



# Elsie Item

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

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Photo # NH 62897 Pyrotechnic celebration of the Japanese surrender



## Inside this issue...

- Memories of VJ-Day
- LCIs lost during WWII
- Landings in Tokyo Bay
- Occupation China LCI 688



## Navy and Coast Guard Veterans of World War II and Korea USS LANDING CRAFT INFANTRY NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

### MISSION

*The USS LCI National Association is dedicated to preserving the history of the World War II Landing Craft Infantry ships and honoring the sailors that manned them. In our publications and website you will find first-hand accounts from the sailors, stories about the battles they fought, the experiences they had, and historical photos.*

**usslci.org**



To learn more about **your** LCI history, **your** collective experiences during the war, and other related LCI information, please visit **your** website. Here you will find all the information related to LCIs that we have acquired. **Enjoy your visit!!**

#### ABOUT US

- What We Do
- Officers & Executive Board
- AFMM-LCI-713 Alliance
- Non-Profit Status

#### THE STORIES

- Featured Stories
- Story Archive
- Share Your Story

#### THE ELSIE ITEM

- Recent Articles Available Online\*
- The Archive
- Other Research Resources

#### THE LCI EXPERIENCE

- LCI Facts
- Combat Awards
- Honor, Valor, Sacrifice
- Reunions
- The LCI-713

\* Note: The most recent articles and updates to the site will appear shortly after the publication of each Elsie Item Issue

### Your Story



**We are always looking for stories and memories of your LCI service.** Although we are primarily interested in your experiences aboard an LCI ship, 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: [usslci.org/share-your-story/](https://usslci.org/share-your-story/). Any letter to the editor can be sent to **Jeff Veesenmeyer** ([JeffreyMktg@gmail.com](mailto:JeffreyMktg@gmail.com)) or the postal address below.

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**"Elsie Item":** 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.

**Notice:** The USS LCI National Association is not responsible for the accuracy of articles submitted for publication. Time and resources do not permit the ability to check each story; therefore, we rely on the author to research each article.

# Observations from Officers Country

## 75 Years Later

My Father Robert E. Wright EM1/c was a crew member aboard the LCI(L)'s 20, 997 and 996. When we were young he told many tales of his accomplishments and the great fun that seemed to follow his ship into every port during World War II. As he got older, the stories lost the humor and became more serious. In 2008, at the invitation of Gordon Smith of LCI(L) 43, I became a member of the USS LCI National Association. In 2009 I attended my first reunion. It was among the LCI veterans that I discovered that all of my dad's stories were true (in a way), because everyone there had the same ones, only with themselves as the main character. This issue, ELSIE ITEM Number 110, contains a tribute to all the men of the Amphibious Forces who manned the U.S. Navy Landing Craft, Infantry in WWII. And thank you, for letting us tell all your stories

## Muster Roll

During WWII 723 LCIs were commissioned into the U.S. Navy. At its high point, this Association had over 3,000 veteran members. That number would have been enough to provide the officers and crews for approximately 100 LCI(L) s. On this date, September 2, 2020, the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the War, we have 91 veterans still aboard as active Association members and we are tracking down 12 who are AWOL (not current with their membership). Our current number of veterans would now only provide the crews of 4 LCI(L)s or 2 LCI(G)s. We are extremely happy to still have all of these U.S. Navy Veterans still aboard!

## USS LCI Association Annual Reunion 2020 CANCELLED

You will have received this ELSIE ITEM a little after September 2, 2020 which was the 75th Anniversary of the signing of surrender documents by the Japanese government that brought a formal end to World War II. The LCI Association Reunion planned with the World War II Museum in New Orleans was cancelled along with all the commemoration events at the Museum. The Museum staff concluded that the risk posed to the WWII veterans by the COVID 19 virus in the City of New Orleans was too great. The Executive Board of the Association agreed. As of this date a 2021 reunion has not been scheduled.

*Robert E Wright Jr.* President and Treasurer  
USS Landing Craft Infantry Association, Inc

## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

HOPE For Today and Tomorrow  
Reprint from ELSIE ITEM 95, modified.

NASB Psalm 42: 1, 2, 5, 11  
Malachi 3:6 Romans 10:17 James 1:17  
Isaiah 45:22 Psalm 31:24

As a Chaplain I feel the subject of hope is appropriate anytime. In today's environment there seems to be a lack of hope expressed in a number of ways. We see evidence in the excessive use of drugs, alcohol, the need to be excessively entertained, the need to improve on our physical bodies in the gym. All of these-good or bad-may point to something to fill an undefined emptiness or to obtain a sense of fulfillment. The need to continue these temporal things do not give complete satisfaction.

We may live with a hope that things will get better; or some may give up on life, reasoning that hopelessness is our present and future destiny. Without selecting one particular practice, I see a search for hope and complete satisfaction in protests of all kinds.

In the churches that I have been part of we used to sing "My hope is built on nothing less Than Jesus' blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand; All other ground is sinking sand." The last line of this stanza we would change to read "All other rocks are SHAM rocks."

Verse 2 "When darkness veils His lovely face, I rest on His unchanging grace; In every high and stormy gale My anchor holds within the veil..." by Edward Mote, 1797-1874

We can place our faith in government. But we know political promises and any other human entity, though well intended, fails to provide hope so some become discouraged, disillusioned and even suicidal. I believe all these things described reveals a thirst for

hope. Psalm 42 describes the desire "for hope" and the source. :1 "As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for you O God." :2 "My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?" :5, 11 "Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him for the help of His presence."

The psalmist indicates that his source of hope is God. That has never changed because we have a God who never changes. He tells us in the Bible (his word) Malachi 3:6 "For I, the Lord, do not change." (He is immutable).

Do I want hope or the faith to believe? Read the Bible; it is God's communication to us.

In Romans 10:17 it says "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of God." God our creator and sustainer is the God of hope. The Apostle James in Chapter 1:17 of his epistle tell us "Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights (God), with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow." God himself invites all of us as follows:

Isaiah 45:22 "Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other."

Psalm 31:24 "Be strong and let your heart take courage, all you who hope in the Lord".

He is our source of HOPE. We can depend on Him. He has a perfect track record; because he is omnipotent, (all Powerful), Omniscient (knows all), Omnipresent (always present) and above all He is Holy and Eternal. What a great GOD we have!

*Ebenezer* (I Samuel 7:12)

RM-1/C Abe Lorenzo LCI 47, 409



# In Memoriam

LCI 69  
George Oakes

LCI 77 Flotilla Doctor  
Richard Martin MD

LCI 366  
Marino Rubio

LCI 373  
Moss P. Mills

LCI 415  
Doyle Wingard

LCI 438  
James Roberts

LCI 470  
Larry Shroy

LCI 496  
Ben Stables

LCI 568  
Joseph Dumenigo

LCI 636  
Michael J. Della Rocco

LCI 690  
Donald West

LCI 726  
Jesse H. Metzgar

LCI 747  
Palmer Woodcock

LCI 884  
Roderick "Doc" Dockery

LCI 1063  
Eugene Koch

LCI 1091 Korea  
Henry Gieske

LCI 1093 CO  
Howard Moore

LSM 311  
Raymond Olley







## Gator Gossip

By Jeff Veesenmeyer

World War Two ended 75 years ago this month. The horror, fear, and despair of servicemen and women was suddenly replaced with relief, hope, and rejoicing.

This issue will focus on the wars end. The memories and events that took place during the later half of 1945 create another chapter in the history of the LCI.

While researching these events I was struck by how sudden the Pacific Theater went from all-out war to peaceful coexistence with a ruthless enemy. Most Japanese troops laid down their arms as ordered by their Emperor. They followed all instructions by the occupation troops. Landings in Japan, Korea, China, and the bypassed Pacific islands were mostly peaceful. The Japanese were fully cooperative. Both sides found their enemy to be human like themselves.

There were some incidents of kamikaze attacks and guerilla fighters who wouldn't face the shame of surrender. One of those stories involved a kamikaze attack on the *LCI(L) 818* after the cease fire.

The LCI National Association was contacted by author Dan King. Here is his email message.

Greetings from Texas. I'm working on a history of the kamikaze and learned that *LCI(L) 818* was at Iheya Island on the last day of WWII and experienced an attack by several Japanese dive bombers on the

night of August 15. I am hoping to find the after-action report, or some other official report from the ship for this time frame.

Best Regards,

Dan King - Author  
- The Last Zero Fighter  
- A Tomb Called Iwo Jima  
- The Yalu River Boys

Robert Wright Jr. did provide King with the War Diary for Group 56, August of 1945. Wright's father was a member of Group 56 on the *LCI(L) 996*. Although the war diary did not provide the information King was hoping for, he plans to look further in the National Archives when they reopen.

King lived in Japan and speaks fluent Japanese. This enabled him to interview five WWII Japanese pilots and author one of his books titled "The Last Zero Fighter."

His interviews with these five men debunked some of our historical theories about Pearl Harbor, Midway, Leyte Gulf and the kamikazes. They had human emotions like any young man sent off to war. One pilot recalled a mission in the Philippines. As he popped up over a hill to attack the fleet in the Gulf of Leyte, he saw an incredible sight. There were hundreds of Allied ships stretching in all directions. He thought, "We've lost the war."

**Cover Photo:** The fireworks on the front cover occurred when news spread that Japan had surrendered. The crews on ships in Leyte Gulf let loose with flares and guns in celebration.

**SEND LETTERS TO:** [JeffreyMktg@gmail.com](mailto:JeffreyMktg@gmail.com)  
or my mailing address listed on Page 2.

## THOUGHTS ON THE END OF WWII

*Abe Laurenzo*

The mood aboard the *LCI 47* was very good during the spring of 1945 because we sensed an end to the war in Europe. We had been busy transporting Yugoslav re-patriots and German prisoners from North Africa to Yugoslavia and Italy.

On one of our mail and beer runs we docked in Palermo, Sicily. While there, we received the news that Benito Mussolini and Claretta Petacci were killed. There were no noticeable tears shed by the Sicilians. In fact, they were joyful.

In early May of 1945 while we were in Naples, Italy we received word that Adolf Hitler shot himself, Eva Braun overdosed on cyanide, and Germany had unconditionally surrendered. VE Day 8 May 1945. The morale aboard ship was great as we could now anticipate sailing back to the USA which we did, as I recall in late June or early July.

We stopped at the island of Bermuda where we overdosed on fresh milk. We arrived in Little Creek, Virginia and were happy to be back in the good old USA.

I was delighted to go on leave in August after about 1 ½ years away from home, including the invasions of Normandy and south France. While on leave, the A bombs were dropped on Hiroshima 6 Aug and Nagasaki 9 Aug. That made my leave and time at home more enjoyable. My birthday was August 7. The bombing dates were easy for me to remember. It was like a birthday celebration for me. VJ Day 2 Sep 1945.

Upon return to the ship I found a happy crew and Officers, knowing we would not be assigned to Pacific duty.

After a short while in Little Creek, VA in early October 1945 we made preparations to sail to Louisville, KY for Navy Day celebration via New Orleans and up the Mississippi and Ohio rivers. On the way we stopped at Memphis, TN and would you believe, we tied up to a tree! When we turned on our signal lights at night we could see thousands of insects in the beam of light and the insects covered the deck of the ship. We arrived in Louisville for Navy Day as planned. While there some of us visited Churchill Downs and I had an interview on the local radio station in conjunction with the Navy Day celebration on Oct 27.

We headed back to Little Creek where I started training a new Radioman to replace me in anticipation of my discharge from the Navy on March 4, 1946.

It did not take me long to adapt to civilian life, but I have never regretted serving the US Navy Amphibious forces. I believe that the training and responsibilities I had for two years aboard *LCI's 47* and *409* prepared me for a 39 year career in the purchasing and contracting profession, moving from a purchasing clerk to Chief of the Major Procurement Branch of Watervliet Arsenal in Watervliet, NY and retiring in 1985.

The names of the Officers and many crew members of both *LCI's* are embedded on my mind and I often think of our service together with pride.



## VJ-Day Memories

**W**ars Over! Those two words traveled around the world on August 15, 1945. The announcement was met with jubilation, triumph, relief, and then sadness for those who had died.

On Task Force 38, Admiral Halsey yelled “Yippee,” and pounded shoulders of everyone nearby. He ordered flags for “Well Done” to be hoisted. To be safe he ordered carrier pilots to shoot down all snoopers – not vindictively, but in a friendly sort of way. One carrier pilot asked his wingman, “What does he mean by not vindictively?” The wingman answered, “I think he means for us to use only three guns instead of all six.”

Everyone who experienced WWII has memories of the day the war finally ended. Most remember where they were, what they were doing and how they heard about Japan’s surrender. Reactions were different for those serving on the home front versus those on the front lines. In Washington D.C. a conga line of servicemen, women, and workers formed as they danced around the White House. Anchorages in the Pacific erupted in fireworks from guns, search lights and flares. On board the hospital ship USS Rixey off Okinawa, the reaction of the crew was “calm.” Navy corpsman Charles Daniel went topside and smoked a cigar. He looked out over the ocean and thought about his wife and the one-month old daughter he had not yet met.

When sailors were asked, “Where were you when the war ended?” these are some of their memories.

*Captain Edwin Leyton, Guam* – When I brought the news to Admiral Chester Nimitz, he didn’t get jubilant or jump up and down like the others. He just smiled in his own calm way.



*Rod Scurlock QM3/c*

**Rod Scurlock, LCI(G) 565** - We just finished up the landings in Okinawa (April 1945) and sailed back to Pearl Harbor. We were preparing to get repaired to go to Japan proper. My orders were there to return to the states for officer training. I moved into a barracks there at the airport, and in a few days, I was sent to a troop ship, and we sailed for the states.

We entered San Francisco harbor the day they dropped the atom bomb on Japan. I was sent to a barracks on Treasure Island and we were given shore leave for a couple of days in Frisco. I was able to visit some relatives living there and toured the town with a couple of friends as well.

They gave us seven days to report to Farragut for refresher courses before sending us to our destination for training. I caught a bus and had the good fortune to sit



next to a very, attractive young lady. We soon were reacquainted and had a pleasant trip up the coast.

I need to digress here a moment: (On the ship I slept in a top bunk and when general quarters was sounded, I reached over to the stanchion that was at the head of my bunk, slid to the deck and ran for my gun.) Well, back on the bus-- I fell asleep, and as we were pulling into Olympia Washington bus station, the bus rocked back and forth throwing us around a little. My first thought was that the ship had been hit and I flung my arm out to grab the stanchion and smacked that young lady right in the face. I had quite a time trying to explain that one! However, she was very, nice about it.

I had enough time to go home for a couple of days and got acquainted with my family. When I had to leave, my parents drove me to Seattle where I had to catch the train to Farragut. As we were approaching the train depot, all at once everything broke loose. People were running all over the street until we had to stop. Everyone was laughing and shouting, hugging, and kissing, and finally someone told us the war was over! WHAT A GREAT DAY FOR AMERICA!!!!!!

**Abe Laurenzo LCI(L) 409, 47** – I was raised a good Italian boy in New York. I spoke Italian. I was stationed in the Med and North Africa aboard ship. I would escort officers to purchase food due to being able to speak Italian. I was in Sicily when Mussolini was killed and witnessed the joy and celebration. I was assigned shore patrol with .45pistol and NO clip. The Sicilians called me Neopolitan, due to my accent. I witnessed the joy when Hitler was killed. I was home on leave when the atomic bombs were dropped on Japan. After WWII, I worked for the VA in the Bronx.



**Harry Ritzel CMoMM**

**Harry Ritzel CMoMM, LCI(R) 341-** We were tied to a pier at Manus in the Admiralty Islands. All the rocket ships were being prepared for the invasion of Japan. I had just finished an overhaul of the engines. The deck plates were being laid back down. Somebody yelled over that the war is over. Yeah okay... just another rumor we thought. After hearing the news, a second and then a third time, we started to believe it was true. A chaplain set up a few boxes on the pier to make an altar. Sailors from all the ships moored there joined in a prayer service. My only thought was, when am I going home. I'd been touring the Pacific for 23 months and been on 11 invasions without any leave. A previous skipper told me he couldn't give me leave. He told me that as Chief Machinist Mate, I was the most important man on the ship. So, I went to see the new skipper and asked when I can go home. He promised me that he'd get me off the ship as soon as the surrender was final. He did. But I sat for two more months at Manus waiting

to get a ship home. Others with fewer months than me were shipping home. I heard that a destroyer escort was leaving for San Francisco. I went to the officer in charge to see if I could get on that ship. He checked the list and discovered there was a "2" in the month column after my name instead of 23. I was in San Francisco 11 days later.



*Vaughn Odene Brown SM1/c*

***Vaughn Brown, LCI(R) 1077*** - In August 1945 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. 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.

***Vernon Wallace, F1/c LCI 662*** - After Basic, a new Fireman 1/c, I got orders to ship to a Replacement Depot on Okinawa. I sailed 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 the first ships to stop at Taiwan and other islands that had been "island hopped." Whole Japanese garrisons were left and needed to surrender as a unit. It gave us a chance to check out abandoned Japanese equipment.

***Roger Walker SG2/c, LCI (FF) 657*** - On 14 June 1945 we received orders to sail for Pearl Harbor to overhaul the ship's engines. Our sailing orders took the ship out of harm's way and the typhoon that devastated Okinawa. After we regrouped, our convoy got underway from Pearl for the Japanese Islands. I had a feeling I wouldn't return from this Japan voyage. Then we were

instructed to return to Pearl Harbor. "Thank God for the Bomb". I was one proud sailor to be able to watch the VJ – Victory Day Parade in downtown Honolulu.

***Ensign R. C. Haines USS LCI(L) 450*** - July 26, 1945: It was back to the forward area and the expected attack on Japan. While on the way to Guam rumors that Japan had surrendered came over the radio. Then it came: THE WAR IS OVER! After picking up the rest of our group, the course was set for Japan arriving in time for the signing of the surrender papers on board the USS Missouri.

***Loyel "Bud" Hoseck, LCI(L) 1091*** – Diary entry August 6, 1945: A-bomb Hiroshima. Mail run. Got several letters. When the war ended 1091 was alongside *Missouri* delivering mail.

***Lt. (jg) Fred Lee, USS LSM 57*** – We were at anchor in Saipan Harbor when we got the great, exciting news that the Japanese had surrendered, and the war was over. All the ships in the harbor were blowing their whistles in celebration. It was an unbelievable V.J. Day for everyone. We heard about the surrender ceremonies being held aboard the battleship Missouri in Tokyo Bay, but knew very little about the dropping of the atomic bomb. Everyone was speculating on what would happen next, and we all had thoughts of getting home as soon as possible.

***Arthur J. Rubino, LCI(M) 740*** – Okinawa June 1945. Got the good news that if we got the engine fixed by putting in a new bull gear, we would head for Pearl Harbor. Boy did we work night and day. June 14, 1945 we started for Pearl. June 21 reached Saipan. Left Saipan and reached Pearl Harbor July 9,

1945. Had a new engine put in and new 40mm gun on the bow. On August 11, left for shake down cruise to Maui. Got back to Pearl and heard the war ended. Made a couple of trips to Kauai and then they stripped our new 40mm and the mortars off. We were changed to LCI(L) sent to Wake Island, Guam, Leyte, Truk to help transport troops.



*Bill Simmons SM3/c*

***Bill Simmons SM3/c LCI(L) 756*** – After Okinawa, our crew got the joyous news to head back to Pearl Harbor for rest, rehab and repair. We would need to prepare for the next big invasion...Japan. About three-fourths of the crew hadn't set foot on land for 6 months. While in Hawaii, shore liberty got even better. The war ended.



# LCI's Lost as a Result of Enemy Action

## Events as Captured by WWII Combat Photographers



At Omaha Beach the LCI's of USCG Flotilla 10 took the brunt of the German opposition (above) LCI(L) 85 with Starboard List (top right) LCI(92) and (bottom right) LCI(L) 93 abandoned



LCI(L) 20 at Anzio Showing Effects of a 500 lb German bomb

## North Africa and Mediterranean

1. USS LCI(L)-1 sunk off Bizerte, Tunisia, 17 August, 1943, by aerial bombing
2. USS LCI(L)-20 sunk off Anzio, Italy, 22 January 1944, by aerial bombing
3. USS LCI(L)-32 sunk off Anzio, Italy, 26 January 1944, by naval mine

## European

4. USS LCI(L)-85 sunk Normandy France, 6 June 1944, by mine and shore battery fire
5. USS LCI(L)-91 sunk Normandy France, 6 June 1944, by mine and shore battery fire
6. USS LCI(L)-92 sunk Normandy France, 6 June 1944, by shore battery fire
7. USS LCI(L)-93 sunk Normandy France, 6 June 1944, by shore battery fire
8. USS LCI(L)-232 sunk off Normandy France, 6 June 1944, by naval mine
9. USS LCI(L)-497 sunk Normandy France, 6 June 1944, by shore battery fire
10. USS LCI(L)-553 sunk Normandy France, 6 June 1944, by shore battery fire
11. USS LCI(L)-416 sunk Easy Red Beach Normandy France, 9 June 1944, by mine
12. USS LCI(L)-219 sunk off Normandy France, 11 June 1944, by aerial bombing

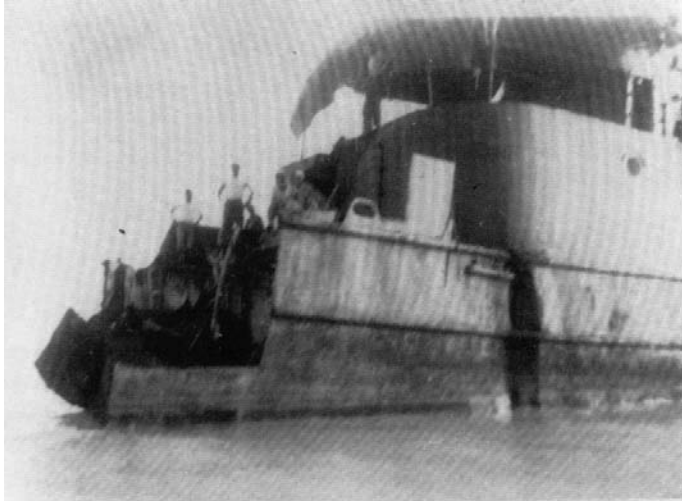


**LCI(L) 339 at Lae New Guinea settled on the bottom showing the damage from a Japanese Bomb**

## Southwest Pacific and Japanese Home Waters

13. USS LCI(L)-339 Lae New Guinea, 4 September 1943, by aerial bombing
14. USS LCI(G)-468 off Guam, 17 June 1944, by aerial torpedo
15. USS LCI(G)-459 off Palau, Caroline Islands, 19 September 1944, a naval mine detonated rocket magazine.
16. USS LCI(L)-1065 off Leyte, Philippine Islands, 24 October 1944, by suicide plane
17. USS LCI(L)-684 off Samar, Philippine Islands, 12 November 1944, by suicide plane (Remained afloat, grounded, but beyond repair)





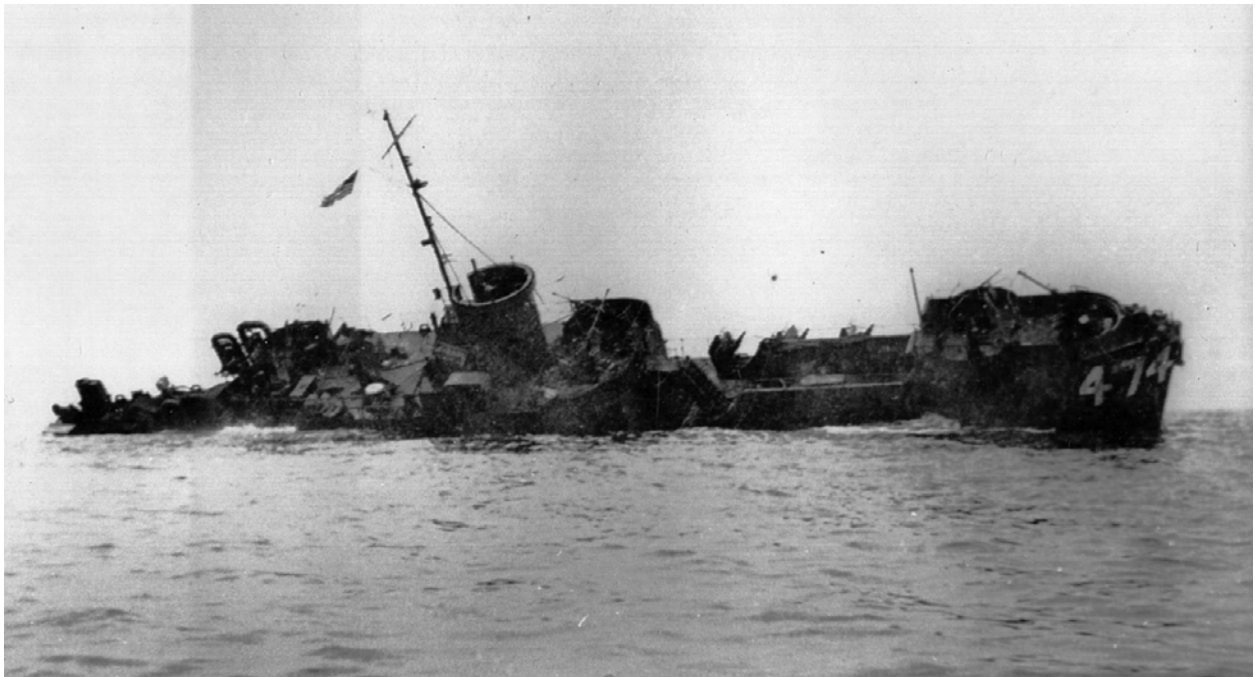
18. USS LCI(G)-365 in Lingayen Gulf, Luzon, Philippine Islands, 10 January 1945, by suicide boat, (remained afloat, but beyond repair)

19. USS LCI(M)-974 Lingayen Gulf, Luzon, Philippine Islands, 10 January 1945, by suicide boat

20. USS LCI(G)-82 off Okinawa, Ryukyu Islands, 4 April 1945. by suicide boat

21. USS LCI(G)-396 (above) off Palau, Caroline Islands, 18 January 1945 by naval mine (Aft of troop compartment 2 stayed afloat, Remainder of hull converted to IX-212 as repair shop storage and receiving barracks, with medical center for small craft)

22. USS LCI(L)-600 sunk at Ulithi, Caroline Islands, 12 January 1945, by torpedo from Midget Sub



23. USS LCI(G)-474 (above) sunk off Iwo Jima, Volcano Islands, 17 February 1945, by shore battery fire



Above: LCI(L) 1065 burning in Leyte Gulf after being hit by a suicide plane. The picture show a number of ships including other LCIs are going to her assistance

**To: Any and All Long Term Member of the USS LCI Association**

The Association is seeking the old issues of the ELSIE ITEM to assemble into complete sets to donate to the archives of various Museum Historical collections. We are especially interested in the early issues from Number 1 to 69. If you have all or part of these issue numbers and wish to donate them to a good cause;

Please contact: LCI President, Robert Wright by phone, email or Regular Mail

# Amphibious landings secure the surrender

By Jeff Veesenmeyer

At first light of L-Day 30 August 1945, white flags could be seen flying all around Tokyo Bay. This provided the first evidence that the Japanese would comply with surrender terms. They had been instructed to render shore batteries ineffective and raise white flags over them. The gun positions appeared abandoned.

While the war was over, peace had not been secured. Military planners faced the problem of how the Japanese military would accept a sudden wars end. It had been drilled into every fighting man in Japan that surrender was worse than death. A fleet of 258 allied ships had entered Tokyo Bay. Nine LCIs (LCI 438, 441, 450, 457, 458, 469, 726, 752, 759) were part of Task Force 31. Would a fanatical Japanese military accept their Emperor's order and face national disgrace? The white flags were either a good sign or an ugly trap.

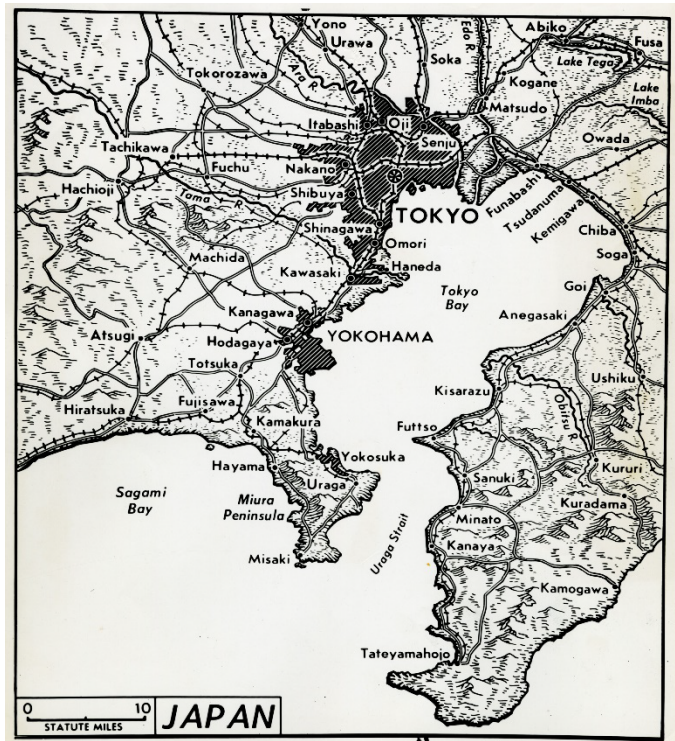


Photo # 80-G-421128 Marines landing in Japan, August 1945

*The 4<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment landing in Japan on 30 August 1945*

At 0558 landing craft carrying Marines of the 4<sup>th</sup> Regiment 6<sup>th</sup> Division hit the beaches

at Futtso. The Army fort there held shore batteries protecting the harbor. At the same time, the first transport plane carrying troops landed at the Atsugi Airfield 30 miles south of Tokyo. The occupation had begun. At both locations, the Japanese had followed instructions to the letter. Coastal guns and mortars had been rendered useless. The fort and airbase were only manned by soldiers with white armbands that identified them as essential maintenance. They acted as tour guides to their conquerors.



*The narrow entrance to Tokyo Bay was well defended by shore batteries on Futtso peninsula and the battleship Negatto at Yokosuka Naval Base.*

Two days earlier Underwater Demolition Team 21 landed on Futtso peninsula. Their mission was to identify and remove obstructions, determine water depth, and map the beach for landing craft. All precautions were in place for possible enemy opposition. The bloody UDT operation at Iwo Jima six months earlier was

still on military planner's minds. Five of the LCIs in Tokyo Bay had also provided UDT gun support at Iwo Jima. They were among the gunboats that withstood a one hour pounding from shore batteries that day. But this day was much different.

The UDT led by Lieutenant Commander Edward Porter Clayton performed beach reconnaissance unopposed. They eventually beached their boats and met with a contingent of Japanese. The Army Coast Artillery soldiers wore white arm bands. The officer in charge surrendered his sword to LCDR Clayton. That marked the first surrender – *ever* - on Japanese soil.



Photo # NH 71599 Japanese surrender on Futtso Saki Peninsula, 28 Aug. 1945

*A Japanese officer surrenders his sword to LCDR Clayton of UDT-21 on Futtso peninsula.*

The guns at Futtso and planes at Atsugi airfield were neutralized by early morning of 30 August. Now the landing at Yokosuka Naval Base and airfield began to unfold. At 0805 a crew from the Fleet Naval Landing Force boarded the battleship *Nagato*. Her guns provided defense of the naval base. A skeleton force of officers and technicians surrendered. Inspection of guns found the

firing locks removed and AA guns were dismantled.

The main landing at Yokosuko Naval Base by the 4<sup>th</sup> Marines went smoothly. By 0930 the airfield and navy yard had been secured. There was no resistance. A British landing party was responsible for securing several small island forts. The few Japanese left there acted as guides and interpreters. The British were amazed at how cooperative they were.

As allied POWs were rescued, their stories of brutal treatment served as a reminder that Japanese were not meek and harmless. All operations continued with extreme caution. Speed was essential in the seizure of ports of entry in the Tokyo Bay. Troops selected for occupying forces were chosen from those with high combat experience. If Tokyo, the seat of Imperial rule was occupied quickly and without incident, then peaceful surrender of the empire was possible.

On 2 September 1945, 1,000 carrier based F4U Corsairs and F6F Hellcats flew over the surrender ceremonies on the USS Missouri. This show of power left little doubt why Japan lost the war.



## Service Memoir of John K. Ashcraft LCI(L) 688

*By Deborah Ashcraft (daughter-in-law). First published in a book for the Bailey Brennan Chandler VFW Post 5892, Hockessin, DE.*

John Kenneth Ashcraft was born 16 January 1926, in Wilmington, DE. At age 17, he enlisted in the United States Navy in May of 1943. He completed Basic Training at Naval Station Newport in Rhode Island. For technical training, he attended Moorhead State Teacher College in Moorhead, KY, where he earned the rate of Electrician Mate (EM).

From November 1943 to February 1944, Ashcraft was stationed in Solomon, MD for amphibious training. He was assigned to a Landing Craft Infantry-Large / USS *LCI(L)* 688.

The LCIs were several classes of seagoing amphibious assault ships utilized during the Second World War and were used to land larger numbers of infantry directly onto beaches. The result was a small steel ship that could land 200 troops, from rear bases on its own bottom. It reached speeds up to 15 knots. Some 923 were built starting in 1943, serving in both the Pacific and European theaters, including a number that were converted into heavily armed beach assault support ships. Commonly call “Elsie Item,” the *LCI(L)* supplemented the small LCAs, LCVPs to get many troops ashore before a dock could be captured or built. As such, they were the largest dedicated beachable infantry landing craft.

In May 1944, Ashcraft and the crew of *LCI* 688 made way to Cristobal, Panama, along with *LCI* 615. They entered the

Panama Canal at Coco Solo. John and his shipmates crossed the equator on 12 July 1944. Next, they made way to Hollandia, New Guinea, joining with 11 other LCIs where they eventually joined the Seventh Fleet and its 67-ship convoy.

By utilizing an LCI smokescreen, the convoy entered the Lingayen Gulf. Their mission was to seize the Central Luzon area as part of the larger campaign to liberate the Philippines.

In the early morning of 6 January 1945, the convoy was attacked by Japanese aircraft, but the invasion fleet pressed further on. As the large Allied Force approached the shores of Lingayen, the combined U.S. Naval and Australian Naval forces began bombarding suspected Japanese positions along the Lingayen coast.

On 9 January the LCI Flotilla 22 landed the U.S. 6<sup>th</sup> Army on a 20-mile beachhead. They encountered an onslaught of Japanese suicide attacks from Q-boats with torpedoes, armed swimmers with mines and kamikaze air attacks, plus light artillery fire from shore batteries.

The LCI Flotilla 22 also took part in operations in the Subic Bay of Grande Island. And in February 1945, they joined operations in the mine-infested waters of Mariveles Bay for the Bataan Peninsula offensive.

For his service aboard *LCI(L)* 688 during the landings in the Lingayen Gulf, San Felipe, Grande Island, and Mariveles Bay, John Ashcraft received the Philippine Liberations Ribbon with one bronze star and the Asian-Pacific Campaign Ribbon with one bronze star.



Ashcraft and his shipmates aboard the *LCI(L) 688* participated in various troop movements in Philippines during 1945. After the war ended, they docked in Leyte for repairs and painting. In September they set course for Jinson, Korea and then Tientsin, China. *LCI(L) 688* new roles were as a communications relay ship, naval escort for merchant ships, and as a pilot ship in the North Channel Harbor for occupation forces.

(see more about *LCI(L) 688* during occupation on the next 2 pages.)

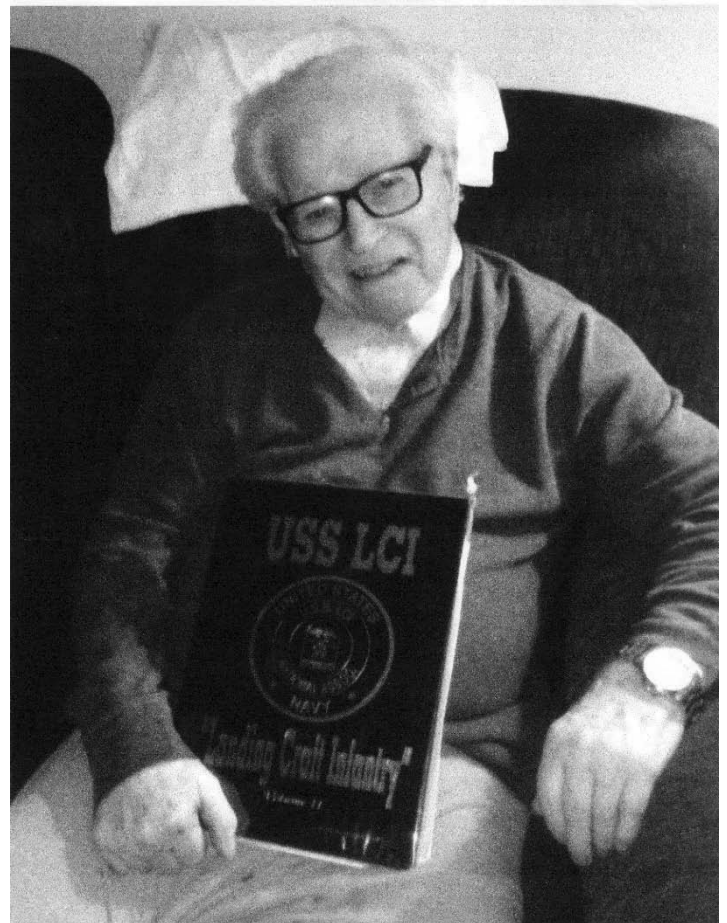
Ashcraft was honorably discharged from the Navy on 30 May 1946. During his time in service he held the rates of Able Seaman (S), Seaman Second Class (S2/c) Fireman Second Class (F2/c), and Electrician Mate Third Class (EM3/c). As for the vessel he called home, the *LCI(L) 688* was decommissioned and struck from the Naval Register. She was transferred to the Argentine Navy in 1948 and redesignated ARA BDI No. 10 (Q-63).

Ashcraft would go on to marry Ruth Hindsley and adopt two children, Kenneth and Susan. He worked 42 years for Diamond State Telephone (later Bell Atlantic and now Verizon Communications). John resides in Wilmington, DE. Having the distinction of being one of the last World War II veterans remaining in VFW Post 5892, he is now a lifetime member. His son Kenneth Ashcraft is a member of their Men's Auxiliary and Post Chaplain.

John Ashcraft's service in the Navy during WWII was part of a family tradition. His father Leon T Ashcraft was a veteran of World War One. His son Kenneth served 27 years in the active Army, the reserves and

National Guard. His grandson Anthony serves in the Delaware Air National Guard as an Aircraft Structural Maintenance Technician. He maintains 166<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing's fleet of C-130H aircraft. The tradition lives on, as Anthony works fulltime at the 166<sup>th</sup> with the intention to complete a full military career and pass the torch onto the next generation.

John's love for his country and his home in Delaware is an inherited trait passed on to his children and their children.



*John Ashcraft at his home in Wilmington, Delaware. John wrote the history of *LCI(L) 688* for the book "USS LCI Landing Craft Infantry" which he proudly holds in this photo.*

# Post War Duty on LCI(L) 688

By Jeff Veesenmeyer

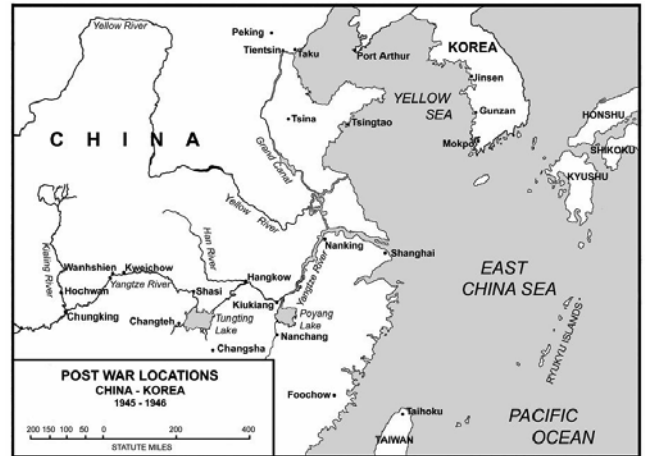
When news broke that the war was over, *LCI(L)* 688 was headed to San Pedro in the Philippines. The crew would have been making ready for the invasion of Japan. Instead, they spent three weeks at San Pedro making ready for transporting occupation forces to the far reaches of Japan's empire.

John Ashcraft had joined the Navy in 1943 when he turned 17. After boot camp and Electrician Mate school, he joined the newly commissioned *LCI(L)* 688. For the next year his ship participated in landings and operations to liberate the Philippines. He had witnessed terrifying kamikaze and suicide boat attacks. It was a relief, not to worry about invading Japan. Now 688 had orders to transport troops to Jinson, Korea.

John Ashcraft EM3/c recalls arriving at Okinawa on 14 September 1945. A storm was brewing. Their task group fueled up and headed northeast to Jinson, Korea. They missed the brunt of Typhoon Ida that was heading for Okinawa. Those ships that rode out the storm in Buckner Bay took a beating. Dozens of ships foundered, crashed into each other, or were driven ashore. Some of the LCIs were driven or steered to shore where they beached in relative safety. But the *LCI(G)* 67 was pushed onto a reef and received major hull damage. She remained high and dry for several months. Eventually she was decommissioned and scrapped.

The *LCI(L)* 688 was on the perimeter of the storm for a day and a half. They fought through 50-foot seas and winds of 70 to 90 knots. "There were waves so high we'd be

out or sight of other ships," said Ashcraft. All ships in the convoy weathered the storm even though being driven within 20 miles of the China coast. They finally arrived at Jinson, Korea, six days late. The Marines had already landed, occupied, and taken surrender from the Japanese forces at Jinson.



Jinson was the name given to the harbor by the Japanese. They had occupied Korea for over three decades. The town was renamed Inchon by the Koreans. It would become famous for McArthur's Inchon Landing during the Korean War. Jinson was not a desirable place for the amphibious sailors. The town was "Hell hole" according to one sailor and the treacherous tides made anchoring difficult. The high tides at Jinson did provide a benefit for amphibious boats. While beached at low tide crews could examine their bottoms and do repairs.

The crew of *LCI(L)* 688 was glad to receive orders to take Marines to Tientsin, China. This city was located about 250 miles across the Yellow Sea at the mouth of the Hai Ho River.

**John Ashcraft EM3/c:** *During my time in the navy I had never seen anyone from home. We were transporting 200 Marines. I saw a guy on deck eating K-rations. It was Earl Roth my buddy from high school in*

*Wilmington, Delaware. Here we were on the other side of the world and two of us from the same high school are on the same small boat together.*

Sediment from the Hai Ho River formed a submerged sand bar in the estuary called Taku Bar. Entering the river and harbor was difficult without a pilot. One of the many duties performed by LCI(L) 688 would be as a pilot boat for U.S. ships entering Tientsin. The city was still in the hands of the Japanese who were awaiting repatriation. Landings were being covered by LCI(M)s from Mortar Support Division Six.

The Chinese were happy to see American sailors. After 35 years of brutal Japanese rule they welcomed the change. This also complicated duties for the amphibians arriving at docks in the harbor. Crowds of well-wishing Chinese flocked around the ships. Small boats, called “Bum Boats” would tie up alongside every available position of LCI(L) 688 to sell their wares. They were selling mostly junk jewelry, novelties, liquor and anything else a sailor might want. Some hawked knock-off Ronson cigarette lighters. They would be stamped “RANSON.” Watches could be bought for \$2.00 to \$5.00.

**John Ashcraft:** *I remember a guy pulled alongside in a sampan. He rolled up his sleeve to show me dozens of watches all the way up his arm. I didn't buy one.*

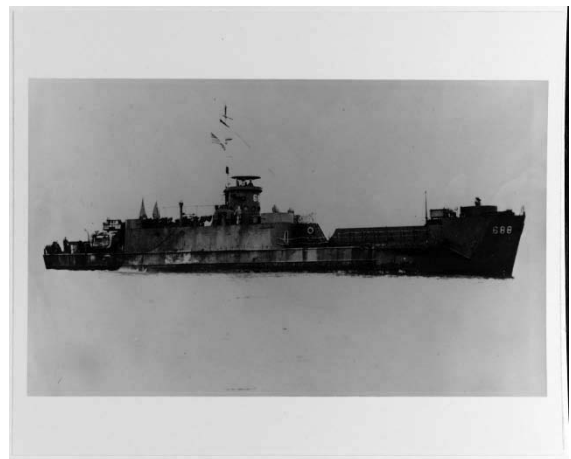
Shanghai was about 600 miles south of Taku Bar. The LCI and LCS ships made frequent trips between Jinson, Taku and Shanghai during the Fall of 1945. Shanghai was a good liberty town. After months of powdered milk, mashed potatoes and spam, sailors longed for a good meal. The restaurants and street vendors obliged. “I ate three dinners on liberty in Shanghai,”

confessed one sailor. The Army set up a P.X. and sold Schlitz or Budweiser for 10 cents a can – best deal in Shanghai.

The amphibians were assigned all kinds of duties. Some were still dangerous. The LCS gunboats were frequently assigned mine sweeping duties. They were not well equipped for this hazardous duty and some casualties occurred.

**John Ashcraft EM2/c:** *We went back to Jinson Bay were assigned temporary duty as a communication relay ship and naval escort to merchant ships. Then it was back to Korea as pilot ship for the entrance to the harbor channel. We were also a liberty ship for outlying anchorages, a barracks ship for shore patrol, and a mail ship for the fleet post office and the main anchorage.*

LCI(L) 688 left Asia in December of 1945 and headed for Honolulu. Upon arriving there, Ashcraft had one thing on his mind...fresh milk. “You don't know how much you appreciate something you don't have,” said Ashcraft. “I hadn't had fresh milk in two years. I think I drank three big glasses of it.”



*LCI(L) 688 went into mothballs after the war. She was sold to the Argentine Navy in 1948.*

# DURING WWII WHEN DUTY CALLED YOUNG MEN SERVED ON LCIs

## THIS IS YOUR PLACE IN HISTORY BY ROBERT WRIGHT

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When the War ended most of the men in the service began making plans for returning home and picking up their lives where they had left off years earlier. For many, the lives they had left behind no longer existed. During the years they were away, the world had changed, their county had changed. But most of all they themselves had changed. There were new lives to be begun, with new occupations, new wives, new children, new houses in new towns and cities. For most returning service men, the War was something to be quickly relegated to their distant past.

But there were others who took to the task of recording the events of the war years. They attempted to make sense of the greatest cataclysms in human history that would forever be referred to as World War II. There were the military historians and tacticians and planners who looked at the actions of the United States Army, Navy, Marines, Merchant Marine, and the new Army Air Force. Their goal was to learn from successes and failures and then to make changes that would allow the United States to retain its new position as the military

leader of the free world. There were individuals who attempted to create literary works and movie scripts that would bring fame and financial rewards to themselves. For many of these writers there was no deviation from the facts that was too large if it stood in their way of making it “big.” There were others who wrote to mainly memorialize specific individuals or events of that War.

There were Historians, both professional and amateur, that took to the task of attempting to record the immeasurable number of events that made up WWII. They would document the cumulative actions of millions of men, women and children who had experienced the War. For the historians this was to be a slow methodical task of compiling and confirming information from available sources including the individual participants, millions of photographs, thousands of movie reels, and mountains of written reports, operational plans, and maps.

This author has personally read so many accounts of the events in World War II that involved the U.S. Navy’s

Amphibious Forces than he cannot begin to recall all specific facts from the large number of individual operations that these forces were engaged. I have found that a common pattern has emerged from these writings. What follows are excerpts from a wide array of observations from different sources. After reading them you too might conclude that the men of the United States Navy's Amphibious Forces had indeed provided something valuable and uniquely critical to the war effort to defeat the combined AXIS forces of WWII.

**1. The following came from an address by Phil Goulding to the members at the reunion of the LCI Association in St Louis MO on April 13, 1996. Mr. Gouding served as a Lt.(jg) aboard the LCI(L) 506 that had made the D-Day Landings at Normandy. After the war he made a career in the Pentagon that included the title, Assistant Secretary of Defense. While in this position he had the opportunity to build relationships with many high ranking officers from the various branches. From a conversation with Lt. General Bruce Brown USAF:**

*... he made the following point about the Amphibious Forces. In earlier*

*wars, he said, brave men with leveled rifles marched forward in spread formation, not only into enemy rifle shot, but into enemy cannon shot as well. In the trench warfare of World War I, brave men, on command, piled over the top and rushed into enemy machine gun fire. In World War II, said General Brown, nothing more approximates those kinds of head on tactics than the beach invasions of the U.S. Amphibious Forces. Mr. Goulding concluded, I had not thought of the General's comparison, but agree in full with it.*

**2. Father Paschal Kerwin was one of the many chaplains serving in the Mediterranean. He wrote of his experiences in the book**

## **“BIG MEN OF THE LITTLE NAVY”**

### **PREFACE**

*This war, as everyone now knows, saw a new type of Amphibious warfare which has added many words to our everyday language: "D-Day," "H-Hour," "landing barge," "half-track," "amphib," and so on. The United States and other Allied nations may claim to have established many beachheads all over the world — beachheads that eventually served as springboards for final victory over the aggressor nations. And it was the beachheads that brought about the phenomenal birth of the Amphibious Forces, known, and justly, as the*



*"Little Navy." Naturally, an Amphibious Force is the first to go in. It is up to the man at the helm of each of those landing craft to steer them straight into the objective. There is no doubt that to be an Amphib takes plenty of intestinal fortitude.*

*The Amphibious Forces are composed of little men — little men in the sense that they came from the farms, factories, cities and towns and villages of this nation. They are the men who, when the operation started, grew into big men through a display of valor and heroic daring that the world had never before seen. They had to learn a new job, and quickly adapted themselves to it. These were the men for whom the words bravery, courage and spirit might have been coined. They cannot be praised too highly.*

*There, in a few short paragraphs, you have the purpose of the following pages. They are the writer's attempt to give you the lowdown on what made the Amphibious Forces click; to assign some part of the proper credit to the Big Men who rode the Little Ships.*

*It is my cherished hope that their share in the successes of the Mediterranean theater of operations may never be forgotten. If this book, in some small way, helps to keep alive the name of the Amphibs, it will have served its author's design.*

**CHAPLAIN PASCHAL E. KERWIN,**  
*Lieutenant, Chaplains' Corps*  
*United States Naval Reserve*

### **3. THE PERSONAL WAR NOTES OF VICE ADM L. S. SABIN**

In June of 1942, a U. S. Navy Commander serving as Staff Gunnery Officer for Commander, Battleships, U. S. Pacific Fleet was ordered to report to Commander, Landing Craft, Atlantic Fleet for duty in Amphibious operations. Thus, did Lorenzo S. Sabin become one of the very few battleship officers who ended up commanding a flotilla of Landing Craft, Infantry.

With the Battle of Midway behind him, Sabin reported to Norfolk, Virginia, for his new assignment. To our great benefit, this young regular Navy officer kept what he called "battle notes" throughout the time he organized and led LCI Flotilla Two through the North African and Sicilian invasions.

As he opened his account, Sabin commented:

*"I was one of a very few regular navy officers ordered for command duty in this force of very strange and totally unorthodox little ships who were later to write a new page of glorious history for the United States Navy in the invasions of enemy territory all over the world. Except for the very few regulars who were to command Flotillas of these ships, all other officers and the greater percentage of men were reserves who never before had seen deep blue water."*

As the account continues it is obvious that Admiral Sabin (to give him the rank he was later to acquire)

is obviously very proud of the accomplishments of the men and ships under his command. In these notes, he says:

*"...in testimony to those magnificent young Americans whose initiative, imagination, character and courage more than offset their lack of experience as military men and their unfamiliarity with the sea."*

From October through December of 1942, Sabin was busy with a multitude of organizational problems. He was ordered to organize and train the flotilla by Christmas of 1942, a seemingly impossible job with only 24 of the ships built and six more to come later.

Shuttling between Solomons Island, Maryland and Little Creek, Virginia, he noted that he had only one officer besides himself who had been to sea before. The ships he describes as:

*"...in bad shape materially. The navigation equipment is crude. Calibration of magnetic compasses is hampered by inexperience and ignorance. Gyros are mercury cup affairs which are no good because the mercury spills out every time the ships put to sea"*

Flotilla Two finally sailed from Norfolk on February 15, 1943. The weather was bitterly cold with the temperature standing at 10 degrees above zero with a biting wind. Some of Sabin's descriptions will bring back vivid memories to other LCIers who made that Atlantic crossing:

*"Men are beginning to get sick; ships are making heavy weather. The bridge is open and it is almost impossible to stay up there for more than an hour without extreme discomfort. Have on woolen socks, flannel underwear, khaki heavy coveralls, arctics, face mask, woolen gloves (mittens), heavy weather leather gloves and sheepskin coat. Still cold. All stoves out in the ship. (I knew this was going to happen and begged BuShips (Bureau of Ships) to do something about it before we departed. They piddled around but did nothing effective."*

Admiration for the LCI came through clearly as Sabin commented:

*"This ship, a little spit-kit 150 feet long and about twenty feet beam, is tough. Lays over on her side and cracks back like a ship. Rides up the crest of a wave and falls into the trough, shaking and quivering. No leaks as yet."*

Toughing it out through the Atlantic winter storms, the flotilla finally reached Bermuda on February 18, 1943, and had a period of respite and repair before tackling the rest of the crossing.

After a short time of social amenities, including paying calls on Viscount, Vice Admiral Curtis, R.N., Commanding the British Station, preparations got underway for sailing in convoy. At convoy conferences some senior officers expressed doubt and concern about whether or not LCIs could make it across the Atlantic. With some experience now to back up his optimism, Sabin notes:

*"...(I) told them to stop worrying and let us do it for them -worrying I mean. We'll make it. These little spit-kits are tough - -and the personnel are tougher!"*

Sabin's confidence was borne out. The LCIs performed well during the hectic, stormy twenty-day crossing. Citing many difficulties and, in particular, troubles that other types of ships were having, he notes:

*"I was proud of these kids in the LCI(L)s. Not one was behind to the extent that the convoy was turned around. Maybe they wouldn't have turned around for an LCI( L). But they didn't have to. Not one LCI(L) has given the convoy any trouble. The kids have repaired their breakdowns as they went along and have kept plugging".*

On the 21st of February 1943, the Convoy Commander asked Sabin if he would like to proceed on his own with the LCIs. Enthusiastically accepting, Flotilla Two left the seven-knot convoy to strike out at twelve knots for Gibraltar. Sabin was very proud to receive a final message from the Convoy Commander:

*"Safe passage of convoy largely due to handling of LCI( L)s and good judgement displayed"*

On the 23rd of March 1943, with Gibraltar in sight, Sabin, recognizing that his flotilla was the first flotilla of American landing craft to make the Atlantic crossing under their own power, decided to make his entrance in grand style:

*".. I decided to give them a show. Formed the ships in column and told them to hoist at the gaff the biggest American Ensign they had. They looked good - and I was proud of them."*

Full of pride in his "spit-kits", Sabin made his official call the next day on Admiral Lewis, Senior British Naval Officer in Command at Gibraltar. Lewis was full of questions about the LCIs and, after hearing Sabin's replies startled Sabin by saying:

*"Quite frankly, we never expected you to make it with all your ships. It is an amazing accomplishment and one that speaks much for the adaptability of your people as seamen. " And then he shook his head slowly and said, half to himself "And with all those inexperienced people!"*

The proud American commander of Flotilla Two did get a bit of a comeuppance, when he asked the British Admiral what he thought of their entrance into port.

*"A jolly good show," the Admiral replied, but not so wise!"*

*I was a little taken aback and said, "Why, sir?" "Well," he replied, "I would have expected you to bring them in at least three or four abreast. But you had them in tandem thereby giving every spy in Algeciras, Spain, a perfect count of your numbers!"*

Perhaps somewhat hopeful, Sabin notes that the comment was made in good humor and with a touch of laughter.

Sabin's notes conclude with fascinating and detailed accounts of the invasion of Sicily. Perhaps one of his most moving and vivid description is that of LCI(L) 1 at Sicily.

*"Lieutenant (junior grade) Robinson, the skipper, came in through the darkness for his landing with nearly two hundred troops. A short distance from the beach an enemy shell exploded in the pilot house killing the engine-order telegraph man and seriously wounding his helmsman. As the dead man slumped over, he pushed the engine order telegraph to full speed ahead. The engine room, not knowing a dead man had given the order, responded. So, with no rudder control and making full speed the ship hit into the beach. She swung broadside to, she lost both ramps, broached and sat cradled between two rocks. As she lay there helpless, she was subjected to a withering fire from machine gun nests, pill boxes and 88mms.*

*"Her forward 20mm guns were the only ones which could bear. They went into action. Bullets and fragments everywhere. For over an hour she fought. She knocked out two machine gun nests and two pill boxes and so effectively did she cover the landing of her troops that less than twenty percent were killed or wounded.*

*"Some of the experiences were miraculous. The little radio room was peppered with holes. Yet the radioman, sitting frozen at his key was unharmed - except for shock. Bullets passed in front of him, in back of him, over him, beside him and under his legs. Not one touched him. The performance of the gun crews was equally inspiring as they kept up*

*a steady fire under the pressure of bombs and strafing from the air and bullets from the beach. I have recommended the ship for a Presidential Unit Citation, an honor she richly deserves."*

Admiral Sabin closes with one of the finest tributes ever paid to LCI sailors:

*"...They are a fine bunch of sturdy little fighting ships with an inspiring bunch of fighting American men. Big men in little ships. We don't have all of them we started out with. We knew we wouldn't when we started out - - Somebody has to get killed in a war. But our losses have been amazingly light percentage wise. One ship lost and not more than twenty out of a total of 30 ships with approximately 205 officers and about 800 men. I mean MEN!*

*"We've come a long way since the days of our organization back in Chesapeake Bay. The lawyers, the accountants, the soda jerkers, the bookies, the professors; the bankers, the clerks, the machinists, the laborers - all of them are sailor men now. I had to leave them and I hate it, but I have orders to other duty. We are fighting the war in other places, too"*

NOTE: Admiral Sabin (then Captain) was transferred from Commander Flotilla Two to England to assist planning for Operation Neptune.

**(Previously published in ELSIE ITEM 38)**

**4. Vice Admiral Daniel Barbey  
was the Commander of the Seventh  
Amphibious Force. The following is  
an excerpt from his book  
“MacArthur’s Amphibious Navy”  
Published in 1969.**

Inasmuch as these flat-bottomed LSTs, LCIs, and LCTs would have to spearhead the assault in landing operations, it seemed advisable to take another look at their capabilities. How skilled were their crews; how adequate their gunpower defense; how reliable their engines; and how long could they maintain themselves in food, water, fuel, and ammunition without outside assistance? These were but some of the questions that had to be answered before we could fit them into a new amphibious technique.

New ships mean new crews, but I was hardly prepared to find that the total sea experience aboard most of the beaching ships was just about zero. I do not mean combat experience. I mean enough experience to go aboard a ship and take her from here to there. Here are a couple of examples. In the log of the **LST-471** appears the following:

The crew that came aboard shortly before the ship was waterborne in Vancouver, Washington, were all green hands. There were six officers and about seventy men. None of the officers and only one of the men had ever been to sea in the past.

The log of the **LST-462** carried this notation on its departure from San Francisco:

We sailed hopefully to find it  
(Australia).

My sympathy went out to the few regular officers who had been assigned to these ships as squadron and group commanders. It will always be a mystery to me how those few regulars successfully chaperoned so much inexperience across the seas to far-away Australia.

If the LSTs had green crews, the LCIs had even greener ones. I went aboard a group of LCIs when they arrived in Sydney under the command of Commander Homer F. McGee (LCI(L) Flotilla 7). He had a pretty rough time in sailing his craft from the Chesapeake Bay through the Panama Canal and thence via a lot of small islands to the final destination in Australia. McGee tried to have his group looking shipshape on arrival in Sydney and they probably were, in comparison with the way they looked when they left Virginia. He told me that more than fifty percent of the officers and men had no personnel records or pay accounts when they reported to his ships. Some had not been paid for two months. There was even some uncertainty as to the names of the men who were aboard.

McGee said a storm scattered the ships soon after leaving the Virginia capes; some of them failed to get the word when to change course and never did rejoin the formation. Ninety percent of the crews were seasick. Many men worried as the ships' plates creaked and groaned and fervently wondered if the lady welders in the shipyards had done their jobs properly.

When the LCIs finally reached Panama, McGee undertook to give the



officers of these little craft some elementary instruction in navigation, station keeping, and general onboard routine. They were told that a chronometer is not a watch and it must not be reset daily as some were doing, and that Venus and Jupiter are planets, not stars, which had been bothering some in their effort to navigate by them.

The group that left Panama included a total of forty-seven miscellaneous ships, made up of tugs, a couple of LSTs, some subchasers, and the LCIs. They headed hopefully for Bora Bora in the Society Islands. McGee had plenty of trouble en route. There were frequent engine breakdowns, two men fell overboard, and the subchasers required fresh water and fuel every four days from the two LSTs. There was no surplus water for the LCIs, so these unlucky ships were put on a strict ration.

Finally, after twenty-six days, a friendly patrol plane from Bora Bora guided them into the harbor. They confidently expected to fill up on fresh water, fresh provisions, and the other niceties of normal living, only to find that Bora Bora itself was on short rations. Bora Bora depended on rainfall for its water supply, and at the moment was in difficulty because of a drought. As for food, Bora Bora was on reduced rations while anxiously awaiting the supply ship due in two weeks. So McGee's convoy continued onward as before. One LCI hung up on a reef in Noumea. Another was towed more than a thousand miles because the engineer thought the engines sounded "funny" only to find on inspection in Australia that the funny noises were normal noises, and

that his engines were running satisfactorily.

On my visit to McGee and his ships I stopped in the tiny galley on one of them to thank the cook for the coffee and sandwiches he had supplied for our inspection party. I inquired about his prior experience and how he happened to become the cook. His answer emphasized the haphazard, but apparently workable assignment of personnel in these small craft. He said that when the crew reported aboard the ship, at the building yard the skipper lined them all up and told them a cook was needed. Did anyone know anything about cooking? Since no one else stepped forward, he answered that he had helped his mother do a bit of cooking on the farm. From then on, he said, "I was the cook; and so that's why I'm here."

Adding to the personnel difficulties of the ships was the prevalent idea that the Amphibious Force was the disposal school for ensigns, and that assignment to an amphibious craft was merely a ticket to the battle zone with no return—that the crews and the craft on which they served were the expendables of the new war. LST, it was said, stood for "large, stationary target." The stories were apparently widespread in recruit training centers, for a number of incidents were reported that seemed to bear out this belief. Lieutenant E. F. Norwood, the medical officer aboard an LST during the transpacific crossing from San Francisco, had this to say about the matter:...When the convoy finally sailed, Dr. Norwood said, only one man aboard the LST, besides himself, had ever been out of sight of land. ...Among other interesting incidents of the voyage, the one I remember

was of the Officer of the Deck who thought that by zigzagging he could keep the ship out of the rays of the moon. He did not want his ship to be the target of a Japanese submarine that might be lurking in the shadows.

...Nearly all the young officers in our outfit were college graduates. The few officers who had come up through the enlisted ranks of the regular Navy were almost always a few years older. These old-timers invariably had their ships or craft in better physical and mechanical condition than the Reserve officers and almost without exception had a physical trait of their own that was noticeable—they were, to a man, more-serious-minded and unsmiling. The better discipline aboard their ships was easily seen. The young Reserve officers were more eager and venturesome, and as they formed the overwhelming majority of the force, planning was patterned to their capability.

All these instances of untried personnel and untried ships were quite disheartening, for it was these men and these ships that would have to carry out a new and exacting technique of amphibious landings. How to beach their ships through a surf, ward off a bomber attack, navigate at night through poorly charted waters, and load cargo for quick discharge, were but a few of the things the crews of these flat-bottomed ships must be expert in if they were to survive.

## 5. LEYTE GULF WAS NO PICNIC TO LCI(G)580

*"Soon...we heard in 24 hours...we'll strike. At midnight we'll enter Leyte Gulf. All is in readiness".*

*"We're only doing what hundreds of others were doing and have done before, but just consider...less than seven months ago our ship was only a mass of steel in a shipyard awaiting women welders who previously had never handled anything hotter than a curling iron. Consider...that less than 14 months ago the skipper walked out of a Middle west law office in a military uniform for the first time in his life to catch a train that would deliver him to an indoctrination school. Consider...that all other officers aboard are junior to the skipper. Consider...that about a year ago most of the crew were on farms, in high schools, in the multitude of civilian pursuits representing merely a gleam in the Draft Board's eye. Consider...these things and see that it's all a tribute to America, to its ingenuity, industry and determination".*

*"All is in readiness. The Gunner's Mates have cleaned and polished their guns to perfection. The black gang has put the final touches on the engines; the cooks have baked a surplus of bread to provide sandwiches in anticipation of long vigils at general quarters without*

*relief for regular chow. The officers have gone over the charts, orders, plans and photographs. We have all been on the payroll for about a year, training and preparing for a mission such as this and we want to demonstrate that the time, the money and effort spent in getting us this far will really count. There is a deep seriousness in all hands; church attendance on board last Sunday was high. The seriousness is deep; it cannot be detected from the surface. There is no evidence of timidity nor any evidence of lust or bitterness toward the enemy. We just have a job to do and we face it with confidence in our commanders, in our ships and in ourselves. I can truthfully say that the men and officers are not jittery. From all outward appearance we might well be on a training cruise in the Chesapeake where we were only a few short months ago. And now, suddenly we're more experienced...and possibly wiser".*

**From the notes of Lt.(jg) Elbert S. Smith  
aboard the 580 as she headed for the  
biggest battle of the season.**

**Submitted by W.G. "Spider" Banks,  
USS LCI National Assn  
(Previously Published in ELSIE 17)**

**6. After reviewing the Action Reports of 17 Feb 1945 involving the LCI(G)'s of Flotilla 3 at Iwo Jima, the following was issued:  
From: Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet**

**To: Chief, U.S. Fleet**

**Item 2.** *The courage, effectiveness and fighting spirit of these small craft, lightly armed, vulnerable in construction, and manned by a mere handful of officers and men of brief naval experience, are not merely in keeping with our finest traditions and standards but add appreciably thereto.*

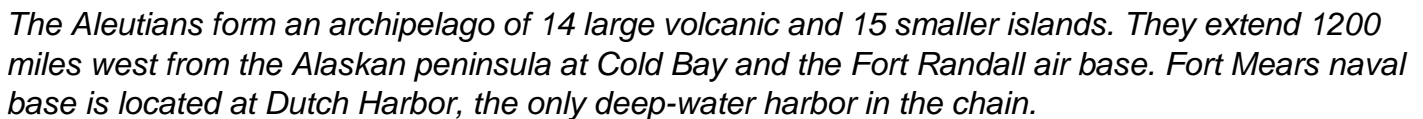
**Signed C A NIMITZ**

### **Epilogue**

During my years of research, I have found no criticism or disparaging remarks about the accomplishments of the US Navy's Amphibious Force. To the contrary, I have found only praise and admiration. Career military officers often remark about how the men in their little ships, often with minimal training and experience, in the face of undeniable odds, found the means to succeed. I think that Lt. General George S Patton may have surmised this ability from his experiences with the American Soldier when he said, *"Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity."*

These articles are a tribute to the veterans of WW II who are members of USS Landing Craft, Infantry National Association on the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the end of The War. America Thanks You for a Job Well Done.

***By Jeff Veesenmeyer***



At 0659 on 16 August 1943, Flotilla 3 had located their landing zone. Ten LCIs began their approach to “Green Beach” on Kiska, Alaska. The fog shrouded beach was made up of baseball size black rock. Not the ideal surface for flat bottomed craft with ¼ inch steel hulls. Fortunately, the Alaskan weather was kind and the seas were light. The first wave of Army troops unloaded in just 13 minutes with no opposition from Japanese defenders. USS *LCI(L)* 77 made five beachings that day. The “Monster

SevenSeven” landed 1,270 troops, 840 of them were Canadians. Flotilla 3 had trained for this operation at Fort Ord. The LCI crews practiced landings and recovery with the Army on the sand beaches of Monterey, CA. They adapted to the more difficult terrain at Kiska. It was a job well done.

In all there were 34,000 U.S. and Canadian troops involved in the recapture of Kiska, Island. Only a handful of these troops would have been necessary. The Japanese garrison of 5,000 men had already evacuated under the cover of darkness and fog two

weeks earlier. The well-planned invasion of Kiska became an under reported victory. While there was no opposition, there were 313 casualties due to mines, booby traps and friendly fire. It had taken the U.S. 14 months to take back the Aleutians from Japan.

### **Japan Invades Aleutians June 1942**

Japan's initial plan was to control the entire Aleutian archipelago. This would provide them with a defensive perimeter against northern attacks to their home islands. They first launched carrier air attacks against the U.S. base at Dutch Harbor on 3 June 1942. This was coordinated with the invasion of Midway Island that was unfolding at the same time. Historians believe it was a diversion from the main assault on Midway. Japan's planners hoped a carrier task force would be sent north to Alaska, leaving Midway more vulnerable. The U.S. Navy was aware of both planned attacks due to the breaking of Japan's Naval code. Admiral Nimitz sent his carriers to defend Midway.

Dutch Harbor was on full alert. They had no warships, but fighter planes were scrambled from Fort Randall at Cold Bay. The Japanese were surprised by a strong defense. Their two days of air attacks were repulsed by P-40s and anti-aircraft guns. Their hope of destroying warships and planes ended with only being able to bomb barracks and shipyard facilities. Damage and casualties were light. The plan to cripple Dutch Harbor and occupy Adak, Kiska, and Attu islands was changed. They bypassed Adak located 480 miles west of Dutch harbor. Japan invaded Kiska and Attu on 7-8 June 1942. There were no U.S. troops on either island. The small native populations were transported to intern camps in Japan.



*LCI(L) 82 landing troops on Kiska Island in August of 1943.*

While this was an attack on American soil, it was not considered an immediate threat.

The U.S. naval forces were in a rebuilding mode after Pearl Harbor. It would be nearly a year until they would be able to respond. Work began on an expanded base at the tip of the Alaskan peninsula. General Simon Bolivar Buckner Jr. ordered the expansion of an air base at Fort Randall in Cold Bay, Alaska. This would provide a naval and air base needed for future offensive and defensive operations in the northern Pacific. It would provide better defense for the deep-water port at Dutch Harbor.

### **U.S. Invades Attu May 1943**

Attu Island was located 900 miles west of Dutch Harbor at the very tip on the Aleutian chain. The U.S. invasion of Attu during May 1943 was poorly planned and very costly. Troops went ashore without cold weather gear, insufficient rations, equipment that could not handle the difficult terrain. They expected a three -day sweep to victory. It

took three weeks to wipe out a 2,500-man garrison that fought to the death. The U.S. troops endured a bloody charge that ended in hand to hand combat. The 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry lost 549 dead and a couple thousand casualties from combat, weather, and disease. This victory was not shared in full on the home front. It did provide valuable experience for amphibious landings. It did cut off Japan's garrison on Kiska from resupply, forcing them to withdraw which saved many lives.

With the recapture of these islands, the Japanese were no longer in control of an American territory. That was the only news coverage the U.S. reported. The Aleutian secrecy would continue for many years.

### Japan reinforces Kurils 1944

Japan's northern island chain stretched within 24 miles of Russia's Kamchatka peninsula. These islands were won from Russia during the Russo-Japanese War of 1905. Their treaty still existed. Russia and Japan were not at war. But the threat of U.S. invasion from the Aleutians was now very real. Japan was forced to send 41,000 troops and 400 aircraft to their Kuril Islands as a defensive measure.



*An invasion plan through Japan's northern Kuril Islands was considered by the U.S.*

As the Pacific War entered its fourth year the invasion of Japan appeared certain.

Operation Downfall would begin on 1 November 1945. Amphibious landings would take place on 35 southern Kyushu beaches. There would be 14 divisions of allied troops involved. On 1 March 1946 another 40 divisions would invade the shores of Tokyo. Over 6 million men would be needed in this largest amphibious assault ever.

An additional plan to invade the northern Kuril Islands was being considered. This was very risky. Supply lines would be stretched thin from the Aleutians 1,000 miles away. Maybe Russia would provide a port on Kamchatka? Or maybe Russia would like to take their islands back?



*Fort Randall airbase located on the tip of the Alaskan peninsula at Cold Bay.*

### Project Hula – Secret Soviet/U.S. operation

Russia and Japan had a neutrality agreement that Stalin did not want to break. He did not want another battle to fight until Germany had surrendered. He did want to extend his territory into southeast Asia. He agreed to declare war on Japan within three months of Germany's defeat. This started the process for a top-secret cooperative operation



between Russia and the United States. It was called Project Hula.

Russia had limited amphibious capabilities in the Pacific. They would need ships and aircraft to support any attack of Japan's home islands. A lend/lease ship request was received from Russia in December of 1944. The U.S. agreed to transfer 180 ships that included various escort vessels, minesweepers, and landing craft infantry. A training program would be developed for the operation of ships and aircraft. Soviet personnel would be taught by American Navy personnel.

The location chosen for training and transfer of the ships was Cold Bay, Alaska just north of the Aleutians. Fort Randall had ample shore facilities, a large protected harbor, an airfield and most importantly...no civilian population. The influx of up to 200 ships and 5,000 Soviet sailors would go unnoticed. Secrecy could be maintained. Stalin did not want an attack from Japan before he was ready to declare war.

A transfer of 180 ships was approved. The most capable of amphibious support were thirty 1,415-ton Tacoma-class patrol frigates. These had anti-submarine capabilities, with three 3-inch guns, multiple flak cannons and depth charge projectors. These were supplemented by thirty-four Admirable-class minesweepers. There were ninety-two smaller submarine chasers and wooden-hulled auxiliary motor torpedo boats, plus four hulking floating workshops to administer repairs at sea. The most important donation consisted of thirty Landing Craft Infantry (Large), equipped with ramps that could discharge over 200 soldiers onto a beachhead. The list of LCIs

destined to be transferred to the Soviet Navy included these ships... *LCI(L)s 521-527, LCI(L)s 551, 554, 557, LCI(L)s 584-587, LCI(L)s 590-593, LCI(L)s 665-668, and LCI(L)s 671, 672, 675, 943, 945, 946, 949, 950.*

In March, a Soviet Navy delegation arrived in Cold Bay to hash out the training program with U.S. Navy staff of 1,350 led by Captain William Maxwell, a veteran battleship officer. The Russians wanted on the job training at sea while the Americans felt classroom instruction was also needed. A compromise was reached, and training began in April.



*A U.S. Navy signalman instructs a Russian sailor on how to use signal flags for ship to ship communications.*

The first five Soviet ships arrived from April 10 through 14 bringing over 2,300 Soviet sailors and their commander, Rear Admiral Boris Popov. He was a former destroyer officer. They were trained while the U.S. vessels were still arriving in Cold Bay. Many ships required repairs due to

poor upkeep and the wear and tear of Arctic waters. Predictably, language barriers proved a major challenge. Explaining sonar and radar technology to the Soviet sailors who were unfamiliar with the technology proved challenging. English-language training manuals had to be rapidly translated. The Americans and Soviets by all accounts got along well. The Soviet sailors especially liked shooting the deck guns.



*Flags are being lowered on LCI(L)s for transfer over to the Soviet Union.*



*The Soviet naval ensign is raised aboard the LCI(L)s at Cold Bay on 9 June 1945.*

Training 100 Soviet officers and 800 enlisted men for the transfer of 30 large infantry landing craft (LCI(L)) in two training cycles began on 7 May 1945, and proved to be the most successful of the Project Hula training programs. The first

cycle lasted 15 days, and experience gained in it allowed the second cycle to be cut to nine days. The fourth convoy to depart Cold Bay, consisting of four LCI(L)s, two minesweepers, and six submarine chasers, which left on 11 June 1945. The first convoy to include LCI(L)s, and all Soviet LCI(L) crews departed for the Soviet Union, aboard their ships before the end of July 1945.

At Pearl Harbor and along the west coast of the U.S., amphibious ships were being prepared for the planned invasions of Japan. Interim-class LSM(R)s were back from Okinawa. They were having their rocket launchers removed to be converted to ammo carriers. The new Ultimate-class LSM(R)s would replace them. The *LCI(M)* 352 had returned to Pearl too. Mortars were removed from the deck and storage space was made in the magazines. Crew members of *LCI(M)* 352 began loading large sealed crates marked Top Secret. They were stashed everywhere. They heard invasion scuttlebutt that included a northern attack of Japan from Aleutians.

While allied plans for invasion of Japan were top secret, Japan's plans for defense of their homeland were well known. Troops had been ordered to fight to the death on Iwo Jima and Okinawa. Very few Japanese were captured alive or surrendered. All of Japan's coded messaging was being intercepted and decoded. Their defense operation was named Operation Ketsu-Go (Decisive Operation). Their defense plans included 4 million soldiers, 31 million civilians armed with swords and spears, plus kamikaze attacks with 10,000 planes, midget submarines, and torpedo boats. One intercepted message read...

*"We will prepare 10,000 planes to meet the landing of the enemy. We will mobilize every aircraft possible, both training and "special attack" planes. We will smash one third of the enemy's war potential with this air force at sea. Another third will also be smashed at sea by our warships, human torpedoes, and other special weapons. Furthermore, when the enemy actually lands, if we are ready to sacrifice a million men, we will be able to inflict an equal number of casualties upon them. If the enemy loses a million men, then the public opinion in America will become inclined towards peace, and Japan will be able to gain peace with comparatively advantageous conditions."*

It was this fanatical mindset of Japan's military that forced the U.S. to explore alternatives to the costly invasion. U.S. war planners thought invading Japan would incur over a million casualties and extend the war one to two years.

On August 6<sup>th</sup>, the atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. This began a string of events that would end the war in a month. On August 8<sup>th</sup>, Stalin kept his promise and declared war on Japan. It was exactly three months after Germany surrendered. Then Russia invaded Manchuria in China and south Sakhalin Island north of the Kurils. On August 9<sup>th</sup> another bomb was dropped on Nagasaki.

Now Japan was facing Russian troops to their north, allied forces approaching from the south and bombs that could annihilate whole cities. Surrender was their only option.

The war came to an end on August 15, 1945. But not for the Soviet Union. Russian troops would continue to roll over Manchuria for several more weeks. And

they would launch an amphibious invasion of the Kuril Islands on August 18<sup>th</sup> ...from the decks of U.S. built ships.

### **Russia invades Shimshu 18 August 1945**

The Soviet amphibious task force entered Kuril Strait at 0200 on 18 August 1945. Sixteen LCI(L)s carried a landing force of about 8,800 troops of the 101<sup>st</sup> Rifle Division and a naval infantry battalion. They would be fighting Japanese defenders of nearly equal numbers who had just learned they lost the war.



*LCI(L) 551 became the Soviets DS-48. She participated in the invasion of the Kurils and was returned to the U.S. in 1955. Her flag is half mast in May of 1945 in honor of deceased President Roosevelt.*

The first wave of 1,000 naval infantrymen approached the landing beach under the cover of fog. The Japanese were taken by complete surprise. They had been informed of Japan's surrender three days earlier. They wondered who they were fighting now. A disorganized defense was mounted. But the inexperienced naval units failed to take advantage. Their advances were uncoordinated. They failed to take defensive objectives or secure a beachhead. This gave the Japanese time to man their pill boxes, heavy artillery and bring up tanks. They began inflicting heavy casualties on the first wave. Attacks inland

against these defensive positions were driven back again and again. The Soviet ships attempted to provide support with 5-inch naval gunfire, but it was ineffective.

Once the Japanese coastal artillery found the range on the Soviet ships, they began causing damage. The second wave of LCI(L)s came under blistering artillery fire. By the time they were unloaded, five LCIs had been destroyed. The *LCI(L)s* 525, 554, 671, 672, and 943 were lost.

As the weather improved Soviet aircraft targeted Japanese counter attacks and reinforcements. Large Soviet shore batteries on the tip of Sakhalin Island pounded Japanese positions. By nightfall, the Soviets had established a 2.5 mile-wide and 3-mile deep beachhead. Their first amphibious assault had been ugly. But now they were able to bring heavy artillery ashore. At 1800 hours on 19 August 1945 the Japanese signed an unconditional surrender of the Kuril Islands.

The Shimshu invasion had cost the Soviets over 1500 casualties and part of their amphibious fleet. Their officers reported that there are many difficulties encountered during an amphibious landing on enemy territory. Their inexperience at amphibious warfare was demonstrated at Shimshu. This was the reason cited for not moving forward with the plan to invade the island of Hokkaido in the Japanese Home Islands. This island was heavily defended by 50,000 troops.

The Kurils invasion marked the final battle and last amphibious landing of WWII. The “Elsie Items” were there. The little-known Aleutians Campaign played a

role in Project Hula. This would have opened another homeland front for Japan to defend had the war continued.

### **Aftermath of Project Hula**

Under U.S. law, all ships transferred to foreign countries under Lend-Lease must be returned to U.S. custody after World War II was over. In February of 1946, the United States began negotiating with the Soviet Union and the Western Allies to have thousands of Lend-Lease ships returned. The Cold War with the Soviet Union had already begun, and relations deteriorated rapidly.

Of the 30 LCI(L)s given to the Russians, only 25 had survived. Fifteen of them were finally transferred back to the U.S. in 1955. Ironically, the Navy did not want the cost or have the need to put them back into service. Most of these and other ships were sold for scrap or sunk.



*LCI(L)s 585 and 591 at Cold Bay in the spring of 1945 awaiting transfer to the Soviet Navy. They became DS-45 and DS-35, respectively. The Soviets returned both ships to the U.S. in 1955. They were sold for scrap in the Soviet Union.*

Sources: Wikipedia, Navsource, History.com, Elsie Item

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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!

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



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*Tokyo Bay, 2 September 1945 on board the USS Missouri (BB-63). Japan's dignitaries await their turn to sign the Instruments of Surrender. Hundreds of sailors witness the end of the most destructive conflict in world history. The battleships 16-inch guns form a telling backdrop.*