



NOVEMBER 2014

Elsie Item

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE
USS LANDING CRAFT, INFANTRY, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, INC.
• Established May 14-18, 1991, Norfolk, VA •

YET ANOTHER GREAT REUNION!



*LCI Shipmates and Family
Gather Again in Portland*

ON OUR COVER:

An LCI veteran group photo taken by Lynne Flanders at the LCI Association Reunion banquet dinner on September 27 at the Red Lion Hotel at the Quay. The Northwest Association and the Amphibious Forces Museum did a tremendous job planning and handling the reunion.

CORRECTIONS:

At our recent Portland reunion we missed reading aloud the names of two LCI veterans during our memorial ceremony on Saturday, September 27. The bell has rung and a rose petal has been added to the bowl of water in memory of each of these extraordinary men. We wish fair winds and following seas to the departed.

To the families of both men, we sincerely apologize, and rest assured—they are in our hearts and memories.

We promise that the names of the following men will be read at our 2015 reunion memorial ceremony:

LCI 467

Edward Peden

LCI 1001

John (Jerry) Haxall



FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE:

Portland Reunion Reflections from Joe Flynn ■ Charles Kellogg Memorial

"A Forgotten Act of Valor" ■ Special Thanks to Hal Bleyhl

Other Notable WWII Heroes Lost in 2014

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 88, November 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

Well, I now have official sanction to use that title "Old Man," even "Old Geezer," if I like!

Sunday was my 90th birthday! Big deal! Well, maybe it was, but I really don't feel any older so I guess I'll just go on acting like I always have. I'm counting all you out there as my friends who know me only too well to continue to take me as I am, so it wouldn't do much good to try to act differently anyway. So, here goes!



This has been some summer! First, that unforgettable trip to Normandy for the 70th Anniversary of D-Day, and then Portland/Vancouver for a great visit with old shipmates and a chance to tread the steel decks of an LCI again! Can't ask for much more than that.

I've been getting hollered and laughed at from every direction possible about that unexpected encounter with President Obama at the D-Day Anniversary ceremonies. All in all, it's been fun and, on top of that, it was good publicity for we LCIers. Gives us something to talk about when we're with people who don't know much about all those WWII craft that no longer exist. Don't know if you saw it, but Mike Gatton did a real funny "conversation balloon" on the picture where it looked like I was giving the President the word on something. Mike had President Obama asking,

"John, is there anything I can do for you?"

And me replying,

"Well, we could use a new hull and some engines for the 713."

And he responds:

"I will get Secretary Rew to send a check on Monday!"

Don't we wish!



As you know from the account I wrote in the last issue it was my desire to sit next to that old Coastie John Gatton that led to me having the unexpected surprise of sitting by the President. I just want to be sure he gets credit for it because he got away from me before I could sit next to him! Later, we had one of those unforgettable moments of recollection together. I was checking the log of my ship for its movements on D-Day and found that after the landings, our ships sailed together back to England for the next load and actually tied up next to each other just off the Isle of Wight on the 7th of June before our second trip. This time we both went to Omaha Beach.

So, it's been a good time for memories and an even better time for looking ahead to future meetings because of the leadership and planning that Mike Gatton and his Board are doing. It's an exciting time for us all!

John Cummer

Third Time's the Charm for LCI Reunion in Pacific NW

By Joe Flynn



Gordon's photo featured in "The Columbian." (Zachary Kaufman) <http://www.columbian.com/news/2014/sep/24/vancouver-wwII-reunion-landing-craft-LCI/>

THEY SAY THE THIRD TIME'S THE CHARM and for 44 *Elsie Item* sailors, their family and friends the 2014 reunion in Vancouver, WA & Portland, OR was truly a charm. We were greeted on opening day with a carefully written news article in *The Columbian* of Vancouver on the reunion, LCIs, and the men who sailed them into battle. The headline read, "Ships with a Special History." The next day TV stations also reported the gathering of LCI veterans of WWII.

Featured in the news article (with photo) was Gordon Smith, LCI Board member and Chair of the Amphibious Forces Memorial Museum, and two photos of the USS LCI (L) 713. The

story covered a lot of detail on LCIs and the facts passed muster with the LCI Sailors at the reunion.

The NW LCI group made arrangements for hotel accommodations, lined up tours, a hospitality room, and a fine banquet for 160 people. Many guests took a scenic ride on a steam locomotive then visited the historic Cedar Creek Grist Mill. Gordon, Rick Holmes and Sue Cosper deserve a big thank you.

Our Chaplain and President arranged and conducted another memorable Memorial for the shipmates who sailed west since our last reunion. The Rose theme using all colors



***LCIers and their families gather in the banquet room of the Red Lion Hotel.
(Courtesy Lynne Flanders)***



***A group gathered at the Cedar Creek Grist Mill.
(Courtesy Lynne Flanders)***

reflected Portland, the City of Roses. Shipmates and family had the opportunity to add Rose petals to a water filled vase, as the names of their departed sailors were called and the bell tolled. A lone Bagpiper played "Amazing Grace," and at the close, Chaplain Mike trumpeted Taps as a fitting and fond farewell.

The highlight of the reunion, of course, was the opportunity to go aboard the 713 to see all the restoration progress made by the volunteers. As a bonus, we had a chance to tour the PT 658, fully restored and berthed next to the 713. This was an unexpected pleasure and the PT group waived admission fees for the LCI group.

One of the great thrills for family and friends was watching our LCI sailors tour the 713, which brought back so many memories for them. When they go aboard a change takes place; sore knees and tender backs seem to have been abandoned on the docks. Once the Elsie Item sailors hit those

gray steel decks the inconveniences of age are cast aside and for a time they are 18 and 20 year old sailors once again. They remember their time during the war, shipmates lost and battles won. They feel the bulkheads once more as



though they could tell of service long ago. And for the rest of us it was an honor to be among



*Tours of the LCI 713.
(Courtesy Amphibious
Forces Museum)*

these veterans and try to express our gratitude for their sacrifice and their service.

The banquet on Saturday evening was a rousing success. Chairman John Cummer, Master of Ceremonies, introduced our speaker Capt. John Ulmer, USN Ret. Among other commands Capt. Ulmer once skippered the USS *Clamagore*, the submarine some of you may have toured at Patriot's Point during our Charleston, SC reunion. Capt. Ulmer told us of his brother who served on the LCI 725 in the Pacific and of the hundreds of downed US pilots rescued by submarines in WWII.

At the June NW Group LCI gathering in Boise, ID we had entertainment that warmed the hearts of veterans and guests. Ellie & Kiley Shaw, a mother/daughter singing and instrumental act provided songs from the 40's that brought back memories and a tear to the eye. This entertainment was provided by the Wright brothers; Robert, Richard, Bill and Michael. These intrepid talent scouts found Ellie and Kiley performing at a Boise nightspot. The brothers then arranged to have them perform at the Boise LCI gathering where they received rave reviews.

So how do you follow an act like that? Well if you are the brothers Wright you book the duo



for the LCI reunion in Vancouver. There, with transportation, accommodations, and fees generously donated by the Wright brothers, Ellie and Kiley provided great performances for veterans and their guests at the Memorial and the Banquet.

Spontaneous entertainment was of course provided throughout the reunion by the King of Kazoos, WWII cook of the LCI 70, Royal Wetzel. Feeding LCI sailors is a hard habit to break, so "Wetz" brought along a box of Pennsylvania Baloney and Cheese. As they say, "Wetz" is never without a good supply of baloney. With his entertainment and snacks he put the "Hospitality" in Hospitality Room.

After the Vancouver goodbyes, Wetz and PA sidekick Pete Selan, drove south to Eureka, CA



***The King of Kazoos—Royal Wetzel.
(Courtesy Lynne Flanders)***



***(L to R) Marvin Carpenter, Royal Wetzel,
and Ray Olley at the banquet dinner.
(Courtesy Lynne Flanders)***

to tour the other LCI, the Flagship of the LCI Association, USS (L) 1091. LeRoy Marsh, Board chairman of the Humboldt Bay Naval Air/Sea Museum and restoration leader gave Wetz and Pete the cook's tour (no pun intended). Doc Davis, who donated the 1091 to the museum,

filled in the history for them. Then they headed back to PA, to start planning for the next reunion, singing,

"...We don't know where and we don't know when, but we'll meet again." ■

***(L to R) Gil
Ortiz, Royal
Wetzel, Leo
Wilcox, and
Pete Selan
(back) at the
banquet dinner.
(Courtesy Lynne
Flanders)***



Amphibious Forces Memorial Museum Director Killed in Crash

By
Rick Holmes

It is with great sadness that we report to you the loss of AFMM Director, Chuck Kellogg. Chuck passed away as a result of injuries sustained in an auto accident on September 7, 2014. Chuck was an Army veteran of Korea and has always been first and foremost all about honoring veterans. He was a major supporter of the AFMM, generously supplying his time, his experience and his resources toward the restoration of the LCI-713.



His history with LCIs goes back to WWII where his father was superintendent at the Albina Shipyard in Portland, Oregon, which built LCIs. He is pictured as a young boy with his family at the shipyard ceremony where his Mother had the honor of launching the LCI-1018.

His other historical passions included the restoration of vintage cars and wooden boats. Chuck was also a Director of Save the PT Boat Inc. and very involved in the restoration of the PT-658, the only operational WWII PT boat remaining in the world.

Chuck was instrumental in recruiting the Port of Portland as an AFMM sponsor. The LCI-713 is now moored on Port property, directly adjacent to the PT-658 base at Swan Island in Portland.

Chuck will be sorely missed not just as a Director, but also as a close and dear friend to us all. ■



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 11 Carl Fisher	LCI 396 Richard T. Burke	LCI 467 Edward Peden	LCI 643 Vincent C. Boylan
LCI 14 Anthony M. Pikos	LCI 406 Gerard M. Dunn	LCI 468 and 476 Doug Mayo (Skipper)	LCI 679 Eugene McCarrick
LCI 30 Floyd Harding	LCI 416 Leo Berg	LCI 538 John "Kelly" McBride	LCI 713 (Adopted) Charles W. Kellogg
LCI 40 William R. Ruud	LCI 446; LCI 618; LCI 690 Crayton G. Hall	LCI 554 John Sapienza	LCI 730 Dan Tolar
LCI 43 and LCI 530 Donald Ragno	LCI 453 James R. Tribbey	LCI 565 James A. Lennon	LCI 752 George Benton
LCI 70 James F. Phillips, Sr.	LCI 455 Roy Davis (Skipper)	LCI 570 and LCI 588 Glen Bivens	LCI 758 Gerard Marder (Skipper)
LCI 77 James C. Fleming	LCI 455 and LSM(R) 401 Henry "Hank" Lai	LCI 595 Robert J. Ziegler	LCI 764 Robert E. Miller
LCI 219 Bill Gallagher	LCI 457 John Gordon	LCI 610 Reginald H. Yeager	LCI 812 Charles Millett
LCI 226 John Pusateri	LCI 461 Russell Hood	LCI 612 Paul P. Capabianco	LCI 948 Donald P. Kennedy (Skipper)
LCI 237 Wayne Bryant			LCI 948 John Krulish
LCI 347 W.J. "Bill" Gallagher			LCI 966 and LCI 1031 J. Byard Swift, Jr.
LCI 347 Steven A. Galus			LCI 987 Earl William Kersten Jr
LCI 349 Laurence J. Campbell			LCI 1001 John (Jerry) Haxall
LCI 362 Frederick Blocker			LCI 1090 Richard McRostie
LCI 373 Joseph Canzone			



"A FORGOTTEN ACT OF VALOR"

The Death of Clyde Roberson and the Rescue of a British Commando

**Motor Machinst's Mate First Class Bill Patton and
Skipper Rodney Quin Nelson aboard the LCI(L) 237 at Italy**

By **Zach S. Morris**



USS LCI (L) 237 at anchor, 10 July 1943, off the coast of Sicily. (Navsource.org)

The following piece is written based on an interview with retired Motor Machinist's Mate 1st Class William Patton conducted on June 15, 2013. I've had the pleasure of speaking to Bill on many other occasions. He recalled several stories, one of which happened on October 27th, 1943 (Navy Day) off the coast of southern Italy when the LCI (L) 237 struck a mine. I also used material from "An Interview With Rodney Quin Nelson," an interview conducted by Charles Johnson with the University of Tennessee in Knoxville on August 18th, 1987.

THE WAVES OF THE IONIAN SEA smashed against the hull of the LCI(L) 237 as she got underway loaded with Royal British Army commandoes of the Black Watch. She was joining up with the rest of the American convoy departing from Taranto, Italy, located in the "heel" of southeast Italy. As the ships

headed south that evening, they did so with the knowledge that they were traveling through dangerous enemy waters—a known minefield. And the LCI was last in the convoy.

It was about 7:03 PM on October 27, 1943. The sun on Navy Day had just dipped below the horizon off Italy's southeast coast. Motor Machinist's Mate Second Class William Patton remembers that there was a light rain—not a storm, just a light drizzle.

Acting as the lookout, Seaman 1st Class Clyde H. Roberson (637 65 70) from Atlanta was standing watch within the 40 MM gun turret located at the bow (front) of the LCI(L) 237 as they sailed. His primary job was to keep an eye out for mines in the ship's path ahead. But for reasons that will remain forever unknown, he did not see the floating mine that was about to punish his LCI. The last place Roberson was ever seen was at the bow of the ship at latitude



(Gene Thorp)*

38° 54' N, longitude 17° 24' E.

"[Roberson] couldn't have seen that, nobody could have,"¹ Rodney Quin Nelson affirmed almost 44 years later. Nelson was a "90-day wonder" before becoming the commanding officer of the LCI 237.

Motor Mac Bill Patton was below deck, at rest in his bunk in the darkness, when the explosion happened.

"I didn't hear the blast [but] I was thrown out of my bed down on the deck. [...] There was no power or light. I grabbed a lantern that was there, and got topside as soon as I could."² Patton recalled a bizarre scene he witnessed as he arrived topside.

Located under the anchor winch, at the bow of the ship, there was a manhole cover concealing a storage tank where the crew was storing a variety of supplies and rations for the British Army. When the LCI 237 detonated the mine, the explosion caused the forward anchor cable to rip through a portion of the bow—exactly where the storage tank was located. The manhole didn't stand a chance as it burst open, causing all of the foodstuffs being stored in the tank to fly high up into the air. But as Patton said, "What goes up must come down."³ It rained beef hash and navy beans. He remembers the



The LCI (L) 237 shortly after hitting the mine on Oct 27, 1943. (Navsource.org) Notice the "Sea Bat" emblem on the front of the conning tower. Shortly after the invasion of Sicily, Nelson had an army soldier paint an emblem for his ship that consisted of an alligator with his mouth open, spewing flames with bat wings flying while it skimmed the ocean. When asked where Nelson came up with the idea, he simply said, "Why, there's no idea to it. To the West of Oran (Algeria, North Africa) is a big rock cliff and those sea bats are flying in and out of that rock cliff, so that's where they came from."⁴

debris showered all over several men standing up on the bridge of the conning tower. The men—including Nelson—were covered in beans, lard, beef hash, potatoes, and red paint. The once handsome LCI was now as ugly as an exit wound.

"It blew forty-five feet of that ship just as clean away as you'd take a saw," Nelson remembered. He was thrown up in the air as thoughts flashed through his mind of the impending and inevitable swim he assumed he was going to have to make. Stunned, Nelson landed on his back, unable to stand against the weight of the water that ascended on him at first, but he soon regained his ability to stand once the water subsided.

"Against orders I turned on the search light, and swirled it around to see what in the devil's around the ship, and it was just a mess of destruction, and soldiers out in the water. [...] And one of my sailors, unbeknownst to me, he dove overboard and saved the life of a Black

Watch English sailor. Well, I put him in for an award, and never heard from him, not at all.”⁵

In the middle of that dark, chaotic scene, one LCI sailor did in fact make a swim that night. A young man from Norfolk, Virginia, dove into the treacherous watery graveyard without hesitation to save drowning Royal commandoes. Though it still remains to be confirmed, Bill Patton strongly believes the valiant sailor who had jumped into the water to save the British commando that Nelson referred to was Seaman First Class Joseph Snell (659 13 34).

A few of the nearby ships saw the S.O.S. distress signal by the 237 and decided to come assist the crippled LCI. The first of those that answered the call was a minesweeper that proceeded to evacuate as many of the wounded men as they could. The second ship to come to the 237's aid was the LCI (L) 15.

Many of the wounded suffered from head injuries inflicted while they were in the No. 1 troop compartment, the room adjacent to where the supplies were being stored. According to the LCI (L) 15's Coxswain Harold Marquardt, thirty-seven men were killed in the #1 hold of the 237,⁶ as well as Roberson. Nelson later stated that he remembered around twenty-five to thirty wounded that they were able to retrieve from the water and transfer to a nearby hospital ship. The LCI (L) 192 joined the LCI (L) 15 in lending assistance to the badly damaged LCI 237. Both undertook the task of towing her, stern first, back to Catania, Sicily.

Dozens of men lost their lives aboard the LCI 237 that night within split seconds. They would never again get to witness another sunset, or have the opportunity to embrace their families one last time.

Upon their arrival to Catania, Nelson reflected on having to clean up the remains of the men who had perished from that mine. He said, “We had to use flat nose shovels to shovel them out, you know, dead bodies. [...] And we hosed it down with all kinds of chemicals, but that smell was there for a long spell.”⁷

Toward the end of his interview almost forty-four years later, Nelson spoke of several items that he would've liked to see [the Navy] change. He explained that nothing ever became of the valiant effort by one of his sailors that October



Motor Mac Bill Patton in his uniform of the day in 1943. (Collection of Bill Patton)

night in 1943. He spoke of the unfair treatment most Reserve sailors aboard LCIs received during World War II, hinting that that may have had something to do with why Snell was never recognized for his valiant actions.

“Now here is this sailor, volunteered, jumped overboard, saved this man's life, and it's nothing out of the ordinary, justifying some award. [...] I put this sailor in for an award, and they never honored it, never even responded to it. And, so, I almost (Laughs) come to the conclusion that the regular Navy has one set of values and the Reserves is another. [...] (Snell) saved that man's life and wasn't even ordered to do it, did it on his own.”⁸

Bill Patton mentioned another item that might have contributed to why Joseph Snell was never recognized. Though it remains unconfirmed, Patton remembered a certain



***Bill Patton (right) and fellow shipmate
Fireman Robert Jackson (left) in 1944.
(Collection of Bill Patton)***

instance that happened shortly after the LCI 237 struck the mine that night. He recalls that for reasons unknown, his commanding officer Nelson abandoned ship twice during the incident. Patton speculated that for reasons also unknown and unconfirmed, may have later raised concerns about Nelson's current state of mind and recollections during the chaotic scene. This incident might have also contributed to the higher-ups disregarding Nelson's first-hand accounts and reports he submitted.

Whether it was due unfair treatment, a deliberate attempt to ignore, or another reason all together, one fact remains clear among all the uncertainty. This act of valor purportedly by S1c. Joseph Snell would forever go unrewarded and unrecognized. ■

Rodney Quin Nelson married his wife, Wilma, and eventually had four children—3 girls and a boy. Nelson retired from the Navy in 1949. Nelson passed away in the late 1990s.

Bill Patton currently lives in Temperance, Michigan.

SOURCES:

- * "The Day of Battle: The War in Sicily and Italy, 1943-1944" (Atkinson)
- 1 "An Interview with Rodney Quin Nelson" (p. 13)
Conducted by Charles Johnson (University of Tennessee, 1987)
- 2 Author's interview with Bill Patton (June 15, 2013)
- 3 Author's interview with Bill Patton (June 15, 2013)
- 4 "An Interview with Rodney Quin Nelson" (p. 10)
Conducted by Charles Johnson (University of Tennessee, 1987)
- 5 "An Interview with Rodney Quin Nelson" (p. 14)
Conducted by Charles Johnson (University of Tennessee, 1987)
- 6 "My Experiences while in the Service of the United States Navy," by Harold Marquardt (p. 8)
- 7 "An Interview with Rodney Quin Nelson" (p. 15)
Conducted by Charles Johnson (University of Tennessee, 1987)
- 8 "An Interview with Rodney Quin Nelson" (p. 19)
Conducted by Charles Johnson (University of Tennessee, 1987)



Through Eyes of Faith

(All photos submitted by Mike Gatton)



FOR THE PAST FORTY YEARS, my dad, John L. Gatton, USCG Chief LCI #96, has talked about a church steeple in France. On our recent return to Omaha Beach—Easy Red, we were determined to find that landmark. Seventy years ago, as Flotilla 10 sailed toward the shore on D-Day, the skipper of the #96 ordered the final coordinates. Dad was at the helm and had learned by the experience of other landings to pick a landmark on shore that lined up with the final directions in order to stay true to the intended landing area. On this momentous day those final orders aligned with a church steeple in the village of Ste. Laurent. Some seventy years later, we found that structure built in the 1300's—still intact—still serving as a house of worship—still guiding the faithful home by its cross on top of the steeple. To dad's reassurance, he hadn't imagined it. It was there. It was real.

When you come face to face with some huge obstacle, some daunting problem, something frightening in which the odds are stacked against you, what is your first step? Do you go around it? As kids walking home, if there was a big, mean dog on the route, we would walk blocks around it to get there safely. How about now? Do you still walk around those big, mean dogs?

Some people go over problems—you know the problem is there but you just scratch the surface, gloss over the problem, brush up against it but don't really address it. It's just always there and you minimize the danger. "It's no big deal. I'm fine."

Some people decide to go under it. They bury their heads into the ground and don't even acknowledge it, don't even name it. "If I don't talk about it, maybe it will just go away." But pretty soon the problem suffocates you with its weight.

But, people with eyes of faith go toward the problem. They name the problem, identify the problem, stare that problem right in the eye, and

decide that the only way to conquer this problem and to get to the other side is to go through it. In 2 Corinthians 4, Paul wrote about two ways to live. You can live with blinded eyes that are veiled and are unable to see the glory of God. Or you can live with eyes of faith that walk you through the storms of life. You can believe in God without having faith. Faith is living against the odds. Faith has less to do with what you believe and more to do with how you decide to live. Faith is seeing



The church steeple in Ste. Laurent.



John Gatton standing at the door of the church in Ste. Laurent.

the enemy surround you, the problem overtake you, the crisis overwhelm you, and instead of going around it or over it or under it, you decide to stay true to the course with eyes of faith.

Hebrews 11 teaches about this journey through problems.

The author

describes faith this way: Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. The only way to see things not seen is through eyes of faith. What does this mean? The author gives some examples.

By faith, we understand that the world was formed by God. We never saw it. By faith, Noah built an ark without ever seeing the first drop of water. By faith, Abraham and Sarah left their homeland not seeing where that journey would take them. By faith, Abraham and Sarah believed they would have a son—not seeing any way that was possible. By faith, Abraham was ready to sacrifice his son not seeing another way out. By faith, Isaac and Jacob blessed their sons not seeing the promise. By faith, Joseph saved his people in Egypt from famine, not seeing the hand of God. By faith, Moses led the people out of bondage in Egypt, through the desert and to the Promised Land.

And then the authors, after this long list of people who by faith went through these problems with eyes of faith, not seeing how the story will end, concludes with these words: "By faith these people overthrew kingdoms, ruled with justice, and received what God had promised them. They shut the mouths of lions, quenched the flames of fire and escaped death by the edge of the sword. Their weakness was turned to strength.

They became strong in battle and put whole armies to flight," (Hebrews 11:33-34).

Are there any better words to describe this Greatest Generation than "they overthrew kingdoms, ruled with justice, and received what God had promised them?"

I suppose they could have responded differently. They could have chosen not to sail directly into the battle. Then again, I suppose Abraham and Sarah could have run away from the problem and just said, "No, we are not moving." And Noah could have gone around the problem, built a couple of canoes, and hoped for the best. Perhaps Joseph could have gone over the problem and shrugged, "Why is a famine that will kill the Egyptians my problem?" No doubt Moses could have gone under the problem and been crushed by the thought of going to the Pharaoh and asking him to release his people who had been held in bondage for 450 years. But instead, they went through with eyes of faith. And, so did these Men of the Landing Craft.

In the words of Paul, "There's far more here than meets the eye. The things we see now are here today, gone tomorrow. But the things we can't see now will last forever, (2 Corinthians 4:18, The Message)—even longer than a 1,300 year-old steeple.

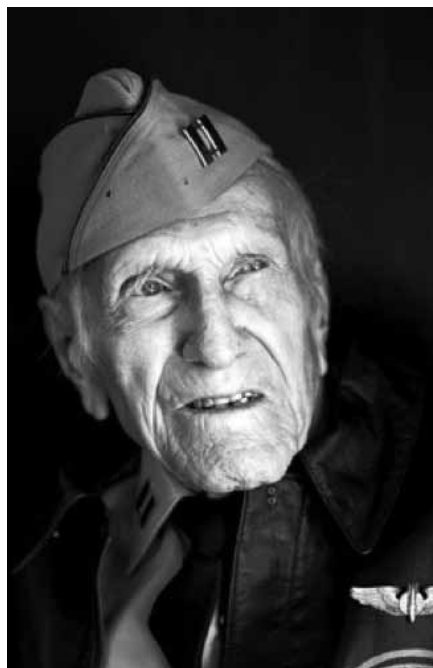
Agape,
Mike



John Cummer in prayer in the Cathedral at Notre Dame.

This Veteran's Day, We Remember...

Other Notable World War II Heroes Lost in 2014



LOUIE ZAMPERINI

January 26, 1917 – July 2, 2014

Louie Zamperini, an Olympic runner in the 1936 Berlin Olympics, became an Army Air Force pilot in WWII flying a B-24 Liberator. After his plane crashed over the Pacific Ocean in May 1943, Louie and two others (one perished) survived 47 days at sea on a raft. After drifting to the Japanese-controlled Marshall Islands, he would be taken as a POW. Death was a part of his daily life as a POW for the two years that followed, as he and other American POWs were subjected to torture and unimaginable pain and suffering. He survived the war and remained unbroken by the enemy. Author Laura Hillenbrand wrote a best-selling book titled, "Unbroken," about Zamperini's life in 2010. Angelina Jolie directed an upcoming film with the same name, adapted from Hillenbrand's book—opening on Christmas Day. (Photos Courtesy of Sally Peterson and "Unbroken," p. 39)



CHESTER NEZ

January 23, 1921 – June 4, 2014

Chester Nez was a Navajo "Code Talker" in the United States Marine Corps during World War II. The secret code conceived, originally by he and 28 others Navajos (3 others later joined), was crucial to winning the war in the Pacific. It was an elaborate code developed from the Navajo language that had no written form, and was kept top secret for decades following WWII—meaning that even after the war ended, the Code Talkers never spoke of their instrumental contribution to American victory against Japan. The Navajo code was the only US military code that was never broken by the Japanese. Nez was the last surviving original Marine Corps "Code Talker." (Photo Courtesy of indiancountry-todaymedianetwork.com)



JACK SCHLEGEL

1923 –2014

Corporal Jack Schlegel was a member of the 508th Infantry Regiment of the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division. At age 19, he parachuted into Normandy on D-Day. Injured, he was later captured by the Germans, and tortured by the Nazi SS. His fluency in the German language helped him survive the Nazis. After returning to Normandy for the D-Day 70th Anniversary ceremony on June 6, 2014, he died five days later at age 90. (Photo Courtesy of Ouest-France/David Ademas - www.ouest-france.fr)

THANKS HAL!

LCI 812 veteran Hal Bleyhl has made the difficult decision to step down from his position as Treasurer of the LCI Association, due to some recent health issues. We want to thank him for his years of service and hard work, and wish him the very best luck in the future. He will be missed dearly as a member of our Board of Directors.

Secretary, Robert Wright Jr., has been appointed as the new Treasurer. Robert has worked hard raising money for the LCI Association selling merchandise of all sorts over the years. We thank Robert for stepping up to the new role and we look forward to a strong and successful future with Robert as Treasurer.



*Hal Bleyhl and Zach Morris
at the Portland Reunion.
(Courtesy Zach Morris)*

A BULLETIN FROM THE EDITOR

- **US LST Association Hires Our Business Manager and "Elsie Item" Publisher—Nehemiah Communications!**
- **2015 Joint Reunion With U.S. LST Association in the Works!**
- **Upcoming "Elsie Item" Deadlines**

Incredible news sailors! U.S. LST Association President Walt Wittholtz has requested our very own, Nehemiah Communications, to handle their business management going forward. I've also been asked and accepted the job of publishing their Association's newsletter, the "LST Scuttlebutt"—soon to be in magazine format as well.

At our recent Board of Directors meeting in Portland it was also decided that a commission of LCI representatives will engage in talks with a commission of representatives from the LST Association to discuss a possible joint 2015 LCI Association Reunion. The location will be either: New Orleans, Louisiana (home of the National WWII Museum) or Baltimore, Maryland (home of the WWII Memorial).



Unless unforeseen or extenuated circumstances prevent a delay in publication, these are the tentative deadlines set for "Elsie Item" issues to come:

- **February Issue:**
Deadline: January 10
- **May Issue:**
Deadline: April 10
- **August Issue:**
Deadline: July 10
- **November/December Issue:**
Deadline: October 20

Stay Tuned to Upcoming Issues For More 2015 LCI Reunion Information!

—Zach

If you have not paid your 2014/15 dues yet this will be your last issue. Also, your year end gifts to the association allow us to continue to help us serve all of our members. If you are "thankful" and can send a year-end gift to the association, it would greatly help. Please make the check payable to the "USS LCI National Association" and send to:

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



The Landing Craft Infantry (L) Model is available now!



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

Member Name _____ USS LCI (____) _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone Number (____) _____

E-mail Address _____



Please read : This is a LCI(L). The Box depicts a Square Conn on a 1-350 hull. The actual model is a Round Conn on a 351 version hull . It has the 5 20mm guns. The ships numbers are incorrect too

Description: This Model was out of Production for 30 years. Many members remember this same model from their younger days. The new owners of the company have released this for the 70th Anniversary of D-Day. This is a 1:160 model, so it is 12 inches long. Simple to paint and assemble. It does require the use of model cement which should be available locally.

LCI Model \$25 each **Quantity** _____ **Amount Paid:** \$ _____

Shipping: **First Model** \$7 **additional models** \$3 each **Amount Paid:** \$ _____

TOTAL AMOUNT PAID: \$ _____

Mail your order form with a Check Payable to the **USS LCI National Assn**

I have copies of the official Pacific camouflage painting patterns if you would like to request one

Contact me directly if you would like to use PayPal for your order, or

Any other Information contact: **Robert E Wright Jr, Secretary**

At: rewrightcpa@gmail.com or 517. 548-1026

Thank You for Supporting the USS LCI National Association!

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 Association Cap

\$ 25 Donation LCI Association Cap WWII _____ (add \$6 shipping total = \$31)

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

LCI Association Clothing

\$ 25 Donation LCI Sweat Shirt (add \$6 shipping total = \$31)

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

\$ 50 Donation LCI Association Polo Shirt (add \$6 shipping total = \$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 total = \$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

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**



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.

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

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

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!

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Attention LCI Veterans!
Want to tell your story?

Zach Morris

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

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MORE GREAT PHOTOS FROM THE PORTLAND REUNION

*Photos contributed by Lynne Flanders
and Zach Morris.*

