

MAY 2014



Elsie Item

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

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

MEMORIAL DAY 2014
D-DAY 70TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

ON OUR COVER:

U.S. Coast Guard photo: Old Glory waves in the wind as a column of LCIs with barrage balloons steam towards Normandy on D-Day, 6 June 1944. It is presumed that this picture was snapped aboard either the LCI 322 or 326, both of which are believed to have had photographers onboard.



FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE:

Portland Reunion Dates and Hotel Information

"On the Fourth They Fought Back"

LCI Men Lost in WWII

D-Day 70th Anniversary

ATTENTION: "ALL HANDS ON DECK!" IMPORTANT! OFFICIAL DUES ANNOUNCEMENT:

By a unanimous vote at the last Board meeting in Branson, we agreed to ask that annual dues for membership in the Association be set at \$35.00 for ALL members. This fee will include all rights and privileges of membership, including advance notice of future reunions and a yearly subscription to the "Elsie Item"—the best magazine of its kind published today. We are asking that Life Members consider a tax-deductible gift of \$35.00 to assure that the organization remains viable. If you have not paid your membership fee for 2013-2014, it is past due. Don't risk missing an exciting issue of our magazine. Dues for 2014-2015 are payable by June 1, 2014. Naturally, donations of any amount are always appreciated and are tax-deductible.

CHECK OUT THESE WEB SITES:

www.usslci.com Our own website

www.amphibiousforces.org For information on the LCI 713

Now on **Facebook!** Please join our group: **"Remembering the LCI Vets"**

"THE ELSIE ITEM"

NUMBER 86, May 2014

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. Zach S. Morris, Editor (*John P. Cummer, Editor Emeritus*). Any material for possible publication should be sent to the Editor, preferably by email (morrisza23@gmail.com).

A WORD FROM THE OLD MAN

A Reason to Be Encouraged



IN THIS TIME OF CHANGE IN OUR ASSOCIATION it's a great source of pride and comfort for me to see the men who have stepped up to the plate to work for the continuation and strengthening of our Association. We've been given a new set of leaders for a new phase of our history and we can be thankful for them. As we wrestle with the issues of the decreasing number of LCI Veterans and consequent financial pressure it is encouraging indeed to know that dedicated and capable leaders – men and women – are "on watch". Early returns from the recent all-member mail-out give reason to believe that the rank and file of our membership and in strong support and are willing to do their part to ensure the survival – and growth – of a healthy association. I want to urge all of you to continue in your support of the efforts that are being made to strengthen the bonds of comradeship we have treasured through the years and to help remind coming generations of the contribution that Landing Craft Infantry and the men who sailed in those small ships made to the victory of World War II.

Here's one for my "Bucket List"!

The 70th anniversary of the Normandy invasion is approaching and, by a most wonderful stroke of fortune, I am going to be there to participate in it. As we were helping serve a Thanksgiving Dinner to Navy personnel training at Ft. Jackson for Afghanistan duty, I met a retired Navy Captain who, noticing my USS LCI ball cap, asked if I had been at D-Day. He then told me of a local organization that was planning to sponsor D-Day veterans for an all-expense paid trip to the 70th reunion and he asked me if I was interested in going. How long do you expect it took me to say "yes!"? Each vet is to have an escort and mine will be my grandson who has just completed 12 years of Navy service. The frosting on the cake is that my old Coast Guard buddy, John Gatton, and his son Mike, who just happens to be President of the USS LCI National Association, will be going with me! The trip was planned for South Carolina vets, but, knowing that Mike and John were planning on going with another group, I asked if they could not be included. At first he answer was no, but I put on my most persuasive manner and pleaded their case, so they finally consented. Mike and John will drive down from Louisville to join us here. We will fly out of Charlotte on June 1st for Paris. Busses will then take us up to Normandy where we will do some sight-seeing and on June 6th participate in the 70th Anniversary celebrations. On the 7th we will return to Paris for two days of sight-seeing there and then fly home to Charlotte on June 10th.

And you can be sure you will hear more about it from me in the future!
Smooth sailing to you all!!

John

NATIONAL REUNION!

WE'LL SEE YOU SEPTEMBER 25 – 27, 2014 IN PORTLAND!



The Red Lion Hotel at the Quay in Vancouver, WA – Our Reunion Hotel

Mark your calendars! It's not too soon to begin making your plans for our 2014 reunion! Once again, we will be meeting with our friends from the Northwest Group at the Red Lion Hotel at the Quay, across the Columbia River from Portland.

Red Lion Hotel at the Quay

100 Columbia St.
Vancouver, WA 98660
Toll free: (800) RED-LION
Local: (360) 694-8341

Gordon Smith, our Northwest Director, has been working hard setting up reservations with the hotel. Our Washington State Directors, Rick Holmes and his wife Sue have also been busy making plans for places to see and things to do. The cut-off date for accepting reservations at the group rate is August 26th. Any additional info will be in the next issue of the *Elsie Item*—August 2014. Please don't wait, book now!

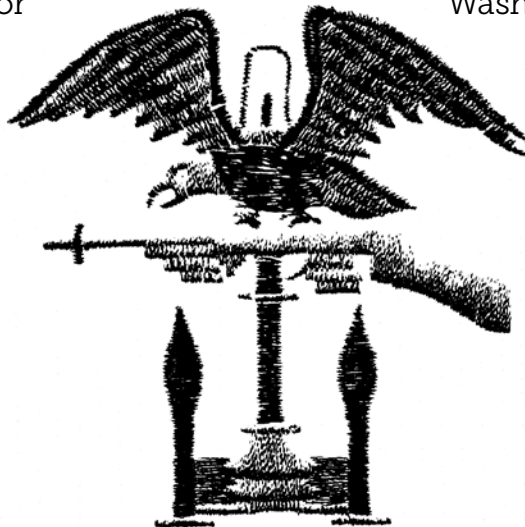
IMPORTANT: If you plan on attending the Portland Reunion, please reach out to one of the following to notify:

Gordon Smith

(360) 256-5901
Gordon.sharonsmith@gmail.com
Northwest Director

Rick Holmes (and wife, Sue)

(509) 427-5402
ricksue777@gmail.com
Washington State Directors



**USS LCI NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
SEPTEMBER 25 – 27, 2014
RED LION HOTEL AT THE QUAY**

Thursday, September 25

Arrive at the Red Lion Hotel at the Quay.

Friday, September 26

Scenic Bus Tour, Train Ride and Grist Mill Tour

9:00 AM Depart Red Lion Hotel on a scenic drive of North Clark County.

This day will be a trip into the past, celebrating our American roots in remembrance of D-Day. First stop will be in Yacolt, where we will catch a ride on the Chelatchie train. This two and a half hour excursion takes us through scenic forest along the Lewis River with a stop at Yacolt Falls.

Lunch Box lunch on the train.

We continue our scenic tour to the Cedar Creek Grist Mill. Here we get to stretch our legs and be given a 'working' tour of the 1876 Grist Mill. Situated over a roaring creek, this water-powered grain mill produces flour and corn meal. We'll be shown how the mill still works today with no gas or electricity. We'll be given samples to take home. There is also a great view of the stream, mill, and covered bridge from a short trail nearby.

Evening We return back to the Quay in time for dinner on your own.

Saturday, September 27

LCI 713 Tours, Memorial Service, and Happy Hour With Business Meeting

Day LCI 713 tours will be in groups of ten for a short boat ride out to the ship.

Evening Banquet Dinner, with speaker and door prizes.



LCI 713 underway in January-February 1946 returning from the Pacific theater.



LCI 713 moored on July 22, 2013.

A special thanks to the Amphibious Forces Museum for the photos and all of their impressive work!



RED LION HOTEL®

Vancouver at the Quay

100 Columbia Street – Vancouver, WA 98660

GROUP SALES AGREEMENT

This Agreement is made and entered into as of Wednesday, February 19, 2014, between **Red Lion Hotel Vancouver (at the Quay)** (hereinafter referred to as "Hotel") and **Northwest LCI Association** (hereinafter referred to as "Group"). Group agrees that the terms of this Agreement are based upon the information provided by Group below.

Organization Name: Northwest LCI Association

Event Name: Northwest/National LCI Association Reunion 2014

Contact Name: Mr. Gordon Smith

Contact Phone: 360-256-5901 **Email:** gordon.sharonsmith@gmail.com

Contact Address: 2313 NE 110th Avenue Vancouver, WA 98684

GROUP ROOM RESERVATIONS

GUEST ROOM ACCOMMODATIONS: Hotel will hold the following block of rooms for Group's use. Unless as indicated in this Agreement, Hotel does not guarantee any particular room type nor does it guarantee that rooms will be in proximity to each other.

Room Block	9/25/2014	9/26/2014	9/27/2014
Run of House	20	20	20

Total Room Nights Booked: 60

CUT OFF DATE: Tuesday, August 26, 2014. After this date, rooms not covered by a rooming list or individual reservations shall be released from Group's room block and Hotel may contract with other parties for the use of such rooms. Hotel may continue to accept reservations from Group's attendees after that date at the prevailing room rate, subject to availability.

GUEST ROOM RATES: The Hotel is pleased to confirm the following room rates for this group:

Room Type	Single Rate	Double Rate	Triple Rate	Quad Rate
Riverfront King or Double Queen	\$115.00	\$115.00	\$115.00	\$115.00
Poolside Queen or Double Queen	\$ 95.00	\$ 95.00	\$ 95.00	\$ 95.00
King	\$ 95.00	\$ 95.00	\$ 95.00	\$ 95.00
Suites	\$175.00	\$175.00	\$175.00	\$175.00

Hotel room rates are subject to applicable state and local taxes. If Group is tax-exempt, it must present all documentation required by Hotel and pay in the manner specified by Hotel. If Group is claiming tax-exempt status, Group hereby accepts all liability and agrees to indemnify Hotel for all taxes paid and all costs incurred, including attorney fees, if a taxing authority requires that the Hotel remit tax for the room nights covered by this Agreement. Otherwise, Group will be charged all applicable taxes.

All rates are net not-commissionable.

RESERVATIONS: Each individual guest must make their own reservations by calling **360-694-8341 or 877-423-7115** by **Tuesday, August 26, 2014**. They must identify themselves as members of the Group. All reservations must be guaranteed and accompanied by a first night room deposit or guaranteed with a major credit card. Guests are responsible for paying for their own accommodations. Deposits (taken either in cash or by credit card) are refunded or credited only if notice is received 24 hours prior to arrival date and cancellation number must be obtained by guest. Incidental expenses of Group members will

A Word from Our President

Dear LCI Friends,

Last year the Board voted to increase annual dues to \$35—this will continue to include a subscription to the “Elsie Item.” An error in the last publication indicated that the dues were \$25. If you have already submitted payment, we appreciate your continued faithful support, but would welcome an additional, tax-deductable gift to offset our error. If you have not yet remitted your dues for the year, please do so at the new rate as soon as possible.



I wanted to share with you why both your participation and encouraging your children and grandchildren are so important. Many of you may be familiar with “Survivor,” which is a reality television game show that has proven to be one of the most successful franchises in broadcast history. Starting in 1992 “Survivor” has spread throughout the world to play in over 50 countries as diverse as Chile and China. If you’ve watched CBS’ “Survivor” with its \$1,000,000 prize, you notice how quickly the sixteen to twenty strangers separate out into two groups, no matter how many “tribes” there are. In one group are those who, in the face of the unexpected, meltdown, freeze, or fold. In the other group are those who cope, manage, and overcome when the unforeseen rears its head. This difference in ability and mobility is less dependent on the facts, and far more dependent upon faith.

Your National LCI Association is made up of “survivors”—those who survived a Great Depression, a World War, and a return to America to build families, careers, and communities. Today, our Association is in “survivor mode.”

Consider these hard, cold facts:

- Since 2007 our membership has decreased from 2,048 to less than 700, resulting in a decrease in assets from \$59,680 to \$15,260 as of January 31 this year.
- Even with the sales of LCI products and the addition of affiliate memberships, which have resulted in much needed revenue; the Association continues to lose ground.
- Ken Breivik and Nehemiah Communications have graciously reduced our contractual obligations for tending to the business affairs and publication of the “Elsie Item” by \$2,400 in the coming year, but we owe a balance of \$4,382.88 as of April 1.
- In order to assure that our annual reunions can continue, we have asked that area groups plan and host the get-togethers, thereby saving the cost of contracting with a for-profit group as we have in the past.

We are so grateful for the Northwest Group in Portland stepping up this year. In addition, we are in conversation with other amphibious groups in how we can best work together to assure future meetings.

Every effort is being made to “stem the tide” and we are pledged to be responsible stewards of your trust. Those of us who have “joined the tribe” as Associates — sons and daughters, grandsons and granddaughters, nieces, nephews, brothers, wives — have made a commitment to insure that this organization will continue to exist as long as there is one LCI crewman left standing.

Last year the Board concluded that it was absolutely essential and voted to increase annual dues from \$25 to \$35—this will continue to include a subscription to the “Elsie Item.” The Board of Directors would also encourage all members — including those with Lifetime Memberships and Lifetime Associate Memberships — to consider donating to the Association now. Whether you donate \$10 or \$100, any amount will help the Association. If you believe that this Association is vital to informing future generations of your contribution in the United States victory in WWII, please consider legacy gifts of cash, stock, insurance, or memorial gifts and remembrance in your wills.

All “survivor” stories combine components of grace and good luck, grit and gumption—but, at the very base of those who “survive” in the face of surprising challenges, are those who have faith. When it is just too hard to hang on, we need to hang on to one another.

Once again, let’s hang on to one another — determined to “survive.”

We look forward to celebrating another year with you in Portland and in the years to come because of your faithful and determined response.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Gatton, President
USS LCI National Association

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 14

Anthony M. Pikos

LCI 455 and LSM(R) 401

Henry "Hank" Lai

LCI 752

George Benton

LCI 237

Wayne Bryant

LCI 565

James A. Lennon

LCI 758

Gerard Marder (Skipper)

LCI 373

Joseph Canzone

LCI 595

Robert J. Ziegler

LCI 948

Donald P. Kennedy (Skipper)

LCI 396

Richard T. Burke

LCI 643

Vincent C. Boylan

LCI 948

John Krulish

LCI 679

Eugene McCarrick



"ON THE FOURTH THEY FOUGHT BACK"

***July 4th, 1943: Stephen Ganzberger (LCI 329) and
Louis Plant (LCI 24) With Flotilla Five On That
Unforgettable Day at Rendova Harbor, New Georgia***

By Zach Morris



***LCI 329's Stephen Ganzberger
poses for a photo while ashore
Rendova in 1943***



Louis Plant aboard the LCI 24

My grandfather, **Stephen Ganzberger**, was part of Task Unit 31.9.1—LCI (L) Group Fourteen; Flotilla Five—the Allied landings on Rendova Island, New Georgia on July 4th, 1943 in the South Pacific during World War II. On May 18th 2011, almost 68 years later, he shared with me his recollection of the battle while aboard the LCI (L) 329 that afternoon. I also had the pleasure of interviewing retired Signalman **Louis Plant** on December 20th, 2013, who was part of the same Task Unit and served aboard the LCI (L) 24. The following piece is written from Stephen's recollection of his experience and information from Lou Plant's intricately written "Memoirs of World War II," that he provided me. Various official docu-

ments from various LCIs and LSTs present that afternoon were also used. Information from **Eric Hammel's** book, "Munda Trail: The New Georgia Campaign," was also referenced. In what turned out to be a desperate effort by the Japanese to halt the advance of the American New Georgia Operation, sixteen enemy bombers attempted to repel the landings of the 169th Infantry with a bombing attack. Three LCI sailors perished, and seven others were wounded that day. Eleven Army Infantrymen were also killed in the attack.

Something awfully peculiar was happening in the harbor of Rendova Island, New Georgia that July

afternoon in 1943. The sun was actually shining. D+4 had turned out to be a beautiful day. In the days leading up to July 4, unrelenting rain had punished Rendova Island without mercy from the moment the 43rd Infantry Division arrived on June 30. The rain was cruel and unforgiving. But July 4th was different. The men of Flotilla Five would undergo their baptism of fire on a sunny afternoon—with clear skies above.

As the South Pacific sun set on the evening of July 4th, it cast a shadow over three palm fronds sitting atop three newly dug graves on Rendova Island. The palm fronds had been placed earlier that afternoon by Signalman Lou Plant, and several men from the LCI 24 and LCI 65. They mourned the loss of their comrades who were killed by Japanese bombs just hours before. The names of the men buried in those graves were:

Ernest A. Wilson, BM2c.

(Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class)

Mahlon F. Paulson, RM2c.

(Radioman 2nd Class)

Hurley E. Christian, F1c. (Fireman, 1st Class)

These are the names of the first LCI sailors killed in action in the Pacific war.

PART I – STEPHEN GANZBERGER ABOARD THE USS LCI (L) 329: OPERATION "TOENAILS"

Stephen Ganzberger was born on August 25th, 1924 in Wyandotte, Michigan. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, he waited patiently until the day after his eighteenth birthday—August 26th, 1942—the day in which he enlisted in the US Navy. As fate would have it, he would be assigned to duty in the newly created Amphibious Forces, aboard the USS LCI (L) 329. She was commissioned from Brown Shipbuilding Company in Houston, TX on November 8th 1942. Only a fraction of the size of a traditional Navy warship, she was a flat-bottomed hunk of steel at about one hundred fifty-nine feet long and twenty-three feet wide. The 329's size and flat bottom ensured the men aboard felt every wave on their vast journey across the South Pacific in spring of 1943. The ride on those particular "small boys" was choppy and rough, as LCIs were not originally designed to cross oceans, but did so out of war's necessity. It made for a cramped, hot, and muggy lifestyle the entire way. Stephen and his buddies would do their best to relax and enjoy the trip—between bouts of chronic seasickness for the unluckier, less sea-worthy ones. However, one of the better

memories that stood out in Stephen's mind was the sight of Pago Pago, Samoa. He remembered it as the "most beautiful island" he'd ever seen.

Seaman 2nd Class Stephen Ganzberger and the crew of the LCI 329 arrived at Lunga Point, Guadalcanal on the morning of June 27, 1943. At that time, the Allies were just beginning the seizure of their next major target in the South Pacific—New Georgia Island. The crew of the LCI 329 had arrived in the Solomon Islands just in time for the opening days of the New Georgia Campaign—dubbed "Operation Toenails."

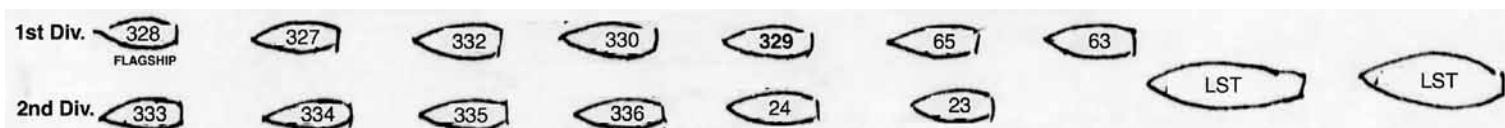
The New Georgia Campaign just happened to be an extraordinarily special landmark for the Amphibi-



South Pacific Area of Operations in "Operation Cartwheel." This map on display at the Pacific War Museum (Fredericksburg, TX). Originally in "Northern Solomons": 22 February 1943–21 November 1944; Center Of Military History, US Army, Washington, DC (pp 6–7).



A map of New Georgia and Rendova. Map courtesy of ruraldevelopment.info (some labels added).



A sketch of the two columns of LCI (L)s in Group 14; Flotilla 5 headed to Rendova on 4 July 1943 (some revisions made).

ous Forces as well. It was the first campaign in the Pacific in which the Americans utilized LCIs to land troops on enemy beaches. Any engagements with the Japanese would be among the first combat seen by LCIs in the Pacific Theater.¹

Just to the south of the main island of New Georgia, lies a tiny island called Rendova. Despite its rather meager size it was crucial that the Allies capture it. Rendova's location made it one of the critical islands needed for artillery support as the Americans drove towards their objective—Munda Airfield—located several miles across the channel on the southernmost tip of nearby New Georgia Island. Munda's seizure would not be possible unless Americans controlled Rendova. On June 30, 1943 the first landings on Rendova began. The first few days that followed did not go as planned for the 43rd Infantry Division and Admiral Turner's Western Landing Force, as torrential rain bogged down the infantry as they landed and attempted to unload equipment and supplies on Rendova's northern beaches. It had been a messy disaster. But Stephen and the crew of the USS LCI (L) 329 would make their first landing of the war on a sunshiny day—July 4, 1943.

LCI (L) Flotilla Five's Group 14—led by Lieutenant Commander **A. Vernon Jannotta** on the flagship LCI (L) 328—sailed in two columns to the northernmost tip of Rendova Island, through the Blanche Channel, in the early morning of July 4 under the cover of darkness. Thirteen LCIs then squeezed southward, through the narrow Renard Entrance,

entering Rendova Harbor at around 8:00 AM. Stephen's LCI beached with the first group of LCIs at around 10:00 AM on Rendova's East Beach. The ramps on each side of the LCI 329 lowered, and began to discharge the troops and equipment of the 169th Field Artillery Battalion.

However, the Japanese had other plans for the landings of Flotilla Five.

* * *

Meanwhile, about four hundred miles to the northwest of Rendova Harbor, the enemy fortress of Rabaul was scrambling in preparation for battle. Rabaul, the mighty Japanese air base—located on New Britain Island, just off the coast Eastern New Guinea—was the epicenter of Japan's naval and air power in the South Pacific at that time. Pilots rushed to their planes. Japanese Vice Admiral Jinichi Kusaka, commander of the 11th Air Fleet was determined and desperate to halt the American advance in the New Georgia Island Group. In a last-ditch effort, Kusaka ordered an aerial assault in hopes of disrupting American shipping and supply locations. About one hundred Japanese planes, including sixteen dual-engine Mitsubishi Sally and Betty bombers, took off en route to the southeastern Solomon Islands.²

Their target—the Allied landing force beached at Rendova Harbor. An epic encounter was about to ensue.



The first group of LCIs landing troops/equipment on Rendova's East Beach—4 July 1943. R to L: LCI(L)'s 336, 328, 335, 330, 334, and 329. LCIs 327 and 333 (not pictured) believed to be on the starboard (right) side of the LCI 329 (Photo from navsource.org).

PART II – THE BOMBING RAID: LOUIS PLANT ABOARD THE USS LCI (L) 24

By 12:30 PM the first group of LCIs (329, 334, 330, 335, 328, 327, 333, and 336) had completed unloading the men of the 169th Infantry and had made their way off the beach. Some moved to the northern end of Rendova Harbor. The remaining five LCIs—consisting of the second group—replaced the first group of LCIs on the beach. The second group consisted of the LCIs 23, 24, 65, 63, and 332 (the 336 part of the first group, remained stranded on the beach). As the second group unloaded their troops, they noticed a battle had begun in the air above Munda Airfield on southern New Georgia Island, to their north. American fighter planes were engaging incoming Japanese planes in dogfights at around 1:50 PM. The fighting intensified with each passing minute.



Path of enemy bombers over Baraulu and Rendova Islands.

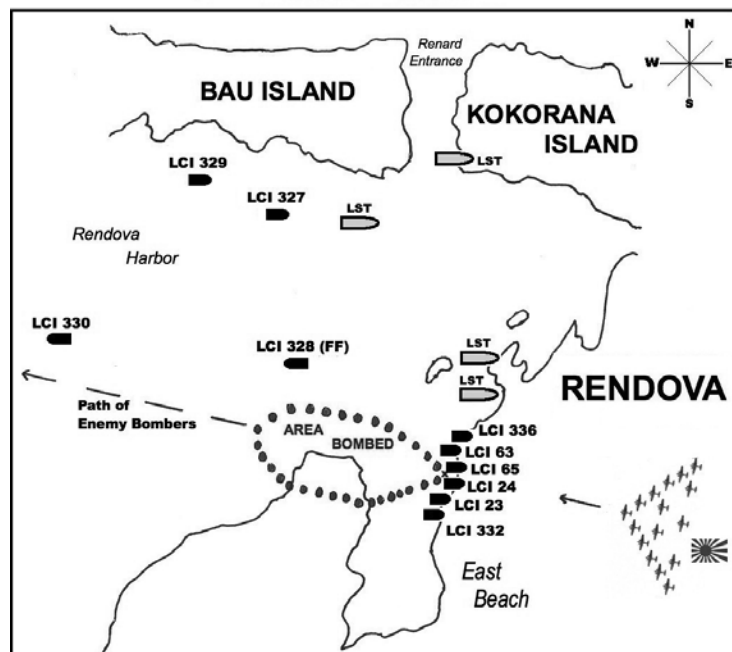
Map courtesy of <http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USN/ACTC/actc-15.html> (some labels added).

* * *

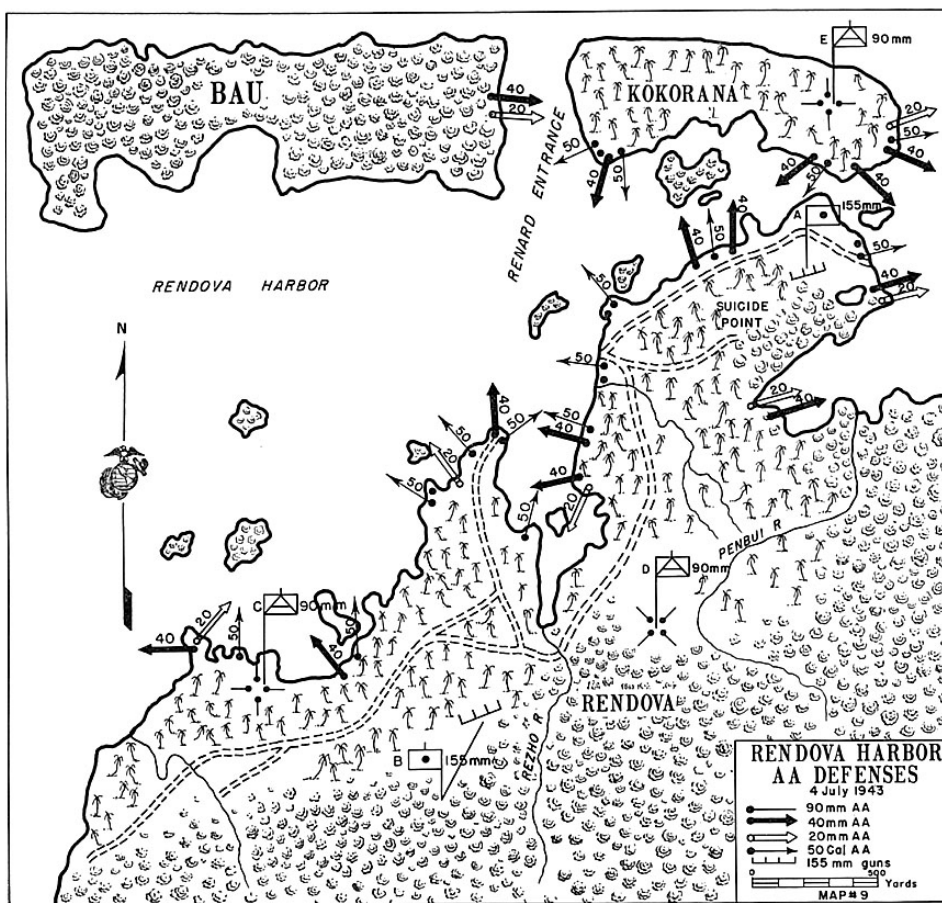
Over on Baraulu Island, a tiny island located across the Blanche Channel about six miles to the north of where Stephen's LCI 329 was currently anchored, Lieutenant Colonel **Henry Shafer** was in the process of setting up 155 MM howitzers with the rest of the 136th Field Artillery Battalion that he commanded. He looked up into the western sky and noticed about a hundred enemy planes were approaching the massive umbrella of American fighter planes that had gathered over Munda Airfield.

Like the hunter that waits for his prey to enter a trap, the Americans were waiting in the skies above Munda. Waiting to ensnare Vice Admiral Kusaka's air force.

RENDOVA HARBOR LCI (L) FLOTILLA 5 -- GROUP 14 4 JULY 1943 14:00 – 14:15



A map of the approximate locations of the LCIs in Group 14 at the time of the bombing on 4 July 1943. LCIs 333, 334, and 335 are not pictured. LCI 335 was exiting Rendova Harbor to the west at the time of the bombing attack. LCIs 333 and 334 had exited Rendova Harbor about an hour before the bombing attack and were anchored near Poko Plantation, about 1.25 miles southwest of Rendova Harbor (map created by the author).



Anti-aircraft defenses on Rendova Island on 4 July 1943. Map courtesy of Hyperwar: <http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USMC/USMC-M-CSol/USMC-M-CSol-3.html>

Shafer witnessed the run of the sixteen surviving bombers flying in a stepped-up V-formation. They were the only ones that managed to make it through the onslaught of dog fighting American fighters waiting for them. The sixteen bombers flew right over Shafer's head, but he could not see the insignias on the bombers. They curved slightly towards the southeast, then all the way around to the right until they were flying due west towards Rendova Island. Suddenly, Shafer realized the bombers were enemy Japanese. Although not aware at the time, Shafer had a ringside seat to what was about to be an incredible spectacle.³

* * *

As Shafer watched the enemy bombers from Baraulu Island, Stephen was loading rounds into a 20MM gun for the gunner and his good buddy—Ship's Cook 3d Class **Elmo Pucci**. They both looked up from the LCI 329 not expecting to see the sixteen low-flying Japanese bombers that suddenly appeared over the eastern horizon. The Japanese bombers were heading straight for them.

At 2:05 PM, every single American artillery gun on Rendova Island opened up with their very own fireworks show at the exact same time. Every LCI and LST in the harbor and on the beach also commenced firing soon thereafter. Stephen described the eruption of anti-aircraft fire from below that blossomed blackly within the bomber V-formation.

"We took the troops in. And the moment we dumped them off, we backed out and turned the ship around. And when I looked up in the air, here comes sixteen bombers at three thousand feet." He soundly recalled almost sixty-eight years later. "And man that's all I kept doing was pouring bullets up there. I must have gotten one or two of them."

The sight of thousands of flashing tracers that upwardly pierced the sky was quite a sensational sight. There was no escape from the curtain of Allied fire that met the Japanese bombers from all directions below.

"[The bombers] was right on top of us. You couldn't miss em' if you tried." Stephen remembered. "I just kept going and pulling sixty rounds. I told [the gunner] Pucci, 'Keep pumpin until that barrel gets hot!'"

Bomber after bomber fell away in flames. But tragically, due to their low-altitude flying, they had managed to release their bombs just before the anti-aircraft fire reached them. The enemy had passed directly overhead the LCIs and LSTs anchored and beached in Rendova Harbor. The harbor was engulfed in fire and shrapnel was flying everywhere. But it was shrapnel from a bomb that exploded between the LCI 24 and LCI 65, which would cause the first combat casualties of LCI sailors of the war in the Pacific. Three LCI sailors lost their lives, and seven were injured from that bomb, which ripped holes in their hulls and badly damaged both ships.

Louis V. Plant, one of the two Signalmen aboard the LCI 24, witnessed a scene he'd never forget. Shrapnel from Japanese bombs took the lives of two of his shipmates that day. The first shipmate taken was a quiet, older Boatswain's Mate—**Ernest Wilson**. Lou described it years later in his memoirs in vivid detail:

"I look forward and I see Wilson lying on his back screaming because the hot deck is burning his flesh. His eyes roll back in his head and he dies from shrapnel wounds. The Quartermaster climbs up on the bridge and says, "Paulson (our radioman) is dead, sir."⁴

The Quartermaster was referring to Lou's friend, the second man killed—Radioman **Mahlon Paulson**—who was curious as to what the deafening commotion from all the anti-aircraft gunfire was about. Paulson had left his radio to find out, instead of hitting the deck or taking cover. In Lou Plant's memoirs he wrote:

"I climb down from the bridge and head for the 'Radio Shack.' Paulson is lying there. He had left his radio to see what the firing was all about instead of hitting the deck and trying to find some kind of cover. A chunk of shrapnel had hit him square in the face and tore most of his head off. The force of the bomb blast had knocked him backward into the 'Radio Shack.' Had he stayed at his radio he might have escaped with just being wounded [...] I look down on the Port side and see a soldier who has been cut in half above the knees by shrapnel. He says, 'Guess I'll get the Purple Heart for this'...and he dies."⁵

Four other sailors aboard the LCI 24 were wounded and two Army soldiers were killed below deck. Another Army soldier was killed while standing on the

beach amid the port side of the LCI 24—right next to another wounded soldier who, somehow, survived the shrapnel. The LCI 23, which was beached next to the LCI 24 (starboard side), also suffered three casualties from fragments of a 100-lb. anti-personnel bomb.

The LCI 65, located on the other side of the LCI 24 (port side), would see one of her sailors killed that afternoon while he was manning the No. 4 gun. Fireman **Hurley Christian** was struck in the forehead and killed by a flying bomb particle.

Despite the destruction from the Japanese bombing run, the Allied forces inflicted severe damage on the enemy bombers. Out of sixteen, twelve were eventually confirmed shot down—five enemy bombers on the first pass, three on the second pass, and four on a third pass attempt. Other reports claim American fighter planes finished off the four remaining bombers as they looped around over Munda Airfield.

Later on in the afternoon of July 4th, Signalman Lou Plant was ordered to take his buddy Mahlon Paulson's body ashore and bury him. As Lou recalled in his memoirs:

"This was one of the toughest things I have ever had to do, digging a grave for a shipmate with whom you made liberties back in the States. By this time, people are bringing bodies ashore from several ships."⁶



The second group of LCIs to land. L to R: LCI 23; LCI 24 (listing to port); LCI 65 (listing to starboard); and LCI 63. The LCIs 332 and 336 are not seen in this photo, but are beached on the starboard side of the LCI 23 and port side of LCI 63, respectively. Photo taken shortly after the Japanese bombing attack on 4 July 1943 (courtesy of navsource.org).

The three sailors were buried together on Rendova Island about a quarter mile east of the landing beaches. Lou spoke of the unnerving stench of death that accompanied them as they buried their fallen crewmen. He and his buddies gently placed Paulson's body into a shallow grave and covered it with dirt. They placed palm fronds on top of the dirt before returning to the LCI 24. Lou somberly remembered that after that day, the men who had been so eager to see combat, never again asked when they were going to see some action.

Despite what would prove to be a deadly and grueling struggle, the Americans would hold Rendova, capture Munda Airfield across the channel, and secure the rest of the New Georgia Islands.

After the Solomon Islands Campaign, Lou Plant returned home and was assigned as Staff Signalman aboard the LCI 484—part of LCS(L) Group Seven under the command of Commander F.P. Stone. He would later participate in the Iwo Jima and Okinawa Campaigns. Stephen Ganzberger was transferred for duty aboard the LCI 65 as a Quartermaster in January 1944. He would later participate in the Dutch New Guinea and Philippine Islands Campaigns. He was honorably discharged on August 15, 1945, the day Japan surrendered to the Allies.

LCI Flotilla Five's first encounter with the enemy had come at last—and on July 4th of all days. There was no shortage of examples of the men's bravery and fighting spirit in the official reports detailing the events of that afternoon. Lieutenant **James McCarthy** of the LCI (L) 63 wrote of his men's determination in keeping up their fire even when enemy bombs were hitting close by. **B.A. Thirkield** of the LCI (L) 23 wrote that his crew, most of whom were under enemy fire for the first time, performed excellently. But perhaps the most stirring account of the men's resolve are the words written by Lou Plant's skipper, **R.E. Ward**—the commanding officer of the LCI (L) 24 who lost two of his own men that Independence Day. In his official action report detailing the events of 4 July 1943, Ward concluded by saying:

"The officers and enlisted personnel fought the ships guns and fires without regard to their personal safety. For a new crew in their first action, they worked quietly, efficiently, and with valor. Individual initiative, courage, and cooperation represented that of the highest traditions of the Navy."⁷ ■

Retired Signalman Lou Plant currently lives in Livonia, MI.

Stephen Ganzberger passed away on May 20, 2011, two days after he shared his story with me. He is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. He will always be my hero.

SOURCES:

- 1 "Landing Craft, Infantry and Fire Support" (Rottman, p. 43)
- 2 "Munda Trail: The New Georgia Campaign" (Hammel, p. 77; Crown Publishers, NY)
- 3 "Munda Trail: The New Georgia Campaign" (Hammel, p. 77; Crown Publishers, NY)
Lou Plant and Lieut. Col. Henry Shafer identified the 16 Japanese bombers as Bettys (Mitsubishi land-based G4M Bombers). However, the official Action Reports I obtained from 4 July 1943 from the LCI's, and several LST's, state that the 16 bombers were identified as Sallys (Mitsubishi Ki-21 Type 97 Heavy Bombers). It is entirely possible that both types of bombers were present. Lou Plant remembers only one of the sixteen Japanese bombers being destroyed.
- 4 "Memories of World War II" by Louis V. Plant (p. 17)
- 5 "Memories of World War II" by Louis V. Plant (p. 17)
- 6 "Memories of World War II" by Louis V. Plant (p. 18)
Records of the Chief of Naval Operations: National Archives, College Park, Maryland:
- 7 Official Action Report: U.S.S. LCI (L) 24; July 4 1943 (File 101439; pages 9-10)

Others relevant documents referenced:

Action Reports: Commander, S. Pacific Serial 2190 dated Oct 17, 1943: Anti-Aircraft Action During Landings at Rendova and Vella Lavella (25 pages); 370/44/20/04: Box 73

USN Deck Log, U.S.S. LCI (L) 329 – June-August 1943 – 470/37/08/01: Box 946

War Diaries, U.S.S. LCI (L) 329 – June-August 1943; 370/46/05/07: Box 1040

Combined War Diary and Log, U.S.S. LCI (L) 65 – July to September 1943; Reg. No. 2190-N (Pages 3-6)

Official Action Report: U.S.S. LCI (L) 332; July 4 1943 (File No.56278; pages 1-2)

Official Action Report: U.S.S. LCI (L) 328; July 4 1943 (File No 55695; pages 25-36)

"Price of Glory"

In honor of those who lost their lives defending this great nation, I would like to share a poem that our Pacific Historian, **Dennis Blocker**, provided. The poem was originally written by **Bruce Hallett** of the LCI (G) 449. Bruce was terribly wounded on February 17, 1945 at Iwo Jima during Underwater Demolition Operations. Bruce wrote this poem a couple years later while sitting and pondering the mission...

*We earned the glory we received that day
but God what a terrible cost,
for the decks ran scarlet and slimy
with the blood of the men we lost.*

*We headed in towards Iwo's Beach
on a day that was cold and gray
with fear in our hearts and a smile on our lips
as we tried our best to be gay.*

*They met us there on that island beach
they met us with shot and shell
I thought I'd dropped from the top of earth
down to the heart of hell.*

*I could hear the horrible screams and moans
above the roar of the guns
the scream and moans of dying men
as mothers lost their sons.*

*But we stayed, we fought, we bled and died
although it was suicide
We stayed in there and manned our guns
in spite of the men who died*

*They sang of our praises and wrote of our deeds
deeds of valor and glory
but those who wrote of them never saw
my shipmates dead and gory.*

*Now that the final battle is won
I sit and read their story
and finally came to realize that then
those men who died, they were the price of glory.*

Bruce Hallett (LCI 449)

John Ratomski Submits Great Photos of the LCI (L) 61 at Bougainville!



A sign posted at Bougainville Navy Yard in the Solomon Islands on 2 January 1944.



LCI 61 with some men from Company A 6th Special aboard—heading to beach at Bougainville, November 1943.

John Ratomski's father was part of the 6th Special Navy Construction Battalion. The LCI 61 unloaded the 6th CBs on Bougainville (Solomon Islands) in November 1943. Below is a brief synopsis of the event written by John Ratomski.

Photos originally provided from Seabee museum archives.

On November 22, 1943, Echelon One of the 6th Special Navy Construction Battalion followed the First Marine Amphibious Corps to Bougainville. After breaking camp and loading their equipment on an LCT, they picked up their helmets, packs and rifles and boarded LCI's for the 170-mile trip from Vella Lavella to Empress Augusta Bay. The Seabee stevedores of Echelon One and the LST supply convoy sailed northward where the Third Marine Division was beating back the Japanese along the Numa Numa trails, in order to secure ground for the two additional bomber strips called for in Admiral Halsey's plans.

Just before dawn on November 23, as the 6th Special Echelon One's convoy drew up to Cape Torokina, an air raid alert was sounded. Anti-aircraft guns on the beaches opened fire, exciting the dim sky with the blazing streaks of thousands of tracers. The LCI's and some of the LST's slipped through the coral lined channel and quickly made their way to the beach north of Cape Torokina to discharge their cargoes. Other LST's headed for the seaward side of Puruata Island, about 1,000 yards away. It took most of the day for Echelon One to get into its temporary

bivouac position. Before they left the beach, they saw an LST get hit with mortar fire and their Marine neighbors shoot up some Japanese barges moving up on their left flank. Between these episodes of violence they discharged their equipment, piling it on the narrow beach, several feet from the bows of their landing craft. The LCT's were unloaded easily, but negotiating crates down the steep narrow ramps of the LCI's was more difficult.



LCI 61 at Bougainville on November 23, 1943.

We pay tribute...

LCI CREW KILLED IN ACTION IN WORLD WAR II

*Information courtesy of the USS LCI National Association web site:
<http://www.usslci.com/html/memorialnames.html>*

It has been a goal of the Association to assemble the most accurate list possible of LCIers killed in action during World War II. We are aware that the following list may be incomplete or contain inaccuracies. Please give this list your careful scrutiny and accept our sincerest apologies for any mistakes. If you are aware of corrections or additions that need to be made, please notify our Treasurer, **Hal Bleyhl**, by email hbleyhl@aol.com or phone (208) 639-9180.

Please take this opportunity to see the names of those brave shipmates who gave their lives during that great struggle. To those courageous men who made the ultimate sacrifice for this country – you will never be forgotten.

The LCI Association wishes everyone a Happy Memorial Day.



LCI (L) 497 abandoned on Omaha Beach at Normandy, D-Day, 6 June 1944 after having struck a mine during landing operations.

LCI 1

(Sunk Berzerte, Tunisia on 8-7-43 by a bomb, 3 KIA and 12 WIA, Sicily July 1943)

- Don N. Mace
- Russell R. Stark
- Ralph A. Austin

LCI 5

(Europe, campaigns 5)

- John J. Gray
- Clifford H. Radford
- Frank Kopriva

LCI 9

(Europe, 5 campaigns)

- Ernest L. Fletcher

LCI 10

(Europe, 5 campaigns)

- Charles Bates

LCI 16

(Europe, 5 campaigns)

- Stoy Kay Alexander

LCI 18

(Italy/France, 4 campaigns)

- John W. Paige
- Robert J. Maher

LCI 20

(Anzio, Italy, sunk by enemy aircraft on 1-22-44)

- Don Hamilton
- Harold R. Kalshnek

LCI 22

(Pacific, 5 campaigns)

- James A Barber

LCI 23

(Rendova Island, Solomons, 2-KIA, 3-WIA)

(Babatngon, Leyte, Philippines, 10-KIA, 24 WIA—Oct 23,1944—by a bomb)

- Theodore Morano
- George H. Gootee
- Loys V. Hayes
- Ruben C. Kale
- Anthony J. Pulice
- Arnold G. Retersdorf
- Harold L. Reynolds
- Antonio R. Fabian
- Robert T. Riordan
- Stanley C. Winkler
- William E. Dutro

LCI 24

(Rendova, Solomons, 2 KIA, 3 WIA by enemy bombers on July 4 1943—5 campaigns)

- Ernest A. Wilson (BM2c.)
- Mahlon F. Paulson (RM2c.)

LCI 32

(Anzio, Italy, sunk by mine on 1-26-44)

- George L. Marsh
- Dilbert B. Mallams
- Earl W. Rubens
- Olindo P. Martello
- Jack Elkin
- Thomas J. Brown
- Paul L. Nardella
- William L. Nisbet
- Charles W. Seavey
- John F. Guethlein
- Robert H. Jackson
- Warren B. Johnson
- David A. Purcell
- Eugene L. Sales
- Herbert Stake, Jr.
- George A. Cabana
- John W. Finch
- Charles J. Gilbride
- Ralph Harding
- John E. Campbell
- Lawrence M. Kennedy
- Hamp L. Richardson
- Ralph DiMeola

LCI 33

(Italy/France, 4 campaigns)

- Walber Kaczyski
- Merle Levell

LCI 34

(South Pacific, 7 campaigns)

- Sherman C. Wagers
- Edmund J. Baldwin

LCI 47

(Italy/France, 4 campaigns)

- Harry Ekey

LCI 65

(South Pacific, 6 campaigns)

(1 KIA at Rendova—July 4, 1943 by bomb)
1 KIA at Leyte Gulf—on Oct 24, 1944 by kamikaze)

- Hurley E. Christian (F1c.)
- Lester E. Aiston (SC3c.)

LCI 70

(KIA, Bougainville; Lingayen Gulf, Philippines, 12 WIA by kamikaze)

- D.H. Shook
- Joseph Byars
- Robert Craycraft
- Walter G. Kiser
- Densil R. Phillips
- Charles A. Poole
- George Pressley
- James O. Vincent
- Eugene Henry Whalen

LCI 72

(South Pacific, 8 campaigns)

- John R. Mansell
- Howard O. Mizell

LCI 73

(South Pacific, 7 campaigns)

- Kenneth Talley

LCI 74

(South Pacific, 8 campaigns)

Bernard Yank

LCI 76

(Italy/France, 4 campaigns)

- Miles Beck

LCI 82

(Sunk at Okinawa on 4-4-1945)

- Hobert G. Heaberlin

LCI 87

(Normandy, 4 campaigns)

- Howel Leary
- William Frere

LCI 88

(Normandy)

- Richard I. Frere
- Warren J. Moran
- Rocco Simone
- Wm B. Cole (Drowned while rescuing crew member)

LCI 90

(Okinawa, 6-6-1945, 10 WIA by Suicide plane that hit the conn) (Coast Guard)

- (? Name) Ross SM 2/c

LCI 91

(Normandy, sunk on 6-6-44, WIA 9)

- James E. Atterberry
- Leslie Fritz
- Ernest Johnson
- Stanley Wilczak
- Bernard L. Wolfe

LCI 94

(Normandy, 4 campaigns, 1 WIA)

- August B. Buncik
- Fletcher Burton, Jr.
- Jack DeNunzi

LCI 193

(Sicily, 4 campaigns)

- Raymond J. Doherty

LCI 209

(Normandy, 5 campaigns)

- George McAllister

FLOTILLA 2 STAFF

(Bermuda, two men drowned on 2-27-43)

- John J. Gray
- Clifford H. Radford

LCI 211

(Normandy, 4 campaigns)

- Gervese J. Keefe
- Charles Veneseke
- Loren B. Owens
- Otis H. Merrill (Bermuda drowning on 2/27/43)
- Alton J. Wright
- Oliver E Burton

LCI 212

(Normandy, 4 campaigns)

- Stafford (Bermuda drowning 2/27/43)
- J. A. Ryman (Bermuda drowning on 2-27-43)
- W. A. Light (Bermuda drowning on 2-27-43)
- Peter James

LCI 213

- (Normandy, 4 campaigns)
 - Lonnie L. Albert (Bermuda drowning on 2/27/43)
 - Vincent G. Farrell (Bermuda drowning on 2/27/43)
 - Leroy R. Chamberlain (Bermuda drowning on 2/27/43)
 - Allen C. Jensen (Bermuda drowning on 2/27/43)

LCI 214

- (Normandy, 4 campaigns)
 - Charles F. Kennedy (Bermuda drowning 2/27/43)
 - Richard A. Kapff (Bermuda drowning 2/27/43)
 - Jack T. Twiggs (Bermuda drowning on 2/27/43)
 - Adam T. Picozzi (Bermuda drowning 2/27/43)

LCI 215

- (Normandy, 4 campaigns)
 - Grant R. Redding (Bermuda drowning 2/27/43)
 - Thomas L. Leonard (Bermuda drowning 2/27/43)
 - Robert C. Gragg (Bermuda drowning 2/27/43)
 - James L. Riley (Bermuda drowning 2-27-43)

LCI 216

- (Normandy, 4 campaigns)
 - James A. Hayes (Bermuda drowning 2/27/43)
 - Robert L. Jones (Bermuda drowning 2/27/43)
 - Maurice Boutell

LCI 218

- (Normandy, 5 campaigns)
 - David H. Muth (Bermuda drowning 2-27-43)
 - Earl L. Roberts (Bermuda drowning 2/27/43)

LCI 219

- (Normandy, sunk on 6-11-44)
 - Russell L. Bloom (Bermuda drowning 2/27/43)
 - Lawrence R. Wallar (Bermuda drowning 2/27/43)
 - Johnson B. Wiles
 - Cornelius B. Dorsey
 - Lester R. Bumps (bronze star)
 - Albert Combs
 - Cyril J. O'Connor Jr. (bronze star)
 - Rolen C. Sikes Jr. (bronze star)

LCI 232

- (Sunk at Normandy on 6-6-44, 4 campaigns)
 - Howard J. Dague
 - Roger Huskisson
 - Walton K. Ellis
 - Leland A. Glover
 - Wilbert E. Henke
 - Roger F. Johnson
 - George A. Kelley
 - Robert A. Mett
 - Mack Penawell
 - Frank J. Petricca
 - Charles O. Rector
 - John H. Shroves
 - Frank Souza
 - Raphael Weinstein

LCI 237

- (Europe, 1 KIA on 10-27-43 by mine explosion off Taranto, Italy)
 - Clyde H. Roberson (bow lookout)

LCI 319

- (Europe, Coast Guard, 4 campaigns, Normandy—4 purple hearts)
 - John C. Scheurman (Silver Star)

LCI 321

- (Europe, Coast Guard, 4 campaigns)
 - Edward Rybicki

LCI 339

- (Sunk at New Guinea on 9-4-43)
 - Fay B. Begor

LCI 341

- (1 KIA on 9-6-43, New Guinea)
 - Robert W. Rolf (Navy Cross)

LCI 342

- (Southwest Pacific and Philippines, 7 campaigns)
 - James Earman

LCI 344

- (Pacific, 6 campaigns)
 - Robert Pumphrey
 - Jack Lanbert
 - James Palmer
 - Edward Woodzien

LCI 347

- (Saipan on 6-15-44, 5 campaigns)
 - Garland Eddington

LCI 365

- (4 campaigns, 7 KIA and 15 WIA on 7-16-44 at Guam)
 - Charles Martin
 - Andrew Lesezynski
 - Edward W. Nemeth
 - Clifford Mossman (bronze star)
 - Thomas Wilkenson (bronze star)
 - John J. Gibbs (bronze star)
 - John F. Harrison

LCI 366

- (Pacific, 5 campaigns)
 - William J. Barry
 - James F. MacWatty
 - Carmelo R. Sidoti
 - Richard C. Steyer
 - Robert W. Unger

LCI 396

- (7 KIA and 20 WIA on 1-18-45 at Peleliu—bow blown off)
 - James R. Wirtz
 - John P. Mannino
 - Bobby G. Ozbirn
 - Delonda J. Self
 - Robert J. Calvert
 - Oliver E. Cole
 - Charles V. Foxx

LCI 408

- (Normandy)
 - Raymond Aubin

LCI 422

- (Pacific, 3 campaigns)
 - William Jenkins
 - Jack G. Johnson

LCI 438

- (Iwo Jima, 5 campaigns)
 - Robert R. Meili

LCI 439

- (Pacific, 5 campaigns)
 - Jessie J. Marzie
 - Dewey L. Mayes
 - Donald Rhodes
 - Lawrence M. White

LCI 440

- (Pacific, Eniwetok on 2-22-44 by friendly fire—5 campaigns)
 - Paul M. McGawan
 - Robert F. Graham
 - Joseph Mercoli
 - Thomas F. Smay
 - Robert Zielinski
 - Earl L. Miller
 - Fred J. Spicer
 - W. Edward Pappen

LCI 441

- (Iwo Jima, 4 campaigns)
 - William T. Connors
 - William E. Griffin
 - Jack D. Starbuck
 - Julian R. Scott
 - Clinton E. Snider
 - Glenn O. De Long
 - Moses Trexler

LCI 442

- (Eniwetok on Feb 22, 1944 by friendly fire, 6 campaigns)
 - Paul D. Mayes
 - Gordon McCuiston
 - George W. Meckley
 - Fleet F. Willis
 - Floyd E. Wright
 - Alexander W. Finney

LCI 449*(Iwo Jima—Feb 17, 1945, 5 campaigns)*

- Byron C. Yarbrough
- Frederick Cooper
- William G. Corkins
- Lawrence Bozarth
- Edward P. Brockmeyer (USMC, silver star)
- John T. Floock
- Bruce Goodin
- Clarence J. Hoffman
- William H. Hudson
- Robert R. Minnick
- Ralph Owens
- Lareto F. Paglia
- Carl F. Park
- Howard W. Schoenleben
- William Tominac
- Glenn H. Trotter
- Charles E. Vogel
- Frederick F. Walton
- Leroy Young
- Lee C. Yates
- Harry L. McGrath

LCI 450*(3 campaigns, Iwo Jima)*

- Jack H. Musselman

LCI 457*(4 campaigns, Iwo Jima)*

- Willard D. Helvey

LCI 466*(2 campaigns, Iwo Jima)*

- Thomas E. Coppinger
- Huey P. Hester
- Charles E. Barton
- Glenn A. Foldessy
- Robert E. Pipelow
- Horace J. Long

LCI 468*(Hit by torpedo plane on 6-18-44 at Guam—bow blown off—sunk later)*

- Dean L. Beemer
- Leslie G. Foss
- Dewey A. Hayhurst
- Joseph A. Hunter
- Lyan S. Long
- Robert G. Marquis
- Robert Barnett
- Robert G. Davis
- J.B. Gladdis
- Hollis W. Hicks
- Steven A. Karko
- Woodrow B. Maggard
- Ralph E. Parks
- Ralph E. Spaugh

LCI 471*(Iwo Jima, 2 campaigns)*

- Jessie L. Adamson
- James F. Bernethy
- Richard Cano
- Louis P. Hagan
- Billie J. Harris
- Troy L. Morehouse
- William P. Morrissey
- Donald Nygard
- Richard H. Pond
- Jerry A. Terracciano
- James W. White

LCI 473*(Iwo Jima, 2 campaigns)*

- Joseph Edward Davis
- Dominick S. Gonzalez

LCI 474*(Sunk on Feb 17, 1945 at Iwo Jima)*

- Daryl G. Huish
- Fred H. Gray
- Donald S. Rappold
- Lester H. Welch

LCI 475*(Pacific, 4 campaigns)*

- Leo P. Selan

LCI 559*(Pacific, 3 campaigns)*

- Donald M. Gross

LCI 568*(Okinawa, 3 campaigns)*

- Edward L. Kolodziej
- James M. Sweatt

LCI 580*(Pacific, 4 campaigns)*

- George C. Thomas

LCI 600*(Sunk on 1-12-45 at Ulithi by an enemy sub)*

- Seth Bailey
- Glen De Quaisie
- Edwin Janacek

LCI 621*(Pacific, 2 campaigns)*

- Raymond Carter

LCI 682*(Pacific)*

- Thomas H. Reese

LCI 726*(7 WIA on 6-15-44 at Saipan, 4 campaigns)*

- Jerome Pruchnieski
- Robert A. Compton

LCI 807*(1 KIA on 4-1-45 at Okinawa)*

- Andrew Karsen

LCI 812*(Okinawa)*

- Walter Siek (Navy and Marine medal)

LCI 821*(8 WIA, 5-7-45, Palau Islands)*

- Wayne A. Seath
- Lee Henley Raigins
- Robert E. Kriniak

LCI 951*(Southern France)*

- Floyd Mage

LCI 974*(Sunk on 1-10-45 at Lingayen Gulf, Philippines by a suicide boat—4 AM)*

- William W. Baft
- Sidney F. Brennan
- Emidue J. Falini
- Richard E. Kern
- Charles Passwater
- Thomas F. Sheehan

LCI 979*(Philippines, 3 campaigns)*

- Martin J. Fleishman
- Martin F. Deem
- William C. Nordon

LCI 1060*(Mindoro, Philippines)*

- Alexander J. Osowieki

LCI 1065*(Sunk on 10-24-44 at Leyte Gulf, Philippines)*

- Sigurd J. Bjertness
- Wallace W. Hamlett
- Michael M. Jalad
- Floyd J. Parker
- Lester S. Tumblison
- Gordon A. Judson

This Memorial Day We Recognize D-Day 70th Anniversary June 6th, 1944

*Photos and information provided by
Robert Wright Jr. and Navsource.org*



A convoy of LCI (L)s en route to the Normandy invasion beaches on 6 June 1944



A gun crew at the bow gun and ready box



LCI 5 crew being briefed on coming operations. The LCI 3 is on their left and LCI 4 on their right. Also in the background across from them (L to R) are the LCI 325; LCI 326; and LCI 8.



LCI loading troops.

LCI 321 heading toward the beach 10 June 1944, part of the continuous build-up of forces following the landing on D-Day.



USS LCI (L) 83 landing more men while troops of the 3rd Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division assemble on a narrow strip of "Omaha" beach before moving inland near Collville-sur-Mer on "D-Day"—6 June 1944.

★ Letters to the Editor

"Hat Pins Carry a Profound Meaning"

Originally published on Nov. 22, 2011 in "The Columbian"—Gordon's local newspaper in Vancouver, WA:

12/23/2013

I happen to be one of those old geezers who goes around wearing a big smile and also wearing a veteran's hat with some pins and gadgets on it. You don't know what they mean but they are a reminder to me of when I was young, and my shipmates and I accomplished things that we did not know could be done. We remember so vividly our shipmates who did not come back. "When we see our flag, we also have a vision of these departed shipmates." So, if you see an old geezer wearing his veteran's hat with those funny pins and gadgets, smile at him as he strolls by.

Those funny pins and gadgets mean that you and your loved ones are free to walk where you wish and pray where you wish in this great country called America.

- Gordon Smith (LCI 43)



**Gordon Smith at
the 2013 Branson
Reunion. Photo
courtesy of Lynne
Flanders**

In Response to February's featured article, "In Monty's Wake" by Harrison Martin:

To: Zach Morris, Editor

2/18/2014

Imagine my surprise to see the picture of LCI (L) 553 on the cover of Feb. '14 Elsie. Not only that, but another picture on page 15. While she was not the topic of the article she stood out in all her glory.

My husband, Donald C. DuBrul was commanding officer of her during the Normandy invasion. She landed on Dog Red beach on Omaha at 10:00. They knew she was coming. The troops were off loaded successfully, but when she attempted to back off the beach, her cable retracted and with the tide coming in she was soon high and dry on the beach. The LST 555 attempted to throw a line to try to pull her free but was unsuccessful and when the 88's on the bluff found her range and got two successful hits, my husband cast her off to avoid damage to her and ordered abandon ship. The crew spent the next 14 hours on that bloody, noisy, smelly beach—dug in with the troops who were pinned down. Expected repair equipment never arrived and the beach master ordered them off the beach. They got an LCVP to give them a lift out to LST 555 back to England. He spent a week at a rest camp waiting for his hearing to come back. This is an abbreviated version of what happened to LCI 553 and her crew that awful day, but suffice to say, her mission was successful.

Donald C. DuBrul reported to The Supreme Commander June 9, 2008. His family is very proud of him and misses him like crazy.

Sincerely,
Betty DuBrul, NY

Changing Possibilities



THE PROPHET JEREMIAH ASKED 2700 YEARS AGO, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots?" (13:23). In other words, can people really change? It is an important question. Few of us are all we want to be. Is there any hope for us? Will Rogers once said, "You can't say that civilization doesn't advance, for in every war they kill you in a new way." In 1961, Bruce Catton, editor of *American Heritage* and an authority on the Civil War, spoke on the theme, "What 1861 has to say to 1961." In his address he emphasized that while weaponry has changed over the past century, man's most explosive problem was his own nature. The chief problem in the world in 1944 was the same as the chief problem in 2014. It is man himself. The late Samuel Heffenstein said, "Wherever I go, I go too, and spoil everything." And there is Jack Paar's classic line. "Looking back, my life seems like one long obstacle race, with me as its chief obstacle." Many of us can identify with those assessments.

Is it possible for us to change? The answer is, "of course." Millions of people have experienced change in their lives. Change is a wondrous possibility for all of God's children. Indeed, change is one of the key ingredients in the concept of the image of God in which the Bible tells us we were created. Of all God's creatures, we seem to be able to best adapt to change. As Spencer Marsh has noted, of all God's creatures we alone can be creative.

Animals are not creative—they are instinctive. For this reason, the beaver dams, birds nest, and ant hills of the 1980s are no different from those of the 1580s. But as humans we can create entirely new models. We can take the raw materials given to us by God and arrange them in a pattern that bears the stamp of an individual creative mind. Taking words, colors, clay, musical notes, bricks, or marble, a man or woman may shape something that has never been. We find such activity "fulfilling." This drive towards creativity is related to our ability to change. We DO possess the capacity for change. And we have seen people change. In fact over a set period of time almost everyone changes to a certain extent. That is what maturity is all about.

So, how can we realize our dreams and remedy our defects? How can we be what we have never been before? There are four very simple, very practical essentials for change to take place in our lives.

The first is desire. Do you really want to be more than you are? Are you sufficiently dissatisfied with your present state that you are willing to pay the price that change requires? Too many of us are not even aware of our need for change.

There must also be a design for change. Constructive change happens best when we plan for it. Successful people are goal setters. They visualize; then they strategize. We need some idea of where we are headed. Our goals may seem minor but we need some kind of measuring stick for personal progress. If I can set a goal of spending one half hour in Bible study each day, I know that one year from now I will be 182 hours better informed about God's Word than I am right now.

Change takes place through desire and design. But we also need a dynamic for change. That is, we need power that is not our own—a source of a higher power from outside ourselves. God provides the power to change.

And finally, change comes when we dare to take a first step. Getting started is always the hardest part. In the *New Yorker* Magazine sometime back was a cartoon entitled "Nanook Goes South." The first frame shows Nanook in the cold north wearing his heavy parka. The second frame shows Nanook in the same outfit in the sunny south. He is "boiling in his parka," says the caption, "but old habits die hard." Old habits do die hard, but they do die if we will dare to take the first step. Change involves risk. It requires stepping out. It means breaking the mold. And, it's exciting.

Ann Landers once shared a piece from an anonymous source that speaks to our need. It was entitled "The Dilemma."

To laugh is to risk appearing a fool.

To weep is to risk appearing sentimental.

To reach out for another is to risk involvement.

To expose feelings is to risk rejection.

To place your dreams before the crowd is to risk ridicule.

To love is to risk not being loved in return.

To go forward in the face of overwhelming odds is to risk failure.

But risks must be taken because the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing.

The person who risks nothing, does nothing, has nothing, and is nothing.

He may avoid suffering and sorrow, but he cannot learn, feel, change, grow, or love.

Chained by his certitudes, he is a slave.

Only a person who takes risks is free.

We can change. Our LCI Association is changing. The formula is simple. There must be desire, a design, a dynamic, and a sense of daring. But it can happen and God is in the midst of it.

Agape,

Mike

A Very Special Thank You to Dr. Michael A. Pikos!

Dr. Michael Pikos recently donated \$1,000 to the National LCI Association in memory of his father, **Anthony Pikos**, who recently passed away on March 16, 2014 at age 92.

Anthony was Chief Petty Officer – First Class Signalmans on the LCI(L)-14. He was very proud of his service, which included all five major Atlantic invasions including North Africa, Sicily, Salerno, Anzio, and Normandy (Juno and Gold Beaches). Michael expressed his interest in visiting the LCI 713 in Portland, and we hope he is able to join us at our annual reunion this September!

On behalf of the entire LCI National Association –
thank you Dr. Michael Pikos for your contribution!

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 \$35.00 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: _____

Alternate/Relative's E-mail Address: _____

(This is so we have a family member or friend we can contact if we cannot reach you)

Name of Alternate Contact: _____ Relationship to contact: _____

Occupation or Former Occupation: _____

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? _____ Email Address: _____

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

Please send this application with your check (\$35) made payable to:

USS LCI NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

Mail to:

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

Support Your USS LCI Association

All profits from the items on this page helps support the USS LCI National Association

**Let everyone Know:
I Proudly Served on a U.S. Navy LCI**



Promote your USS NATIONAL ASSOCIATION membership by wearing:

The USS LCI National Association WWII Service Cap	\$ 25
The USS LCI National Association WWII Service Polo Shirt	\$ 50
The USS LCI National Association WWII Service light weight insulated Jacket (add optional Name & Ship)	\$100
NEW : USS LCI National Association WWII Service Sweat Shirt	\$ 25

The Landing Craft Infantry in WWII



New Item

The Best of Elsie Item Issue 70 \$20

All the editors favorite articles for the first 69 issues of the Elsie in one Collector Issue. Stories from your shipmates in 84 pages.

Landing Craft Infantry and Fire Support \$20

This book contains one of the great description and many illustrations of the versions of the Landing Craft Infantry, including Square and Round Con, Gunboat, Rocket and Mortar. 47 pages

Iwo Jima Recon \$20

Dick Camp tells the story of Iwo Jima on February 17, 1945 with extensive details on the UD Teams and the LCI(G)'s courageous actions to protect these men. 127 pages

American Amphibious Gunboats in WWII \$50

This book which was written by the historian of the LCS(L)(3) Association includes the best published history of the development of the LCI Gunboats and their actions in WWII from the Solomons to the final battle at Okinawa. About 230 of the books 370 pages are devoted to the LCI(G) operations in the Pacific.

Thank You for Supporting the USS LCI National Association!

Mail This Form with Your Check to:
USS LCI National Association
101 Rice Bent Way # 6
Columbia, S.C., 29229



Additional Information Contact:

Robert Wright (517) 548-1026

Member Name _____ USS LCI (____) _____

Member Phone Number _____

Member Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Member Email Address _____

BOOKS

\$ 20 Donation : *The Best of the Elsie Item Issue 70* Quantity: _____ Amount Paid: \$ _____

\$ 20 Donation : *Landing Craft infantry and Fire Support* Quantity: _____ Amount Paid: \$ _____

\$ 20 Donation : *Iwo Jima Recon* Quantity: _____ Amount Paid: \$ _____

\$ 50 Donation : *American Amphibious Gunboats in WWII* Quantity: _____ Amount Paid: \$ _____

LCI Caps

\$ 25 Donation LCI Association Cap WWII _____ add \$6 shipping = **\$31**

Size: S \M _____ L\XL _____ Cap Amount Paid: \$ _____

LCI Clothing

\$ 25 Donation LCI Sweat Shirt _____ add \$6 shipping = **\$31**

Size: L _____ XL _____ Sweat shirt Amount Paid: \$ _____

\$ 50 Donation LCI Association Polo Shirt _____ add \$6 shipping = **\$56**

Service Branch: Navy _____ Coast Guard _____

Shirt Color: Navy _____ White _____

Size: S _____ M _____ L _____ XL _____ XXL _____ Polo Shirt Amount Paid: \$ _____

\$ 100 Donation LCI Association Jacket _____ add \$12 shipping = **\$112**

Optional Embroidered Last Name and Ship Number on Jacket add \$10 Total= **\$122**

Service Branch: Navy _____ Coast Guard _____

Jacket Color: Navy _____ Khaki _____

Size: S _____ M _____ L _____ XL _____ XXL _____ Jacket Amount Paid: \$ _____

Total for all Items Ordered: \$ _____

(Allow us 3 weeks to Produce and Deliver your order to you)

USS LCI National Association, 101 Rice Bent Way, Columbia, SC 29229; (803) 865-5665

Your Officers and Board of Directors

Please feel free to contact any of the officers or directors listed below for whatever comments, questions or help you may have. We're here to serve you!

OFFICERS

Chairman of the Board

John P. Cummer

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

Michael Gatton

President/Chaplain
6410 Gellhaus Lane
Louisville, KY 40299
(502) 762-0613
mgatton@insightbb.com

John France

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

Hal Bleyhl

Treasurer
LCI 812
6194 Duxbury Pier Place
Garden City, ID 83714
(208) 639-9180
hbleyhl@aol.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jim Aydelotte

LCI 25
37010 Goldfield Road
Apache Junction, AZ
(480) 290-1795
Jj10723@aol.com

Diane Cronin

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

Joe Flynn

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

Gordon Smith

LCI 43
2313 Northeast 110th Ave.
Vancouver, WA 98684
(360) 256-5901
Gordon.sharonsmith@gmail.com

Robert E. Wright, Jr.

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

HISTORIANS

John France

European Theater of Operations
(See address above)

Dennis Blocker

Pacific Theater of Operations
6138 Border Trail
San Antonio, TX 78840
(210) 789-4149
Lci449@yahoo.com

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Attention LCI Veterans! Want to tell your story?

Zach Morris

(586) 651-1263
morrisza23@gmail.com
Twitter: @Zach_Elsieltem

OFFICES AND SUPPORT SERVICES PROVIDED BY

NEHEMIAH COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

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

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

More Great Photos from the 2013 Branson Reunion!

Photos contributed by Lynne Flanders and Zach Morris.

