

ISSUE 82 **MAY 2013**

Elsie Item

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

• *Established May 14-18, 1991, Norfolk, VA* •



BUZZARDS AND SITTING DUCKS!

*The USS LCI(G) 70 Survives a
Furious Attack by Japanese Aircraft.*

On Our Cover:

This painting of the attack by Japanese planes on USS LCI(L) 70 was painted by Joe Ortiz, nephew of Gilbert Ortiz who served on that ship;. Read about the miraculous escape of this ship from a torpedo that did not explode. Page 22

IN THIS ISSUE:

Great Sea Stories:

“Red Avalanche South! The LCI (L) 15: Fighting the Fascists From Africa to Normandy”, by **Zach Morris**

“Kamikaze’s Scarf Held Secrets of Past”, by **Dawn House**, *The Salt Lake Tribune*,

Reprinted by permission; Edited by Zach Morris

“My Grandfather: Stephen Ganzberger: a Memorial”, by **Zach Morris**

“The Surrender of the Italian Submarine Fleet at Taranto, Sicily,” by **Gordon Smith, QM1C, LCI 43**

“An LCler in the Royal Navy”, by **Frank Ward**

“Sitting Ducks Clobber Buzzards: The Fighting Courage of LCI(G) 70”, By **Joe Ortiz**

“A Novel LCI Repair Job By The 75th CB Battalion”, reprinted from *Seabee News Service*

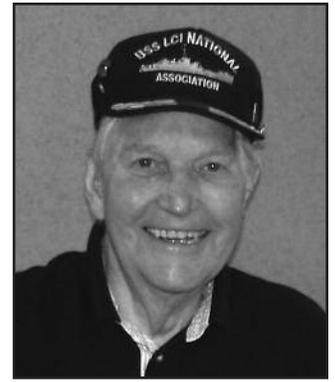
Plus—All the Information and registration blanks you’ll need for our September reunion in Branson!

“THE ELSIE ITEM”

NUMBER 82, May 2013

Official publication 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, to anyone related to an LCI veteran, or to anyone just interested in the history of LCIs. 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.

A Word from the President



THERE ARE THREE THINGS THAT SOMETIMES GIVE ME HEADACHES, along with a lot of pleasure, about our LCI Association: getting the newsletter out on time, planning and carrying off a successful annual reunion and—the big bugaboo—finances.

We're in relatively good shape on the first of those concerns. It's not the quality of the newsletter that concerns me. Due to the excellent design and printing that **Nehemiah Communications** gives us, we have a good product. It's my own personal difficulty in getting things done in a timely fashion that needs attention. The addition of **Zach Morris** as Feature Writer and Assistant Editor is already proving to be a great help. In this issue you'll find three articles either written or edited by him. Outside of urging you to keep those stories and pictures coming in, there's little else for which I can plead for your help.

As far as the reunion goes, we can be thankful for the great support of Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. (especially of **Donna Lee**). What we really need for another great reunion in Branson come September is—you! Be there! If you haven't done so already, please use the registration forms that we're including in this issue again to get your reservation in. There may not be too many more of these reunions, so we want to see as many of you as possible there.

That leaves the big one where we really need a lot of help—finances.

I'm not, and never have been, good at fund raising. I had a shot at it once at a college and soon found out that it was a talent I did not possess. But I have been associated with more than one outfit or organization that really needed someone with that gift—like our LCI Association. There's really no one else, at least on my horizon, with the time and talent to do that, so, at least for the time being, I'm going to have to give it a shot. Only thing I know is to let people who have the means know what you need and why you need it and then ask them to "come alongside" with financial support. So here goes!

The situation is this: With our dwindling numbers our cash flow doesn't look so good. We're having to dip into our reserves to pay our bills and, as necessary as that is, it doesn't really help our long term viability. We want to continue our support for the bonding of our shipmates, mainly through this newsletter and our reunions, just as long as we can and then turn the watch over to our affiliates with the resources they need to do so in whatever form they see best.

Here's a broad brush picture of where we are financially: We've got two major expenses—the newsletter and our support services from Nehemiah Communications. It costs roughly \$3,000 to get out each issue of the newsletter and \$1,200 per month for support services. That comes to about \$26,400 per year. As of January 10th of this year, we had 511 members who were LCers and 126 non-LCI veterans for a total of about 637. Even if every one of those members pays his dues we come up short. We have a little income from the sale of merchandise and, if enough of you show up for the reunion, there's usually a little profit for us there. But that's it.

So here's where we really need a lot of help. We need as much in contributions as possible. For some of you a major contribution may be possible. If you can make a good sized contribution that will be greatly appreciated. But what I'm hoping is that we will have a large out-pouring of a lot of modest gifts—maybe \$5, \$10, or \$25. Whatever you can afford. Remember, we are a 501.c.3 organization, so your gift is tax-deductible. Can we count on you? The address is: Nehemiah Communications, 101 Rice Bent Way, #6, Columbia, SC 29229

There! That's my modest attempt at fund raising!

Regards to you all—and enjoy this issue!

John Cummer

LCI ARCHIVES PRESENTED TO THE NIMITZ MUSEUM!

Saturday, March 9, was a great day for us as our archives were officially presented to the Nimitz Museum in Fredericksburg, Texas. A crowd of some fifty people, including ten LCIs, were present for the event.

The hard work of LCI Historian **Dennis Blocker** made it all possible. Stored in special folders and boxes designed to preserve them in first class condition, the materials will be a valuable source of information for future historians, scholars of WWII, or friends and relatives of LCIs.



The Archives and the ten LCIs who were present



Dennis Blocker makes the Presentation

**USS LCI NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
SEPTEMBER 23 – 27, 2013
RADISSON BRANSON**

Monday, September 23

- 2:00pm - 6:00pm **Reunion Registration open**
1:00pm - Hospitality Room opens for the duration of the reunion.
7:00pm - Meet & Greet Reception in the hospitality Room ??

Tuesday, September 24

- 9:00am - 10:00am **Reunion Registration open**
10:30am - 2:00pm BRANSON SCENIC RAILWAY (description follows)
4:00pm - 6:00pm **Reunion Registration open**
6:45pm - 10:30pm BALDKNOBBER'S JAMBOREE (description follows)

Wednesday, September 25

- 10:45am - 2:45pm SHOWBOAT BRANSON BELLE LUNCH CRUISE
(description follows)
3:00pm - 5:00pm **Reunion Registration open.** Additional hours will be
posted at the reunion if necessary.
3:30pm - 4:30pm LCI Meeting for All Members Who Did Not Serve on
LCIs (formerly Affiliates)
7:00pm - 10:30pm SIX SHOW (description follows)

Thursday, September 26

- 9:00am - 11:00am Business Meeting.
1:00pm - 2:00pm USS LCI National Association Memorial Service
5:30pm - Cash Bar Reception
6:30pm - Banquet

Friday, September 27

Farewells & Departures

Register and pay online at www.afr-reg.com/lci2013

CANCELLATION AND REFUND POLICY FOR ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC.

For attendees canceling reunion activities prior to the cut-off date, Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. (AFR) shall process a full refund less the non-refundable AFR registration fee (\$7 per person). Attendees canceling reunion activities after the cut-off date will be refunded to the fullest extent that AFR's vendor commitments and guarantees will allow, less the non-refundable AFR registration fee. **Cancellations will only be taken Monday through Friday from 9:00am until 4:00pm Eastern Standard Time, excluding holidays.** Please call (757) 625-6401 to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion. Canceling your hotel reservation does not cancel your reunion activities.

USS LCI NATIONAL ASSN. ACTIVITY REGISTRATION FORM

Listed below are all registration, tour, and meal costs for the reunion. Please enter how many people will be participating in each event and total the amount. Send that amount payable to ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC. in the form of check or money order. Your cancelled check will serve as your confirmation. Returned checks will be charged a \$20 fee. You may also register online and pay by credit card at www.afr-reg.com/lci2013 (3% will be added to total). All registration forms and payments must be received by mail on or before August 22, 2013. After that date, reservations will be accepted on a space available basis. We suggest you make a copy of this form before mailing. Please do not staple or tape your payment to this form.

Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.
322 Madison Mews
Norfolk, VA 23510
ATTN: LCI

OFFICE USE ONLY	
Check # _____	Date Received _____
Inputted _____	Nametag Completed _____

CUT-OFF DATE IS 8/22/13

	Price Per	# of People	Total
TOURS			
TUESDAY: BRANSON SCENIC RAILWAY	\$63		\$
TUESDAY: BALDKNOBBER'S JAMBOREE SHOW	\$53		\$
WEDNESDAY: LUNCH CRUISE	\$64		\$
WEDNESDAY: SIX SHOW	\$54		\$
BANQUET			
THURSDAY: BANQUET <i>(Please select your entrée)</i>			\$
BEEF MEDALLION W/ BORDELAISE SAUCE	\$34		\$
CHAMPAGNE CHICKEN	\$34		\$
MANDATORY PER PERSON REGISTRATION FEE			
Includes Hospitality Room and administrative expenses.	\$20		\$
Total Amount Payable to Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.			\$

PLEASE PRINT NAME AS YOU WANT YOUR NAMETAG TO READ

FIRST _____ LAST _____

(CIRCLE TYPE OF SHIP)

LCI LCI(FF) LCI(G) LCI(L) LCI(M) LCI(R) SHIP NUMBER _____

IF YOU HAVE A SEATING PREFERENCE, OTHER THAN W/ YOUR SHIP, PLEASE SPECIFY _____

SPOUSE NAME _____

GUEST NAMES _____

STREET ADDRESS _____ CITY, ST, ZIP _____

PH. NUMBER (____) _____ - _____ EMAIL ADDRESS _____ @ _____

DISABILITY/DIETARY RESTRICTIONS _____

(Sleeping room requirements must be conveyed by attendee directly to hotel)

MUST YOU BE LIFTED HYDRAULICALLY ONTO THE BUS WHILE SEATED IN YOUR WHEELCHAIR IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN BUS TRIPS? YES NO (PLEASE NOTE THAT WE CANNOT GUARANTEE AVAILABILITY).

EMERGENCY CONTACT _____ PH. NUMBER (____) _____ - _____

For refunds and cancellations please refer to our policies outlined at the bottom of the reunion program. **CANCELLATIONS WILL ONLY BE TAKEN MONDAY-FRIDAY 9:00am-4:00pm EASTERN TIME (excluding holidays).** Call (757) 625-6401 to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion.

REGISTER ONLINE AT WWW.AFR-REG.COM/LCI2013

TOUR DESCRIPTIONS

BRANSON SCENIC RAILWAY

Tuesday, September 24

Enjoy a forty-mile, narrated ride through the countryside on a real passenger train. You will learn the history of the area as you cross bridges and trestles. Narration includes a description of the wildlife & landscape and an outline of the railroad's role in shaping the Ozarks. Experience the luxury of rail travel from yesteryear. Your trip includes a box lunch.

10:30am board bus, 2:00pm back at hotel

\$63/Person includes bus, escort, train ride, and lunch.

BALDKNOBBERS JAMBOREE SHOW

Tuesday, September 24

The Baldknobbers began in 1959, when the four Mabe brothers began entertaining fishermen on the downtown Branson lakefront. Now, over fifty years later, the second and third generations of the Mabe family continue the family tradition of combining your favorite country classics, with hot-new country hits and hilarious comedy into a fast paced, high energy show. Enjoy this musical powerhouse with a talented cast of singers, musicians, and comedians.

6:45pm board bus, 10:30pm back at hotel.

\$53/Person includes bus, escort, and show.

SHOWBOAT BRANSON BELLE LUNCH CRUISE

Wednesday, September 25

Cruise the waters of Table Rock Lake on board a paddle wheeler, the Showboat Branson Belle. Enjoy a served lunch and great entertainment. The show features a talented cast of singers, dancers, and musicians, who will take you back to the time when showboats were once famous. The show is all new – and such a variety – since our last trip in 2007.

10:45am board bus, 2:45pm back at hotel

\$64/Person includes bus, escort, and cruise.

SIX

Wednesday, September 25

See the show that everyone is talking about! The cast is six brothers and everything is done a cappella. The variety show includes many music genres, so it appeals to everyone. Their intense high-octane energy, electrifying stage presence, and powerhouse vocals combine to create a truly amazing entertainment experience. Your eyes won't believe your ears! No tracks, no lip-synchronizing, no band; just SIX human voices.

7:00pm board bus, 10:30pm back at hotel

\$54/Person includes bus, escort, and show.

Driver and Guide gratuities are not included in the tour prices.

Please plan to be at the bus boarding area at least five minutes prior to the scheduled time.

All trips require a minimum of thirty people, unless otherwise stated.

RADISSON HOTEL BRANSON – BRANSON, MO
(417) 335-5767 (888) 566-5290

The newly renovated Radisson Hotel Branson is located at 120 South Wildwood Drive, Branson, MO 65616. The hotel is approximately 55 miles away from the Springfield Branson National Airport. Additionally, the hotel is approximately 15 miles away from the Branson Airport. If you are driving, please call the hotel directly for directions. The Radisson Hotel features 472 spacious guest rooms and suites, each equipped with a coffee maker, hair dryer, iron/ ironing board, and complimentary high speed internet access. The hotel also features an indoor and outdoor swimming pool, hot tub, sauna, and exercise room. Handicapped rooms are available, but subject to availability. Please request any special requests when making your hotel reservation. There is ample free parking available. Check-in time is 4:00pm and check-out is 11:00am. **Wildwood Bistro** offers local flavors with a bistro twist and is open for all meals. **Time Out Lounge**, serves your favorite cocktail, beer, or wine in a warm, friendly atmosphere that is uniquely Branson. Menu service is also available in the Time Out Lounge. Room service is available.

Four airlines (American, Allegiant, Delta, and United) service the Springfield Branson Airport. Classic Shuttle Service, offers shuttle service from the airport to downtown Branson. Currently, one-way service is \$60 for 1 person, \$70 for 2 people, \$90 for 3 people and \$30 each for a party of 4-10 people. Please call 417-598-0227 to make your reservations and to verify pricing. Terry's Transport, offers service to and from the airport, current fare for one-way service is \$74 for 1 person, \$79 for 2 people, \$84 for 3 people and \$29 per person for 4-17 people. Please call 417-331-2582 to make your reservations and verify pricing. All prices are subject to change, please call to verify pricing. Branson Airport, a smaller privately owned airport, uses Grayline for shuttle service to and from the airport. The cost is \$14 per person with a 2 person minimum. For questions or to make reservations, please contact Grayline at 800-237-4466 or www.bransongrayline.com. **All prices are subject to change, please call to verify pricing. Reservations need to be made twenty-four hours in advance for all shuttle services.**

The Radisson Hotel does allow RV's to park in the hotel parking lot for guests staying in the hotel. Should hookups be required, call Branson KOA, 397 Animal Safari Road, Branson, MO 65616, at (800) 467-7611 or (417) 334-4414 for information, reservations, and directions. The RV Park is approximately 2 miles from the hotel.

Should you need to rent a wheelchair for the reunion, ScootAround rents both manual and power wheel chairs by the day and week. Please call their toll free number at (888) 441-7575 for details. All prices quoted include delivery fees.

Vendors, Schedules, and Prices are subject to change.

----- CUT HERE AND MAIL TO THE HOTEL -----

USS LCI NATIONAL ASSOCIATION REUNION - HOTEL RESERVATION FORM
REUNION DATES: SEPTEMBER 23-27 2013

NAME _____ SHARING ROOM W/ _____

ADDRESS _____ ZIP _____

TEL. # (_____) _____ EMAIL _____

ARRIVAL DAY & DATE _____ DEPARTURE DATE _____ # NIGHTS _____

OF ROOMS _____ # OF PEOPLE IN RM. _____ HANDICAP ACCESS _____

KING BED _____ 2 DOUBLE BEDS _____

If room type requested is not available, nearest room type will be assigned.

RATE: \$111 + tax (currently 11.6%). Rate includes breakfast buffet for two people each day.

CUTOFF DATE: 08/22/13. Reservations received after this date will be processed on space & rate availability.

CANCELLATION POLICY: The Radisson's cancellation policy requires that any portion of a reservation must be cancelled 72 hours prior to arrival date. If a cancellation occurs within 72 hours, the penalty is a minimum of one night's room and tax. Early departures and no shows are subject to a penalty equal to a minimum of one night's room and tax.

Reservations must be guaranteed by credit card (information below) or first night's deposit enclosed.

___ AMEX ___ DINERS ___ VISA ___ MASTER CARD ___ DISCOVER

CREDIT CARD NUMBER _____ EXP. DATE _____

SIGNATURE (regardless of payment method) _____

MAIL TO: RADISSON HOTEL, 120 SOUTH WILDWOOD DRIVE, BRANSON, MO 65616

"RED AVALANCHE SOUTH!"

The LCI (L) 15: Fighting the Fascists From Africa to Normandy

By Zach Morris



LCI(L) 15 Loading Army Engineers at Termini-Imerese, Sicily, September, 1943

The following is a narrative re-telling of the log originally recorded by Harold Edward Marquardt during his time in the US Navy aboard the LCI (L) 15. His ship saw action from North Africa to Normandy, France.

Harold Marquardt had some unforgettable experiences while he served in the Navy aboard the LCI (L) 15 during WWII.

Some of those memories were extraordinarily special.

Many of them were terribly tragic and unfortunate. One experience that occurred while rescuing Italian refugees from the bloody beaches of Anzio would even prove to be quite miraculous.

But it was the memories of the enemy air raids in the middle of the night that were impossible to erase. Those raids haunted him, because they embodied the very definition of what it meant to feel true terror. Like

others who lived through them, they would shake him to his very core.

November 5th, 1942 was the day the USS LCI (L) 15 was commissioned for duty in WWII, fresh from the Philadelphia Navy Yard. Apprentice Seaman Harold Marquardt recalls that for the next three months, the LCI (L) 15 conducted its first training exercises off the coasts of Maryland and Virginia, under Commanding Officer Lt. (jg.) W.R. Kline.

The USS LCI (L) 15's plunge into the European Theater of War was about to begin. This rough journey proved to many of the men just how violently seasick they were capable of getting, especially Harold. The LCI (L) 15 departed Virginia in February 1942, en route to Algeria, Northern Africa. Upon arrival, their first duty in action was to transfer German prisoners from Bizerte to Bone, Algeria on May 14, 1942.

As fate would have it that same night in Bone Harbor, the LCI (L) 15 would experience its first of many furious air raids by the German Air Force, the Nazi Luftwaffe. It experienced many of these frightening raids during the dead of night. Harold lived through countless raids made by ME-109's, FW-190 fighters, and JU-88 enemy bombers. In July of 1943, the LCI (L) 15 even had to endure a raid while the entire crew was sick with a painful case of dysentery. It's hard to imagine the terror of a nighttime raid, aboard a ship where tiniest waves can be felt, all while doubled over sick.

The LCI (L) 15 spent the summer of 1943 landing troops and securing the island of Sicily, the southernmost island of Italy. In mid-September came the landings of the Italian mainland. Their first target: Salerno, Italy – dubbed “Operation Avalanche.” These landings encountered heavy enemy resistance from a Nazi Panzer Division. The bloody shores of Red and Yellow Beaches took the brunt of the attack. While approaching the chaos of Red Beach, the radio sounded by warning the crew using the words that soon became a familiar phrase: “Red Avalanche South!” The landing was followed by four straight days of what seemed like non-stop enemy air raids, but the LCI (L) 15 still managed to successfully land British “Empire Troops” on Italian soil.

As the war continued into January of 1944, the Allied advance brought them to the outskirts of Rome. Dubbed “Operation Shingle,” the Battle for Anzio would be next in the Allied strategy. Anzio would prove to be amongst the

bloodiest, fiercest, and costliest battles in WWII. While anchored in Anzio Harbor, Harold witnessed ferocious daily attacks by the Nazi Luftwaffe. The FW-190 fighters rained down a storm of shells on the beaches during the day, and switched to radio controlled jet-propulsion bombs attacking the Navy at night. Both methods proved to be deadly effective.

One of the horribly tragic events Harold was forced to witness was the Luftwaffe glide bomb attack of Anzio Bay. Just as the sun was setting on January 29, 1944 one radio-controlled German Henschel Hs 293 anti-ship bomb struck the British Light Cruiser *H.M.S. Spartan*, on the port side boiler room. This caused the boiler room to flood due to the mast collapsing, and shortly after, a fire broke out. *Spartan* was burning, and many of the men aboard were consumed in the fire.

Harold and fellow Gunner's Mate, Paul Carter, immediately went over the side of the LCI (L) 15 in a rubber lifeboat and attempted to rescue survivors. They managed to take ten men aboard, all of them suffering from severe burns. Sadly, while attempting to transfer the ten wounded men to the *H.M.S. Delhi*, one of the men died aboard the lifeboat from his injuries. Harold and Paul looked over and noticed that the fire consuming *Spartan* had reached the magazines, causing other violent explosions. This was *H.M.S. Spartan's* final hour. Soon after, it capsized and sunk to the bottom of Anzio Bay.

A liberty ship was hit next. It was loaded with ammunition, which triggered a firework-like display of continuing “Pop, pop, pop” blasts that lasted all night. Following the liberty ship, German bombs also hit a destroyer or two. But the most heart-wrenching blow came to the nearby LCI (L) 32 just after dark. It smashed into a mine and sunk, joining its counterpart, *Spartan*, at the bottom of the Tyrrhenian Sea. Devastatingly, some of the staff from the LCI (L) 15 were aboard the LCI (L) 32 when it did.

Harold and the LCI (L) 15 were fortunate to make it out of the initial Battle of Anzio with only minor damage. He would earn the rating of Coxswain on March 1, 1944. Almost two weeks later, with the battle still raging, the LCI (L) 15 would return to Anzio on March 12. This time, they not only unloaded British troops, but they also loaded and evacuated Italian refugees from the war torn beach.

Harold's LCI left the beach with the refugees in the afternoon, and had to overcome a rather rough sea. But

this particular mission was very unique. In the middle of the night, one of the refugee mothers gave birth to a baby girl while still underway. Harold recalled that this event understandably caused a lot of excitement amongst the crew. The mother and her baby were rushed to a nearby hospital in Pozzuoli, Italy once the ship tied up to the pier. Harold had somehow miraculously witnessed the life of a child begin aboard his ship, after being subjected to the grueling loss of so many others. It was a very special day for them all.

The LCI (L) 15 spent the rest of the spring of 1944 on liberty and maneuver drills, and managed to observe the last eruption from Mount Vesuvius, a volcano several miles east of Naples, known for its reputation of swallowing entire ancient Roman cities whole.

Then came the grey, stormy skies of those early days in June 1944. One thing that stood out in Harold's mind was the lecture and movie given by British Admiral Talbot about the forthcoming operation in Normandy. Harold and the crews were told that they only expected one ship in ten would return. It wasn't encouraging; especially the part where the Admiral added that one of the Germans' expected weapons would be gas. The LCI (L) 15 loaded the British Engineers of the 3rd Infantry Division and approached White area, Sword Beach for the long-awaited invasion of Nazi-occupied France. "Operation Overlord" had finally begun on June 6.

Harold remembers a calm, sleeping beach from the

distance, but upon getting closer, it suddenly and viciously came to life. Soon, bodies and every type of equipment were scattered along the shores. The troops reluctantly disembarked for the beaches in the face of heavy artillery, some having to be forced off the ships into the jaws of hell. The LCI (L) 15 would have close calls from 88MM enemy fire, air raids, and German E-boats, but they would survive the trials of June 1944.

Four days after Harold's 23rd birthday, on October 18, 1944, the USS LCI (L) 15 was decommissioned with a ceremony. She was now officially part of the British Navy. The crew had one last liberty in Glasgow, and then boarded the Queen Elizabeth for their final journey home to Boston. The war was over for Harold.

On August 2, 1945 Harold found himself on a seventy-one hour liberty in Washington D.C. It was there he met a girl named Betty, a girl he would become engaged to the very next day. The war for everyone else was over a week and a half later. Harold would receive his discharge on January 17, 1946.

During the course of his journey, I suppose there were many things Harold was not sure about. Where the next European Theater landing would bring him and his crew? Would he ever survive the chronic seasickness? Would one of the enemy's bombers hit his LCI next? But there was one thing that Harold did know for sure...

It was a journey he would never forget.



KAMIKAZE'S SCARF HELD SECRETS OF PAST

By Dawn House
The Salt Lake Tribune
Reprinted by permission;
Edited by Zach Morris

Mystery and heartache were folded into a white silk scarf taken from the body of a kamikaze pilot who died in the spring of 1945 while trying to sink a U.S. gunboat that was so small the vessel was known only by a number.

J. MacPherson “Mac” Munk was a 21-year-old sailor on LCI(G) 452, sailing northwest of the island of Okinawa during World War II when he spotted three Japanese planes flying toward him. Gunners shot at the planes but missed.

Munk, a Utah native, watched as the planes, perhaps Mitsubishi Zeros, nearly flew out of sight. To his horror, one circled back and took a steep, suicide dive straight at his ship. The skipper ordered the right propeller into full speed reverse and the second engine into a hard right turn.

The evasive maneuver was just enough to save the vessel. The plane crashed into the water a few feet away from where Munk was standing at the back of the boat.

“If I hadn’t ducked, I could have touched its wing,” said Munk, now 89 and a resident of Murray. “I never did see his face.”

Munk grabbed a long hook used for docking and fished out a large piece of a parachute and the pilot’s body. The pilot’s face had disintegrated, but wrapped around his neck was a white scarf – a flag with the image of a red sun and an inscription.

The crew placed the body in a metal ammunition container punched with holes so it would sink. The skipper called all hands on deck and said a few words before burying the pilot at sea.



LC1er MacPherson Munk displays a flag he retrieved from the body of a kamikaze pilot and returned to Japan decades later.

“The ceremony was an automatic thing,” said Munk of the gesture toward the man who had tried to kill all 30 crewmembers. “Nobody thought to do anything different.”

Munk sent the parachute to his wife **Floy**, who used the silk material for a baby dress, carefully cutting around the burn holes in piecing the pattern together. He would not see their daughter Kathleen, born in his absence, until she was 18 months old.

A bleeding ulcer brought Munk to a hospital in the United States before the end of the war. He had tossed the silk scarf into his footlocker, which eventually was forwarded to his home.

Through the years, he kept the scarf in a drawer, taking it out only when one of his four children asked to show it off at school.

“It brought back too many bad memories,” said Munk, who fought in sea battles at Okinawa, the Solomon and Marshall Islands, and the Philippines. “I saw destroyers cut in two from kamikazes and bloated bodies of our sailors, many of them, floating in the water.”

The use of suicide planes, which crashed planes into targets, had caught the Americans by surprise when they appeared in the spring of 1945 as U.S. forces successfully took one island after another on their way to the main Japanese homeland.

“Even though most suicide fighters died missing their marks, all it took was a few hits to inflict devastating damage on the U.S. Navy,” said **Paul Walker**, of Murray, author of *Truman’s Dilemma: Invasion or the Bomb*.

“The U.S. Navy was taking such a beating from kamikazes during the battle for Okinawa that fleet commanders were pressing the Army to speed up the invasion of the Island,” he said. “The Navy had some 10,000 casualties in that single sea battle alone.”

Though Americans secured Okinawa against defenders who fought to the death, Japanese military planners were buoyed by the success of their suicide fighters, said Walker.

In their plans to defend the main Islands, the Japanese military set aside 13,000 planes for suicide attacks, using wood and fabric makeshift planes. “Anything that you could put a five hundred pound bomb under and fly”, Walker added.

When Munk returned from the war, he rarely discussed what he had done, seen, or heard. His own siblings did not know of the scarf’s existence for nearly 60 years.

It was in 2002, when he was honored with other veterans at the University of Utah when **Ann Floor**, Coordinator of Activities, published the story of the scarf. She became intrigued and asked University professor **Kazuo Matsubayashi** from the Graduate School of Architecture and Japanese scholar **Masami Hayashi** of Salt Lake City for help in tracing its history. Hayashi translated the inscription, which roughly means, “God, strength; and no obstacle is impossible to overcome.” Listed at the bottom was the name of a friend who perhaps had presented the scarf to the pilot along with the flier’s name: “**Shoichi Yasui**.”

“It was fairly common for people to write names on Japanese flags or scarves and give them to soldiers during World War II,” said Hayashi. “Sometimes belts were made and a thousand different people would each add a stitch, infusing the belt with encouragement for the soldiers.”

Matsubayashi contacted a Japanese organization based in Tokyo called Tokkoutai, which tracks what were called special attack troops. The common name of these forces is “kamikaze” meaning “God’s wind,” an old term from the 13th century when fierce storms had kept back a

Mongol invasion.

The organization was unable to locate the pilot’s family, but it did trace Yashui to the Bansei airfield in the Kgoshima Prefecture, where he had taken off for that final flight on April 7, 1945. The site in southern Japan now houses the Kaseda Peace Memorial Museum.

Floor asked Munk about the possibility of returning the scarf to Japan. Would he consider giving it to the museum?

“There have been instances where Japanese flags have been returned by Americans,” Floor wrote to Munk in one of several updates on the unfolding mystery of the scarf. “But what makes this case a bit unique is that the name of the pilot has been identified and that his photograph has been located.”

Munk said yes.

“I understand the scarf was rare because it could be traced, but I didn’t want any money for it,” he said. “Those people were doing what they were called to do. It just turned out better for us than for them.”

The scarf arrived at the museum during the summer of 2004, just days before the 58th anniversary of Japan’s surrender to the United States on August 15, 1945.

When the artifact was put on display a man named **Matsuo Yasui**, 64, read about it in the *Yomiri Shimbun News*. A cousin to the pilot, he had been adopted into the grieving family when they lost their only son, following a Japanese tradition of continuing the family name.

“Behind the prosperity Japan enjoys today is the loss of many young lives like my brother’s,” the adopted cousin is quoted as saying. “I would like to sincerely thank the American soldier who carefully protected this article of the deceased.”

The pilot had two older sisters, one who became senile and another, aged 85, who indeed remembered her long lost brother.

Another man, **Genkichi Shimazu**, also came forward visiting the museum. Shimazu had inscribed his own name on the pilot’s scarf those five decades ago, in bidding his friend goodbye before the sacrificial flight.

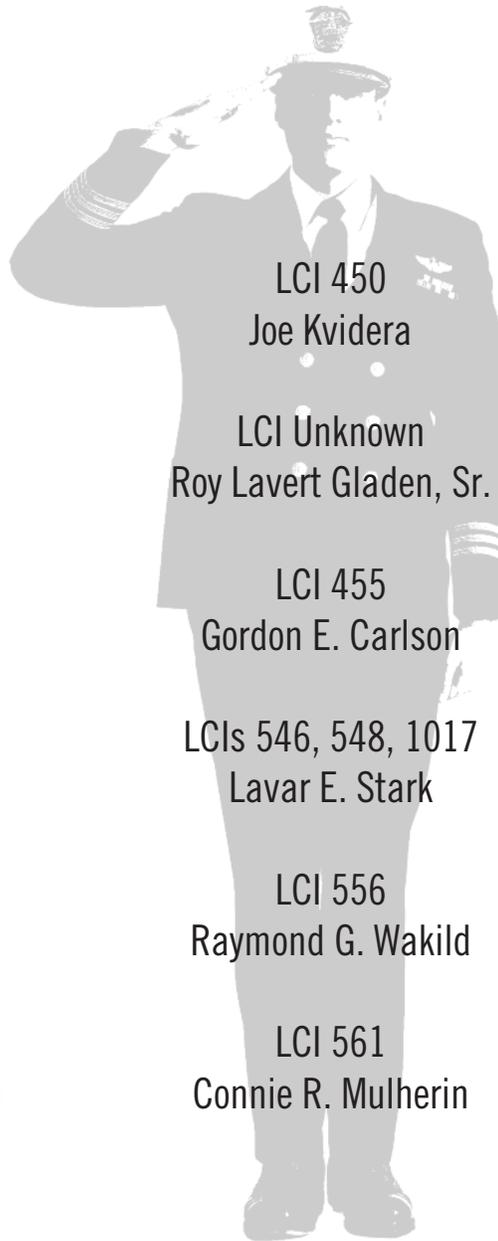
Professor Matsubayashi made sure the family and friend were given information on the pilot’s death and, most importantly, how the American sailors had conducted a memorial service for their enemy before burying him at sea.

“That part of the story touched me,” said Matsubayashi. “I made a special note that the family knew of it.”

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 passes understanding.”



LCI 64
Burton Yandell

LCI 65
Elmer Kinsinger

LCI 217
Eston Miracle

LCI 365
Cecil Leroy Reed

LCI 372
Joseph Goldberg

LCI 407
Lewis A. “Chick” Mason

LCI 450
Joe Kvidera

LCI Unknown
Roy Lavert Gladen, Sr.

LCI 455
Gordon E. Carlson

LCIs 546, 548, 1017
Lavar E. Stark

LCI 556
Raymond G. Wakild

LCI 561
Connie R. Mulherin

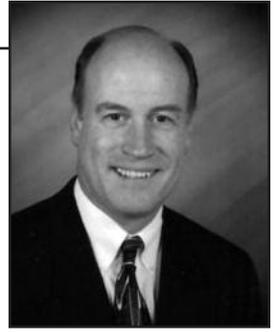
LCI 601
James L. Curran

LCI 758
Edward Gravius

LCI 995
Robert Snider

LCIs 1021, 966
Byron Swift

LCI 1091
Robert Wright



Thanks for the Memories!

BOB HOPE ALWAYS ENDED HIS U.S.O. SHOWS SINGING “THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES.” Memories allow us to claim the past, live in the present, and face the future.

Memories are important. The past is not to be discarded. Only those who know their heritage are qualified to be pioneers. In order to claim an inheritance, someone from the past had to pass along something. The scripture teaches us, “We have an inheritance which is undefiled.” In John Steinbeck’s great novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*, a migrating “Okie” family is told not to waste vital packing space on photographs and other items of family history and memories. One of the family members responds, “How will we know it’s us without our past?”

Dr. N. Scott Momaday, a professor and member of the Kiowa Indian Tribe, tells of the time when he was just a youngster and his dad took him to a woman of the tribal village early in the morning. He sat all day long as the old squaw told stories. They sang old songs, described rituals and told the oral history of our people. She told how they began out of a hollow log in the Yellowstone River; of the tribe’s migration southward; of the wars with the other tribes; of the coming of the white man; of the buffalo hunts; the slaughter; of the coming of the War; of moving southward again to Kansas; of starvation and disease; and finally, of the arrival at Fort Sill and the reservation and confinement. “Then about dark, my Dad picked me up, and I left her house a KIOWA INDIAN.”

Those of us who gather with the “LCI Family” at the yearly reunions, hear the stories, look at the photographs, and enjoy the relationships, leave each time glad to be an American—grateful for the heritage we know because of this “Greatest Generation.”

Our past and heritage remind us we are not orphans, but we are heirs of a great inheritance. We have a grand history. We are part of a long, ongoing story. We need to keep alive the stories, for they, in a real sense, keep us alive. Memory not only connects us with our past, but keeps us alive in the present and propels us forward into the future. We are what we remember.

On Memorial Day, we will remember many things. We will remember those who gave the supreme sacrifice that our land might remain free. But, we need also to remember that we are a people connected to a great story, and that story is unfinished. As men and women of years ago confronted the storm clouds, the dark shadows, towering mountains, the Hitlers, the Pharaohs, the Caesars, with a deep abiding faith in God, so the memory of their faith and response can remind us, guide us, and nurture us to do the same in order to inspire the next generation. Thanks for the memories, LCI-ers!

Agape, Mike

So long, Connie!

We regret the passing of every shipmate, but will particularly miss **Connie Mulherin**, the man of ready wit and teller of great sea stories.



Probably no one worked harder to maintain contact first of all with the crew of his beloved LCI(G) 561 and then with the entire membership of our association. Of his shipmates he wrote “We were an extraordinary group of very young civilians who became instant sailors in our country’s time of need...we weren’t exactly the pride of the navy in our presentation of what sailors should look like, but we managed to hold our own in some very trying situations.”

Of his passing, **Joe Flynn** wrote, “He was one of three LCI sailors who helped me immeasurably on all things LCI and in research. Connie, **Jim McCarthy**, and **Jimmie Prime** were all in wheelchairs but continued to work circles around the rest of us in sharing, recording, and preserving the history of the LCI service. But now, I see three wheelchairs parked outside the Pearly Gates, and our Three Musketeers, hale, hearty and tanned from the Pacific sun, probably trying to round up LCI Sailors for a Grand Reunion.”

“Home is the sailor, home from the sea.”

My Grandfather: Stephen Ganzberger, a Memorial

by
Zach Morris

My Grandfather, **Stephen Ganzberger**, was born on August 25th, 1924 in Wyandotte, MI. He grew up in Wyandotte and enlisted in the Navy the day after his 18th birthday, August 26th, 1942, during World War II. He would see action in the Pacific Theater aboard two different LCI's (Landing Craft Infantry) and be on active duty for 36 straight months. He served aboard the U.S.S. LCI (L) 329 [1942-1944], and also the U.S.S. LCI (G) 65 [1944-1945]. By war's end, he had been awarded 4 medals, 3 battle stars, 2 campaign bars, 2 ribbons, the Philippine Presidential Unit Citation, the Insignia for the

Amphibious Forces, and Honor Guard responsibilities.

His WWII journey began on the LCI (L) 329 from in the southern Solomon Islands where he would see his first action of the war on Rendova Harbor, New Georgia Island. On the afternoon of July 4th, 1943, while his LCI Group was landing Army troops of the 169th Infantry onto the beaches of Rendova Island, sixteen Japanese Mitsubishi 97 bombers in attack formation bombed the Allied landing beaches. He shot down one of the twelve bombers that were eventually shot down by anti-aircraft fire. This action earned him his first Bronze Star.

While on the LCI (L) 329, he would later land troops on the Russell Islands; New Georgia Island; Kolombangara; Vella Lavella; and Treasury Islands (Stirling), Bougainville.

In January 1944 he transferred for duty aboard the U.S.S. LCI (L) 65. In June 1944, his LCI was converted from a Landing Craft to a Gunboat, being renamed LCI (G) 65. Aboard the 65, he would participate in the Morotai Island and the Philippines Campaigns.

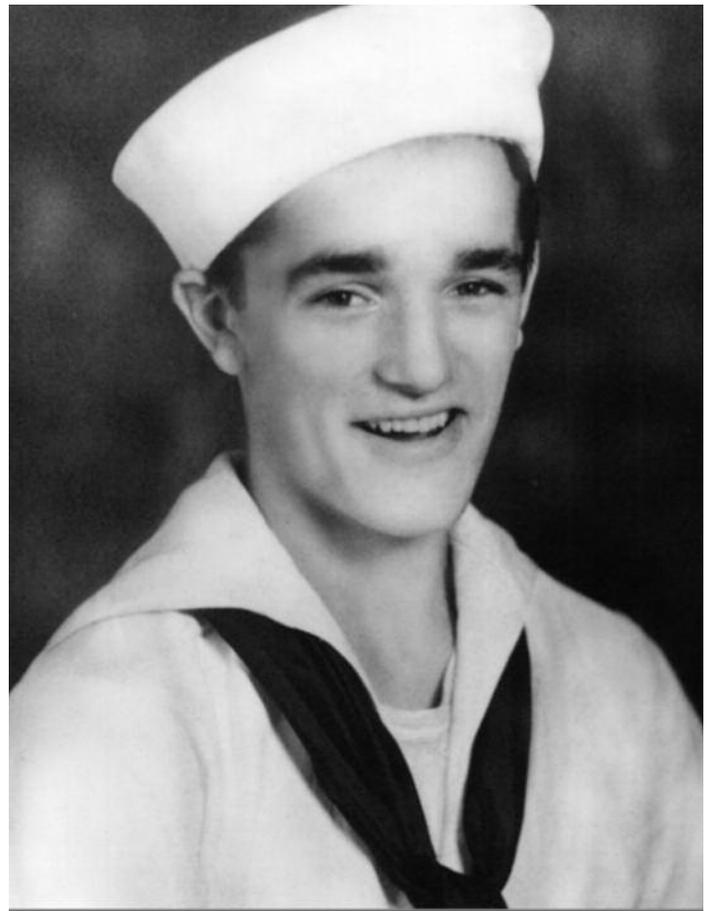
He would be involved in the Leyte Gulf, Philippines Campaign in October 1944. From his position in San Pedro Bay on the LCI (G) 65, he witnessed **General Douglas MacArthur's** famous October 20th return landing on Red Beach, Leyte Island. On October 24th, 1944 at around 9am, a kamikaze pilot made a suicide crash dive into the stern of the LCI (G) 65, killing Stephen's friend **Lester Eugene "Paul" Aiston (SC3c)**. The action in Leyte Gulf would earn Stephen his second Bronze Star.

His last action of the war was covering landings of the Sixth US Army on White Beach #2 and #3 in Lingayen Gulf, Luzon, Philippines on January 9th, 1945. He would be sent home four months later in May 1945 to recover from battle fatigue. He was later awarded a Silver Star because of actions he performed in his first five campaigns during "Operation Cartwheel," from Guadalcanal, to Bougainville, finally ending with the victory in Rabaul, New Britain.

Stephen Ganzberger was honorably discharged as a Quartermaster 2nd Class from the Navy on August 15th, 1945.

Upon returning to civilian life, Stephen Ganzberger worked as a sheet metal, heating and air conditioning mechanic for more than 50 years. He married his wife **Patricia** on April 28th, 1951, and they remained together for 60 years. They eventually had 6 children.

He would become a Southgate City Councilman for 14 years from 1970 to 1984, in Southgate, Michigan. He was elected as a credit union president, and later as president of Sheet Metal Workers Local 80. He was instrumental in many community and fundraising projects, and also served as the employee representative to the Civil Service Commission. His passion was playing golf, the sport he loved. He always kept devoutly close to his faith.



LCIer Stephen Ganzberger

When he retired, he became a licensed builder and a heating, ventilating and air conditioning contractor. He also served as liaison to the Capital Improvements Commission, where he provided input into the construction of City Hall, Police & Fire departments, and the courthouse.

The World War II veteran and former Southgate councilman died on Friday, May 20, 2011. He was 86.

In addition to his wife Patricia, he is survived by his children—**Stephen, Michael, Patrick, Heidi, Victoria** and **Barrie**; and his seven grandchildren—**Eric, Kelly, Abigail, Zach, Patricia, Caroline, and Geoffrey**.

The Surrender of the Italian Submarine Fleet at Taranto, Sicily

By

Gordon Smith, QM1C, LCI 43

Gordon recalls a dramatic day aboard LCI 43

If you look at a map of the entire country of Sicily which lies in the Mediterranean Sea, you will see that it resembles a large boot. On the underside of the boot next to the heel, is the town named Taranto. That is where this story centers.

Taranto is a beautiful town. It has a canal on the western end which enters into a very large body of water. This body of water was what I would call, “The San Diego of the Italian Fleet” It is called this in my mind as many major ships of the Italian Navy moored there in the sunny south just as many of the United States Navy berthed in sunny San Diego. The canal going into this large water basin is graced by many arched bridges.

Going back into history, the Italians were weary of war, had hung their own dictator, Mussolini, and surrendered on September 8, 1943. However, the Italian Submarine Fleet did not surrender! They remained at sea to continue their devastation of American and British shipping as long as they had fuel, torpedoes and supplies.

It was close to December 31, 1943, almost four months later, that my ship, the LCI #43, happened to be in Taranto. Yes, we did have some leave during the daylight hours. Since my Christian background kept me away from bars and I also retained a high respect for women, it was my habit to roam an area to see what was to be seen.

On this particular day of roaming I happened to cross one of the arched bridges. In looking below in to the canal, to my utter amazement, here was Italian Fleet of submarines sailing in to surrender! They crept in a solemn single file with all of the bunting they could display. On their decks, the crews were lined up in formation with their dress uniforms.

My emotions were similar to viewing a nest of wasps, spiders or snakes! The hairs on my arms rose with the spectacle of my enemy—that I had been fighting for almost a year—slithering below. I will never forget that sight.



AN LCIER IN THE ROYAL NAVY

By
Frank Ward

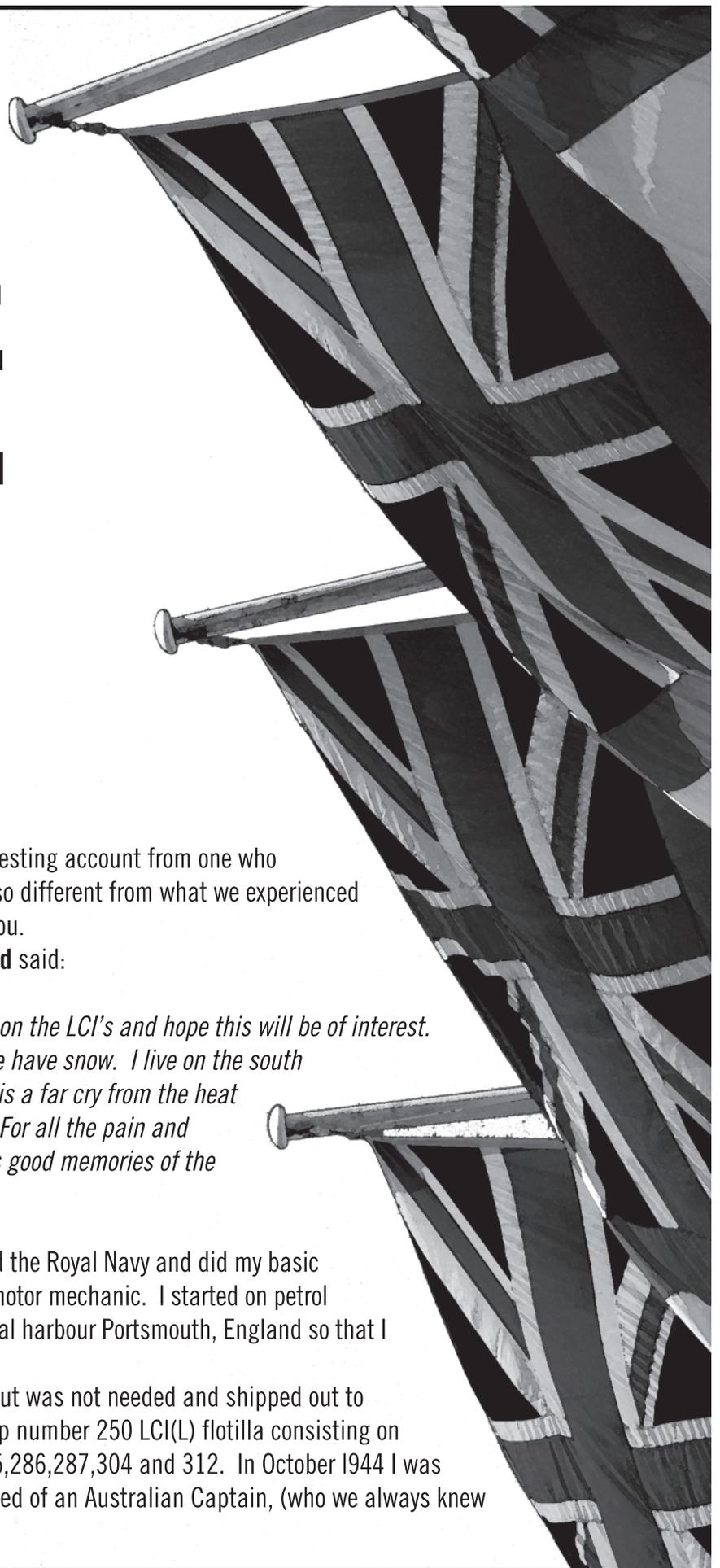
We're grateful to **Hal Bleyhl** for this interesting account from one who served in LCIs in the Royal Navy. It is so different from what we experienced that we thought it was worth sharing with you.

In his email to Hal, RN veteran **Frank Ward** said:

"At last I am sending you my service record on the LCI's and hope this will be of interest. At the moment our temperature is -4 and we have snow. I live on the south coast of Dorset so this is unusual for us. It is a far cry from the heat of India. It all seems a long time ago now. For all the pain and hardship experienced in war one always has good memories of the comradeship we shared."

I volunteered in 1943 (I was 17 1/2), joined the Royal Navy and did my basic training before being selected to train as a motor mechanic. I started on petrol engines and completed on diesel, at the Naval harbour Portsmouth, England so that I could work on all types of Landing Craft.

I was on standby for the D-Day landings but was not needed and shipped out to Bombay in September 1944 where I picked up number 250 LCI(L) flotilla consisting on numbers 114, 120, 173,261,265,267,279,285,286,287,304 and 312. In October 1944 I was drafted on to number 287. The crew consisted of an Australian Captain, (who we always knew



as “Mac”), a South African 1st Lieutenant, a Chilean Third Officer and the rest of the crew were British.

The flotilla sailed around India to Chittagong (our main base) in November 1944. Number 287 had been converted to single cabins for use by officers so on the way we diverted to Calcutta to pick up army personnel—Sikh and Gurkha officers who were rejoining their units at Chittagong.

In early January 1945 a force of mixed landing craft, supported by naval forces, attacked Akyab harbour. This was the start of a series of landings along the coast over the next few months.

The main base for the Japanese was Ramree Island. We left Akyab on the 20th January for the invasion which began in late January after a terrific bombardment by the British, U.S. and Indian warships. Number 287 acted as a Headquarters ship, directing engagements from close in but without taking part in the landing. The Island was taken after heavy fighting with the loss of 2,000 Japanese (source SEAC report).

Over the following months more landings were made along the coast in support of the 14th Army who were fighting the main force of the Japanese army in the interior. The coastal region of Burma is largely cut-off from the interior by the line of the Arakan mountains with rivers rather than roads providing the few links; after Ramree the coastal fighting became less intense, more a series of skirmishes.

One such landing was at Ru-Ywa in February where an Army Surgical Team came on board. We sailed inland as far as possible. Heavy fighting was taking place and the wounded were shipped out in small boats to a Hospital ship off-shore. Those in need of immediate attention were brought on board and received treatment from the surgeons before being transferred. On the fourth day we, ourselves, came under artillery fire and had to move our position out to sea.

The final landing in early May was just above the Irrawady Delta. The troops joined forces with the main army and took Rangoon, the capital of Burma. This ended the fighting in Burma.

Through out the campaign our main supply of provisions came via the American Liberty Refrigerated Ships. I shall never forget eating cans of tinned peaches and Libby's Milk sitting on the foredeck watching the flying fish.

The Japanese war ended on the 6th August 1945. As number 287 could carry individual personnel we were used as a “ferry service” up and down the coasts of India and Burma transporting officers and medical teams. In December some of the flotilla sailed to Cochin on the tip of India where the ships were decommissioned and the crews paid off.

I was promoted to Petty Officer Mechanic and transferred to LCI(L) 285 and subsequently numbers 261 and 279. Under the Lend Lease agreement between the USA and Britain all LCIs were to be returned to the US Navy and eventually all were assembled at the tip of India ready to be transferred.

Between March and May, those LCIs with crews sailed from Cochin across the Bay of Bengal down to Singapore. From there skeleton crews took the LCIs on to the Philippines to be handed back to the US Navy. Those of us who remained returned to southern India where we prepared the last of the LCIs for the repeat journey to Singapore.

Back in Singapore I was drafted on to a Floating Dock in Singapore harbor to maintain the pumps. I lost contact with all my LCI shipmates. I stayed in Singapore from July to September 1946 before being repatriated to England and discharged from the Service in January, 1947.

During the 18 months I served on the LCIs, I reckon I travelled 6-8000 miles and never once did the Grey Marine engines let us down. I feel privileged to have served on such a fine craft.”

A Novel LCI Repair Job By The 75th CB Battalion

John Ratomski, son of a deceased WWII Navy Seabee, found this account of a remarkable repair given to an LCI by the 75th CB Battalion in a copy of old "Seabee News Service" reports and sent it in, thinking that LCers would be interested in reading it.

How, when an LCI was badly damaged by enemy bombers, the 75th Battalion improvised repairs which enabled the ship to travel 2,500 miles to a drydock, was told by Lt. **Cmdr. D.N. Gottwals, CEC, USNR**, the battalion's OinC.

The LCI had been beached after two near misses had flooded her forward compartments. Examination showed the ship not only had suffered many holes in her hull, but had been bent up in the middle along a beam axis.

The bow proved to be roughly 18 inches lower than its normal relative position and the midsection was dangerously weakened. A bending of the ship was noticeable even in the mild waters of the sheltered side of the island. The swells of the open seas, said Cmdr Gottwals, very probably would have broken her in two.

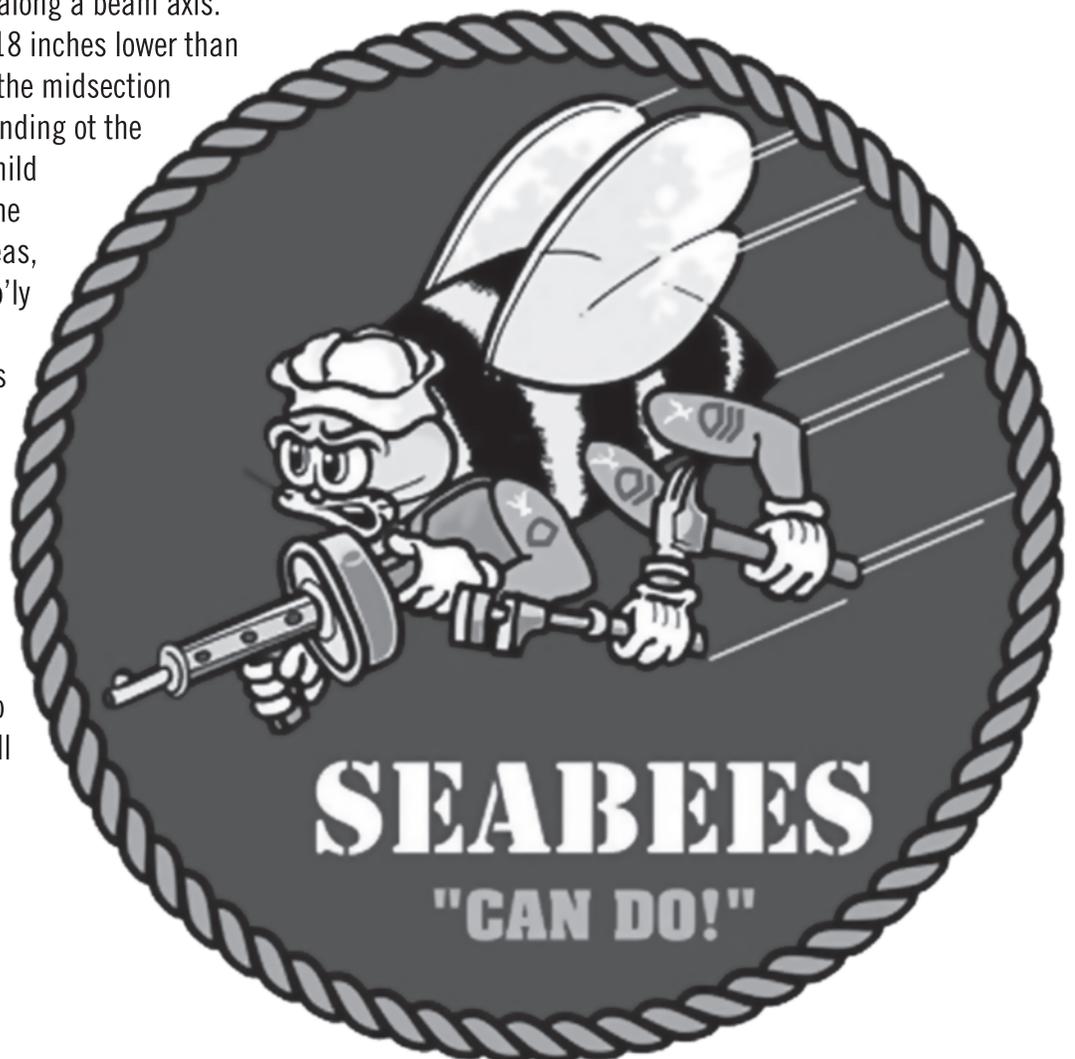
Although the job obviously was one for a drydock, temporary measures had to be taken to enable the ship to proceed to a repair base. The LCI first had to be made watertight, then strengthened sufficiently to be able to make the voyage.

The only materials available to the Seabees were timber, a small quantity of salvaged 1/4" plate, some reinforcing rods and steel cable.

The ship was run as far aground as possible so that most of its support was shifted to the bow. This tended to force the bow upward to a more nearly normal position.

All holes and ruptures were closed by welding plates over them. Stiffening was effected by welding additional plates and reinforcing rods in appropriate places. Where buckling occurred, reinforcing rods also were welded to the plates on the outside of the hull.

Buckled stanchions were removed from the most badly damaged compartment and timber shoring, running fore and aft with a timber sill top and bottom substituted. The deformed deck and bottom plates also necessitated the use of short timber pads with wedging for the entire



length of the sills.

The ship was floated for observation. By stretching two #16 wires taut along the deck and a few inches above, the Seabees were able to see that the gentle swells of the water still caused a bending up and down of the bow which indicated the LCI was not ready for the open sea.

The forward anchor winch and three-inch gun were removed, lightening the section of the vessel forward of the buckle by roughly six tons.

Two one-inch steel cables were run from the bow to a point aft of the buckle. They were fastened at the forward hawse pipes after these had been strengthened; run across a gun platform approximately over the buckle, and directly over the interior shoring and anchored aft at deck level to two large timbers wedged athwartships across the outside of the after bulkhead of the superstructure.

Steel bearing plates were, of course, used between the cables and timbers. Turnbuckles were employed in the cables.

The gun platform was covered by heavy timbers and steel bearing plates. The top of these plates was noted to be 13 feet above the deck.

The turnbuckles were taken up while the bow of the ship was resting on the beach and again the ship was refloated.

The vessel was then taken to sea on a test run and the bending was again checked by the taut wire system. In relatively high swells and at top speed the bending was so slight the ship was considered seaworthy.

The LCI was able to travel the 2,500 miles to a drydock without further repair.

..and here's another story about Seabees and LCIs that John found in those old *Seabee News* issues:

The Seabees have established the reputation of getting things done in short order, and **Seymour L. Davidson**, S2c, is doing his best to uphold the tradition reports **Sgt. Leodel Coleman**, a Marine Corps Combat Correspondent. Davidson, a diver and under-water welder, was called in on the job when an LCI ran up on a reef and sank at an advanced base.

“The commodore gave us fourteen days to put that LCI back into floating condition,” Davidson told the Marine Corps Correspondent. “The dock officer promised the commodore it would be ready in seven days—we did it in four!”



SITTING DUCKS CLOBBER BUZZARDS!

The Fighting Courage of LCI(G) 70

By Joe Ortiz, Nephew of LCler Gilbert Ortiz



The crew of LCI 70 pose with the torpedo that penetrated their engine room but did not explode.

This is the story behind the painting on the cover of this issue:

On November 5, 1943, U.S. forces attacked the Japanese Naval base at Rabaul inflicting heavy damage. At the same time the U.S. was continuing the invasion of Bougainville Island. In response to the attack on Rabaul, the Japanese launched a counter strike in an attempt to find the U.S. attacking fleet.

That evening a squadron of 12 B5N "Kate" torpedo bombers heading southeast encountered a tiny convoy heading south west. The tiny convoy consisted of LCI(G) 70, PT 167, and LCT 68 heading southwest from the Cape Torokina landing on Bougainville. The planes began an attack on the tiny convoy concentrating on LCI(G) 70. The Japanese probably thought that they would just drop their torpedoes, and head back to base without any problem.

At 1915 the planes were spotted by the convoy, and General Quarters were sounded. The planes split into two formations. 8 planes passed in front of the convoy. Four of the planes came directly at the LCI (G) 70. One of the Kates dropped a torpedo which passed under the bow. The planes reformed on the port side, and started another torpedo run lining up one at a time.

Aboard the LCI(G)s, the 40mm, 20mm, and the 50 caliber guns all opened fire, and set the first plane in flames as it passed over the ship, and the starboard guns finished it off, sending it crashing into the sea about 2,500 yards from the LCI(G)s.

The second plane received the same welcome, and was set on fire, following his leader crashing also about 2500 yards. Next, a group of two planes came in together. One of them dropped a torpedo which porposed out of the water, and punched its way into the LCI's engine room. It passed above the control deck skidded over the starboard quad of engines, and came to rest on the catwalk. The torpedo never exploded, but it killed one, and wounded one of the crew.

The same plane that dropped the torpedo was shot up, set on fire and sent into the sea very near the LCI's starboard quarter. The other plane was shot up, but continued as it passed over the LCI, but was not seen to crash. At 1925 the last plane involved in the attack came in. All guns on the LCI(G) opened fire on him, and sent him crashing into the sea about 5,000 yards away. A total of four torpedoes were dropped.

When LCI(G) 70 was hit by the torpedo in the engine room, all power was lost, and she was dead in the water. Upon discovering the unexploded torpedo the order was given to abandon ship. PT 167 was summoned to come by and take off the crew and casualties. It then stood off about 500 yards From LCI(G) 70.

LCT 68, about a mile back, asked to come to attempt a tow of LCI(G) 70. A few of the crew transferred over to LCT 68, and began to tow LCI(G) 70 back to Bougainville. PT 167 went ahead with the crew, and casualties.

During the battle, PT 167 also engaged the enemy with all it had, claiming another of the Kates. As the PT engaged this

aircraft, the plane came so low at them that it knocked off the PT's antenna as it flew over, and then crashed into the sea. It was so close, that the splash drenched the PT's crew.

A moment after that ordeal the PT shuddered. It was later discovered that a torpedo had passed right thru its bow above the water line. When PT 167 took on the crew of the LCI(G) 70, they gathered on the stern of the PT so as to raise the bow higher above the water as to prevent flooding due to the holes punched into her bow.

LCT 68 reported no damage, and arrived at Bougainville Island, off Cape Torokina in the morning with LCI(G) 70 in tow. A bomb disposal unit removed the torpedo, and repairs were begun. As the result of the battle 4 planes were shot down, and 1 plane was not seen to crash, but probably did as it smoked away. Another plane was badly damaged by direct hits, but was not seen to crash. Two torpedoes scored direct hits, but did not explode.

My Uncle **Gilbert Ortiz** was aboard the LCI(G) 70 on that day, and also later when the 70 was hit by a Kamikaze. He came home to tell us these incredible hair raising war stories. I also have had the honor of meeting some of my

Uncle's shipmates who provided me more important information about the LCI(G) 70 for the paintings I have completed depicting these mentioned battles. I will always be thankful to all of them.

The Japanese pilots upon returning to base told a tall tale to their commanders in that they had sunk two Aircraft carriers. The following message was sent to the LCI(G) 70 by **Admiral Wilkinson**:

LCI(L) FLOTILLA FIVE THIRD AMPHIBIOUS FORCE
THIS FROM RIO KOLI TO RDO TULAGI SECRETLY X INFO
COM LCI FLOT FIVE, COM LCT FLOT FIVE, COMMTB FLOT
ONE, X COM LCI FLOT FIVE PASS TO ELSIE ITEM SEVENTY,
COM LCT FLOT FIVE TO LCT 68, AND MTB FLOT ONE ALSO
PASS TO PT 167 ALL FOR ACTION X FROM CTF 31 X THE
NIPS REPORTED THEY HAD SUNK ONE LARGE CARRIER
AND ONE SMALL CARRIER OFF BOUGAINVILLE THE NIGHT
THEY ATTACKED YOU X YOUR FINE SHOOTING MADE
THEM BELIEVE YOU WERE BIG STUFF X GRAND JOB FOR
ALL OF YOU X WILKINSON.

The Men of LCI 70! At the Nimitz Museum LCI archives dedication: Artist Joe Ortiz poses with his uncle and shipmates from LCI 70. Left to right: Royal Wetzzel, Lee Wilcox, Gilbert Ortiz, John Reulet, Joe Ortiz



Your USS LCI Association Needs Your Support



Make Your Pledge Rewarding

With a pledge of \$25.00

to the USS LCI National Association you will be rewarded with a new style ball cap which includes your choice of a special Navy or Coast Guard LCI Association emblem.

Make pledge of \$50.00

to the USS LCI National Association and you will be rewarded with this new style polo shirt which includes your choice of a special Navy or Coast Guard LCI Association emblem.



By pledging \$100.00

to the USS LCI National Association today you will be rewarded with this newest Light Weight Jacket from your Association. Includes your choice of a special Navy or Coast Guard LCI Association emblem.



Please make your checks payable to: USS LCI National Association

My Pledge of _____ \$25 _____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ \$150 \$ _____ Other Amount

My Reward: _____ LCI Cap _____ LCI Shirt _____ LCI Jacket Service Branch: _____ Navy _____ Coast Guard

[SIZE: _____ S _____ M _____ L _____ XL _____ XXL] [Jacket Color: _____ Navy _____ Khaki] or [Shirt Color: _____ Navy _____ White]

Add Shipping: Cap or Shirt \$5 _____ Jackets \$10 _____ (Allow us 3 weeks to Produce and Deliver to You)

If you want your Name and Ship added to your Jacket for \$10 (see picture above)

Last Name _____ Ship : USS LCI(_____) _____

Block letters please _____

This is a gift for _____

Please provide any additional shipping instructions

Please provide the following information

eMail _____

Phone(_____) _____

Additional Information Contact:

Robert Wright (517) 548-1026

Mail This Form and Your Check to:

USS LCI National Association
101 Rice Bent Way # 6
Columbia, S.C., 29229

Member Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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.
We're here to serve you!

OFFICERS:

James E. Talbert

Chairman of the Board
LCI 618
12238 Woodland Trail
Council Bluffs IA 51503
(712)366-1094
tab626@yahoo.com

John P. Cummer

President
LCI 502
302 Pinewood Cottage Lane,
Blythewood, SC 29016
(803)714-9098
cummerj@bellsouth.net

John France

Vice President
11621 Copper Springs Trail
Oro Valley, AZ 85737
(520)429-3792
Lci540@aol.com

Hal Bleyhl

Treasurer
LCI(L) 812
10418 Campville St.
Boise, ID 83709
(208)639-9180
hbleyhl@aol.com

Steven Dudrow

Secretary
Associate Member
5067 Vincitor Street,
Las Vegas, NV 89135
(941)416-0717
stevedudrow@comcast.net

Rev. David Cox

Chaplain
(LCI 633)
413 Tupilo Way NW
Birmingham, AL 35215
(205) 854 -5229
swabby1@bellsouth.net

Rev. Michael Gatton

Chaplain
Associate Member
6410 Gellhaus Lane
Louisville, KY 40299
502/762-0613
mgatton@insightbb.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jim Aydelotte

(LCI 25)
3710 Goldfield Road #425
Apache Junction, AZ
(480-671-2425)
Jj10723@aol.com

Diane Cronin

Associate Member
125 Gage Hill Road
Lake Luzerne, NY 12846
(518)696-2903
dm_cronin@yahoo.com

Joe Flynn

Associate Member
627 Bradford Road
El Cajon, CA 92019
(619)588-7078
joeglo@msn.com

Gordon Smith

LCI(L) 43
2313 Northeast 110th Avenue
Vancouver, WA 98684
(360)256-5901
gordonsaronsmith@gmail.com

Robert E. Wright, Jr.

Associate Member
PO Box 407
Howell, MI 48843
(517) 548-2326
rewrightcpa@gmail.com

HISTORIANS:

John France,

European Theater of Operations
11621 Copper Springs Trail
Oro Valley, AZ 85737
(520)429-3792
Lci540@aol.com

Dennis Blocker

Pacific Theater of Operations
2847 Cedar Plain
San Antonio, TX 78245
(210)673-8854
lci449@hotmail.com

OFFICES AND SUPPORT SERVICES ARE PROVIDED BY

NEHEMIAH COMMUNICATIONS, INC

Ken Breivik, CEO

101 Rice Bent Way, # 6, Columbia, SC 29229
803-865-5665 • ken@nehemiahcommunications.com

USS LCI NATIONAL ASSOCIATION APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Our membership is open to anyone who served in Landing Craft, Infantry, during WWII or anyone else interested in our small ships and the men who served aboard them.

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

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

I. For application as a LCI Veteran:

Name _____

Which LCI did you serve on? _____ What was your Rank/Rate? _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Phone #: _____/_____

E-mail address: _____

Occupation or Former Occupation: _____

Wife's Name _____

II. For Application as a Relative or Interested Person:

Name _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Phone #: _____/_____

Are you related to someone who served on an LCI? Yes No

If so, what is the relationship? (i.e. father, grandfather, uncle, etc) _____

What is/was his name? _____

On which LCI did he serve? _____

(If unknown or if you do not have a relative who served on an LCI, leave blank)

Please send this application with your check (\$25) made payable to
USS LCI NATIONAL ASSOCIATION to:

USS LCI National Association
c/o Nehemiah Communications, Inc.
101 Rice Bent Way, Unit #6

NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
COLUMBIA, SC
PERMIT NO. 487

USS LCI NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, INC.
c/o Nehemiah Communications, Inc.
101 Rice Bent Way, #6
Columbia, SC 29229



LCIs in heavy seas