



# Elsie Item

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

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## Inside this issue...

- Memories of *LCI(G) 41*
- Vaughn Brown's LCI career
- May 3-5 Reunion Announcement and Details

**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, to any past or current member of the U.S. Armed Forces, and to anyone interested in the history of LCIs. Any material for possible publication should be sent to Jeff Veesenmeyer, Editor by email (JeffreyMktg@gmail.com), or postal mail to the address listed below.

**We are always looking for stories and memories of your LCI service.** Although we primarily are interested in your LCI experiences, we are also interested in the circumstances leading up to your entry into the Navy and the impact that your WWII experiences have had on your postwar life. General guidance on sharing your story can be downloaded from the Association website: <http://usslci.org/share-your-story/>.

*Stories/ Letters*

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**Cover Photo:** Photo taken after WWII, in San Diego Bay, early 1946.

Visit our Website: [www.usslci.org](http://www.usslci.org) for additional information to the USS LCI National Association.  
You’ll also find all past issues of the “Elsie Item” for your reading enjoyment.

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- For AFMM visit: <https://www.facebook.com/LCI713/>

For information related to the LCI(L) 713 visit: [www.amphibiousforces.org](http://www.amphibiousforces.org)

**“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 do not permit the ability to check each story, therefore, we rely on the author to research each article.

## Some Observations from Officers Country by Robert Wright

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This is the first issue of the New Year 2019 and the 104<sup>th</sup> issue of the ELSIE ITEM. Most of you were serving during the War. The remaining readers are the family and friends who are trying to get a better understanding of what your experiences were, or that of their LCI Veteran. With each issue we attempt to cover many subject areas to provide interesting and relevant information to all of our various readers.

Every now and then, we receive a response from a member that confirms that we are accomplishing something worthwhile. Recent letters sent to me with their dues renewal stated “This is the only magazine that he reads any longer”. Another, more sadly noted that when his dad died, “the latest ELSIE was on the bed stand beside him”, and that he never knew how important being part of the USS LCI National Association was to him.

More recently we have been fielding questions from grandchildren who are researching their family’s histories. They have discovered that their grandfathers were crew members on Landing Craft Infantry during World War II. They want to know if we can provide any information about what Grandpa did during the War.

In the early 1950’s there was a TV series called the Naked City. It concluded with the dialogue, “*There are eight million stories in the Naked City; this has been one of them*”. There were over 10 million men who were in World War II. That means that there were over 10 million personal stories to tell after the war. We historians and writers have only been able to capture a very small percentage of those experiences and save them for the current and future generations. I continue to plead with the LCI veterans, while they are still able, find a way to record your thoughts, feelings and experiences about your participation in “Mankind’s Greatest Endeavour.” Please send them to the Association. If you did send them to us at any time prior to 2017, please resend them to John France. (Address on back cover) Almost all of those were lost by the previous publisher.

For those of you who listen to these tales, take the time to write it down, clarify things that you don’t understand. Ask for more details! I don’t know how many times that I have heard, “Dad use to tell us these stories about when he was in the Navy, but I never really paid enough attention to what he was saying.” “Now I wish that I had.”

**A Picture May Tell a Hundred Stories** – our cover photo shows a group of LCI’s in a nest. Each one had a story. Every sailor who manned them had many experiences before the war ended. A few of these are included in this issue. I wish to apologize to the following members who I did not have the opportunity to hear their story. LCI(FF)-679, Charles Johnson, LCI(G)(M)-638, Bryon Drew, John Healy and Boyd Hedrick, and LCI(G)-455, William Armstrong. I hope to speak with you in the coming months.



## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER ON TIME IN 2019

NASB: James 4:14,15; John 1:12; II Cor 6:2;  
Prov 27:1; I Tim 6:17; I Cor 2:9; Isaiah 64:4;  
Heb 4:13 Amplified version Ephesians 5:15-17

We all have the same amount of time each day, how we use that time defines how we live life. It is good to make short term and long-term plans for success in business or personal life. We plan and trust our goals will be met.

During my career as a Purchasing Manager for the US Dept. of Defense, my division was subjected to "time and motion" studies to determine the efficiency and relative productivity of my division. I am not suggesting a formal study for our personal life. However, as I read and study my Bible, I am reminded of the importance of time and how quickly it passes. I am now in my 94<sup>th</sup> year and it seems to have flown by. Take note of James 4:14,15. "What is your life? It is like a vapor that appears for a little while and vanishes away." The brevity of time is emphasized in this scripture. Therefore, as verse 15 reads, we should say, if the Lord wills, we will do this or that. Considering what we stated above, let us see what the great Apostle Paul writes in his letter to the Ephesians 5:15-17 "Look carefully how you walk, live purposefully and worthwhile, and accurately, not as the unwise or witless but as wise intelligent people making most of the time, buying up each opportunity because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be vague, thoughtless and foolish, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." Words like these, grab me and maybe an alarm goes off within you also. We sense a waste of time and energy. Perhaps the time slipped by with an opportunity while I was day dreaming. Verse 14 just before these quotes reads "Wake up o sleeper." We say "Get with it man, etc." That's the wake-up call to the time wasted as he drifted thru life. Someone said, "There may be a tendency to have time nagging us rather than our managing it", and just drifting along hoping for the best.

The words of the Apostle quoted above did not come from a book on time management. They come from the book of books-the Bible.

You may remember the old song "Time waits for no one, it Passes You By". In this New Year 2019 we should use some of the time to be with family and friends, and to help others. The resolution should be the oath. Some of us learned as Boy Scouts "On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and country and to obey the Scout Law, to help others at all time, to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake and morally straight." That is a tall order for anyone to keep without the help of God, especially to "obey the Scout Laws" which say "A scout is helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent." I learned those words as a 12-year old and never forgot them in my youth, my military life and to this day. Except for God's grace, mercy and wisdom how does one tap into this power perform? The Bible says in John 1:12 "As many as receive Him (Jesus) to them He gives the power to be called children of God, to those who believe on his name---Who are born of God." Apart from God's power we cannot begin to keep that stated in the Scout Oath and Laws, but the Bible teaches that God gives those who believe His Holy Spirit who enables us to do so and please him. With this new life comes power to fulfill our commitment to do what we resolve in 2019. And to do what was seemingly impossible and difficult before.

It is important to order our lives intelligently using our time to a good life for us and our loved ones; but preparation for our eternal life should be of immediate interest. The Bible tells us "Now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation." II Cor 6:2.

We have time now, but we don't know about tomorrow. Solomon said in Prov 27:1 "Do not boast about tomorrow for you do not know what a day will bring forth." James echoes the same truth when he says, "Life is a vapor that quickly vanishes."

God wants us to enjoy our time and has given us the simple formula in his word-the Bible. He isn't in heaven ready to rain on our parade.

Obedience to what he has laid out in the Bible will give us the best possible life here and in the hereafter.

Take a good look at what God has given us. The Apostle Paul in I Tim 6:17 states "God has freely given us all things to enjoy." His is the giver of all good gifts. If the beauty we see around us in so enthralling just think of the surpassing beauty prepared by God for those who love Him. The Bible says in I Cor 2:9; Isaiah 64:4 "It is written, eye has not seen, nor ear heard neither have entered the heart of man the things which God has prepared for them that love Him. There is reward beyond our comprehension at the end of God's "time and motion study" for obedience to his will.

Heb 4:13 remind us "There is no creation hiding from his sight; But all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with Him with whom we have to do."

In a book by Charles Swindell he relates a simple formula presented to Charles Schwab, President of the Bethlehem Steel Corporation years ago. In answer to Schwab's request "show me how I can get more things done with my time." His consultant, Ivy Lee, said

"Make a list of the most important things you want to accomplish. Start with #1 till that is done, then recheck your priorities and start with #2 and 3. Make this a practice each working day. Pass it on to those under you. Try it as long as you like, then send me a check for what you think it is worth." After trying that for several weeks, Schwab sent him a check for \$25,000. A simple formula, but very useful in our business or personal life. However, don't send me a check. I stole the idea from those named above.

*Ebenezer* (I Samuel 7:12)

RM-1/C Abe Lorenzo LCI 47, 409



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## In Memoriam

LCI 12  
Frank Symosek  
LCI 27  
Howard Simpson  
LCI 64  
John "Joe" Rounsaville  
LCI 93  
Robert McCrory  
HMS 135  
John Boe  
LCI 322  
James T. Sweat Jr.  
LCI 334  
Cleland W. Popke  
LCI 404  
Bobby Dean Livingston  
LCI 414  
Roland Harris  
LCI 451  
Trusten Wadsworth  
LCI 541  
Walter Berg  
LCI 560  
Rolland "Ro" Harrison  
LCI 626  
R. Manning Lignon  
LCI 756  
William "Bill" Simmons  
LCI 872  
Ted Spellicy  
LCI 1000  
Arvid Kelander  
LCI 1054  
John "Jocko" Ulseth  
LCI Flot 6 Group 17  
James Alvie Carnes

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# Gator Gossip

By Jeff Veesenmeyer - Editor

## Letter to the Editor from Charlie Ritz:

Hi Jeff,

*I just saw the article online ("Skipper of LCI(R) 1024" Dec. 2018), and what a tour de force piece of journalism! My dad would be proud! Thanks a bunch... and let me know if you ever need a favor from across the pond.*

*Charlie Ritz (son of LCDR Edward Ritz)*

The skipper and crew of *LCI(R) 1024* were featured in our December 2018 issue of *Elsie Item*. This note was received from his son Charlie Ritz who teaches in Japan.

## Website comment from Sharon Evanko:

*My grandfather, Herbert Kaplan, before he passed told my husband a story of him being in Iwo Jima on LCI 474. My grandfather passed away when my daughter was in Kindergarten. She is now doing a report on him in her 8th grade. Any information would be greatly appreciated. Thank you so much.*

Dear Sharon Evanko: Thank you for your comment to the [LCI \(G\) 474 at Iwo Jima](#) post on the USS LCI National Association website [usslci.org](http://usslci.org). I have attached several items pertaining to the *LCI 474* from our historical files that may help your daughter in her report. For a good account of the Landing Craft Infantry (LCIs) in action at Iwo Jima, I also recommend the book "The Heart of Hell" by Mitch Weiss that adds context to the Battle.

Stan Galik - Webmaster [www.usslci.org](http://www.usslci.org)

## Website Comment from Thomas Hedderick:

*"My father was the radioman on the LCI 70 and was the sailor that stayed on board as they towed it back. For his efforts he received the Navy & Marine Corps Commendation medal. It was Charles G. (Rick) Hedderick radioman 2nd class. Navsource has a photo of the torpedo and crew."*

Hi Thomas: Thank you for visiting the [www.usslci.org](http://www.usslci.org) website. We posted your comment pertaining to your father on the site. As you know the *LCI 70* saw a lot of action during WW II and we have photos of the crew and ship including the damage done by the torpedo and kamikaze attack. Aside from the photo on Navsource, we do not have a photo of your father.

Stan Galik – Webmaster

## Website comment from Cleland Popke's family:

*Wow, my wife's grandfather was serving on LCI 334 mentioned in this article (On the Fourth They Fought Back). I wish he had told us more while he was still alive. He passed away 25 January 2019.*

**CORRECTION:** Harry Ritzel *LCI(R) 341* called to let me know there were a couple of hull number typos in Issue #103 September 2018. On page 22 the *LCI(R) 77* and *LCI(R) 347* were incorrect. They should have been *LCI(R) 71* and *LCI(R) 341*.

We look forward to hearing from you too.

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# Friends in High Places

*By Joe Flynn*

President George H.W. Bush was known for his many friends from all walks of life. At his funeral many commented on his easy comfort with all the people he met. And all made a point of honoring his service as a Navy pilot in WW II in the Pacific. At 20 years old, he was the youngest Navy pilot in the War. His plane was shot down twice but he survived to complete 58 combat missions. It was this military experience that solidified his resolve to continue to serve our country.

Although I never had the opportunity to meet or know the President, I was fortunate to have a good friend who did. Emile J. Roy, Cook on the LCI(G) 347 in the Pacific knew the President well and was listed among his friends whom he never forgot. Emile was one of the crewmembers who had served with my brother on the 347. In an earlier Elsie Item (#95, Nov. 2016) I wrote that after the War Emile became a Barber in Sanford, ME, located next to Kennebunkport, home of the Bush family. And, the Pres. was one of Emile's customers, and a good friend.

At the 2001 Reunion in Reno, I missed a chance to meet Emile and asked what happened. He explained that he was receiving a State Award for his volunteer work with the Salvation Army, and Pres. Bush was there to present the award. Truly a command performance. We did later meet Emile in person at the LCI reunion in Mobile, AL and enjoyed his great sense of humor

On one occasion when Emile had been invited to the Bush compound, Barbara Bush told him, "Next time, bring your wife. I want to meet her." So, at the next invitation, Emile

and his wife drove in, were ushered through the Secret Service security, and pulled up to the house. But Emile was aghast, there were no other cars in the parking area. He thought he had misread the invitation and arrived early. Then the Pres. and Mrs. Bush came out of the house to greet them. Emile apologized for being early, but Barbara said, "You are not early, you are on time. We wanted you to come early so we could talk before all the rest of the people get here."

Emile also received an invitation to the opening of the Bush Presidential Library in Texas and later attended the commissioning of the George H.W. Bush aircraft carrier CVN 77. Emile was a humble man not prone to exaggeration, but he must have had very good seats at the commissioning. He later told me, "I was seated with Congressmen and Senators. I was amazed."

When Emile's wife passed the President and Mrs. Bush attended her funeral. The President told Emile, "We stayed in the back because we did not want to be a distraction." True friends.



*Emile J. Roy, Barber, with President George H.W. Bush. My favorite picture of both.*



# Cover Photo Stories



The three stories that follow were published in *Elsie Item* many years ago. They bring back memories from

shipmates who served on these ships during WWII. The seven ships nested in San Diego Harbor are the LCIs 679, 673, 640, 1012, 638, 41, 455, and 847. They were there after the war so most of them were destined for the scrap yard. The stories that follow are from the LCI 41 and 455.

## Memories of LCI 41

By Ken Stern

**LCI 41** started out as a regular square-conn in the 1 to 350 class of LCIs. The ship left the Philadelphia ship building site, went to the Norfolk area and then across the Atlantic to North Africa. The *41* served in Sicily and Salerno as a troop carrier. I joined the ship in late November 1943 at AATB. Bizerte, Tunisia.

### Cape Gaeta target

In early December 1943 we were assigned the job of going into German held Cape Gaeta, Italy. We continued in until the shore batteries opened-up and kept firing at us. Once our off-shore destroyers could see the German gun flashes they proceeded to knock them out. That was our first conversion ... as an LCI target ship. After the Anzio invasion, we stayed in the area as a communications ship with all sorts of radio gear and radiomen aboard. That was in the spring of 1944.



*USS LCI 41(L) baseball team at Anzio, Italy. Left to right kneeling: Ken Stern (Skipper), Ray Martin, and Walter Kijec, Middle: John Kasonic, Otis Bailey, and Ed Dissen. Back row: George Hoffman, Bob LeBlanc, Fred Schmidt, Roy Merrit, Bob Strassburg (one unknown).*



### Normandy ship salvage

On August 15, 1944 we went into Southern France with the first wave of LCVs as a salvage and fire-fighting ship. We had boatswains and riggers along. They were all over the place with their hand billys. Remember those little water pumps? It was our job to keep the beach clear of wounded LCVs

### Portsmouth overhaul

After Southern France we became a troop carrier again. We went back to the States to be overhauled in Portsmouth, New



Hampshire at the sub-base. We proceeded into the Portsmouth docking area very early in the morning. The people on harbor watch could only see our silhouette. They thought we were a WWI submarine. But no . . . just a regular LCI.

### **Long Beach gun conversion**

We moved down the East Coast through the Panama Canal and up to San Diego. Our new orders took us to the Terminal Island dry dock in Long Beach, California. *LCI 41* would be converted to a gun boat for the invasion of Japan. We were in a tremendous dry dock with a small carrier, a destroyer and a dozen or so other LCIs. We finally got all our guns and ammo and more people to run the ship and we set sail from Terminal Island to San Diego. We were now the full-fledged USS *LCI( G) 41*. Between Terminal Island and San Diego, the Japanese surrendered. But no one would change our sailing orders to or from San Diego, and to Pearl Harbor.

### **Pearl Harbor neutering**

We arrived in Pearl and I reported to the Port Director who said in the worst possible tone you can think of, "What are you doin' here?" All I could do is reply. "I don't know sir." We anchored out there in West Lock and were neutered. The Navy in all its greatest wisdom took away all our guns and ammo and sent us west. We never stopped. Guam, Okinawa, Wakayama, Japan. and the Bay of Nagoya. Things changed again ...we became a floating hotel for the Japanese harbor pilots, who were glad to be taking US ships into port.

### **San Diego scrap yard**

Nothing much more happened to us. The war was long gone. All the experienced people on the ship had vanished. One way or another, we got USS *LCI(G) 41* back to San Diego. Now the *41* would suffer its last conversion from Jim McCarthy's cutting torch. Our final gasp was scrap metal.

*Written by. Ken Stern C.O. of LCI-41*

Story originally published in Elsie Item #25  
June 1998.

## ***LCI 41***

*Submitted by Earle L. Bailey QM1/c*

The USS *LCI(L) 41* left Little Creek, VA on March 19, 1943 for Bermuda to link up with a convoy to North Africa. We encountered a storm off the coast and most of the crew got seasick. We were instructed to stand our watch regardless of how sick we were. We carried buckets to our watch station for vomiting purposes. Our cook got too sick to cook, so we got food from the provisions that were loaded into the troop holes before departure.

In the invasion of Sicily our ramps were dislodged and had to pull alongside a supply ship with booms to put them back in place. We returned to La Goulette, Tunisia to receive more troops for transport. The morning the troops came aboard, our chief boatswain's mate Frederick Trieber, announced that all crew members must be fully clothed when we came topside because we had ladies on board. We had a field hospital unit aboard that included some nurses for transport to Gela, Sicily. On our return to La Goulette, Tunisia, we went into dry dock for repairs. While in dry dock our crew made make-shift tables and ate on the dock.

In the invasion of Salerno while our ship was stuck on the beach, we received two wounded soldiers for transport to a hospital LST. We were pushed from the beach by a dozer, as we turned around, it was daybreak and we found that we were in a mined area. We were able to transfer the wounded.

On Dec. 14, 1944 we left Mers El-Kebir, Algeria for Portsmouth, NH for overhaul. The USS *LCI(L) 41* left Portsmouth, NH by way of Boston, Little Creek, Key West, Canal Zone, San Diego to Terminal Island, into dry dock for conversion to USS *LCI(G) 41*. I was transferred from the ship there. I learned through some research and information from crew members who were still aboard, that the USS *LCI(G) 41* left for Pearl Harbor. Hostilities ceased before they reached Pearl Harbor. The 40MM gun was removed. The *41* was routed to Guam, Okinawa and assigned as harbor entrance control vessel at Nagoya and Kobe-Osaka, Japan then back to San Diego, CA in June 1946 and decommissioned.

The USS *LCI(L) 41* along with the many LCIs made a great contribution to the war effort due to the fact they were so adaptable to the many things that needed to be done. I am proud to be counted in the numbers of sailors in this effort.

The *41* crew were all good men and I am proud of all of them. We have had several reunions and all our families are like one big family.

## Memories of *LCI 455*

*By Bremmer Martha PhM1/c*

How seasick we were on our first trip in Atlantic on the way to Panama, from the Captain on down.

We saw our first hint of war - passing a torpedoed tanker off of Coast of Florida - burning. I volunteered for standing radio

watch while under way on all trips. Jim Hale, Radioman, was my buddy.

I had liberty at Key West, FL, Panama Canal - Coco Solo. Panama, San Diego, CA, Los Angeles - Stage Door Canteen.

We went on maneuvers with Marines at San Clemente Island off of California. We were sent out to sea afterwards to look for an Amtrac that had stalled and was drifting way out to sea. While pulling it back, it sunk. We got acquainted with the Marines. Then we saw them again when we went in for a landing at Kwajalein, waving and whistling at us.

At Roi and Namur Invasion - Kwajalein. Majuro Atoll - I went ashore here. We hauled natives and Jap prisoners. Then back to Pearl Harbor - a Honolulu Liberty - Royal Hawaiian Hotel - A certain hotel downtown - Waikiki Beach - Italian Restaurants - Photo Shops - Dry Dock - Swimming in East Lock.

Went on maneuvers with Marines at Maui for the invasion of Saipan. Provided fire support of underwater demolition teams at Guam for three days. I even got to shoot at a pill box on the beach. Invasion of Tinian. Crossed International Date Line - Met King Neptune. Then on to Guadalcanal - Tulagi - Russell Islands in the Solomons. While playing ball on beach at Tulagi, some natives were cooking fish nearby. All of a sudden, tracer bullets were flying all around us, everybody dove for cover behind trees, etc. The natives had thrown a box of ammunition into the fire. One of them got hit pretty-bad in the groin. I took care of him the best I could and put him on a landing craft to be taken to base hospital.

At the invasion of Peleliu and Anguar - we shot up landing barges with Japs trying to get behind Marine lines. Pulled Jap pilots out of water, but first they wanted to be shot before we got them aboard. I went on the

command ship to get supplies. I saw wounded Marines being lifted aboard on one side of ship, going down to Sick Bay. Doctors and corpsman were operating on wounded. I saw dead Marines being lowered on the other side of the ship.

At Nuglu Atoll – I went ashore and spent time with the natives there. On Ulithi Atoll - Mog Mog- we took men off of Battleship *South Dakota* to be taken ashore for beer and recreation. I sewed up a fellow's hand from cutting his hand on a beer can.

I remember eating Christmas dinner on deck Christmas Day 1944. I swam off of the fantail at Ulithi at mid-night New Year's Eve, 1944.

I remember Father Cunningham having us aboard his ship to take fresh water showers, and to see the movie "Going My Way" with Bing Crosby on fantail. He also gave us bags of real potatoes. I also got to eat in their mess hall one day. A Jap submarine torpedoed a tanker close by us one day. Destroyers dropped depth charges and lifted us right out of water.

On way to Okinawa, we went through the most rough water and weather we had ever been in. Sometimes I wonder how we ever got through it. Seems like we were on top of waves 12 stories high, and we were always right on the edge and could fall off. It sure gave you a funny feeling to stand by railing and look way down there.

Invasion of Okinawa - April 1<sup>st</sup> 1945 - Easter Sunday and April Fool's Day. First day of Invasion around 7 am, an LST right by us got hit by a kamikaze, the first of many, many attacks we saw and were in. My Battle Station in all battles was by the conning tower. Had a "bird's eye" view of everything going on. Never forgot, bombardments, battleships, cruisers, destroyers, rockets flying. Plane runs on beach and islands, bombings, Napalm

bombs. Landing craft and amtracs going in. Jap air raids on our ships, flak flying, smoke screens we let out. Kamikaze attacks every day for over the two months we were at Okinawa. Jap planes getting hit, our ships getting hit.

Kerama Rhetto - Ship junk yard with all the damaged Ships from kamikaze attacks. Watched our own ships accidentally shooting down our own pilots taking off from carriers. Kamikazes that dove at us but missed and went right over us into the water. I dove under the starboard 40mm gun mount at the same time.

Our ship got hung up one day (while firing behind Marines front line) on a coral reef, where a destroyer a few days before got shot up by Jap shore batteries for doing the same. We worked all night moving ammunition and rockets from the bow to stern, and finally got off before dawn. Hurray! Then we had to put all that stuff back.

Saipan - going ashore there with George Garber radarman, to find his hometown buddy's grave buried in the Marine Cemetery. We rode for miles down the plane runway and saw hundreds of B29s on each side. There were natives bathing together men, women and children all naked. Some were Korean laborers. I saw hundreds of B29s in air returning from Japan bombing runs.

Went to Eniwetok. Pearl Harbor. Camp Andrews in Hawaii - Navy rest camp. San Francisco, CA, Treasure Island – Liberty, and Great Lakes. I was Master of Arms Dispensary in recruit training command before getting discharged December 15, 1945.



## The World's Most Precious Cargo

No gold-laden galleon ever carried a cargo half so precious as that of the Navy's sturdy LCI (L) Landing Craft. For theirs is the task of transporting to the invasion beachheads the cream of American manhood . . . our sons, brothers and husbands whose courageous efforts are clearing the paths to Tokyo and Berlin. ☆ Defoe men and women are putting their hearts as well as their brains and brawn into these invasion vessels. Yes, and a full measure of patriotic devotion, too, plus the engineering skill and experienced craftsmanship traditional in shipbuilding. ☆ Today, Defoe's job is to build sturdy, dependable fighting ships of the Navy. But tomorrow, these same skills and abilities will be devoted to building just as fine products, at low cost, for peacetime America. Whatever Defoe creates then will reflect the same pride we take in our work these crucial days.



DEFOE SHIPBUILDING COMPANY, BAY CITY, MICHIGAN

**Defoe**



Four White Star Award Citations now decorate the Navy "E" Award won by Defoe workers.

INVEST IN INVASION  
—BUY WAR BONDS

SHIPS FOR VICTORY  
SERVANTS FOR PEACE

# The Greatest “industrial” Generation

By Jeff Veesenmeyer

**T**he Greatest Generation put 16.1 million men and women in uniform during WWII. Those numbers are amazing. But the military needed more than uniforms to win the war. What the folks back home produced to supply the war effort is incredible.

At the beginning of the war in Europe the U.S. industry was still flat from the depression. Factory output was less than half of capacity and unemployment was at 20 percent. By 1945 factory output had doubled, then doubled again and yet again. Unemployment dropped to 1 percent during the war.

In 1939 the United States only produced 800 military planes all year. In 1942 President Roosevelt called for 4,000 airplanes per month! Nobody thought it was possible. But by 1944 over 8,000 planes per month were coming off the assembly line. The same kind of output for jeeps, trucks, tanks and weapons was produced by the auto industry. But, none of this could reach the war zones without ships.

Over 60 shipbuilding yards went into emergency production mode. Yards on the east coast, west coast, gulf coast and Great Lakes operated 24/7 for nearly four years of war. Many classes of ships were prefabricated so unskilled labor could assemble the parts at a shipyard. Ships of all types were launched daily! A new destroyer was launched every week during America’s

3-1/2 years of World War II. We the people of the U.S.A. produced the following:

- 22 aircraft carriers
- 8 battleships
- 48 cruisers
- 349 destroyers
- 420 destroyer escorts
- 203 submarines
- 558 landing ships medium (LSM)
- 1,051 landing ships tank (LST)
- 6,000 merchant ships
- 23,000 Higgins LCVPs

*And 10 shipyards built one of the most versatile ships of the war.*

- **923 Landing Craft Infantry (large) LCI(L)s** nick-named **Elsie Item**.

Our parents and grandparents were truly the Greatest “industrial” Generation of all time.

*Sources: Alligator Alley Newsletter – June 2018, Wikipedia, usslci.org, NavSource.org, Mashable.com*



*USS LCI(L) 700 launching at George Lawley and Sons Shipyard Neponset, MA on 22 June 1944. Workers began preparing to start another hull as soon as she hit the water.*

## Vaughn Brown's *LCI(R)* 1077 Career

**T**hey say that the longest journey begins with the first step. I have wanted to write about my recollections of life aboard the USS *LCI(R)* 1077 for many years now. So, I am compelled from within to begin.



Vaughn Odene Brown, fall of 1944.

I must at least give some background. On September 11, 1926, in the little town of Roswell, New Mexico, a Seventh Day Adventist minister announced to his congregation that he had just become the proud father of a son. I was named Vaughn Odene Brown. I have no idea where this name came from, nor how old I was when I found out my first name was Vaughn. For the next 30 years I was known as Odene Brown. When I was 9 months old the family

brought my sister, brother and me to Pomona, California, where I grew up.

On December 7, 1941, I was in Los Angeles at a rodeo when newsboys came thru the crowd saying the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor. I was 15 years old and had no idea where Pearl Harbor was. I knew there was a Hawaii and Waikiki, but that was about it. My brother, Duane - two years older than me - went off to war as a para-trooper. He made a couple of jumps. The first jump on D-Day, June 6, and the second in Holland. He made it home alive, only to be one of the very last to come down with polio in 1949.

By June of 1944 I had graduated from Pomona High School and went to work. When you turned 18, you were drafted, and you went where they wanted you to go. Instead of waiting for a draft notice, a friend and I joined the Navy in August. My friend was Bob Keckley who also served on an LCI (don't know the number) For reasons I won't mention, I was delayed for 2 days and we were not in the same company at boot camp in San Diego. By November I had risen to the rank of Seaman 2<sup>nd</sup> class and was sent to Shoemaker, California.

In the middle of November, a busload of swabbies left Shoemaker, me included, and were dropped off at Treasure Island in front of this little boat. It had 1077 painted on it, and I was pointed in that direction. The *LCI* 1077 was built in Bay City, Michigan It had motored down the Mississippi River to the gulf. The only 1077 casualty of the war was when a young man fell overboard and drowned in the Mississippi River. The 1077 proceeded through the Panama Canal to San Diego, then to San Francisco where I met my ship for the first time. I became part of the deck crew and was put right to work. The most memorable job was when someone, the Skipper I suppose, decided to



convert a fuel tank into fresh water tank. It had a small opening just big enough for me to get inside. I painted it with red lead paint. I can remember coming out drunk from the fumes. Why I didn't die right then I will never know.

A day or so later we proceeded to Mare Island to load rockets, for what purpose I had no idea. They were heavy, and one smashed my thumb. I don't remember having to load rockets any other time, so we must have loaded hundreds of them. The *1077* left San Francisco around 20 November 1944 for a ten-day cruise to Hawaii. By the time we passed Alcatraz and I was already not feeling so good. I never threw up for the 10 days, but certainly thought about it. I was never sick again. Bill Bruce was so sick we had to put a watch on him, so he would not fall or jump overboard. (Bill is dead now, but his wife Rosemary has attended our reunions). The *1077* arrived in Hawaii on Dec. 7, 1944. We anchored in the back bay off Ford Island. A few days later we were put into dry dock where we spent Christmas and New Year's Eve while being converted to a rocket ship. In January the *1077(R)* was re-floated and sent to Kahoolawe Island to test fire the rockets. We were ordered to put on our helmets, lifejackets and flash powder and go below deck. I guess they worked. I know they worked later. I will get to that further into my story.

In the middle of January, the *1077(R)* left Hawaii in a convoy doing 9 knots and heading for Saipan (wherever that is). We left Saipan in a bigger convoy for an invasion. This was a big secret, so we wouldn't tell anyone. Who would we tell? We're in the middle of the ocean and who ever heard of Iwo Jima, let alone where it is.

## IWO JIMA

The *1077R* left Saipan on 15 February 1945 and arrived, without incident, off shores of Iwo Jima at daylight. Our mission was to lay down a barrage on the north end of the island. It was thought to be the Japanese headquarters. We were to prevent them from reinforcing the south end where the main landing was taking place. According to our battle report at 0637 we began firing rockets. I was a loader on the 40mm bow gun crew. We were in close and began to take mortar and ground fire. Several landed just in front of the ship, but *1077* and all our group were safe. We stayed right on our 40mm gun mount while rockets were being fired alongside of us. So much for being trained to go below deck when firing rockets. According to our battle report, we made 20 runs and fired approximately 1175 rockets; 400 rounds of 40mm and 600 rounds of 20mm. I don't like to confuse my recollections with facts. It seemed like the next day we began salvage duty. But according to the report it was four days later, on 23 February.

### **“It helps to be 18 years old and a little stupid”**

There was so much wreckage on the beach that the LSTs and larger ships could not re-enforce the landings. We were to go in, tie the wreckage to our bow anchor cable, drag it out into deep water, and cut it loose. We began this operation and I was one of those who went ashore. The Marines were just a short way up the beach, and there I was with a helmet, white shirt and boots. I always said it helps to be 18 years old and a little stupid during a war. I will skip some of the details

of what I experienced because it serves no purpose. Talk to any Marine who was on Iwo Jima and he will tell you how tough it was. This went on for 3 days. We added fire support at night or made smoke. We left Iwo Jima on 26 February and arrived at Saipan the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March.

## OKINAWA



*LCI 1077 firing rockets on the Kerama Retto islands located 15 miles west of Okinawa.*

Since this is my recollection, the dates and stories may not be totally accurate. We left Saipan around the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> of March and arrived in the Philippines around the 10 March 1945. Our day-to-day life was broken up by several shore parties, a lot of trees, children, rain and beer. Not much else stands out.

We left Leyte Gulf in the Philippines for the invasion of Okinawa around the 24<sup>th</sup> of March. The invasion of Okinawa began for us at 0840 and all rockets were fired by 1040. The landing was not contested. We were very happy about that. For the remainder of the month we added fire power, made smoke and suffered air raids

almost every day. Two things stand out: we carried troops from Ie Shima the day after Ernie Pyle was killed there and I believe we were having continual air raids that day. What I really remember is we were very close to the stern of a large ship. A Japanese plane was shot down and this ship's quad 40 followed it right down to the water with us in between. We were so close the shells went right over us. I think it was about this time we were credited with shooting down one Jap plane and assisted on two others.

Another incident happened 28 May according to our ship's log. I remember the clouds were low and a Japanese plane that looked like a seaplane seemed to cruise around, then suddenly flew right into the ship next to us. The pontoons were full of gasoline. The cargo ship was the SS *Mary A. Livermore*. We did what we could to help. We sent over our corpsman, stretchers, and provided what fire power we could to protect them. She lost 10 sailors dead and 7 wounded. In the meantime, the army was having the fight of their lives. We continued doing whatever we were asked or ordered to do.

## SHIPS LOG – 16 JUNE 1945

This narration covers a period of 4 or 5 days. Most are factual. What is rumor I will identify. On June 16 the *LCI 1077* and *LCI 762* steamed to the south shore of Okinawa and began firing at the shore. We began firing on the beach, shooting at sea gulls, and anything that moved. Late in the afternoon a man (Japanese or civilian) came out and just sat in the water. If he had run, we would have shot him, but he just sat there. We did not know what to do, so we radioed headquarters. They thought there was going to be a mass surrender. We were

told to stand-by. The next day they sent a p.a. system, a Japanese prisoner (he was a 1932 Olympic shot putter) and a young Okinawan man to the ship. We proceeded to the shore with guns up and encouraged soldiers and civilians to surrender. A few of them swam to the ship; others we marched up the beach and turned them over to the Marines. At times someone would shoot at us and we would pull out for a while, then come back in.

We were having a great deal of success and were accumulating a lot of souvenirs on the beach. We decided to go get them. This part of the story is true, but there is some controversy. We had lost our shore boat. I don't know where. Larry Roth, a California surfer, and others built a paddle board. The plan was to tie a rope to the board, paddle ashore, and bring guns, swords and whatever back to the ship. (For 50 years I was certain it was Larry on the board, he says it was the Japanese prisoner we called Tojo) I prefer my version. The rest is all true. The board was paddled to the shore. While loading the board with souvenirs the ship drifted sideways. The *1077* backed away from the beach to get straightened out. When the ship started in again, the rope caught on some coral. The board pulled out from shore and almost wound up in the screws. That was the end of our treasure hunt.

### **Hundreds of Japanese soldiers and civilians surrender to *LCI 1077***

We were having such success with surrenders that a war correspondent was put on the ship. I have the article by Herb Paul of the Minneapolis Star-Journal. The headline reads, "Paul Sees Okinawa Japs Quit!"

*The newspaper article dated Saturday, June 23, 1945 begins... "OKINAWA – I witnessed surrender of hundreds of Japanese soldiers and civilians today. Unprecedented in the Pacific war against Japan, this wholesale surrender may be a forerunner of what may come later and showed some lost fanaticism for dying for the emperor. I had a grandstand seat for this spectacle on the bridge of an LCI commanded by Lt. George N. Armstrong. This LCI won the nickname of Mercy Ship."*

Herb Paul claimed we talked 2,000 soldiers and 5,000 civilians into surrendering. I realize this is just a guess, but we did a great job those few days. We should, at least, have received a unit commendation.

In August we were back in the Philippines. On August 14, we were tied to a large ship watching a movie. As we returned to the ship, we heard that the war was over. This night is one of the most memorable of my navy career.

### **WAR IS OVER**

We broke out the beer, cooled it with CO2 fire extinguishers and joined a thousand ships firing our pistols and pyrotechnics, the greatest display of fireworks I've ever seen. What a sight! The remainder of these dates are approximate. In September we went back to Okinawa. What stands out was a severe typhoon. The larger ships put out to sea. We joined a group of small ships in a small harbor, tied ourselves together and rode it out. When it was over there was a lot of wreckage. I don't remember how, but we acquired a jeep and brought it all the way back to the U.S.A. Once again, the dates are a guess. In October we sailed back to Saipan. From there we towed a ship all the way back to Hawaii. We were at sea for 30 days. We continued to San Diego. Then



began the best duty I had in the Navy. I had risen to the high rank of Seaman First class. I was the last one to join the ship so now I was the last one off. Everyone else had enough points to go home or even be discharged. One officer and I stayed on and for the next month until we decommissioned the ship. I drove the jeep every day, showed 2 or 3 movies every night and ate ice cream. What a life! With everything off, they towed her out to the mud flats and I turned in the jeep. Thus, ended my relationship and life on the USS *LCI 1077(R)*.

### POSTSCRIPT

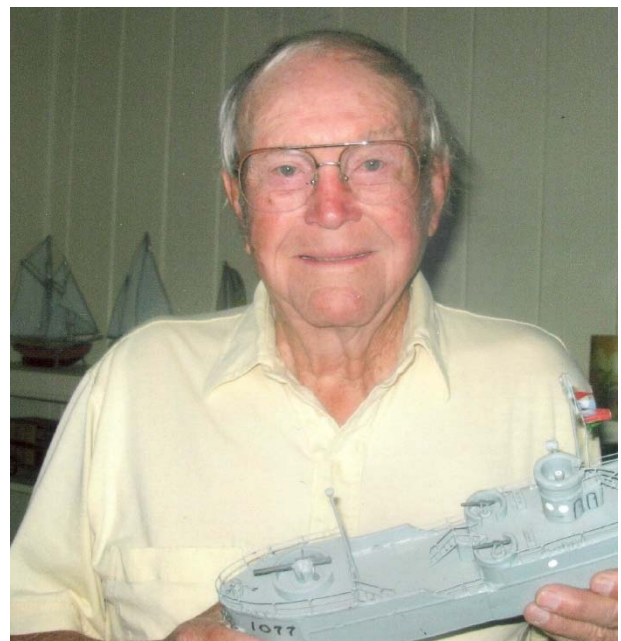
I went home to Pomona, CA and began a 30-day leave. It was about May by now. I did not have enough points to get out, so I reported to San Pedro, shipped out on the *Harland R. Dickson* DD-708. We went through the Panama Canal and on to Portland, Maine. Moved to New York, and I finally had enough points to get out. I took a train home, reported to San Pedro and was discharged June 10, 1946, a total of 22 months, thus ending my navy career. I was now 19 years old.



I was married in 1947. I went into business in 1956 as a cement contractor, I retired in 1981. For some 50 years I wondered what happened to my shipmates. One night the phone rang, it was Larry Roth, who I remembered very well. He told me about the

LCI National Association. I am now a life member and have made all the reunions to date of writing this memoir. Thanks to all who bring back memories from so long ago, and especially to my wife, Gwen, who didn't seem to mind going along.

Written by Vaughn Brown in 2002. This article, his Action Reports, Deck Logs, and photos were scanned, emailed and submitted by Brown's friends, Ken and Pat Campbell. (more photos next page)



*This model of LCI(R) 1077 was built by Brown using...STAINED GLASS! Yes, he had created stained glass windows for churches, decorations for friends and models for many years when he decided to utilize his talent on the 1077.*



*The LCI(R) 1077 shipmates at their 2001 reunion in Reno, Nevada. L-R: Ross, Larry, Clyde, Bob, Vaughn Brown.*



*Vaughn Brown on the right*



*Gwen and Vaughn Brown in 2001. They celebrated their 71<sup>st</sup> wedding anniversary last year.*

## A Sailor You Be

*By Noel Payne*

Have you felt spray, upon your face?  
Have you seen porpoise at the bow,  
keeping pace?

Have you viewed sea birds, above the  
wake in flight?

Have you fixed on a star, at sunset  
shining bright?

Has there been a time, to save a  
shipmate?

Has the roll of the deck, ever kept you  
awake?

Has the vastness of sea, left you feeling  
alone?

Has a foreign port, made you wish you  
were home?

If you have weighed anchor, from calm  
shelter?

If you have crossed the equator, at noon  
time swelter?

If you have stood your watch, on a  
pitching deck?

If you have made landfall, on the horizon  
speck?

When you have secured the decks, for the  
night to turn.

When you have mustered at sunrise, seen  
a new day be.

When you have dogged down hatches, in  
mountainous.

When you have known all these things, a  
sailor you be.

*Facebook post by Master Chief Hal Morrison,  
retired USN - Submitted by Rich Lovell*



# **Operation Magic Carpet...was not a luxury cruise home**

*By Jeff Veesenmeyer*

**H**ave you ever complained about the crowding on airplanes? Our veterans who were overseas at the end of WWII would scoff at your mild discomfort. They experienced unprecedented crowded travel during *Operation Magic Carpet*. They were just thankful to be going home.



*Troops arriving home on board the USS General Harry Taylor.*

Returning the troops home after WWII was a daunting task. The U.S. military experienced an unimaginable increase of men and women in uniform during World War II. In 1939, there were only 334,000 servicemen. In 1945, there were over 12 million.

At the end of the war, over 8 million of these men and women were scattered overseas in Europe, the Pacific and Asia. Shipping them out wasn't a problem but

getting them home was a massive logistical headache.

The problem didn't come as a surprise, as Army Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall had already established committees to address the issue in 1943.

When Germany fell in May 1945, the U.S. Navy was still busy fighting in the Pacific and couldn't assist. The job of transporting 3 million men home fell to the Army and the Merchant Marine. Three hundred Victory and Liberty cargo ships were converted to troop transports for the task.

During the war, 148,000 troops crossed the Atlantic west to east each month; the rush home ramped this up to 435,000 a month over 14 months after the war.



*Hammocks were hung in every available space aboard the USS Intrepid*

In October 1945, with the war in Asia also over, the Navy started chipping in, converting all available vessels to transport duty. On smaller ships like Destroyers, capable of carrying perhaps 300 men, soldiers were told to hang their hammocks

in whatever nook and cranny they could find.

Carriers were particularly useful, as their large open hangar decks could house 3,000 or more troops in relative comfort, with bunks, sometimes in stacks of five welded or bolted in place.



*The Army transport USS Pennant*

The Navy wasn't picky, though: cruisers, battleships, hospital ships, LSTs (Landing Ship, Tank) and even LCIs were packed full of men yearning for home.

Two British ocean liners under American control, the *RMS Queen Mary* and *Queen Elizabeth*, had already served as troop transports before and continued to do so during the operation, each capable of

carrying up to 15,000 people at a time, though their normal, peacetime capacity was less than 2,200.

The war in Asia had been expected to go well into 1946. The Navy and the War Shipping Administration were hard-pressed to bring home all the soldiers who now had to get home earlier than anticipated.

The transports carrying troops also had to collect thousands of POWs from recently liberated Japanese camps, many of whom suffered horribly during years of forced slave labor. They required special medical attention and berthing spaces.

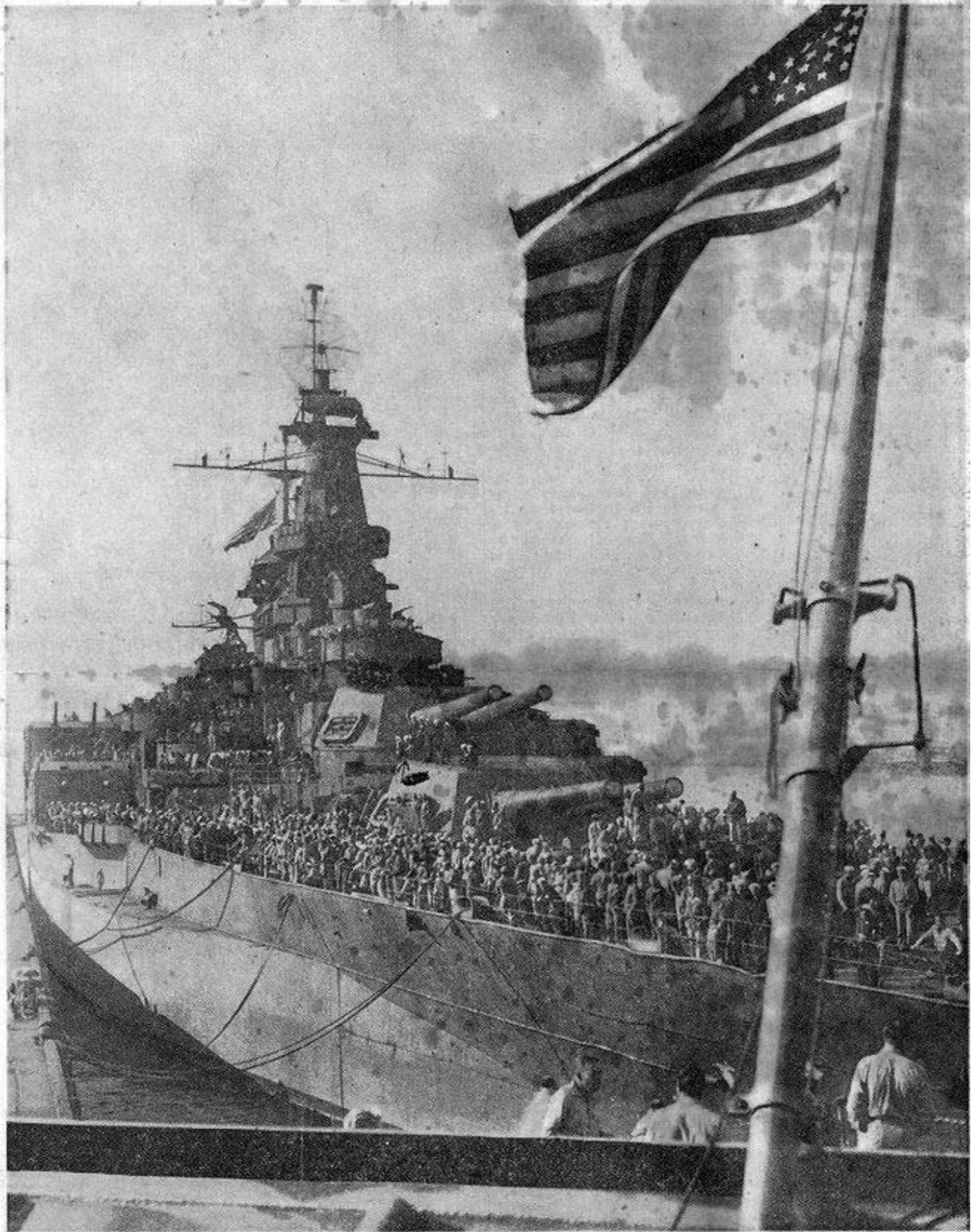
The final 29 transports carrying 200,000 troops from the China-Burma-India theater returned in April of 1946. This brought an end to the massive *Operation Magic Carpet*.



*Troops aboard the Queen Mary crowd every inch of the forward bow during a lifeboat drill.*



## First of 'Magic Carpet' Ships Arrives in Harbor



Story on Page 1, Part II

**HERE WITH 2100 MEN** — The battleship U.S.S. West Virginia, first of Navy's "magic carpet" ships, steamed

Times photo  
into Los Angeles Harbor yesterday with 2000 Army men and 100 Navy men, veterans of fighting in South Pacific.

*This photo appeared in newspapers during November of 1945. The West Virginia pulled into Los Angeles Harbor with 2100 army and navy veterans from the South Pacific.*

# Gator Heroes Decorated

By Jeff Veesenmeyer

During the naval battle of Anzio, the British cruiser HMS *Spartan* was hit amidships by a guided missile. This new German weapon had made its debut during the Salerno campaign. It was now being used more extensively. It had fins so it was designed to glide rather than drop and was radio-controlled from the launching aircraft. *Fritz*, as the missile was named, had an armor piercing warhead with 320 kilograms of explosive. The resulting blast caused massive flooding in the *Spartan's* boiler room spaces. She listed and quickly sank.



*HMS Spartan lost 46 dead and 42 wounded*

The Luftwaffe had coordinated 18 missile attack planes on Anzio Harbor at sunset 29 March 1944. Another ship was hit setting off its cargo of fuel and ammunition. The fire and explosions lit up the harbor throughout the night.

There were LCIs nearby supporting the landings and re-supply of troops. One of the LCIs came to the aid of *Spartan* crewmembers in the water. Boatswain Mate 2/c Harold Marquardt would be decorated for his action in saving lives of British sailors. His story appeared in *Gator* newsletter.

The Amphibious Training Base at Little Creek, Virginia published a weekly newsletter during the war. It was called *GATOR*. In the issue published on 17 March 1945 nine officers and enlisted men were honored. Marquardt's story was one of them. He was attached to Unit 222, Division 3 and was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for saving British sailors who were in immediate danger of drowning.

## Excerpt from *Gator* issue 17 March 1945

"Marquardt was aboard an LCI that was in the fleet of landing craft off the Anzio-Nettuno beach when the British cruiser was hit by a Nazi glider bomb and immediately began to sink. The whole area was covered with a thick smoke blanket and the men in the water couldn't find their rescuers or could the rescuers find them. When the LCI had pulled as close alongside as possible, Marquardt and another Boatswain's Mate launched a rubber boat and paddled through the dense clouds of smoke and oily wreckage under the side of the capsizing ship and brought back four men. They then went back, amid exploding ammunition and falling bombs and guided a raft full of survivors back to the LCI."



# Post VJ Day LCI

by Vernon Wallace as told to Tom Gorham



Vernon Wallace FM1/c

**PROLOGUE:** From our 2019 perspective, knowing that VE and then VJ Day were just few months away, it may seem strange that the Navy was still aggressively recruiting and training replacements in April 1945. However, at the time the “island hopping” campaign in the Pacific was progressing slowly, chewing up men and ships. The Atomic Bomb was a deeply held secret. It was generally believed defeat of Japan would require invasion of the home islands and that the Pacific War could stretch on for years.”

My LCI story starts in early 1945, I was 17 and in high school, living in the country near Hot Springs, AR. Now I didn’t know how to swim and had never seen the ocean, but at 17 you don’t worry about those details. So, when a group of friends, mostly already 18, decided to join the Navy I decided the Navy was for me too. The recruiter said I could join too, if a parent would give permission. To my Dad that looked like one less mouth to feed, so in April 1945 I was off to Basic Training in San Diego.

I did OK there except when it came to the test when you have to jump in the pool from the high dive and make your dungarees into a floatation device. I told the old Chief running the test I was not going to jump, but he told me I was going to do it or die trying. Well, with that kind of encouragement, I passed the test while swallowing half the pool in the process.

**By the time we arrived in Okinawa,  
the war was over.**

After Basic, a new Fireman 1/c, I got orders to ship to a Replacement Depot on Okinawa, sailing from Long Beach on the Cruiser *New York* to Pearl Harbor. While I waited in Hawaii for transport to Okinawa, the first Atomic Bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. A few days later, I left on a transport for Okinawa, and by the time we arrived in Okinawa, Japan had surrendered. While on Okinawa awaiting assignment to the fleet, many of us were assigned to clean up debris. Three in our group were killed when they encountered live munitions in a cave. That cured me of wanting to look for war souvenirs!

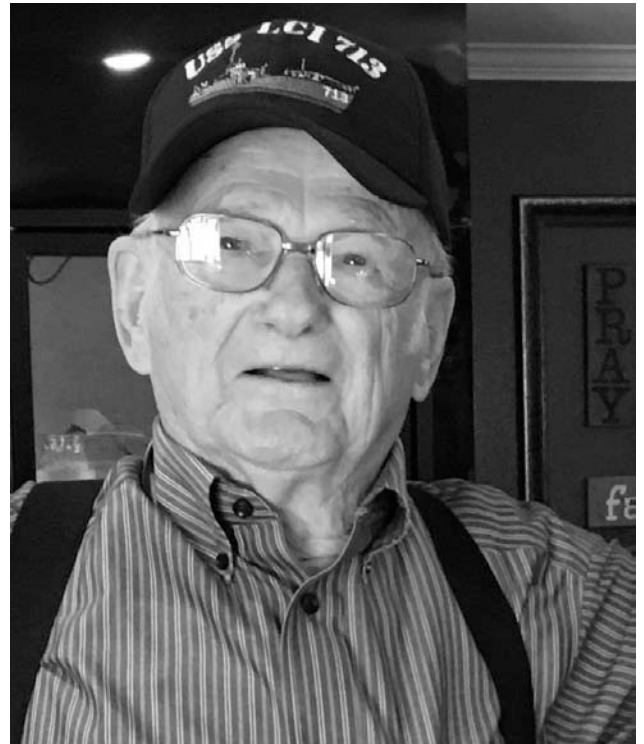
Just after VJ Day I was assigned to *LCI 632*, which looked awful small after the

cruiser. The 632 had seen combat at Iwo Jima and Okinawa, but now, like the rest of the fleet was looking to transition to peacetime. Leaving Okinawa, we were one of first ships to stop at Taiwan and some other islands that had been “island hopped”, leaving a Jap garrison to surrender as a unit. It gave us a chance to check out abandoned Japanese equipment.

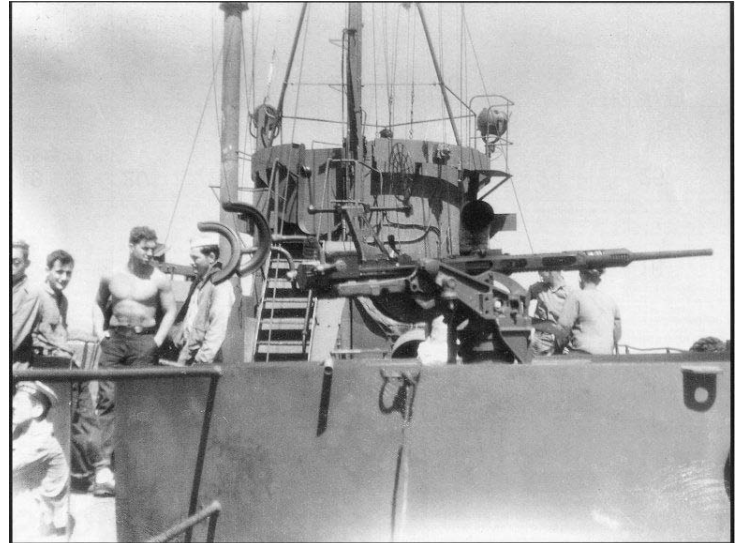
We joined up with a Flotilla in Hong Kong setting off for Subic Bay as a typhoon swept through the area. While bigger ships plowed through the rough seas, 632 bounced around like a cork and I was miserably seasick for nine days. I sure wished I could be back on the *New York* in this storm. How would a kid from Arkansas know they were prone to Sea Sickness? To this day I avoid any cruises on the ocean.

By February 1946 the *LCI 632* moved up to Tsingtao, China and began the process of turning the 632 over to the Nationalist Chinese Navy. With little to do on the 632, I was often assigned to operate a Liberty boat launch taking sailors back and forth to their ships in Tsingtao Harbor. By April the turnover of the 632 was complete and I left on a transport working my way back to California. I was discharged in New Orleans in July 1946, still just 18 years old.

I returned to Hot Springs, worked in various jobs, met my wife, and by 1950 moved with my wife and baby daughter, to San Diego. I worked 42 years as a Chef and Restaurant Manager in San Diego. I’m now 91, retired back in Arkansas, and proudly wear a ballcap from the *LCI-713* Museum Ship, in memory of my post-VJ Day LCI service.



*Vernon Wallace, a proud member of the LCI Association.*



*After the war, LCI(M) 632 was sent to China. Her crew trained Chinese navy crews on the operation of LCIs. During gunnery instruction, a laid back 632 crew takes a break. In the lower left, what appears to be a Chinese sailor can be seen sitting on the deck. (more photos next page)*





*During the war, LCI(M) 632 provided fire support at Iwo Jima and Okinawa.*



*LCI(M) 632 is moored in the ice alongside the USS Kinzer (APD-91). This photo was taken at Chingwagtao, China in February of 1946.*



*USS LCI(M) 233 and USS LCI(G) 632 moored at Tsingtao, China in June 1946. The crew was training Chinese crews to operate the LCIs being transferred to the Chinese Nationalist Navy.*

After the war, Pacific Marine units established bases and provided security in the Tsingtao-Chinwangtao region of Eastern China. The China Civil War had erupted. Marines clashed with the Communist forces while pursuing their assigned mission in China. A U.S. Naval facility operated there from 1945 to 1949. *LCI(M) 632* was eventually transferred to the Chinese Nationalist Navy. When the Nationalist government retreated to Formosa in 1949, many Chinese Nationalist naval ships and army units defected to the Communists, including the former *LCI(M) 632*.



# Bill Simmons

## An Honored World War II Veteran

Chicago born and raised, William H. Simmons enlisted in the United States Navy on 27 June 1944. He was 17-years-old.

The Navy sent him to the Farragut Naval Training Station in Idaho and then on to the West Coast and Hawaii. He was assigned as a crewman on the USS LCI(L) 756, a landing craft, 158 feet in length, that could carry as many as 200 men. However, LCI(L) 756 (no name was ever given) was about to undergo a transformation from landing craft to gunboat—a vessel which would support men ashore with heavy mortar fire. The '56 was outfitted with three 4.2" chemical mortars. Also, the ship's company was increased to five officers and 45 men ("History of USS LCI(L) 756"). Bill Simmons was one of those men.

In January 1945, the '56 was part of LCI(L) Group Forty-six, one of three groups of LCI Mortar Flotilla Twenty-one, headed for a destination unknown. That destination turned out to be "Bloody Little Iwo."

According to the "Ship's History," "Books will record February 19, 1945 as the day that Iwo Jima first felt the heel of the United States Marines and the mortar shells of the LCI(L) 756. H-Hour, 0900, found the 756 already on the right flank of the Fourth Marine Division pouring chemical mortar shells into the east boat basin and stone quarry, which housed many gun emplacements and pillboxes...."

"The '56 spent but eight days and seven nights in the waters around Iwo ... but hundreds of gallons of fog oil were expended to protect the larger fleet units from hostile air attacks; and over 2700 rounds of mortar ammunition were thrown at that eight square mile island mostly in night harassing missions on the northwest end of Jap-held Iwo." On 26 February, the 756 left for Saipan.

A report of the Iwo Jima operation states, "The successful use of mortar gunboats throughout the early days of the assault was one of the outstanding features of this operation. The standard procedures developed during the training period proved adequate and the fire from these vessels was quite accurate and extremely effective." (Report, Commander Amphibious Group Two, 9 April 1945)

The next engagement of Bill and the 756 was Okinawa, where on the morning of April 1, "the '56's position this time was at the fore leading the assault craft to the beaches ... paving the way for a safe beachhead for infantry troops." ("Ship's History")

Mercifully the war ended, and Bill headed home to Chicago after almost two years of service.

The noteworthy accomplishments, perseverance, and devotion to duty of Electrician's Mate Third Class William Simmons reflect credit upon himself and uphold the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service. Thanks to him and over 16 million other Americans in uniform during World War II, we have a free country.

*LCI SAILOR HONORED & NOT FORGOTTEN: Bill Simmons LCI(M) 756 passed away in January 2019. This tribute appeared in his American Legion newsletter. He will always be held in great respect by members of Tattler Post 973 in Chicago. This tribute was shared by the Simmons family along with photos and navy memorabilia. His full story including the details from the above article will appear in our June Elsie Item.*



## 2019 USS LCI National Association Reunion Announcement Portland, Oregon May 3-5, 2019



### **Hello LCI shipmates and friends,**

Its time again for your favorite event of the year, where you can come spend some quality time with your shipmates, family and friends. This year's reunion is scheduled to be held at the **Sheraton Hotel Portland Airport** and will include a Willamette River tour with champagne brunch on the Portland Spirit and tours of the LCI-713 and PT-658. The hospitality room will be open all the time for that great camaraderie we all love to experience. The Amphibious Forces Memorial Museum and the LCI-713 are once again sponsoring the event.

### **Friday, May 3**

- 4:00pm – 7:00pm Registration in the Garden foyer.
- 6:00pm – 8:00pm LCI Association reception in the Garden Hospitality room

### **Saturday, May 4**

- 8:00am Registration in the Garden foyer
- 9:00am Business meeting
- 10:00am Memorial Service
- 11:00am Lunch, at your leisure
- 12:30pm-4:00pm LCI-713 Tour  
*The bus boards at 12:15 for a 12:30 departure down to the LCI-713.  
There will be Navy Bean soup, coffee and good conversation and, of course, ship tours.  
The bus loads at 3:15pm and heads back to the Hotel at 3:30pm*
- 5:30 pm Once again, back by popular demand, we'll have a casual group dinner outing to Famous Dave's BBQ by carpool and hotel shuttle.

### **Sunday, May 5**

- 10:30am – 3:00pm Downtown Portland Willamette River tour and Brunch aboard the Portland Spirit.  
*The bus boards at 10:00 for a 10:15 departure down to the Portland Spirit.  
The ship boards at 11:00am and departs at 11:30am for the 2-hour tour and brunch.  
The bus loads at 1:45pm and heads back to the Hotel at 2:00pm.*
- 5:00pm -9:00pm Banquet Dinner  
*Starting with a social hour, then Color Guard, pledge, opening remarks, dinner, and guest speaker. And Door Prizes!*

The reunion officially concludes after the dinner.

We hope to see all of you there! If you cannot attend, please send a note. Tell us what is happening in your life, so you can let us all know how our absent friends are faring.

Feel free to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,

Rick Holmes, AFMM President  
Email: [afmm@amphibiousforces.org](mailto:afmm@amphibiousforces.org)  
Phone: 541-226-5427

Robert Wright, LCI National Assn. President  
Email: [rewrightcpa@gmail.com](mailto:rewrightcpa@gmail.com)  
Phone: 517-518-0854





The Reunion will be held at the Sheraton Hotel at the Portland Airport:

8235 Northeast Airport Way, Portland, OR 97220

Reservations: 888-627-7163 **ask for the LCI Reunion rate. Please let us know if there are any problems obtaining the rate.**

They offer Airport and local shuttle service. Cascade Station is a large shopping center nearby

Reunion Rates: Studio Double Queen Suite - \$129 Single or Double (Good for 3 days before and after)

Website: [www.sheratonportlandairport.com](http://www.sheratonportlandairport.com)

Phone: 503-281-2500



### The Portland Spirit Downtown Brunch Cruise

A top Sunday Brunch pick with a 2 hour cruise, bountiful seasonal buffet featuring locally sourced breakfast, lunch and dessert items prepared fresh on board, champagne, ever changing views and a narration of the sights. Delicious Northwest buffet, selected beverages, and live entertainment

*A Scenic Champagne Cruise to Remember.*

.Website: [www.portlandspirit.com](http://www.portlandspirit.com)



**And, of course, the LCI-713!**

[www.lci713.com](http://www.lci713.com)

[www.facebook.com/lci713](https://www.facebook.com/lci713)



**The PT Boat too!**

[www.savetheptboatinc.com](http://www.savetheptboatinc.com)



**2019 USS LCI National Association  
Reunion Announcement  
Portland, Oregon  
May 3-5, 2019**



**\*\*\* The bad news, registration fees are up a bit since we haven't been collecting enough to cover the event. But, the good news, we got a break on the meals and the Spirit tour!!**

**\*\*\* Form and payment to Rick Holmes due by 4/12/2019 \*\*\*\***

**2019 LCI National Reunion**

Email: [afmm@amphibiousforces.org](mailto:afmm@amphibiousforces.org)

C/O Rick Holmes

Cell: 541-226-5427

572 Beacon Highlands

Stevenson, WA 98648

<u>Event</u>		<u>Cost</u>		<u># Persons</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>Registration Fee:</b>	\$25.00 or \$10.00 <i>(Banquet Only)</i>		X		
<b>Portland Spirit Tour</b> <i>Includes Tour and Bus Transportation</i>		\$75	X		
<b>LCI 713 Shuttle:</b> <i>Tour is free. Select this option only if you need a ride down to the ship</i>		\$20	X		
<b>Banquet:</b> <i>Chicken Marsala</i>		\$40**	X		
<b>Banquet:</b> <i>Red Wine Braised Beef</i>		\$40**	X		
<b>Famous Dave's Outing</b>		<i>No commitments - just to get an interested party count</i>			XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
<b>Grand Total:</b>					

**\*\*The Banquet Dinners includes tips and fees**

**Chicken Marsala:** Chargrilled, Highlighted with a Rich Mushroom-Tomato Garnished Marsala Sauce, Creamy Mashed Potatoes & Market Vegetables

**Red Wine Braised Beef:** Slow Cooked Sirloin, Garnished with Bacon, Mushrooms & Onions. Accompanied with Parslied Potatoes and Green Beans

**Dinners Include Salad with Balsamic Dressing, Fresh Baked Rolls, Dessert, Coffee, Tazo Teas, and Iced Tea.**

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone#: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

LCI#: \_\_\_\_\_ Rank: \_\_\_\_\_ Will you be staying at the Sheraton? \_\_\_\_\_



# Your Officers and Executive Board

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

### **Robert E. Wright, Jr.**

President/Treasurer  
Son of Robert E. Wright, WWII,  
LCI(L) 20, LCI(L) 996  
& LCI(L) 997  
P.O. Box 407  
Howell, MI 48844  
(517) 548-2326  
rewrightcpa@gmail.com

### **Richard Lovell**

Vice President  
LCI 713 Restoration Project  
Amphibious Forces Memorial  
Museum  
8014 NE 159TH Ave  
Vancouver WA 98682-1539  
(360) 952-8916 (h)  
(971) 570-7231 (c)

### **Peter Selan**

Secretary  
Nephew of Leo Peter Selan, (KIA)  
WWII, LCI(G) 561 & LCI(G) 475  
875 Moores Mountain Road  
Lewisberry, PA 17339  
(717) 697-0294

## Chaplain

### **Abe Laurenzo**

Chaplain  
WW II Veteran, LCI(L) 409  
& LCI(L) 47  
2610 SE 164<sup>th</sup> Ave. Unit J16  
Vancouver, WA 98683  
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alaurenzo@gmail.com

## Board of Directors

### **Joe Flynn**

California Director  
Brother of LaVerne C. Flynn,  
WWII, LCI(G) 347  
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joeglo@msn.com

### **Stan Galik**

Son of Stanley Galik  
WW II, LCI(L) 35  
13006 Crested Ct.  
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lci35@galik.com

### **Dr. Michael A. Pikos**

Son of Anthony M. Pikos,  
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### **Lisa Bittle Tancredi**

Daughter of Robert D. Bittle  
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## Directors Emeritus

### **Rod Scurlock**

Vice President Emeritus  
WWII Veteran, LCI(G) 565  
4445 Mustang Dr.  
Boise, Idaho 83709  
(208) 362 4447

### **Gordon Smith**

Director Emeritus  
WWII Veteran, LCI(L) 43  
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## Historians

### **John M. France**

European Theater of Operations  
Son of Frank T. France, WWII,  
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### **Dennis Blocker**

Pacific Theater of Operations  
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lci449@yahoo.com

**Attention LCI Veterans and Associates**  
**We need your stories now. Write or email John France.**

**USS LCI NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, INC.**

C/O Robert E. Wright, Jr. President/Treasurer

P.O. Box 407 Howell, MI 48844-0407

**This was the design painted on the conning tower of *LCI(R) 1077*. See Vaughn Brown's *LCI 1077* story in this issue.**

