration of the 713. Sue Cosper, daughter of Phil Cosper, Captain of LCI #481, and husband Rick Holmes were singled out for their outstanding contribution with the presentation of a Presidential Recognition Plaque.

Other plaques for similarly outstanding service were presented to Hal Bleyhl, John France and Dennis Blocker. And in a turnabout, President John Cummer was then surprised by Chairman of the Board Jim Talbert with a plaque in appreciation of his efforts to preserve and pass on to the next generation the history of LCIs and of the USS LCI National Association.

The assembled guests then had an opportunity to hear keynote speaker, military historian and author Bill McGee. Bill was working in a Portland shipyard when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. He then enlisted in the Navy and served aboard merchant vessels as part the Navy Armed Guard. Author of ten volumes, he is best known and appreciated by LCI sailors for his book *The Amphibians are Coming*, one of the few histories of the LCI's in the Pacific Campaign. Bill gave us some personal history as well as key aspects of his research and writing. With eyesight now failing, Bill called upon our Historian Dennis Blocker to read pertinent passages from his books. The presentation was well received by an appreciative audience.

In years past we have had some outstanding after-dinner entertainment and this year was no exception- except that the entertainment was home-grown. The sons, daughters, in-laws and grandkids of Jack Boyce, who served on LCI (R) 651, decked out in hula shirts and helmet liners, led the crowd in a rousing rendition of the "LCI Blues" (see page 26).

Sartorially speaking, if there had been a prize for the best dressed man in attendance, it would surely have gone to Fred Langston's grandson, active Navy Senior Chief Jim Blair in his ceremonial dress uniform. He was standing tall.

Our evening closed with the drawing for the Carl Chapple LCI model. A record \$1,500 was raised by this raffle. It was won by Richard Wright, an Affiliate, who promptly donated it to Rod Scurlock's fledgling LCI Museum in Boise, Idaho. It was a great finale for a great reunion.

## Indiana LCI Reunion Luncheon Planned

**Jim Ransom**, State Director for Indiana, has announced plans for a luncheon gathering Saturday, October 10, 2009, in Indianapolis. You are cordially invited to attend if you are in the neighborhood! The gathering will be a time for informal fellowship. For directions and other information contact Jim. He can be reached at:  
616 Terry Lane • West Lafayette, IN 47906-2754

# **New Directions! New Vision! But We Retain Our Identity!**

## **A Report on the Board and Business meetings at the Portland Reunion**

**By  
President John Cummer**

In what may well be one of the most significant steps in the history of the USS LCI National Association, the men in attendance at the business meeting voted unanimously to continue as an LCI organization instead of joining with other associations into a umbrella organization for all amphibious veterans. Recognizing the wisdom in sharing annual reunions with groups like the LSM/LSMR Association, as in now being planned, they nevertheless were certain that they wanted to keep their LCI identity while modifying our by-laws so as to eliminate the distinction between regular, life and affiliate members.

That, in essence, was the decision made by the membership upon recommendation of the Board. Instead of letting the Association dwindle as our members grow older, official action was taken at the business meeting as follows:

- 1.** To change the membership provision in the by-laws to make full membership open to affiliates so that they can move fully into leadership positions. As per by-laws requirement, this proposal was put to the membership at this reunion but will not be voted upon until our next reunion in 2010.
- 2.** To request life members to begin paying annual dues, recognizing the previous error in judgment in setting too low a cost for life membership,

Strong expressions of agreement with these proposals were made from the floor. Many who were life members expressed their willingness to begin paying dues again. It is felt that taking these two actions will go a long ways toward assuring the financial and membership strength of the Association for the foreseeable future.

Legal advice will need to be sought to clear up a question before we can alter the membership requirements of our present by-laws. Article IV, Section 1 (Membership) of our by-laws currently reads as follows:

*“Membership in the Corporation is open to personnel who served as members of the United States Navy under official Navy Department orders during World War II and members of the Amphibious forces and its allies, provided that at least 75% of the members of the Corporation must be war veterans which, for the purposes of these Articles, shall have the meaning provided for under Internal Revenue Code Regulations [regulation section cited].”*

We want to be certain that our tax-exempt status will not be threatened by changing our membership provision.

Assuming there is no tax-exempt status threat, we propose changing that membership clause to read:

*Membership in the Corporation is open to personnel who served as members of the United States Navy under official Navy Department orders during World War II and members of the Amphibious forces and its allies, **and to anyone interested in the preservation of the history of Landing Craft Infantry*** (Bold face clause added)

...and striking the phrase:

*“provided that at least 75% of the members of the Corporation must be war veterans.”*

In Board discussion, serious consideration was given to the option of planning for 2009-20010 being our final year as the USS LCI National Association while planning for merger with the LSM/LSMR group to form an entirely new association with an all-inclusive name such as “U.S. Navy Amphibious Forces Association”. However, as the discussion proceeded, strong support for retaining our identity as LCIers for as long as possible developed. That, therefore, was the recommendation taken to the membership in the business meeting where it was enthusiastically adopted.

Discussion and comment on this proposal is invited to prepare for a vote on it in Cincinnati in 2010.

## **How About Our Financial Condition?**

With fewer members our income is obviously less. To maintain our present level of operations, including *Elsie Item*, it is estimated that we will need about \$45,000 this year. It's something of a guessing game to predict revenue from dues; but, assuming we will have around 1,700 members paying dues and about \$1,000 in income from trust investments, we estimate income of around \$42,500. That means we would have to tap into our investments or look elsewhere to make up the difference.

As of May 31, 2009 we had about \$46,237 in assets, so we do have the resources to draw on if necessary; but our financial future would be sounder if we did not have to tap into our investments. For that reason, a strong fund raising campaign was recommended by the Board to the membership and that recommendation was also adopted. As it was being discussed in the business meeting several strong statements of support were voiced. Particularly encouraging was one from Fred Langston's grandson, Navy Senior Chief Jim Blair, one of our affiliate members. Senior Chief Blair expressed his appreciation for LCIers as the heritage of present day amphibious forces and offered to campaign among the many active duty units with whom he has contact to encourage financial support for our association.

Equally encouraging was the offer of our new Chaplain Mike Gatton. He informed us of his experience in fund raising and offered his services to head up a campaign to encourage donations both from our membership and from outside sources. The offer was heartily welcomed.

Thus, the groundwork is being laid for a vigorous drive for additional funding. With the anticipated support of our membership we feel that our continued existence as an association will not be threatened by financial considerations for some time. The need for the support of our entire membership is the key element in this design for success.





## Life Members Paying Dues?

A significant element in planning for our financial future is asking our most loyal members—our life members—to step up to the plate and pay dues again. Their support in the past has been vital and we owe them a debt of thanks for that. It was, therefore, with some reluctance that the Board considered the need to ask them to start paying dues again, but we were most encouraged to hear strong expression of support for the idea when it was presented at the business meeting. Many noted that they have been life members for many years and, thus, could feel that they had received their money's worth for what they paid for their life membership.

Therefore, recognizing fully that no obligation to pay dues can be imposed upon our life members, we do request that they begin paying annual dues again. It will be a key element in maintaining our ability to continue promoting our LCI friendships and heritage.

So, there it is—truly a new vision with new commitment to retaining our cherished LCI identity. It will take conscientious effort on the part of many people to bring it off, but the strong support of our “next generation” members who, under these plans will become full members, gives us ample reason to be enthusiastic and optimistic about our future.

Time to go on watch, shipmates!



***From the Archives: LCI 513 on the beach in Southern France next to LCT 1143.  
(Note the unique telephone wire system and troop traffic on the beach.)***



# WELCOME ABOARD!

It's a genuine pleasure to welcome aboard this great list of new affiliate members! It speaks well for our future. And, of course, we are happy to find a few more LCI Veterans who are joining us.

## LCI VETERANS

Burnell McConnell,  
LCI 77  
New Florence, PA

Elmer Grady "Nick" Nicholson  
LCI 551  
Aberdeen, MS

George Courville  
LCI 726  
Burlington, VT 05401

Andrew R. Pomeroy  
LCI 981  
San Antonio, TX

Christopher Nelson  
Seattle, WA

Emily Aydelotte  
Apache Junction, AZ

James C. Aydelotte  
Apache Junction, AZ

Jon Shleifer  
Portland, OR

Stephen Esler  
Milford, NH

Dave Egan  
Flagstaff, AZ

Catherine Neidlinger Doane  
Westbrook, CT

Michael A. Gatton  
Louisville, KY

Frank Yacono  
Etters, PA

Keenan Harp  
Pottstown, PA

Nicholas Yacono  
Gilbertsville, PA

Ethan Barker  
Chester, VA

Patricia Rone  
Wapakoneta, OH

Joseph Ortiz  
Pecos, TX

Dr. Randy L. Nicholson  
Aberdeen, MS

Mark Stenehjerm  
Williston, ND

Linda Wakild Lemieux  
Paris, KY

David L. Moore  
Richmond, VA

## AFFILIATES

Geoffrey Nelson  
Portland, OR

David Nelson  
Portland, OR

George Harry IV  
Tendkee Springs, AK

## OHIO LCIs TO MEET

The Ohio LCI Association will be having its Sixth Reunion:

Wednesday, September 9th, 2009

Place: Ramada Plaza Hotel and Conference Center, Columbus, Ohio

Contact Diane Churchill, Treasurer, The Ohio LCI Association at [lcig457@yahoo.com](mailto:lcig457@yahoo.com)



# Affiliates Form Information Network

By  
Joe Flynn

We had a good turnout at the affiliates meeting in Portland with 15 in attendance and 12 new volunteers ready and willing to help preserve and pass on LCI history. One of our accomplishments was the establishment of an “information network” linking affiliates to that we can stay in touch with each other.

A good example of what can be accomplished is the work of affiliate Stan Galik. He has been working on his father’s LCI history for years and in 2002 established his own website on his father. Check it out at [www.galik.com/stanleygalik1922](http://www.galik.com/stanleygalik1922).

Others are at various stages starting with the history of their own LCI sailor. One of the attendees has volunteered to scan for the LCI website the previous editions of *Elsie Item*. Fortunately, Jim McCarthy gave me his complete set so we should be able to get started on that soon. And, our Historians will be rendering advice to beginners and in turn will have some assistance with the LCI Archives.

The first stage, exchanging contact information, has been completed. We are just beginning to learn of all the talent available in affiliates. It is a promising beginning.

If you were unable to attend the reunion in Portland and would like to get involved, drop me an email at [joeglo@msn.com](mailto:joeglo@msn.com) and we will plug you into the network. There is always room for more people. We can offer a lot of assistance in getting you started.



***Joe Flynn leads the Affiliates Meeting***



***From the Archives: 24 July 1944, near Naples, Italy. Men of the 30th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, load LCIs for yet another practice landing. LCIs, left to right: 687, 593, 595, 594, 670, 672, 671, 591***





# More Sea Stories!

*Ask an old swabbie to share a sea story and you might be opening the floodgates!*

*Well, not exactly a “flood” but we did receive several stories that we think you’ll enjoy and that will probably bring to mind a couple of your own. If so, let us have them for the next issue.*

*Here we go!*

## **Air Raids. Monkeys and Dogs**

**Timothy J. Benton**

**LCI 752**

THE LCI(G) 752 WAS ACTUALLY BLOWN OUT OF THE WATER, at least the fantail, just off the pier at Tacloban, Philippines on October 23, 1944, when we were attacked by six Japanese planes, type unknown. I was on the fantail helping load 20mm magazines. I didn’t see the planes coming because the superstructure of the ship blocked my sight. The Japanese plane came in from behind some clouds and dropped a bomb which came straight at us. I just knew it was going to hit the fantail, so I grabbed the ladder railing—as if that would do any good! I watched the bomb come toward us. It’s funny how your mind works at a time like this, but it flashed through my mind to run tell the two guys in the engine room that we were going to be bombed. In a flash, the bomb hit, but I guess the good Lord above was watching over us for the bomb missed the starboard side of the fantail by just a few feet. With a rumble, the fantail rose a few feet and a shaft of water and shrapnel rained down on us. Believe it or not, there were no casualties. About the only damage to us was that we got our feet wet!

The ship was not so lucky. The steering was disabled and the starboard shaft was warped. Our gunners did account for four Japanese planes plus two “probables.” Another LCI towed us out into San Pedro Bay where we served as a floating anti-aircraft battery.

This begins my story of Mickey, the monkey and of Bogie, the dog.

We had a clothesline rigged over the port ramp, tied to the opening at the front of the well deck. Mickey would use this line to get on top of the tarp over the well deck. One day we were going to take on fresh water, so the clothesline was taken down. Mickey was at the top of the ladder; Bogie was at the bottom. Now, Bogie was a bob-tailed terrier dog. Mickey crept down the ladder and bit Bogie on the tail and took off running toward the opening where the clothesline used to be. She jumped for the line and it was not there! She sailed out into the bay with a splash. We were howling with laughter as she swam back and climbed back onto a fender. Did you ever see a wet monkey? Well, they are just skin and bones. Someone got a towel and dried her off and she hugged against him for warmth.

Mickey was very friendly and usually obeyed. However, if you gave her a command like “Sit on my shoulder” and she didn’t want to, she would pee on you!

She liked me!



## Want A Ride on an LCI? Bring a Strong Stomach!

**Bill Murphy, LCI(FF) 532**

I WAS SHIP'S COMPANY ON THE LCI(FF) 532 when we left for home on the 15th of April, 1946, in a convoy with other LCIs and LSTs. Because we were going home, a bunch of CB sailors and a few Marine Lieutenants decided to grab a ride back to the states with us as, naturally, they wanted to get home as soon as possible. The Marine officers even had some beach chairs with them so they could sit up by the conn and enjoy the sunshine.

I was a Signalman, Third Class, and I knew what was coming. We left the port of Sasebo, Japan, on a beautiful day and sailed into the China Sea.

Seven days and about a thousand miles later we made it to Guam. To say it was a rough ride will come as no surprise to any old LCI sailor. I never saw a sicker bunch of guys! They all called it "hell week." Every one of our passengers, except one die-hard Marine, got off at Guam saying they would rather stay a month more on that island than ride all the way home in our little ship.

We arrived safely in San Diego on June 4th—and thought it was a great trip on a great little ship!

## Return to Owner

**William Caldwell, LCI 5 and LCI 218**

SHORTLY AFTER I HAD BEEN ASSIGNED TO LCI 5, we made the landing at Sicily. We were hit by a large artillery shell on the port side just below the conn and above the waterline. Several of the troops who were still below decks were casualties. I remember that one of our officers had to remove a soldier's arm that was shattered. Later he ordered me to find his stretcher on the beach and place his arm with him in his stretcher. When I found him and was about to deposit the arm, he said, "Thanks, buddy! Got a cigarette?" I had thought he was dead—it shook me up but I was glad he was alive.

## Exasperation!

**Perry C.Hill, LCI unknown**

LCI MEN DELIGHT IN THE BUMPTIOUSNESS of some of their leaders. They relish the retort of a flotilla commander bringing his flock into a Solomons anchorage after night maneuvers. The pass was narrow and he had eighteen ships in single column with all running lights brightly burning. The shore signal station challenged the guide ship. Then, either facetiously or careless in choice of words, the beach inquired: "Is there anybody with you?" This was too much for the Commander. "No," said he, "I am towing the Brooklyn Bridge."

## Navigation by Magazine!

**Cliff Edgcombe, LCI(L) 681**

ABOUT JANUARY, 1946, WE WERE ORDERED TO SAIL from the Philippines back to Pearl Harbor in company with another LCI. After crossing the International Date Line, we had engine trouble and could not make headway. An important engine part had failed and there was no spare. Our companion LCI took us in tow. The chart showed the nearest point of land to be Johnston Island, halfway between the Marshall Islands and Pearl Harbor, about 15 degrees above the equator. Johnston Island had been a U.S. possession for many years and we were able to make radio contact. We were told to be careful approaching the atoll—currents were unpredictable and the channel was tricky. The navigational charts we had on Johnston Island were out of date, and their information old-hat. What evolved was unique indeed.

Our Skipper LTJG Mike Kellin, subscribed to *New Yorker* magazine. Coincidentally, a recent issue carried a feature article on Johnston Island! It was very descriptive, telling about tides, the direction and depth of the channel – all the information we could put on our charts.

The Skipper was able to talk to the island by radio. He explained the information he was going by and we got into the atoll safe and sound. A few days later the new engine part was flown in from Pearl Harbor and we were able to proceed—thanks to *New Yorker* magazine!



## It's a Small World, After All— for Ships and Shipmates

**Elizabeth G. Du Brul,**

***Widow of Don Du Brul, LCI 553***

LTJG DON DU BRUL, WAS THE COMMANDING OFFICER OF LCI 553 which figured prominently in the account of LCIs at Normandy in our last issue. Mrs. Du Brul wrote, expressing her pleasure at the article and informing us of Don's death last June. She enclosed a copy of a speech Don gave to their local Amphibious Association several years ago. She suggested that this excerpt from it might be included as a "small world" story.

In March of this year [1995] I received a call from Ernie Williams, Motor Machinist Mate from LST 510. He had just attended a reunion of the crew of LST 510 at Mystic, Connecticut. I guess they were perusing the deck log of their ship, and came across the entry logging aboard the survivors of LCI 553. The question was asked, "What ever happened to those guys?" Ernie got in touch with Armed Forces Reunions, Inc., who handles reunions for both groups. They referred him to Bob Kirsch, LCI National Association Secretary at the time. Bob gave Ernie my name and phone number; and that is how my phone came to ring in March. We talked for a while, reminiscing, and Ernie said, "Hey, one of our shipmates lives in your town – his name is Schneider." My reply was "not Ralph Schneider?". He answered "Yes".

Well, I've known Ralph for over 40 years, we attend the same church, our daughters were close friends and graduated from high school together. Many years ago Ralph and I casually discussed being at Omaha Beach on D-Day but never connected the two ships. I called Ralph and he was as astounded as I was. How we never mentioned ship numbers is a mystery. Ralph was a PhM2c and it is possible he may have checked out some of my men.

That is not the end of the story. The last LST reunion included a sail on the M/V Henlopen, a ferry that crosses Long Island Sound from Orient Point, New York, to New London, Connecticut. My wife and I often take

that ferry when traveling north to New England.— and that vessel, greatly changed in appearance, served in WWII as LST 510! She may not look much like an LST anymore, but she looks as good to me today as she did that night on Omaha Beach.

## Why Not Miami?

**Ardie Hunt, LCI 226**

UPON READING THE ARTICLE "NAVIGATION 101" in the last issue, I was reminded of something that was written in the March 27, 1944, Life Magazine article by John Hershey. It was an article entitled "USS LCI 226" and chronicles the story of LCI 226 from being commissioned on December 14, 1942, to the landings at Cape Gloucester, New Britain, on December 26, 1943.

Harvey writes of the five weeks of training operations in Chesapeake Bay (Solomons, Maryland) and then of how they left for Panama City, Florida, on February 6, 1943. He relates how, once they got to the southern tip of Florida, they were given new orders to proceed to the Panama Canal and from there to Australia.

The incident which I remembered from Hershey's article pertained to something that happened on their way to Florida. He wrote:

Gradually a flotilla of LCIs took shape. Their commander was a rugged, tireless regular-Navy officer who had been a boatswain in the last war. On Feb. 5, 1943, he called his skippers together, told them they were leaving the next morning, and said with hopeful boldness: "Goddammit, we're going to take and get these ships out on time."

The next morning was all fog. The 226 crept at a miserable pace, for she did not know what the distant future held or where the immediate rocks were. As she moved out into Hampton Roads, the noises of bigger ships came up from astern. A bunch of destroyers was approaching the 226 and her companions at high speed. Seeing the leading destroyer, someone on the 226 suggested that they were going to have an escort after all and everyone felt better. But when a towering air-craft carrier came out of





the mist and cut through at 20 knots, blasting her imperious bullhorn at the scattering LCI's, the 226 felt very small and scorned.

She felt even smaller a few hours later. The LC Flotilla spent its first night at sea in a Cape Hatteras gale. Cape Hatteras has very special gales, and to the land-loving men on the 226 this seemed like the last night of their voyage, as well as the first. It has been said of flat-bottomed landing craft that they do not cut through the water; they try to beat the waves to death. In the pounding that night a voice on the bridge said: "I sure hope those lady welders knew their stuff." Many were unashamedly sick. One member of the crew was so thorough about it that he also gave the sea his entire set of false teeth, which he was unable to replace until he reached Australia.

The next morning the flotilla was scattered all over the choppy sea, for according to regulations the ships had been blacked out all night and the waves had separated and hidden their dark bulks. Finally in mid-morning the 226 found six other LCIs. They had lost their group commander. They had no orders as to where to proceed. They drew close together and the ensigns shouted through megaphones.

"I think I know the way into Charleston harbor," one shouted. "Shall we go there?"

Another roared: "I've got a couple friends in Jacksonville. It's swell there. Let's go there."

The 226's Skipper McKnight shouted: "I know some people in Miami and, besides, it's warmer there. Let's go to Miami."

The consensus seemed to be Florida, so the stragglers headed there. Sure enough, near Palm Beach they met up with the main body of the "Flot," as members of the flotilla had begun to call their force.

## How to Pass an Eye Exam!

**Arthur N. Chernin, LCI(L) 364**

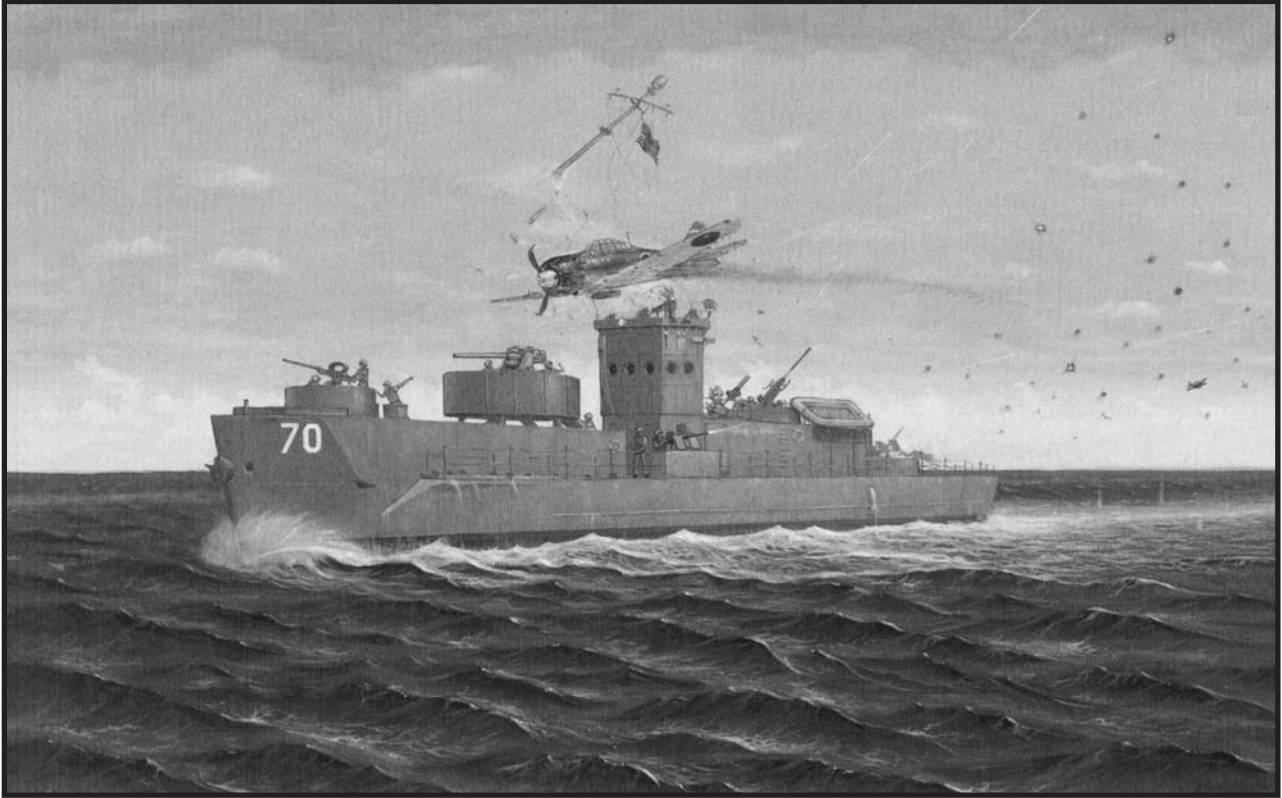
*Arthur Chernin sent a well-written account of his WWII Naval Career. From it, I've excerpted this anecdote which surely counts as a sea story. After V-12 training at Stevens College, he reported to the University of Notre Dame for a six-week course leading to his commission as an Ensign. As the course drew to a close there was one final barrier he had to pass – the eye exam - and he knew his eyes were not up to standard. Fearing he could not pass the eye exam, he was certain that his naval career was about to be cut short. Here's his story:*

The tests at Notre Dame were held in a large gymnasium with two test lines operating side-by-side. I approached the starting line and almost immediately moved to the sixteen foot pass-fail line. Covering one eye I strained to see the letters but I could not read any. I stood there, silently trying to read, when I heard the man in the other test line read off the letters on the chart. "OK", said the sailor in charge without looking up, "now cover the other eye". Again I said nothing and the man next to me read off the next set of letters. I had passed the eye exam without saying a word and was now an Ensign in the Naval Reserve!



# **“The Unsinkable 70”**

**By  
Joe Ortiz,  
Nephew of Gilbert V. Ortiz, LCI(G) 70**



I CAN STILL REMEMBER BEING TOLD THE STORY AS A CHILD about the attack by a Japanese Zero Kamikaze on my Uncle Gilbert's ship , the LCI(G) 70, during WWII. What I remembered best was that the Kamikaze hit the bow of the ship and not where my uncle was standing at the time.

Uncle Gilbert told me that the 70 also survived a direct hit from a Japanese torpedo plane prior to the Kamikaze plane attack. The torpedo killed one man in the engine room but, miraculously, did not explode.

Since I am an artist who enjoys painting military subjects, I decided to do a painting of my uncle's ship. A few month's ago I asked my uncle again about his ship and told him I planned to do a painting of it. I had heard of LCIs but didn't know much about them. I now know that they had a huge role in winning the war. Uncle Gilbert directed me to the USS LCI National Association for help with my project.

Historian Dennis Blocker was a great help, providing me with names and addresses of some of my uncle's shipmates along with photographs and technical information about LCIs. To be as accurate as possible I wanted to know details such as the time of day of the attack, the ship's heading, sea conditions, weather, what other ships were nearby, the type of Japanese attack aircraft involved and any other pieces of information these shipmates could provide.



What I got in response was all that I asked for and a lot more. I made new friends as they sent along a goldmine of information. I learned of what they had to endure at sea, of shipmates killed in action and the heartbreak of performing burials at sea. I learned of the bravery and courage of all of the crew and of what their life was like aboard that small ship.

On January 5, 1945, at 1740, while in convoy during the Lingayen Gulf operation, a Japanese Kamikaze fixed his sights on the LCI(G) 70 which was in station at the rear of the convoy. I was told by crew members that they fired everything they had as the plane made its way toward them. The approach was from aft of the ship. The plane came in low over the water. Many pieces were seen falling off the plane from the 70's gunfire but the plane kept coming at them. One crew member told me that he could see the pilot's face as he flew over them. More than one told me that they thought they were "goners."

Crew members told me that they do not know why the plane missed the 70's conning tower but flew through the mast and crashed on the bow 40mm gun tub, killing the gun crew.

I know that my grandmother prayed a lot and I think many other family members did also. I thank the Lord not all the crew of the 70 perished, and I thank you who gave so much for our freedom. It is my hope that this painting will honor all who served on LCIs and tell a story of the high cost of freedom to younger generations for years to come.

I was able to unveil the painting before my Uncle and family in Santa Ana, California, on June 6th 2009. What an honor it was.

For information on limited edition prints, Joe Ottiz can be contacted at [joelvn@yahoo.com](mailto:joelvn@yahoo.com).



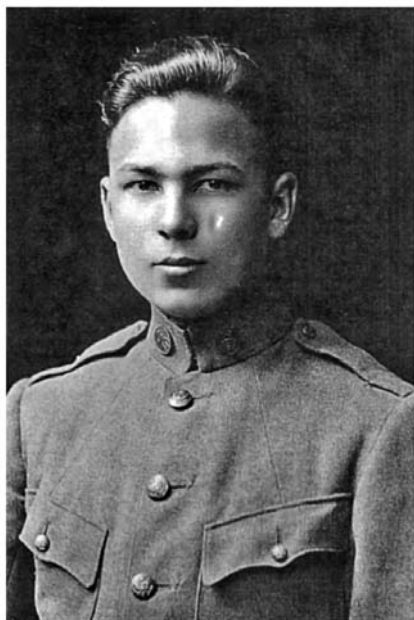
***Joe Ortiz presents the finished painting to his Uncle Gilbert***





# LCler Participates in Liberation of Philippine POW Camp; Meets One of the POWs 65 Years Later

By  
Bob L. Petit, LCI 750



FRANK WOODRUFF BUCKLES - enlisted U.S. Regular Army 14 August 1917. Overseas December 1917 with First Fort Riley Casual Detachment of 100 men. Sailed December 1917 aboard Cunard Liner "CARPATHIA", the vessel famous for rescuing survivors of the White Star Liner "TITANIC" April 15, 1912. Photo taken in Winchester, England.



FRANK WOODRUFF BUCKLES - on way to a reception for GENERAL JOHN JOSEPH PERSHING at the Skirvin Hotel in Oklahoma City, January 1920. The General asked many questions, including where was I born? "Harrison County Missouri." The General then said "JUST 43 MILES, AS THE CROW FLIES, FROM LINN COUNTY WHERE I WAS BORN." It impressed me that the General and I had something in common.

***Frank Buckles: Underage veteran of World War I;  
Civilian Prisoner of War in the Philippines in World War II.***

*Bob Petit, himself an underage veteran of WWII, whose story we carried in Issue 64, relates here a remarkable story of his meeting with an underage veteran of an older generation.*

This is the story of two men from two different wars who, in their youth, were so eager to serve their country in the military that they schemed to get around age requirements.

Mr. Frank Woodruff Buckles, aged 108 years, is one of the very few surviving U.S. veterans of WWI.. Eager to participate in that great conflict but being underage, he made several unsuccessful attempts to enlist in the Navy and in the Marines before finally getting by the Army recruiters and enlisting on 14 August 1917, at the age of sixteen.

After honorable service in France, he returned home and entered into his professional career. The steamship business appealed to him and he spent several years in cargo and passenger ships.

In 1940 he accepted an assignment to expedite the movement of cargoes for the American President Lines in Manila. He was there when the Japanese overran the Philippines and spent the next three and a half years as a civilian Prisoner of War until they were liberated by the 11th



Airborne Division on February 23, 1945.

As is Mr. Buckles, I am also a member of Veterans of Underage Military Service (VUMS), having joined the Navy in 1942 at the age of 13. I was a crew member of USS LCI (L) 750 during the Philippine campaign in 1944 and 1945 when we took part in landing the 11th Airborne Division which liberated Mr. Buckles and his fellow prisoners.

Not knowing that he was one of the POWs liberated by that force which we landed, I visited Mr. Buckles on May 26, 2009, following the National Memorial Day Parade in Washington, DC, the previous day. As we visited I learned of the way our paths crossed sixty five years ago without either of us knowing it. It was a moving experience for both of us.

This is the story of our participation in that liberation.

The landing, at Nasugbu, located at the south west entrance to Manila Bay, was ordered by General MacArthur to establish a line of advance on Manila from the southwest. In preparation for this landing we beached at Tarraguna Beach, Leyte, on 27 January 1945 and took aboard 179 troops and 6 officers of the 11th Airborne Infantry. On the morning of 31 January we arrived off Nasugbu. The weather was warm with a 10 to 15 knot northeasterly breeze. The sea was calm under an almost cloudless sky. The landing area 1500 yards south of the Wawa River was designated Beach Red. Mine sweepers swept the routes to the beach and reported no mines present. The LCIs anchored in our assigned area waiting for our fire support to soften up the landing area where the Japanese were believed to be present in some force. There was no reply to our initial shelling, but, since no friendly natives came out to welcome us, regular assault was ordered. Our fire support ships launched rockets and gunfire and A-20 bombers of the Army Air Force strafed the landing area. Japanese machine gun fire was reported coming from the left bank. Two LCIs and the destroyer USS *Claxton* silenced it. Following this action, the LCIs headed for the beach. The LCI 750 landed and discharged our paratroopers. We pulled off the beach and cleared the area.

In total, the landing force landed 8,000 troops and 4,200 tons of supplies during this offensive. The 11th Airborne fought it's way from Nasugbu to Manila where they freed Mr. Buckles and many other prisoners of war.

To meet and talk with Mr. Buckles after all these years was a wonderful experience which I shall never forget.

—Bob L. Pettit  
Member USS LCI National  
Association

**From the Archives: LCIs 344 and  
342 dodge mortar fire at the  
invasion of Shouten Island,  
Netherlands East Indies. (Photo  
by Dick Hanley of Yank  
Magazine.)**



# A Word from Chaplain Mike

## A Prayer for America



The ministry provides a schedule that is never boring and often totally unpredictable. The daily calendar is seldom routine. That may be why I appreciate those events that occur in somewhat of a seasonal rhythm: Advent followed by Christmas, Easter preceded by Lent, Pentecost, then summer camp and conference. But, in recent years, one of my favorite things happens every two years. The “Seminar” is for high school youth and includes a study trip to Washington, DC, and New York City. I love acting as “tour guide” during the week long experience. Our day of monument tours in DC always inspires me. Beginning with the Washington Monument, continuing to the Jefferson, the FDR, the World War II, the Korean, the Vietnam, and concluding with the Lincoln Memorial, we walk through a history rich in legacy.

Among the words of Thomas Jefferson inscribed on the walls of his memorial are these: “God who gave us life gave us liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that those liberties are the gift of God?” As the author of the Declaration of Independence, with its appeal to the Creator as the ultimate source of human rights, Jefferson endowed our national beginnings with the idea that faith and freedom are inseparable partners. Too many times today, our “freedom of religion” that the framers of the Constitution wanted to preserve has evolved into a “freedom from religion” that lends to the exclusion of most things spiritual from all things governmental. Now, more than ever, we need to pray for America.

In honor of our nation, Peter Marshall, Chaplain of the U. S. Senate, first delivered this prayer on July 3, 1947:

*“God of our fathers and mothers, whose almighty hand has made and preserved our Nation, grant that our people may understand what it is they celebrate tomorrow.*

*“May they remember how bitterly our freedom was won, the down payment that was paid for it, the installments that have been made since this Republic was born, and the price that must yet be paid for our liberty.*

*“May freedom be seen not as the right to do as we please, but as the opportunity to please to do what is right.*

*“May it be ever understood that our liberty is under God and can be found no where else.*

*“May our faith be something that is not merely stamped upon our coins, but expressed in our lives.*

*“Let us, as a nation, not be afraid of standing alone for the rights of all people, since we were born that way, as the only nation on earth that came into being ‘for the glory of God and the advancement of the Christian faith.’*

*“We know that we shall be true to the Pilgrim dream when we are true to the God they worshiped.*

*“To the extent that American honors you, will you bless America, and keep her true as you have kept her free, and make her good as you have made her rich. Amen.”*

Let’s never forget that faith and freedom go hand-in-hand. God bless America.

Agape,  
Mike





# IN MEMORIAM

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the families and friends of these shipmates who have sailed for their final port since our last newsletter

*"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 passes understanding."*

LCI 22  
Stuart Erlanger

LCI (G) 497  
David Felix

LCI 732  
Richard Bresnahan

LCI 23  
William C. Stark

LCI 547  
Lyndon E. Pratt

LCI 732  
Donald Lucas

LCI 74  
Robert A. Clark

LCI 561  
Howard Allgood

LCI 732  
Norman H. Scheer

LCI 79  
Gayle A. Oglesby

LCI 565  
Edward Alai

LCI 732  
Alvin Tompakav

LCI 84  
Edward Matousic

LCI 565  
Earnest McDougal

LCI 878  
Del James

LCI 431  
Robert L. Sebastopol

LCI 565  
Donald Nixon

LCI 879  
Robert W. Edmond

LCI 451  
Raymond L. Fenn

LCI 588  
Ken L. Smith

LCI 1025  
W. Charles Kingsley

LCI 467  
Thomas Gentry

LCI 656  
Harland Marth

LCI 1033  
Carl L. Chapple

LCI 731  
Harrison D. Goodman



# Coast Guard Academy Class of 1962 Unveils D-Day Mural Depicting LCIs 91, 92 and 94 Arriving on Omaha Beach.

*We are indebted to shipmate John L. Gatton, LCI(L) 96, for calling our attention to websites carrying the story of a dramatic mural depicting the Coast Guard manned LCIs at the moment of their landing on Omaha Beach on D-Day.*

*Here is the story as carried in the New Haven Register:*

## Painting captures epic clash

**Published: Friday, June 5, 2009**

**By Mary E. O'Leary, Register Topics Editor**

NEW LONDON — With two of its sister ships smoldering from direct German hits, the Coast Guard's No. 94 Landing Craft Infantry vessel diverted slightly to the east, dropping more than 200 troops into chest-high water in the first hours of the bloody D-Day invasion of Omaha Beach.

The confusion, fear and terror of that day along a portion of the coastline of Normandy, France, is captured in an oil painting by Tony Falcone that will be dedicated today at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy.

The LCIs, and the smaller, nimbler Higgins Boats, which maneuvered a beachhead criss-crossed with mines, discharged the troops without benefit of air protection or help from the Navy, whose shells couldn't reach the heavily fortified German bunkers on the cliffs overlooking the beach.

In the past nine years, Falcone has been commissioned to paint nine of 15 scenes showing important events in Coast Guard history from World War II through Sept. 11, 2001. Five other artists also were involved.

The project was inspired by the Depression-era WPA murals that show earlier Coast Guard history from 1790 to 1930—paintings that hang in the library of Hamilton Hall at the academy.

"It's a fascinating legacy that has been created here," Falcone said.

Today's dedication comes one day before the 65th anniversary of the invasion by Allied troops that helped turn the tide against the Nazi occupation of Europe, but left 10,000 dead and wounded Americans by the time it was over.

Falcone, who was putting some finishing touches on the large canvas Thursday, talked about the all-consuming project and how he worked closely with the academy's class of 1962, which sponsored it.

"I showed tactically what happened, but what I really want everyone to remember is that this was a human experience of epic proportions," Falcone said of the D-Day landing between Vierville and Les Molins on Omaha Beach.

As he did with his other murals, Falcone built a cardboard model of a portion of the landing craft



at his studio in Prospect, since none of the boats still exist.

With the help of Omaha Beach re-enactors, who showed up with authentic uniforms and the 60 pounds of gear each soldier would have carried, Falcone said he was able to come as close as possible to recreating the scene.

“They were awesome, wearing their grandfathers’ vintage stuff,” Falcone said of the young re-enactors. The photographs he took of them served as a basis for the painting.

Falcone said he followed this with a visit to Normandy last November to walk the beach at low tide. Falcone said he couldn’t get out the 75 yards where the troops were dropped on D-Day, but he got a good shot of the bluffs from that angle.

“It’s very profound when you see all that,” Falcone said of the beach and cemetery with acres of crosses.

The three Coast Guard LCIs in the painting, which in addition to No. 94, included Nos. 91 and 92, both of which were destroyed, were the first to drop troops from the 29th Army infantry battalion June 6, 1944.

Elmer Sorensen, a retired Coast Guard captain and a member of the class of 1962 who researched the D-Day history of the three boats, said many of the Army troops on No. 91 were incinerated, but the Coast Guard was also able to rescue others.

Six of the Coast Guard survivors who were aboard the three crafts in the painting, all in their late 80s, are expected to be at today’s dedication.

One of those men is Al Green, the lieutenant in charge of No. 94 who managed to get his landing craft safely back to the transport ships after a harrowing 57 minutes, Sorensen said. Three of his crew were killed when the pilot house took three direct hits from German 88 millimeter shells.

Len Pichini, a retired engineer and president of the class of 1962, said the art project so far has cost about \$900,000, with half of it provided by his class, and the rest donated by other alumni.

“This was a true collaboration,” Falcone said of his working relationship with the Coast Guard Academy graduates. “It has been great working with these guys.”

Pichini said when he was a cadet, everyone studied science and engineering, yet the class of 1962 decided to gift the academy with artwork.





# What are the Future Plans for the 713?

**By  
Gordon Smith,  
Chairman of the Board  
Amphibious Forces Memorial Museum**



***LCI 713 Arrives at the Red Lion on the River for the Portland Reunion—assisted by a tugboat!***

*During our Portland reunion many people questioned Gordon Smith about how the 713 came to its present condition and what are the plans for the future. Here's Gordon's Answer.*

Our first step, after we purchased the 713 from Walt James was to become a 503 (C) (3) non-profit corporation. This was followed by becoming a member of the National Historical Ships Association. The 713 is also on the National Parks Register as a place to visit.

Progress on restoring the 713 to its original WWII configuration continues. Walt James serves as Restoration Manager.

All of the electrical wiring has been completed by our secretary, Jerry Gilmartin.

*Elsie Item* recently carried the story of how we acquired two V-12 GMC Detroit diesel engines. These engines, complete with gear boxes are in storage and ready for installation. The engines were donated to us by Mr. Bill Chaplin. Expenses in the amount of \$2,000 for removing the engines from the original hull were covered by donations. The engines are like new with only a few hours of test running time. These will not be like the original quads but will do the ship good service.

For some time we have had a generator humming for all of the electrical needs. It was the donation of board member Chuck Kellogg. When the generator first started up, the ship came alive again! That hum used to be so much a part of our life aboard ship.

We are fortunate to have a first class Marine Architect, Mr. Thomas S. Winslow, PE, assisting us. Tom's talents assisted us in arriving at the exact amount of steel needed to fabricate a new bottom for the 713. We have purchased this steel and have it in storage (free) at the engine storage facility. This locality is a historical site as it is one of the buildings used as a part of the Kaiser Shipyards in Vancouver, Washington, for building vessels during World War II.

The cost for the steel was \$40,000. This was paid for by a \$20,000 grant from the State of Oregon and \$20,000 in matching funds that we had hoarded for this purpose.

We have also procured five 20mm Oerlikon guns at \$500 each plus over \$600 in freight. These guns had been cut into thirds to deactivate them, but a machine shop in Portland, owned by Chuck Kellogg, is working on restoring them. Two are complete and you cannot tell where they were cut into pieces.

Our next goal is a major one. The old gal desperately needs a new bottom! We do have that steel on hand, but the dry-docking and labor for that job will cost over \$250,000. We are in the process of applying for a federal grant for this. In the meantime we will be contacting local foun-



dations, inviting them to come aboard, meet us and see the ship. They, too, could be a source of significant income for us.

We want you all to know that we are committed to being as good stewards of our funds as possible. We have accountability and strict controls on all funds. There are no salaries, lunches, coffee or social events paid for from donated funds. Every penny donated goes to the ship.

We have been receiving donations, ranging from \$10.00 to \$1,000 from LCI Association members and their families and we are truly grateful for this support. We need even more support if we are to achieve that goal of replacing the bottom so we once again are asking for your donations.

Through the generosity of Bill McGee, our reunion speaker, we have an attractive offer to make. For your donation of \$500 or more to the "GET THE LCI 713 UNDERWAY" fund we will send you, free and post paid, a set of his three books on amphibious operations in the Pacific: *The Amphibians are Coming*, *The Solomons Campaigns* and his latest book, which he introduced at our Portland Reunion, *Pacific Express*. The total value of these three books is \$110.00.

Bill McGee's account of amphibious operations in the Pacific and of the supply effort needed to support all operations there is meticulously researched and told with the skill of a born storyteller. These books will make a proud addition to anyone's library.

Quantity is limited—this offer started June 15, 2009 and will continue until all of the donated sets on hand are given away.

**SEND YOUR ORDER TO:**

**GET THE LCI #713 UNDERWAY FUND  
P. O. BOX 17220  
PORTLAND, OREGON 97217**

**REMEMBER: "EVERY PENNY GOES TO THE SHIP!"**

And thanks again for all your good words at generous support!

**SAVE THESE DATES FOR OUR 2010 REUNION!  
AT THE MILLENNIUM HOTEL IN CINCINNATI:  
AUGUST 25–29, 2010**



# "The LCI Blues"

You may or may not have heard this while you were serving aboard an LCI in WWII, but this masterpiece was resurrected by the "Boyce Family Singers" at the Portland reunion banquet!

*You've heard of the Cans and the APAs  
And you've heard of the cruisers, too,  
And you've also heard of the fast PTs  
And some of the things they do.*

*Refrain*

*Let the good times roll, It's the LCI Blues!*

*But, brother, if you've a minute to spare  
And feel in need of a cry  
Then sit right down, and my tale I'll share  
Of the terrible LCI!*

*Refrain*

*They're a helluva, horrible looking mess,  
Neither ship nor barge, it's true.  
They're a joke to the fleet, I must confess,  
But not to the poor damned crew.*

*Refrain*

*She will rock and roll on the calmest day,  
She'll buck like a kangaroo  
And pitch in the most peculiar way,  
Thou all is serene and blue.*

*Refrain*

*The engineers sit in their miserable hole  
And can't even hear or think,  
While the boys topside, as they sway with the  
roll  
Have often wished she would sink.*

*Refrain*

*The signalman clings to his light in the Conn  
While she rolls over fifty degrees,  
And the helmsman struggles to hold her on  
Though it's blowing a very light breeze*

*Refrain*

*The cooks in the galley sob and moan  
As over the stove slops the stew,  
And the crew sets us a terrible groan,  
And so, by God, would you!*

*Refrain*

*And when we take the troops aboard  
To land on some enemy shore,  
They take one look and pray to the Lord  
They won't see us anymore.*

*Refrain*

*They were built, I am told, of a bunch of old junk  
And stuck together with glue,  
The whole thing was planned by a humorous drunk  
An inmate of Annapolis U!*

*Refrain*

*But don't pity us, friend, and dry that tear  
Though we are thankful for your grief,  
But we've sailed in this thing for many a year.  
SO, PLEASE LET'S HAVE SOME RELIEF!*

*One more time!*

*Refrain!*



# Trivia Quiz Subject: Famous LClers

## What was the first landing craft to land in the Sicily landings and Who was its Commanding Officer?

**Answer: HMS LCI 124 commanded by  
(let's have a drum roll, please!)**

### **Sub Lieutenant Alec Guinness, RNVR!**

That's right! You can count the famous actor as one of your LCI shipmates. Not only that but he was wrongly accused of being late! The story was carried in the June 2002 issue of Naval History. Here is part of that Article entitled "To Sicily with Alec Guinness.":

*A lone British landing ship (HMS LCI-124) hit the beach at Cape Passero lighthouse on 9 July 1943. It was the beginning of Operation Husky, the invasion of Sicily. Tumultuous seas pushed the stern of the craft at such an angle that the 200 soldiers she carried could not use the ramps alongside the ship's bow to go ashore. Using ropes, they lowered themselves into the surf and scrambled across the beach to take up their positions. No enemy opposition was encountered, much to the surprise of the commander of the landing craft. Suddenly, from out at sea, a thunderous barrage began, and explosions erupted half a mile inland. The commander, Sub-Lieutenant Alec Guinness, had expected this shelling an hour earlier. Puzzled, he watched as several of the soldiers he had landed returned to the beach, along with a few terrified Italian prisoners. An hour later the sub-lieutenant stood before an angry Royal Navy commander, who demanded to know why he had been so late in landing. Guinness, Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve (RVNR) and commander of the LCI 124, replied that he had not been late. In fact, he had been the first to land his men. The officer did not believe him. He asked just what Guinness did as a civilian. 'Acting,' replied the latter, adding that, although it had not been part of his orders, he had in fact landed first, leading all others. He had landed on time, he insisted, at the exact spot specified in his orders. "And you will allow me to point out, sir, as an actor, that in the West End of London, if the curtain is advertised as going up at 8:00 p.m., it goes up at 8:00 p.m. and not an hour later, something that the Royal Navy might learn from."*

*—Captain James E. Wise, JR, U.S. Navy, (Ret.) Naval History, June 2002, p. 17*

The article continues with the explanation. While maneuvering his landing craft alongside a troopship to pick up soldiers, heavy seas made the operation extremely hazardous. In the confusion of getting the men aboard, Guinness missed the signal to all ships that the invasion had been postponed by one hour. Once free of the troopship, he headed straight for land just left of the Cape Passero lighthouse. He was eight miles away from his landing beach point in his assigned quadrant passing other landing craft that were circling off the beach. He beckoned them to follow but none did. There is no mention of disciplinary action against Guinness, so his story must have stuck!

# “Spread the Word” Says Rod Scurlock

If you're looking for a place to leave your medals, photos, models or anything else connected to your LCI service, Rod Scurlock, former VP of our association and now an emeritus board member, has a suggestion for you.

One of the goals of the USS LCI National Association is to “spread the word” about the role played by LCIs and their sailors in World War II. There are military museums throughout the country in most major cities and even in many small communities. These facilities are eager to have displays of a military nature.



***George Menhorn (l) and the LCI Model he purchased from Richard Wright (r) and donated to the Warhawk Museum***

Several of the tours we took at national reunions in the Northwest included such museums in small communities: Chehalis, Washington, population 7,105; Astoria, Oregon, population 9,605; Monmouth, Oregon, population 8,901; and Vancouver, Washington, population 151,654. The displays that are shown in these museums are largely donations from local veterans and other interested people.

These museums draw large numbers of visitors on a long term basis. There may be only a few visitors at a time, but the displays are there as long as the museum exists for viewers to see and learn from. How better to spread the word about our LCIs for future generations?

Here's what some of us have done in the Northwest:

The “Boise Four” (Hal Bleyhl, Gorge Menhorn, Leroy Olson and myself) have installed displays in the Military Museum, Boise, Idaho, and the Warhawk Military Museum in Nampa, Idaho. At the Warhawk Military Museum, we built the display case and each of us contributed memorabilia that we had accumulated, such as books, pictures, keepsakes, etc., for those display cases.

We believe we have placed a good accounting of the history of LCI participation in WWII for generations to come to view, learn from and enjoy.

We were fortunate enough to receive donations of two of the models built by Carl Chapple for raffling off at our reunions. One was donated by Jim Talbert, Chairman of the Board of our Association. The one pictured above was won by Richard Wright at the Portland reunion. George Menhorn wanted it for our museum here and offered Richard \$400 for it. In a very generous gesture, Richard said he would give it to the museum, asking only that his father's name and ship number be displayed on it. George was more than willing to agree to do that.

# More Reunion Photos



***The Color Guard from Vancouver VFW Post 7824 presents the colors***



***Hal Bleyhl, Joe Flynn, Gordon Smith and John Cummer lead the audience in traditional toasts.***



***Board Chairman Jim Talbert surprises President Cummer with a plaque recognizing his services***



***Senior Chief Jim Blair, Son of Fred Langston, and Affiliate Member with Banquet Speaker Bill McGee***



***Naval Historian and Author William McGee Addresses the Banquet.***



***Memorial Service: "Taps" from the Bow of the 713***



# Need Help? Answers? Here's 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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**101 Rice Bent Way, # 6, Columbia, SC 29229**  
**803-865-5665**

Please send information or questions about membership, dues payment, address, e-mail or telephone changes to them.

Please send information concerning the death of an LCI shipmate to Jim Talbert

Please send any communications concerning *Elsie Item* to John Cummer

# 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**

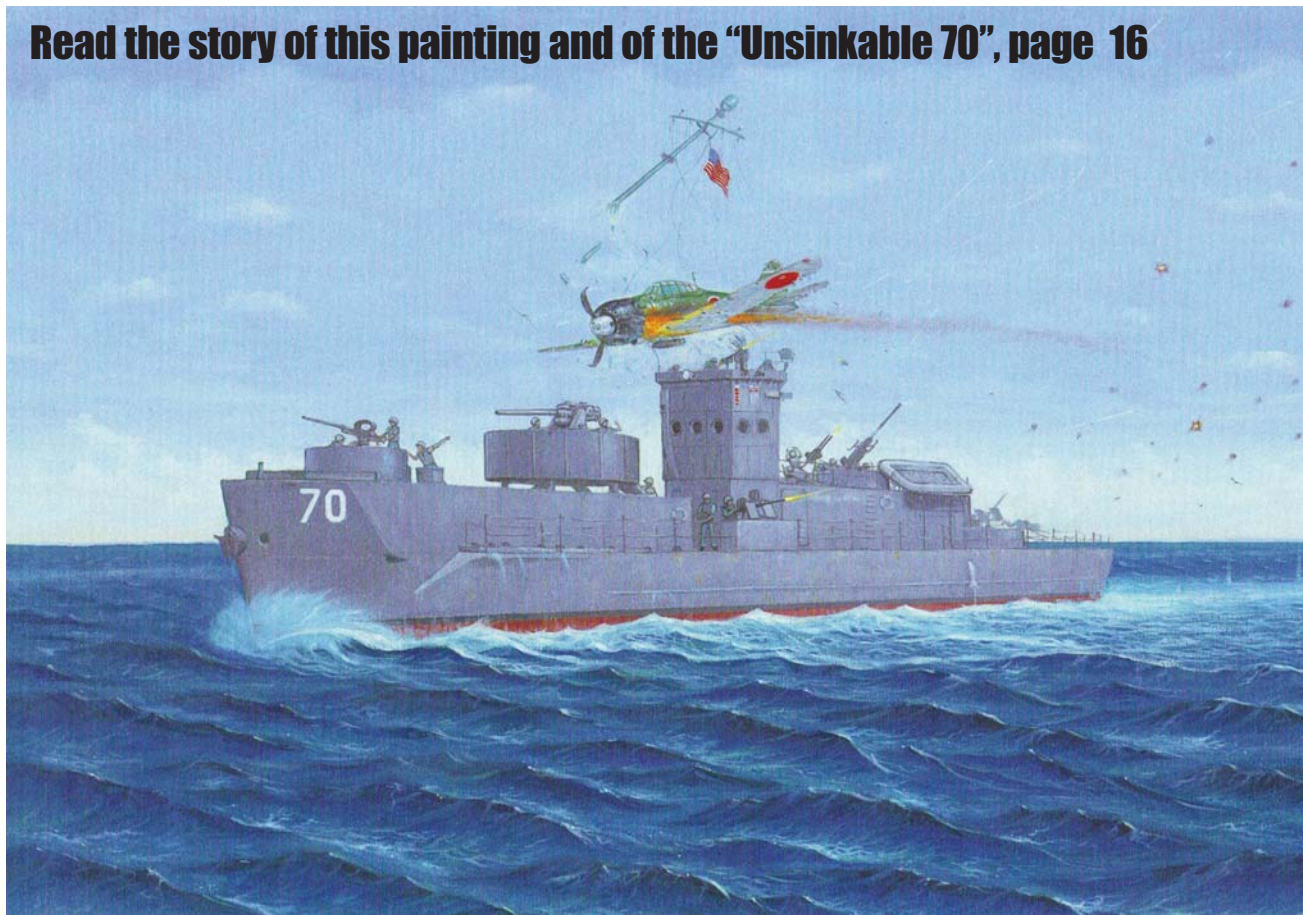
Send Application and Check to:  
**USS LCI National Association**  
**c/o Nehemiah Communications, Inc.**  
**101 Rice Bent Way, #6**  
**Columbia, SC 29229**

**USS LCI NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, INC.**  
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**Read the story of this painting and of the “Unsinkable 70”, page 16**



**“THE UNSINKABLE 70” by JOE ORTIZ**