

July 2016



Elsie Item

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

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The NW LCI Reunion
April 2016

“The Elsie Item”

Number 94, July 2016

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 interested in the history of LCIs. Published quarterly by the USS LCI National Association. Joe Flynn, Editor. Any material for possible publication should be sent to the Editor, preferably by email (joeglo@msn.com)

Attention LCI Members – We are changing from a fiscal year to calendar year

The USS LCI National Association has moved from a fiscal year (July 1 to June 30) to a calendar year (January 1 to December 31.) Many members have said they prefer the calendar year as it is easier to keep current on subscriptions. But to make this change required the \$20 payment for the rest of this year. That gets you to December 31 of 2016. So annual subscriptions will be payable on or before January 1, 2017. Sorry for any inconvenience, but we hope the calendar year will be simpler.

Pay Subscription Renewals

\$35 Check or money order payable to USS LCI National Association, and send to:

USS LCI National Association

% Robert E. Wright, Jr., Treas.

P.O. Box 407

Howell, MI 48844

(517) 548-2326

For the OnLine Payment options: email our Treasurer: REWRIGHTCPA@GMAIL.com

Checkout the new and improved USS LCI National Association Website

www.usslci.com Back issues of Elsie Item are there too for your enjoyment

www.amphibiousforces.org For information on the LCI 713

“Elsie Item” Notice: The USS LCI National Association is not responsible for the accuracy of articles submitted to the Editor for publication. Time and resources does not permit the ability to check each story, therefore, we rely on the author to research each article.

Message From the President



What a year this has been! There is much news to tell. Our Association is free from the yoke of paying a firm to “manage” our affairs. We are now an organization comprised only of dedicated volunteers. The only thing we out source is to pay a company to publish this newsletter. We are solvent and thriving. The partnership with the Amphibious Forces Memorial Museum (AFMM), LCI 713 is solid as a rock. Old members who had fallen off the chart have returned. People are signing up as new members as we celebrate the 25th Anniversary of our Association. Life in the LCI world is good.

We are planning two national reunions for our Association. The first, organized by our Treasurer Robert Wright and Board Director Michael Pikos will be held in New Orleans, Oct./Nov., 2016 and the second will be held in Portland in April or May, 2017 with full support from the AFMM, LCI 713 team.

I just finished a lengthy article for the Elsie about Flotilla 12, Group 35 and the heroics of their crews at Omaha Beach on D Day. The article is the result of six years of research. This large article will be the bulk of an upcoming Elsie. I began the research by a prompt from Association member Leo Berg who wrote to me and asked “Why hasn’t there ever been anything written about LCI 416? We lost her on D Day.” I interviewed Leo several times before he passed away, December 31, 2013. The story continued to expand and I interviewed many other LCIers and poured over after action reports and personal letters.

The further we get from WWII, the fewer LCIers we have to interview. We have to dig into old chests and boxes in attics for wartime letters and search endlessly on the internet for other military reports and references to LCIs. It is amazing how much information is out there but we have to dig. I do mean “WE”.

I implore all of you LCI veterans to share your stories and ask the Associates to interview and record our LCIers and trap their histories. Your children, nieces, nephews and grandchildren can do this for a school project. I encourage you to submit stories for the Elsie Item or forward your findings to me so that I or others will write the stories for future publication in our newsletter. Please help us preserve the legacy of our LCIers. Share your history.

John France

USS LCI National Association
Membership Vote and Ballot Returns
Set New Course for Association

At the LCI Reunion in Portland in 2014, there was discussion of exploring associating with other amphibious groups or developing a closer relationship with the Armed Forces Memorial Museum (AFMM), home of the LCI (L) 713.

A group led by former President Mike Gatton including ex-Pres. John Cummer, contractor Ken Breivik of Nehemiah and paid editor Zach Morris met with leadership from the LST Association. Things were moving swiftly toward a merger when the Board of Directors requested that the option of working with the 713 to be considered. After a tele-conference with Officers and the Board it was agreed to ask the members to vote for their preference.

That is the origin of the ballot you received in the mail in March. Using a membership roster furnished by Nehemiah, 530 ballots were mailed. In short order 294 ballots were returned, with 178 members electing to affiliate with LCI 713, and 79 opting to merge with the LST Association. Twenty-seven members on the list had sailed west and 10 did not vote due to health problems, abstentions, or the letter was undeliverable.

With the vote of the members 70% in favor of affiliating with the 713, former President and Chaplain Gatton chose to resign, along with paid editor Zach Morris. In Feb. the Board voted to end Nehemiah's contract in May; they chose to bow out in April. Vice President John France then moved up to assume the duties of Association President. Director and Secretary Joe Flynn, was nominated and elected by the Board to fill the Vice President spot. And we are now off and running, sailing with the 713.

J. Flynn, temp Editor

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the Newswire

**Wire Photos and Captions from Press
Releases during WWII**

**This following photo was released to the Public
December 6 1943.**

The landings on Woodlark and Kiriwina Islands occurred simultaneously on June 30 1943. The U.S. Army censors were acting much more diligently as they waited 4 months before releasing this item to the press and also blocked the ships numbers which the U.S. Navy censors had not done.



**Loading supplies by human chain from a
infantry landing craft during the American
occupation of Kirawina island north of New
Guinea**

—U.S. Army Signal Corp Photo--

From Seventh Amphibious Force Report: For current operations in the southwest Pacific area the LCI(L) appears well suited as a personnel carrier. Troops carried during the operation vary from 150 to 188 and no difficulty was experienced in caring for this number enroute. The maneuvering characteristics and shallow draft of these LCI(L)s are desirable characteristics in waters which are infected with coral.



USS LCI(G) 347 at Peleliu, in WWII

A 1997 Letter from W.F. Sorsby, Skipper of the 347 to Elsie Item editor Robert Kirsch.

Dear Bob,

Thank you for the copy of "The Story of a New Ship of War." I read it with interest as I served on the LCI 347, one of the square conns, for many months. It is quite informative, and how nice to have this information compiled for easy reference.

I have two items concerning deaths that you would want if you should ever update your store of information. In the approach to the beach at Saipan to fire rockets, the 347 and others were under heavy mortar fire and had several shrapnel hits. One of our gunners was hit. Later he was transferred to a hospital ship, but we learned later that he had died. I don't remember his first name, [Garland] but his last name was Eddington and he was from Oklahoma. He had married while on leave after boot camp. So it would be fitting that in any updated list of crewmen killed in action that his name would be included.

For my second item I can't furnish names, but here is the story. While on patrol on the east coast of Okinawa on the night of April 3, 1945, the LCI 82 was hit by a suicide boat. My ship, LCI 347, was in the adjacent patrol area and received an SOS by light from the 82. Their ammunition was exploding forward, but we maneuvered to their stern and took aboard most of their survivors as they were in the process of abandoning ship. Then

we also picked up several men we could see who were already in the water. According to the record at that time nine men were unaccounted for. After daylight the wounded were transferred to other ships for further treatment. During that day the 82 was being towed by the LCI 725, but sank. Our Group 7, Flot 3 Commander was aboard the 725 and had us transfer the remaining survivors to that vessel. A copy of the LCI 347 log for that period is enclosed to verify my memory of that action. Someone living in the D.C. area might want to research the 725 log or the Group Commander's files to possibly determine the final count and names of those from the 82 who died. The Commanding Officer of the 82 at that time was John M. Cate, one of the survivors.

Thanks again for a great job in making known the LCI history.

Sincerely,

W.F. Sorsby



W.F. Sorsby, Skipper of the LCI(G)347

**PAYING IT FORWARD:
LCI-471, HARDY, HUDGE,
A SECRET MESSAGE, AND FEDEX**

By J. Wandres, JOC, USNR (Ret.)

It was difficult to know what was going through the mind of Mary Smith, 36, and her brother, James, 25 as they toured LCI-713. All over the ship were signs of work-in-progress: rust being suffocated under Corroseal. Research on dimensions of where a replica galley cook stove would go. Planning for the next Scout troop visit and project. Most of the restoration work was probably lost on Ms. Smith. She turned to her father. "Was Granddad on a landing craft like this," she asked. "It seems smaller than what I thought a warship should be." Thomas Hardy smiled at his daughter's question. Small, yes, he thought, but a warship no less. He and his adult children continued their tour of LCI (L) 713. They climbed the ladder to the foredeck, to the No. 1 gun tub, still missing its 40mm cannon.

Thomas Hardy, a professor at the U.S. Army's Command and Staff College, is the son of the late Ensign David H. Hardy. As a naval reserve officer, David Hardy was communications officer in LCI (G) 471, under the command of Lieutenant (jg) Robert S. Hudgins. Professor Hardy stared at LCI (L) 713's empty gun tub, perhaps silently offering thanks to whichever deity had spared his father's life.

Well, it may not have been the deity on duty that day in February 1945 which saved his life. Actually, Ensign Hardy lived because he was not able to decode a secret radio message sent to LCI (G) 471. The date was 17 February 1945 – a Saturday, if anyone cared. LCI (G) 471 and several others assigned to Task Group 52.4 were lying off Iwo Jima's Red Beach. In two days, on 19 February 1945, the main allied assault force would storm ashore to take back the

Japanese-held rock just 760 miles from downtown Tokyo. The LCI gunboats were ordered to cover the planned invasion beaches. Their objective:

provide cover for UDT swimmers sent in to clear obstacles and mines. As the first group of LCIs closed to within 1,000 yards they came under intense 5-inch gunfire from enemy guns concealed on Mount Suribachi. Unknown to the LCIs the Japanese had the beaches range-marked and their fire was devastating.

After the task unit's flagship, LCI (G) 438, was severely damaged the flag shifted to Lieutenant Hudgins' LCI (G) 471. Ens. Hardy was the ship's communications officer, but his battle station was No. 1 gun. LCI (G) 471's battle report would later state: "1106 relieved LCI 438 and . . . drew heavy enemy fire. 1109 commenced firing all guns . . . received hit (judged to be a 5-inch shell) . . . 1125 headed back into beach. 1128 received hit on forecastle which knocked out No. 1 40mm gun, killing 9 men and wounded 6 others. . . ."

But not David H. Hardy. Minutes earlier Lieutenant Hudgins had directed his communications officer to the radio room to break a secret message that had just come in. The message would give the LCI unit their next orders. Hardy called up to the skipper in the wheelhouse that he could not break the secret message! He did not have the proper decoding key! Minutes later the enemy shell scored a direct hit on the forward No. 1 gun mount. Several LCIs were severely damaged, or sunk. LCI (G) 449 suffered multiple casualties but it's commanding officer, Lieutenant (jg) Rufus Herring, kept firing back. For his bravery Herring was awarded the Medal of Honor. Lieutenant (jg) Hudgins of LCI (G) 471, and the other LCI commanding officers were awarded the Navy Cross. The entire task unit earned a

Presidential Unit Citation. However, the official after-action report of the LCI's participation dryly noted that in future missions, "LCIs should not be ordered to close within range of emplaced superior gunfire."

In a way, Professor Hardy said, by inviting his children to visit a ship like the one their grandfather had served in, he was helping to bring to life the unquestioned bravery of *his* father.

Paying it forward -- via FedEx

Among the LCI models in LCI-713's onboard museum is a model of LCI (G) 471. It had been crafted by the noted model builder Carl Chapelle, and donated to be raffled at an LCI National convention. The lucky ticket holder? Lieutenant Robert S. – and now -- Judge R. Stanley "Hudge" Hudgins. Chapelle agreed to affix 471 to the LCI's hull, and he personally delivered the model to Judge Hudgins, then living and practicing in Virginia Beach. For many years Judge Hudgins kept the model in his home office. Before he died in 2011 "Hudge" asked a long-time friend to keep the ship model safe. The friend, too, died but left the model in care of his sister.

She knew little about the model, its history, or what it represented. What she was sure of, she didn't want to just give it away to some charitable organization. Her daughter searched the Internet and found the Amphibious Forces Memorial Museum -- AFMM. The daughter contacted Gordon Smith (LCI-43), co-founder and honorary chairman of AFMM. Gordon welcomed the offer to include the model in LCI-713's museum.

Mother and daughter packed the model carefully and took it to a FedEx office. The clerk informed that shipping charges from Virginia Beach to Portland, Oregon would be \$360, which was about \$350 more than the

woman could afford. Several people were in line, waiting to ship their packages. Then, a man stepped out of line and said to the FedEx clerk, "I will pay the shipping."

J. Wandres, JOC USNR (Ret.) serves on the AFMM board of directors, and handles the nonprofit organization's public affairs. A freelance writer, his feature articles on naval history have been published in *All Hands*, *Compass*, *Military History*, *Naval History*, *Spectrum Monitor* and *World War II History*. He is the author of *THE ABLEST NAVIGATOR: Lieutenant Paul N. Shulman, USN, Israel's Volunteer Admiral* (Annapolis; Naval Institute Press; 2010)



USS LCI(G) 471



Gordon Smith with Model of 471

PACIFIC N.W. LCI REUNION
PORTLAND OR
ABOARD LCI (L) 713

April 27-29, 2016 was another opportunity to Muster on Station. Gordon and Sharon Smith hosted our gathering, along with Rick Holmes and his wife Sue Cosper.



Wednesday the 27th was meet and greet and make sure you get some of Royal Wetzel's Pennsylvania bologna, with cheese.

Thursday at 0900 the business meeting occurred. National update and new directions were reported. LCI 713 presented an update on ship's status.



Topside is looking good, and much has been accomplished below decks. Many volunteers have been organized by Jerry Gilmartin MMC (ret).

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Liberty call was held in short order and the gang headed to the Crystal Springs Rhododendron gardens.



Gordon Smith and Royal Wetzel



Marilyn Lovell & Sue Cosper w/the 'kids'



Oregon Museum of Science and Industry was a stop for lunch. The submarine Blueback schedule did not meet ours, so back to the hotel.



Supper was at Uncle Vinny's Eatery with way too much food. Dungeness crab, pizza and sandwiches were big enough to feed a teen!



Sue's goodies. Gordon's Navy bean soup.



Friday was the best day with PT 658 and LCI 713 open for inspection. G. Smith at Helm



We were graced by the company of Joy Reed





Phil Reed was presented with a special model of his ship, LCI (L) 35 by the crew of the 713.



Abe Laurenzo, guest speaker and our Chaplain

The evening brought us together for a farewell to Hal Blehyl, Tom Barnett and John Cummer.



Taps.



John France, Sue Cosper, and Richard Wright. National reunion is in the planning stage.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

In Elsie Item newsletter #6, June, 1993, it was stated:

"We received a dues payment of \$100 from a member, saying 'Put me down for anything'. We the Officers didn't know what to do with the money and not wanting to give it back, came up with the idea of offering a LIFE Membership for \$100.

Since then, many members in good faith, paid \$100 for a Life Membership, which included a subscription to the Elsie Item newsletter. Unfortunately, the Regular Members of our Association eventually were too few in number to pay for the publication costs of the Elsie Items for themselves and the many Life Members. Therefore, at the reunion in Mobile, Alabama, 2008, the Board of Directors brought this problem to the membership in attendance and asked Life Members to make a "donation" so that they could continue receiving the Elsie Items in the mail. Many life members responded with donations but many did not. Keep in mind, that a small percentage of the membership attended the reunion. Therefore, our past President had post cards mailed to the Life Members reminding them to submit a donation in order to continue to receive the Elsie Item. The attempt to differentiate dues from donations for Elsie Item subscriptions was confusing. Apparently, the Life Members who failed to respond with a donation for the Elsie Item subscription were not mailed subsequent Elsie Items and those members fell off the chart. The Board recently discovered this problem while attempting to make sense of the mailing lists that we inherited from the paid contractor who previously maintained our Association mailing lists.

The Board is delighted to reunite with the Life Members missing in action. However, the problem persists that the Regular Members are too few in number to support the Life Members. Therefore, we are providing this complimentary issue of the Elsie Item to those Life Members who we have not heard from in years and we ask that they resume paying dues so that they may receive future Elsie Item newsletters. Please send \$20 dues for the remainder of 2016 and pay \$35 dues every January hereafter for yearly dues. Please complete the membership form on page 22 and send dues to USS LCI National Association, Robert Wright Treasurer, PO Box 407, Howell Michigan 48844.

John France, President

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

One who is called to do invocations at matters of meetings and military functions.

AMAZING GRACE

I Chronicles 17: 16,17

Ephesians 2: 4-9

...how sweet the sound, that sav'd a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now am found.

Was blind, but now I see.

This has been repeated over many generations by choirs and sole bag pipers at the highest tower of Edinburgh castle at the end of the annual Military Tattoo.

John Newton was a former slave trader and had a brutal life. His ship was sinking in a terrible storm off the coast of Ireland. He prayed "Lord, have mercy on us" and the cargo shifted, plugging a hole in the ship and it drifted to safety. John started reading the bible, but did not become a believer until 'a considerable time afterwards' in 1748.

In 1764, John was ordained an Anglican priest and wrote 280 Olney hymns. For each prayer meeting held, a new hymn was written. In 1772, Amazing Grace was written. It would take until 1835 before the words were put to the popular tune "New Britain". Other favorites were "Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken", "How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds", "O for a Closer Walk with God" and "There is a Fountain Filled with Blood".

In times of war, toil and trouble, have we not asked God for mercy and saving grace to deliver us? Afterwards have we shown faith and love back to our Creator for all he has done? Do we pray in thankfulness for our food and health and for others? Do we ask God's blessing on our daily lives and request traveling mercies while we are away from home?

We should turn to God daily in patterning our lives, setting the way of life for ourselves and being an example for others. Our nation has turned a cold shoulder on prayer and the Bible- 'Believer's Instructions Before Leaving Earth'. Should we stand idly by and allow this? The Greatest Generation has set a firm foundation for freedom of religion and speech and many other things taken for granted. We should never assume that these freedoms will continue without being actively involved. Acts and faith are required of us to grow our Nation into what our forefathers established. We are many faiths, each to his or her own. However, we should all be focusing on the same God. He made us great and will continue to do so.

Every morning I awake and see and hear and sense and smell and feel my surroundings, I am amazed that I am truly blessed to be an American. We have so much to be thankful for.

We are being told to make America great again.

Righteousness exalts a Nation, but sin is a reproach to any man. America is great because it is good. America will cease to be great if it ceases to be good.

Never forget that we are "One Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all".

Our father's God to Thee, Author of liberty, To Thee we sing. Long may our land be bright, With freedom's holy light, Protect us by Thy might, Great God our King! *Ebenezer*



Abe Laurenzo

In Memoriam

LCI 5

Galileo Maragini

LCI 475

Carl Weisenberg

LCI 646

Walter Howerton

LCI 71 & 74

Carlos Danville

LCI 491

James Lavelle

LCI 654

Joseph DiGirolamo

LCI 78

Neal Collins

LCI 551

J. Vincent McLees

LCI 872

Ralph Keenen

LCI 195

John E. Gellick

LCI 553

Donald Dubrul

LCI 996

Myron W. Hennemuth

LCI 330, 418 & 562

Charles Savary

LCI 558

Charles Gaurino

LCI 1017

Egon Werdleman (Skipper)

LCI 395

Albert Hirschman

LCI 596

Charles Lo Guidice

LCI 1055

Roy Porter

LCI 436

Robert McLain

LCI 1094

Art Jaseau



“Let Your Light Shine On”

The last issue of the Elsie Item included a one-line message to LCI Veterans, “Do not hide your light.” That brought to mind an article I prepared earlier for the Elsie Item.

There, I shared finding a 16-page letter home written by my LCI brother. Since he survived the letter was never sent. He rarely spoke of his time in the Pacific and passed far too young. Armed with the letter, I crashed the LCI reunion in Reno in 2001 to learn more about my brother’s service in WW II. When I asked to join, Tiny Clarkson told me I had to be an LCI Sailor. I told him that the closest I could come was an LCI brother. Tiny relented and said, “Well, I guess we could give you a Memorial Membership.” Close enough.

Once in, I left a request for help on the USS LCI National Assoc. website. First to answer the call was Hank Henderson, 765, who shared a wealth of information and put me in contact with Vaughn Hampton, 450, who added photos, stories and other sources.

Things started to fall into place. By then I learned that my brother’s LCI(G) 347 was in Flotilla 3, Group 7 and found Jimmie Prime, 373, who gave me a copy of his memoir, “Because I Cannot Forget.” Jimmie also introduced me to Jim McCarthy, 685, of the LCI Board of Directors and California Director. Carl Chappel, 451, was at Reno with four of his scale model LCI’s and he walked me through the different configurations. And others were to answer my questions and fill in the blanks.

Since then I contacted 13 of my brother’s shipmates who have shared information, stories, and photos. They helped fill in the blanks in my brother’s letter. Now I was beginning to understand the role of LCI’s in the War, and the hell they went through. Based on this information I compiled a report on 347 and its crew in WWII.

Each of my brothers and sisters and my

brother’s seven children received a copy. Since five of the seven children are teachers, I am confident that this information will be passed on the future generations. And I hope that one of them, or one of the grandchildren will pick up this information and go into the next round of research. But I hope they will do it soon, or they may not have the privilege of talking to the LCI sailors who served during WW II.

So now it is up to you Elsie Item sailors. Eighty percent of Americans say they are going to write a book – only two percent do. You should be among the two percent, because you have a story that no one else has. Your story is essential to educate those who follow you but who are ignorant of the War that made their freedom and way of life possible.

My brother’s story has now been recorded, belatedly, and not nearly as well as he could have told it. But what about your stories? Have they been told? Will they be told? Or will you take them with you when you go?

Those stories should be recorded for future generations. Some of you may say, “I’m not much of a writer.” Well, don’t worry about your writing ability, it’s the content that’s important, not the style. But one way or another, pass it on; there is no substitute for your first-hand experience and your first hand observations.

So as the book reviewer’s would say, “We await your next work with interest.” And as I would say, “Let your Light Shine On.”

By Joe Flynn

Note: From the Editor

Any LCI Sailors, Associates, and relatives seeking to record LCI history, feel free to contact the officers or directors listed in this issue. We don’t have all the answers, but our historians have completed extensive interviews and research; other members have also delved into the history. They can help you get started and save you time. As they say, “Just do it!”



HE TOOK OFF LIKE A RUPTURED DUCK Sgt. Doug 21 Dec 2011

The Honorable Service patch was issued 'for service subsequent to September 8, 1939' and used until December 1946.

It was worn on the left breast of the uniform after separation. Veterans were allowed to wear their uniform for 1 month after discharge. This was the only way to tell that they were not AWOL or Absent-With-Out-Leave for sailors, or deserters.

Anthony de Francisci designed the award, patterned after the Roman legion eagle standard inside a wreath. It is composed of a chief and 13 vertical stripes. The button version was smaller and could be worn on 'civies' and sometimes was many years later to show that veterans had served.

The eagle faced to its right, the same direction inductees were told to turn their head and cough for the Doctor to check for rupture/hernia. The chest and wings gave the appearance of a duck.

In a hurry to take 'space available' transports to get home after discharge, veterans were known to 'take off like a ruptured duck'.

*When it's time to go and we all must die
The Lord and the Devil for our souls will vie
So please, old Satan please pass us by
Cause we served your time on an LCI.*

Jim McCarthy LCI 685

"Brit" Soldier on LCI

On the 5th of September, 1943 we cast off in the LCI (L) 43 from Bizerte, North Africa carrying 170 troops of the British 8th Army with all of their gear, food and supplies. These lads were fresh off the North Africa Desert of Libya. They had been fighting the famous German General Rommel and his troops and tanks for over four years.

Their rations had been tea, bully beef, tea, biscuits, tea, cheese, tea and sand. Not one ounce of fat could be seen in the entire group. When they clomped down the streets of Tunis or Bizerte with their arms swinging, you stepped aside. My oh my, they were a real tough bunch!

We were enroute to Castellamere, Sicily. The weather was pure nasty. Rough would be too mild a word. The crests of the waves were swept sideways. When looking at the ship abeam from our conning tower, it would disappear in a trough of water and then it would be my ship's turn for the bow to plunge into the trough of a wave and shudder and vibrate the entire ship as it struggled to gain the crest of the next wave.

All of the convoy's decks were bare and the only person to be seen was an occasional lookout such as myself appearing as a dot on the top of a conning tower.

For some reason I had to go to the locker in the very bow of the ship. This was accomplished by grasping the available hand rails and going hand over hand to keep from being either blown or swept overboard. This simply had become a "way of life" after being at sea so long in the smallest Navy ship to cross the ocean unassisted. To make matters worse, the ship had no keel and was flat bottomed.

On my return I came upon a small Limey Soldier who was grasping the rails of the Conning Tower on either side of him and facing outward. He was weaving and bobbing as the ship did its gyrations.

As I passed over him by grasping the same hand rails, he shouted something. Of course, the wind blew his words away and I leaned back and shouted into his ear, "Wha'd you say?"

His response was, "I say, it is a bit morbid, isn't it!"

True Story ! Gordon Smith LCI #43

An Invitation to Visit the: WWII THE NATIONAL WWII MUSEUM NEW ORLEANS

My invitation came last year in the mail inviting me to attend the Grand Opening of the newest exhibit of the National WWII Museum's, **The Road to Tokyo: Pacific Theater Galleries**. The date was December 10-11 2015. Initially I was inclined to send my regrets, thinking that this was just another fund raiser for the museum, but later, I decided that it was really the time to make my first visit to the quickly growing institution which is currently ranked as the # 3 destination museum in the country.

picture. Over the next 15 years the added 4 additional pavilions that house historical exhibits, on-site restoration work, a restaurant with a period dinner theater.

The museum singular focus is the contributions of the generation of men and woman and the events that were World War II Four separate buildings house the various collections. The Louisiana Memorial Pavilion exhibits tell the stories of dozens of amphibious landings. Campaigns of Courage European and Pacific Theaters are the Museum's newest pavilion and tells the story of American service members abroad and how they overcame unprecedented challenges on multiple fronts to win victory in World War II. There are 2 movie theaters , that show special documentaries.



Many of the members of the LCI Association still remember when the museum opened under the name of the National D-Day Museum. The USS LCI National Association was one of the organizations that provided funds to the museum and some of our members have great memories of attending the grand opening in the year 2000 which was celebrated by the whole City on New Orleans. The museum started with a single exhibit hall which is the building in the lower left in the

The US Freedom Pavilion by Boeing show the contributions of the men and woman on the home front and samples of the production of the Arsenal of Democracy

The museum original building houses a wall plaque listing the major donors. This is where we see our LCI Association contribution recognized.

USS LCI National Association

2016 USS LCI National Association Reunion
October 19–23, 2016
Marriott Residence Inn Downtown
New Orleans, Louisiana

Wednesday, October 19, 2016

Early arrival for those who wish to see the many sights and sounds of New Orleans

Thursday, October 20, 2016

Arrivals and Hotel Check-in

3:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Welcome and Reunion Registration
Hospitality Room - Meet and Greet
(*Dinner on Your Own*) *

Friday, October 21, 2016

6:30 AM – 9:30 AM Complimentary Breakfast at the Hotel

9:30 AM – 3:30 PM

The National WWII Museum: A visit to experience the exhibits of the National WWII Museum, including the Campaigns of Courage European and Pacific Theater pavilions, *D-day* documentary movies, and the Tom Hanks *Beyond All Boundaries*. (*Free Admission for WWII Vets*) (*Lunch on your own at Museum*).

6:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Steamboat Natchez- Enjoy a Dinner Cruise while listening to jazz music as you travel on the Mississippi River aboard this Stern Wheeler.

Saturday, October 22, 2016

7:00 AM – 10:00 AM Complimentary Breakfast at the Hotel

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM Hospitality Room Open for Attendees

No activities scheduled at this time – Those with WWII Museum tickets can use them for a return visit. (Transportation and Lunch on your own)

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM - Memorial Service

2:00 PM - 3:30 PM - Business Meeting

5:00 PM - 9:00 PM - Cash Bar and Closing Banquet

Sunday, October 23, 2016

7:00 AM – 10:00 AM Complimentary Breakfast at the Hotel – Farewells

*There are many dining options within 0.5 miles of the Hotel (most are within 0.2 miles)

Marriott Residence Inn Downtown • 345 St. Joseph St • New Orleans, LA 70130
Reservations: (504) 522-1300 • Toll Free (800) 331-3131
<http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/msyri-residence-inn-new-orleans-downtown/>

Marriott Residence Inn Downtown: This extended-stay hotel is a 3 minutes' walk from the *National WWII Museum* and a mile from the *Aquarium of the Americas*, *Harrah's Casino* and other attractions. There are many restaurants within a short walking distance of the hotel. The rooms come with fully equipped kitchens and free WiFi, as well as separate living areas with pull-out sofas, desks and flat-screen TVs. The Hotel is completely accessible. There is a complimentary hot breakfast as well as a grocery delivery service and a 24-hour convenience store.

Getting to the Hotel from Louis Armstrong International Airport (MSY)

The Hotel does not provide shuttle service. Ground Transportation located on the lower level, outside the baggage claim area is available from the airport to the hotel. Attendees can take either the *Airport Shuttle* (\$44.00 per person round trip or \$24.00 per person one way). Taxi rides cost \$36.00 from the airport to the Central Business District (CBD) for up to two (2) passengers. For three (3) or more passengers, the fare will be \$15.00 per passenger. Taxis are required to accept credit card payments.

Room Reservation Information: Call the Residence Inn Downtown to make your reservations (504) 522-1300 or toll free (800) 331-3131. Attendees are encouraged to make room reservations no later than **September 5, 2016**. You may cancel your reservation for no charge until 3 days before your arrival. When making your reservation, you must indicate that you are attending the ***“USS LCI National Association Reunion”*** to get the special room rate.

Reservations can also be made online at:

<http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/msyri-residence-inn-new-orleans-downtown/>

Please Note: Accessible Rooms are only available in the one-bedroom units

- ☐ One Bedroom (sleeps 4) \$129.00 + tax/fees = \$150.32 per night
- ☐ Two Bedroom (sleeps 6) \$242.00 + tax/fees = \$281.12 per night (\$140.56 each for couples sharing cost)

USS LCI National Association Reunion Registration and Event Selection

Mail Completed Registration Form and Event Selections to:

Robert E. Wright, Jr. • Treasurer • USS LCI National Association • P.O. Box 407 • Howell MI 48844

Name: _____ LCI Vet: ☐ Yes ☐ No LCI Number: _____

(Please Print)

Address _____ City _____ State _____

Phone: _____ Cell _____ Email: _____

Name(s) of Person(s) Sharing Room With You _____

EVENT ESTIMATED* COSTS

Please note that no payment is required at this time. We will send an Invoice after the final costs have been negotiated with the vendors. Payment will be expected upon receipt of the invoice.

| Planned Events for Attendees | Cost | | # of Persons | Total |
|--|---------|---|--------------|-------|
| Registration Fee | \$20.00 | X | | \$ |
| Friday - National WW II Museum (WW II Vet)** Free admission/Transportation (Two Day Ticket) | \$20.00 | X | | \$ |
| Friday - National WWII Museum (non WWII Vet) Admission Fee/Transportation (Two Day Ticket) | \$50.00 | X | | \$ |
| Friday - Steamboat Natchez Dinner Cruise with Jazz Music | \$95.00 | X | | \$ |
| Saturday - Banquet | \$50.00 | X | | \$ |
| Total | | | | \$ |

Event Descriptions

The National WW II Museum

The National WWII Museum tells the story of the American Experience in *the war that changed the world*—why it was fought, how it was won, and what it means today—so that all generations will understand the price of freedom and be inspired by what they learn. During your visit you will have the opportunity to view the Special Exhibit: ***Tom Lea: LIFE and WWII***, view ***Beyond All Boundaries***, the 4D experience narrated by Tom Hanks, and explore the European and Pacific Theater pavilions. Relax for lunch in the American Sector Restaurant & Bar.

Steamboat Natchez

Take a river excursion into the heart of the signature culture and lifestyle of New Orleans and Louisiana as you step aboard the STEAMBOAT NATCHEZ and share our heritage and hospitality as you cruise up and down the mighty Mississippi River. The sounds of jazz will fill the air as our cocktail waitresses serve libations from the bars. On board you will enjoy wonderful New Orleans cuisine prepared on board by our chef and his staff and served by our staff of food service professionals.

REMEMBER TO MAKE RESERVATIONS AT THE HOTEL BY SEPTEMBER 5, 2016

Reservations: (504) 522-1300 • Toll Free (800) 331-3131

**2016 USS LCI National Association Reunion • Marriott Residence Inn Downtown
October 19-23, 2016**

Financial Report of the USS LCI National Association Inc.

We are publishing the Financial Results of the LCI Association Operations for the period of June 2012 thru May 2016. During these years, the expenses of the LCI Association to publish the Elsie Item Magazine, maintain the USSLCI.Org website and for the expenses of administration have averaged \$2,261 per month. While the cost of everything has gone up, the LCI Association had been able to make reductions in these areas that have enabled us to keep this amount consistent. As expected there has been a natural decline in our WWII veteran members. This has led to a related decrease in receipts of dues and paid subscription for the ELSIE ITEM. Fortunately, Generous Cash Donations and the purchase of LCI Branded Products by our members, have allowed the LCI Association to remain viable during this time. In April of 2016 the Association's Executive Board made a number of decisions necessary to stabilize the finances of the USS LCI National Association. This included termination of the administrative services of Nehemiah Communications, and obtaining a new publisher of The ELSIE ITEM. The board estimates that these changes will reduce our expenditures by over \$1,200 per month and bring them in line with our current cash receipts.

Robert E Wright Jr., Treasurer

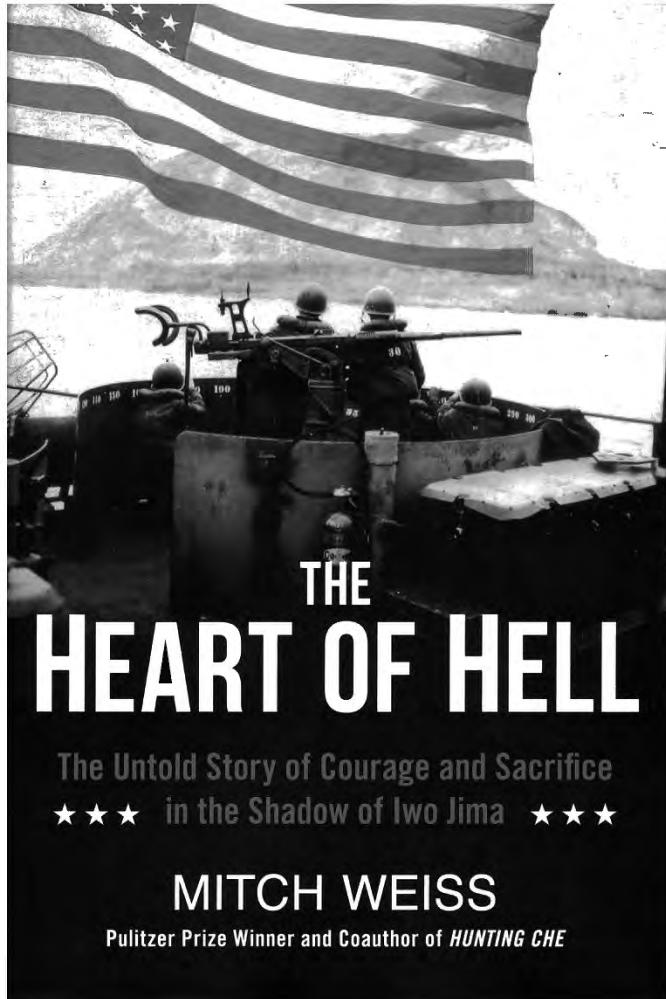
USS LCI National Association, Inc Statement of Asset and Equity

| | May 31, 2013 | May 31, 2014 | May 31, 2015 | May 31, 2016 |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| ASSETS | | | | |
| Current Assets | | | | |
| Total Checking/Savings | 19,944 | 26,260 | 14,777 | \$ 8,878 |
| Accounts Receivable | - | 100 | 55 | - |
| Total Current Assets | 19,944 | 26,360 | 14,832 | 8,878 |
| TOTAL ASSETS | 19,944 | 26,360 | 14,832 | 8,878 |
| LIABILITIES & EQUITY | | | | |
| Equity | | | | |
| Opening Equity | 24,642 | 19,944 | 26,360 | 14,832 |
| Net Receipts - Expenditures | (4,698) | 6,416 | (11,528) | (5,954) |
| Ending Equity | 19,944 | 26,360 | 14,832 | 8,878 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY | 19,944 | 26,360 | 14,832 | 8,878 |

Statement of Revenue & Expenditures

| | Year Jun 2012 - May 2013 | Year Jun 2013 - May 2014 | Year Jun 2014 - May 2015 | Year Jun 2015 - May 2016 |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Ordinary Income/Expense | | | | |
| Income | | | | |
| Donations & Misc | 4,387 | 9,958 | 4,499 | 8,760.00 |
| Investment Income | 89 | 15 | 1 | - |
| LCI Products (Net of Costs) | 2,869 | 3,526 | 2,282 | 1,303.00 |
| 2015 Reunion | | | | (419.00) |
| Dues & ELSIE Subscriptions | 16,478 | 20,893 | 5,740 | 12,400.00 |
| Total Income | 23,823 | 34,392 | 12,522 | 22,044.00 |
| Expenses | | | | |
| ELSIE ITEM Publication | 11,253 | 13,715 | 11,332 | 10,943.00 |
| Website | 1,260 | 690 | 560 | 5,407.00 |
| Administration | 16,008 | 13,571 | 12,158 | 11,648.00 |
| Total Expense | 28,521 | 27,976 | 24,050 | 27,998 |
| Net Income | (4,698) | 6,416 | (11,528) | (5,954) |
| Average Monthly Receipts | 1,985 | 2,866 | 1,043 | 1,837 |
| Average Monthly Expenses | 2,377 | 2,331 | 2,004 | 2,333 |
| Donations of Cash & LCI Products | 7,256 | 13,484 | 6,781 | 10,063 |
| % of Revenue | 30.5% | 39.2% | 54.2% | 45.6% |

A Story of Men who went to War and the Families who waited for them back Home



Dennis Blocker the USS LCI National Assn Pacific Theater Historian, spent 15 years researching the story of his grandfather Cliff Lemke and the USS LCI(G) 449, which was part of LCI(G) Group 8, Flotilla 3 and the events surrounded it at Iwo Jima in February 1945. Dennis's personal research revealed a fascinating, tragic and unforgettable story about his grandfather's ship and shipmates which has resulted in this the book written by Pulitzer Prize winning author **Mitch Weiss**

"I am so thankful for his hard work, diligence. patience with me, and attention to detail. The families of the 449 will be proud of his work. I know I am" - Dennis Blocker

"A tremendous insight into the lives of the men and their experiences aboard an LCI gunboat during World War II in the Pacific"

- Robert Wright, USS LCI National Association Treasurer

Order your copy today from the USS LCI Association
Delivered to your door including postage only \$30.00

Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

USS LCI National Association Annual Membership Renewal

-----USS LCI Veteran Information-----

Name _____ Birthdate _____

USS LCI (____) _____ Your Final Rank or Rating _____

(X if New ____) Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____ Email _____ @ _____

-----Other Member Information-----

Name _____ Birthdate _____

LCI Veteran Name: _____ USS LCI (____) _____

Or other Armed Forces Branch _____ Final Rank or Rating _____

(X if New ____) Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____ Email _____ @ _____

I would like to make a Donation to the USS LCI Assn of \$ _____

Membership Including the ELSIE ITEM SUBSCRIPTION

June 2016 to December 2016 **Next 3 Issues** \$20 _____

(optional) June 2016 to December 2017 **Next 7 Issues** \$55 _____

I am also purchasing a copy of The Heart of Hell (from other side) \$30 _____

Make Checks Payable to: USS LCI National Association Total _____

Mail to: USSLCI National Association

Robert Wright Treasurer

PO Box 407

Howell, MI 48844-0407

Your Officers and Board of Directors

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

Officers

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President

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Vice President,
Secretary & California Director
Brother of LaVerne C. Flynn,
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Robert E. Wright, Jr.

Treasurer
Son of Robert E. Wright, WWII,
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Abe Laurenzo

Chaplain
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& LCI(L) 47
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(see above)

Dennis Blocker

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Attention LCI Veterans and Associates:

Want to tell your story? Write or email Joe Flynn (See Contact Information Above).

USS LCI NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, INC.

C/O Robert E. Wright, Jr. Treasurer

P.O. Box 407

Howell, MI 48844-0407



“On Watch” This 2007 sculpture of a Sailor commemorates the World War II U.S. Naval Amphibious Training Base in Solomons, Maryland where over 68,000 servicemen, including LCI sailors, were trained for amphibious landings. The USS LCI Association contributed to creation of this monument.