



Elsie Item

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

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MARCH 2021



Three columns of LCIs crossing the English Channel on 6 June 1944.

Inside this issue...

- Discovering dad was on LCI(L) 530 during D-Day
- Memories of LCI(G) 70 in stories and art
- Saluting current LCI member veterans



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
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THE STORIES

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THE ELSIE ITEM

- Recent Articles Available Online*
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THE LCI EXPERIENCE

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- 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/. Any letter to the editor can be sent to **Jeff Veesenmeyer** (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 Officer's Country

from Robert E Wright Jr.

USS LCI Association Annual Reunion 2021, the continuing saga...

The number 1 question that I receive from veteran members is if there is going to be a reunion this year. Due to pandemic we currently have few options for a safe event. So a 2021 reunion has not been scheduled, but wishful thinking always makes me optimistic!

Membership Renewals 2021 (continued from last issue)

Firstly, let me say, please take the time to return your membership renewal for 2021 if you haven't done this already.

I want to express a sincere Thank You, for those who have returned theirs. As of February 14, 2021 we have had 65 of the WWII veterans re-up their enlistments for 2021 in the USS National Landing Craft Infantry Association. As far as I know we are one of the few remaining active WWII Veteran Associations.

I have often been asked who the "oldest" member of the Association is. This year we asked each veteran for their birthdate and now we know the answer. The award goes to **Gordon Smith of the LCI(L)43**. Gordon is the first of three members who will turn 100 this year. In this issue, I have included a listing of all the Veterans and what age they will be by end of 2021. We wish all of them, long lives and continued good health. (Note: the list only provides basic information to help to protect the identities of the veterans)

In my position as President of this Association there are times that you feel like you are speaking from the pulpit to an empty church. You just hope that there is someone out there, and maybe, they are listening, at least a little. Sending out the annual membership renewals, creates some apprehension because you wonder how many members that you might lose, due to many individual reasons. Many members included personal thank you notes expressing their gratitude that we have kept the association active. These are always appreciated.

This year donations made by members increased by 40% over last year. As a result, I feel that we can continue to provide the expanded version of the ELSIE ITEM that we started last year, when we increased the number of pages from 28 to 32 or 36. I need to thank our editor, Jeff Veessenmeyer, for his expertise and assistance in getting each issue out the door, and also his patience in dealing with my still crazy schedule. I also want to thank everyone who has contributed information for the many articles that were included for publication. There are still so many amazing stories left to be told.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

ILLUSIVE HOPE

Hebrews 6:19, John 14:6 NIV

Had any unusual chats with friends lately? Has this COVID era sponsored any new thoughts for you? It certainly has for me.

Conversations with friends, family and associates have been so fascinating to me in this era of American life. I find myself listening carefully to the insights, folks have about all that is swirling around us in this cultural moment. Some have wise and practical views about the last 6 months of political life in the U.S., but on the whole they lack optimism. Most are conflicted about the practical necessities of staying safe, the COVID pandemic and the resulting isolation. They wonder aloud about the “new normal” and express anxiety about what it will require of us. Many grapple with making their way financially and supporting those closest to them in this unusual and scarce economic environment.

While I enjoy the connection we have around these ideas and observations, what I notice most is a lack of hope in so much of what is expressed. Indeed I believe that hopelessness is swelling in epidemic proportions in the hearts of many. A cursory survey of the landscape reveals that many of our leaders have given us little to hope for in their performance as public servants. Sound bites, fear mongering and conspiracy theories rule the day.

Indeed, the label “public servant” rings hollow having lost much of its weight and integrity. The search for good clear usable information from the instrument of the free press seems futile to many. Though the nation’s founders viewed a free press as essential to educate citizens in a thriving democracy, many find it exhausting to sort through news sources and news features curated to fuel emotion and galvanize red or blue political support, rather than to simply report or honestly debate the news. This produces a sense of hopelessness.

On a personal level we have often established well intentioned goals in our financial, relational and career worlds only to see the paths to those outcomes upended in this slippery 2020-2021 journey.

Here is the challenge that results. Humans were made to have hope! We were made to find and carry a reason to get up in the morning and seize life! There is a part of each of us that desires a settled security about the days ahead and our participation in them. We don’t do well in a hope vacuum.

Into the middle of this cultural moment, the Son of God, Jesus speaks, offering us genuine hope. In a conversation with His friends and followers who wrestled with anxiety and uncertain future scenarios, He declared “I am the way (the answer to humanity’s search for direction), I am the truth (the answer to our quest for a larger guiding reality), and the life (the answer to our hunger for hope and vitality.” John 14:6 NIV. Jesus, who Christians believe is resurrected, alive and accessible today, invites you and me to His way of living. He has the audacity to say that a new, radically loving kind of life is available and empowered in following Him and His teachings. The way forward He offers is a life of surrender. We offer Him our old lives and patterns, our demandingness (Scripture calls this sin) and the specter of shame that comes with it. He give us in return, forgiveness, freedom from the old things that enslaved us and (get this, this is what we all crave in this era) His leadership in hope-filled kingdom living for something much greater than ourselves.

The result? Hope. Hope in the realization that He is there to mentor us today as His follower. Hope in that He is empowering us to say “yes” to the good and “no” to evil and our past. A settled certainty that heaven awaits us after death’s door. I believe that you can experience THIS kind of hope in the days ahead.

Dan Laurenzo (son of Abe)

Lead Pastor, Lake Church, Lake Stevens WA

“We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure” Hebrews 6:19 NIV

Ded to: RM-1/C Abe Laurenzo LCI(L) 47, 409



Thank you to Dan Laurenzo for this column.

In Memoriam

LCI 46
James Schlatterer

LCI 65
Earl "Jerry" Mahoney

LCI 325, 94
Bernard Trifoso

LCI 343
Maynard Bartram Jr.

LCI 456
J.N. "Mac" McClure

LCI 458
Lou Krecht

LCI 458, 988
Arnold Walker

LCI 521
Richard "Jack" Walker

LCI 534
Robert Szpak

LCI 638
Bryon Drew

LCI 688
John Ashcraft

LCI 729
Earl Kyle

LCI 821
Earl F. Tennerman

LCI 867
Wilbur Webb

LCI 879
Edward Jeronczyk

LCI 1015
Charles Fodge

LCI 1027
Rev. Robert Roof

LCI 1064
David Klein

LCI 1077
Porter Biddleman



A Celebration of a Life Well Lived

This is a small tribute to our remaining veterans who served their country in time of War and returned home to live long lives in Peace.

AGE	LCI Veteran	Rank or Rate	Served Aboard
100	G SMITH	QM1 /c	LCI(L)-43
100	H LAABS	MoMM3/c	LCI(L)-711
100	R RAYNER	LT	LCI(L)-944
99	G QUINN	LT	LCI(L)-336
99	W HOYT JR	LT(jg)	LCI(M)-741
99	K ARNOLD	RM/3/c	LCI(L)(X)-951
99	H ASHWORTH	Lt(jg)	LCI(L)-420
98	W YAKY	MoMM2/c	LCI(L)-661
98	E THIELE	MoMM1/c	LCI(G)-472
98	W FRENCH JR	LT	LCI(L)-684
98	J BEAHM, JR.	LT	LCI(L)-689
98	P HUPPMANN	Lt(jg)	LCI(G)-80
98	H WOLFE	Lt(jg)	LCI(G)-465
97	J STANLEY M.D.	Lt(jg)	LCI(L)-958
97	W BERTSCH	RM1/c	LCI(G)-64
97	C JOHNSON	GM2/c	LCI(FF)-679
97	H RITZEL	CMoMM	LCI(L)(R)-341
97	E CARLIN	EM3/c	LCI(G)-472
97	H MC CREARY	MoMM3/c	LCI(L)-412
97	D JOHNSON	BM2/c	LCI(L)-69
96	D HEMPHILL	LCDR	LCI(G)-514
96	R JACOBSEN	MoMM3/c	LCI(L)-412
96	W GUNTER	ABLE SEAMAN AA2	LCI(L)-249
96	R MILLER	SM2/c	LCI(M)-805
96	R SCURLOCK	QM3/c	LCI(G)-565
96	R BANSKY	EM2/c	LCI(L)-594
96	L NOWICKI	SM3/c	LCI(L)-661
96	A LAURENZO	RM1/c	LCI(L)-409
96	P DE BLAISE	GM1/c	LCI(M)-355
96	J NIMESKERN	S1/c	LCI(G)-439
96	J ARRUEBARRENA	S1/c	LCI(M)-1055
96	L WILCOX	EM1/c	LCI(G)-70
96	J REID	S3/c	LCI(G)-65

AGE	LCI Veteran	Rank or Rate	Served Aboard
96	E RADZIK	GM3/c	LCI(G)-64
96	H LEVINE	MoMM3/c	LCI(L)-606
96	J HEALY	SM3/c	LCI(M)-638
96	W ARMSTRONG JR	SM3/c	LCI(G)\(R)-455
96	R GALEWSKI	COX	LCI(R)-224
95	A WAGGONER	RM3/c	LCI(L)-355
95	F GRIEF	QM 2/c	LCI(L)-30
95	D GREEN	GM3/c	LCI(D)-227
95	C SHELVIK	SM2/c	LCI(R)-337
95	J ROSENTHAL	MoMM3/c	LCI(L)-944
95	W GILLUM	RM2/c	LCI(FF)-995
95	A BECKER	MoMM2/c	LCI(L)-712
95	A HUNTER	MoMM3/c	LCI(R)-337
95	P CHAPIRSON	S1/c	LCI(L)-802
95	C DEVIER	EM2/c	LCI(G)-234
95	C ROYLANCE		LCI(FF)-1080
95	C WOLK	MoMM3/c	LCI(L)-699
95	R WRIGHT	SSM3/c	LCI(M)-1059
95	V BROWN	S1/c	LCI(R)-1077
95	W KIRKLAND	MM2/c	LCI(FF)-367
95	R NELSON	SM3/c	LCI(FF)-532
95	R GONZALEZ	S1/c	LCI(M)-805
95	D HOLLINGER	RM2/c	LCI(G)-470
95	R WETZEL	CM3/c	LCI(G)-70
94	J NANCE	QM1/c	LCI(M)-1059
94	A DRUKALSKI	SM3/c	LCI(L)-982
94	T MC GARR	MoMM3/c	LCI(L)-882
94	B HARLESS	S1/c	LCI(G)-421
94	B RUTMAN	SC 3/c	LCI(G)-442
94	J LUNNEY	RADM	LCI(L)-371
93	A POMEROY	S1/c	LCI(L)-981
93	E LISLE	MM2/c	LCI(L)-813
90	H BALL	SK SN	LCI(L)-989
90	D MC GREGOR	EN2/c	LCI(L)-1091



Gator Gossip

By Jeff Veessenmeyer

Mr. Jeff Veessenmeyer,

First of all, thank-you and congratulations on producing such a great newsletter for the USS LCI National Association. I discovered it through a Google search while researching my father's adventures as engineering officer aboard *LCI 1024*.

In the "Gator Gossip" section of Issue 107 (Dec 2019) of the *Elsie Item*, I read a short note (with attached underwater photo's) from Charlie Ritz. An attached Editor's Note reads: "Charlie Ritz is the son of Commander Edward J. Ritz USNR, Captain of the *LCI 1024*. Charlie is a teacher in Japan."

My dad Louis R. Frogner (now 100 years young) served as the engineering officer, under (then LT) Ed Ritz aboard *LCI 1024*. Over the years, he had mentioned service aboard the *1024*, including good memories of the skipper (Ed Ritz), the long open ocean crossings in a flat-bottomed ship, Shellback (crossing the equator) & Golden Dragon (crossing the date line) "ceremonies," action at Okinawa, and subsequent occupation force in Japan. I have some pictures (from Navy History & Heritage Command) & film from United News & Army Signal Corps (from National Archives) of prisoners swimming out to *LCI 1024* and surrendering.

Do you have any contact information for Charlie Ritz, son of CDR Edward J. Ritz, mentioned in your editor's note? If so, I'd love to contact him to compare stories. It's especially important to capture these stories for future generations. Thank-you in advance for any contact or other information you might be able to provide.

Very Respectfully,
Gary R. Frogner, LCDR, USN, RET

Editor's Note: Yes, I hear from Charlie Ritz from time to time, and did provide Gary with his email. Ritz recently sent me Photos of WWII historic sites taken during a visit to Saipan. They are included in this issue.

To Jeff Veessenmeyer,

RE: Charles E. Fodge LCI 1015. Dad passed in August 2020. He enjoyed your magazine so much! He never spoke of his experience in the war until his 90th birthday in 2015. He was a sailor doing his job! Thank you for your time and effort in publishing this magazine.

Patti Parker

Dear Jeff,

In honor of last year's 75th anniversary of the D-Day invasions, I started the enclosed writing project in 2019. I thought you could run a series for "Elsie Item." You're doing a "4.0" job as editor of the "Elsie Item."

Thank you.

Carl V. Batzkall

Editor's Note: See the first of Batzkall's series on Flotilla 350 at Utah Beach in this issue.

SEND LETTERS TO: JeffreyMktg@gmail.com
or my mailing address listed on Page 2.

“Wetz” – A card carrying, kazoo playing member of the LCI Association

If you have ever attended any of the LCI Reunions, you no doubt remember “Wetz.”

Royal Wetzel CM3/c *LCI(G) 70* has been a member of the LCI Association since 2006. He has attended most of the reunions since then. At every reunion he brings summer sausage and cheese from his hometown of York, Pennsylvania. He’ll tell you sea stories while you munch the snacks. And upon request Wetzel will play Anchors Away on his kazoo.

At age 95 Royal Wetzel’s memory of events while serving on the *LCI 70* are still vivid. Although he plans to live until 100, he thought it best to get some of his stories told and published now. Two of his stories are personal memories of the events that have been immortalized in paintings by Joe Ortiz, the nephew of shipmate Gilbert Ortiz. “Buzzards and Sitting Ducks” depicts an attack by torpedo bombers. “The Unsinkable 70” painting shows a kamikaze crashing into the ship. The “Buzzards” painting was donated to the National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg, Texas. Wetzel had a copy of “The Unsinkable 70” in his living room. He has since donated his copy to a local restaurant the Mission BBQ. They have it displayed with Wetzel’s picture and a ships chow tray. Wetzel takes pride in helping to keep *LCI(G) 70* stories alive.

In November of 1943 the 70 participated in the Bougainville operations. Wetzel hadn’t joined the crew yet but remembers hearing

the story. On the evening of 5 November they were attacked by a squadron of 12 Kate torpedo bombers. One torpedo passed under the 70’s flat bottomed hull. Another skipped over the waves and crashed into 70’s engine room without exploding. One man was killed. Gunners on the 70 were credited for shooting down five of the planes during the action.

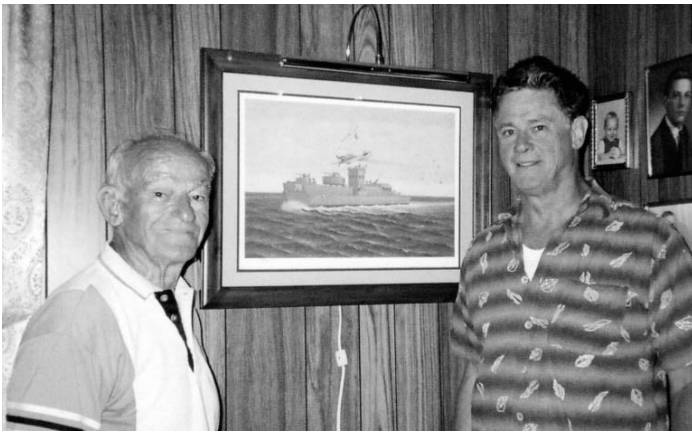
Royal Wetzel CM3/c – The Torpedo: *I was told an engineer was pinned against the bulkhead by the torpedo. After the torpedo was disarmed and removed from the ship, the crew had their picture taken with their dud torpedo. I was with the artist Joe Ortiz and LCI shipmates Wilcox, at the Nimitz Museum when the “Buzzards” painting was donated.*



This painting appeared on the front cover of Elsie Item in the May 2013 issue. Shipmates and artist presented the painting to the Nimitz Museum in Fredericksburg, Texas. L-R: Royal Wetzel, Lee Wilcox, Gilbert Ortiz, John Reulet and artist Joe Ortiz.

On 5 January 1945 the *LCI(G) 70* was en route to Lingayen Gulf for landings in the Luzon operation. The 70 was attacked and hit by a kamikaze. The plane took off the ships antenna and crashed into the bow killing and wounding gun crews on the 3-inch mount and 37mm Army anti-tank gun.

Royal Wetzel - The Kamikaze: *The plane came at us from the stern portside. I was a loader on the starboard 40mm. Two guys on the port 40 mm abandoned ship – they dove over the side. I laid down and prayed. The plane took our antenna off, missed the conning tower and crashed into the bow. It hit the 3-inch gun tub. Two men were killed and six were wounded. The guys manning our 37mm gun were wounded. That 37mm anti-tank gun was scrounged from a PT boat.*



Royal Wetzel and his nephew with the painting by Joe Ortiz “The Unsinkable 70.” Wetzel displayed the painting in his home for many years. He wanted it to be seen by more people. He donated the painting to a local restaurant, The Mission BBQ. It hangs in the lobby along with Royal’s picture and a chow tray from his galley.

The Japanese used barges for transporting supplies and troops to island bases around Rabaul. They operated at night and hid under jungle cover by day to avoid air attacks. The 70 had been converted to a gunboat and had radar installed. Their 37mm gun was effective for attacking Jap barges that had extra steel protection. They joined the PT boats for in-shore night patrols of the “Tokyo Express” travel routes. Some

of the damaged barges were abandoned and beached.

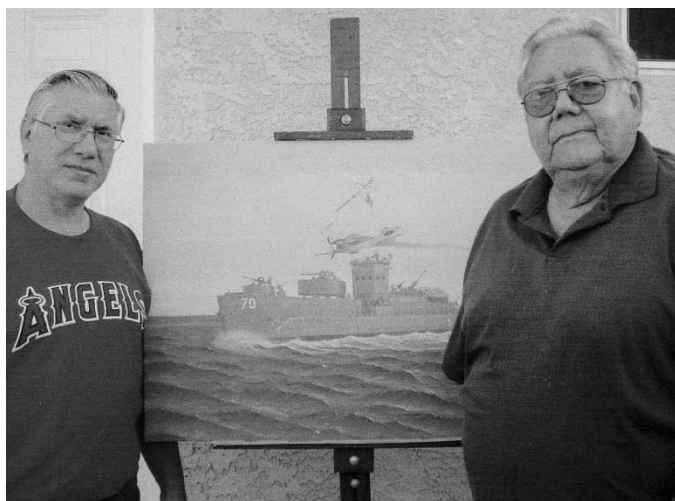
Royal Wetzel – The Booby Trap: *At St. George Canal we boarded a damaged barge to search it. No permission, we were just nosey. One of the guys found a box and he brought it back to the ship to see what was inside. Once opened he found some tubes. While taking them out, the box exploded. It was a booby trap. It blew his stomach open. I got hit with some shrapnel. I held him. He looked up at me and asked if he was going to die. We were in a canal. We couldn’t do a burial at sea. We took him on shore and buried him on Green Island.*

One time the Chief asked Wetzel if I liked being on this ship. He said no, he had wanted to be on a cruiser or battleship. The Chief agreed and said bear with it, we had to make the best of it. But actually...Wetzel was glad to be on the LCI 70. They had loose regs compared to other ships.

Royal Wetzel – The Loose Regulations: *One of our shipmates was from down south. He knew how to make moonshine. He would use the water bottles from our two life rafts to store his white lightening in. Glad we never needed the life rafts and fresh water. One night I came in from liberty looking for a fight. Got into it with an officer from Ohio. The Captain gave me two weeks restrictions. We went out to sea the next day for a month. There was no place to go anyhow.*

The 70 was awarded Presidential Unit Citations for their actions at Bouganville and Lingayen Gulf. They took pride in how the crew conducted themselves during battle.

Royal Wetzel - The scoreboard: – *Gilbert Ortiz painted the scoreboard on our con. He was a good painter. We had the planes and pillboxes on the scoreboard that we had destroyed. Gilbert was the number one ship's cook. I was number two. The crew called us the Belly Robbers. Most of our food came from Australia. They'd send us mutton. We'd toss it over the side. Even the fish wouldn't eat mutton.*



Joe Ortiz and his uncle Gilbert Ortiz with the painting of the kamikaze attack on LCI(G) 70. See the color version on back page of this Elsie Item.

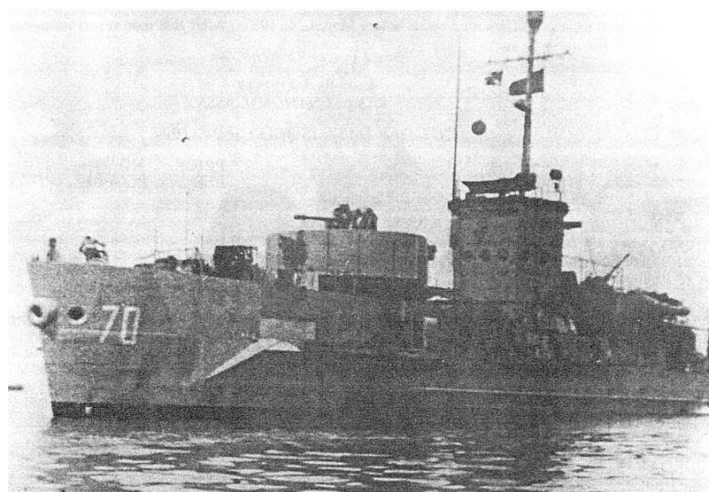


The crew of LCI(G) 70 gathered around their torpedo dud. The torpedo had been dropped by a Kate torpedo bomber. It crashed through their engine room bulkhead and killed one man. Luckily, it did not explode or the whole crew might have been lost. The crew was awarded a Presidential Unit Citation for having downed five Kates that day.

The last two reunions were held in Portland, Oregon. Wetzel attended both in 2018 and 2019. He is hoping the pandemic will be over soon so another reunion can be held in 2021. If so, he'll be there with his cheese, sausage and kazoo.



At the 2018 reunion in Portland, attendees toured the LCI 713. Seen here left to right are Del Hollinger, Royal Wetzel, Chris Shelvik, and Gordon Smith.



LCI(L) 70 was laid down, 15 September 1942, at Consolidated Steel Corp., Orange, Texas. She was launched 25 October 1942 and commissioned 24 December 1942. She was reclassified LCI(G) 70 on 15 June 1944.

LCI(L) 982 plays role in Great Raid at Cabanatuan

By Jeff Veesebmeyer

Gong – gong – gong. The unmistakable sound of a ship's bell reverberated out of Cabanatuan POW camp. The 121 Army Rangers and 13 Alamo Scouts hidden nearby in the jungle all froze. Had they been spotted by a Japanese guard who was sounding the alarm? And why a ship's bell? They were over 70 miles from the landing beach at Lingayen Gulf.

Twenty days earlier this contingent of 6th Army Rangers led by Colonel Henry Mucci had been aboard *LCI(L)* 982. They included the Colonel, Captain Prince who commanded Company C, and Medical Officer Jimmy Fisher. The Rangers shared quarters and got to know many of the crewmembers. They were put ashore on 10 January 1945 during the invasion of Lingayen Gulf in northwestern Luzon. The goal of 200,000 troops of the 1st and 14th Army Corps was to capture Lingayen Gulf and then Manila. The goals of the Army Rangers were special operations. They would make history during the Great Raid at Cabanatuan.

The *LCI(L)* 982 was built by Consolidated Shipyards in Orange, Texas and launched 18 April 1944. She was commissioned with Lt.(jg) L.R. Dawson in command. The crew of three officers and 25 enlisted took their shakedown cruise in the Gulf of Mexico. The water in the Gulf can be rough. The crew nicknamed their flat bottom ship "The Pitching Bitch." They eventually developed

a greater sense of respect and loyalty and referred to her simply as "982."

She departed Galveston, Texas in June of 1944 enroute to the Admiralty Islands. For six weeks the crew supported operations at New Guinea. Then in October they joined the invasion at Leyte, Philippines. The 982 was anchored in Leyte Gulf – along with several hundred other ships – during the decisive naval battles in Surigao Strait and off the coast of Samar. Their place in history would have been much different had the U.S. Navy not prevailed against the Japanese fleets.



*Allied forces established a beachhead on Lingayen Gulf (north of Camp O'Donnell) where *LCI(L)* 982 put Army Rangers ashore.*

As American forces made a rapid advance on Luzon it became obvious that they would reach the town of Cabanatuan by the end of January. A prisoner of war camp was there. Over 500 POWs were still imprisoned at the camp. These men had survived since the Bataan Death March in April of 1942. It was believed that the POWs would be executed before advancing troops could liberate them.

Colonel Mucci was ordered to mount a rescue mission. His Rangers would have to penetrate behind enemy lines, raid the prison camp and free the POWs and bring them back to U.S. lines.

Colonel Mucci had little time to devise a plan. It would need to be coordinated with Alamo Scouts, Filipino guerillas, Army Air, civilian villagers, medical and evacuation units.



Army Rangers and Filipino guerillas who participated in the Great Raid at Cabanatuan.

The Alamo Scouts would do recon of the camp and contact guerilla forces. The Alamo Scouts were modeled after the Navy's UDT units. They were trained to carry out demolition, sabotage, and reconnaissance behind enemy lines. The force was named by Lt. Gen. Walter Krueger from San Antonio. He admired the men who fought and died at the Alamo. He borrowed the Alamo name for his Scouts.

The Guerilla forces would provide rear guard support and transportation during withdrawal from Cabanatuan. Most of the POWs would be in poor physical condition and unable to march out of the jungle. Ox carts, food and water would be needed for the escape back to American lines.

Fighter air support would supply cover for the retreating column of Rangers and POWs. Finally, a Black Widow plane would provide diversion at the Cabanatuan camp while Rangers approached for the assault.

On 28 January Mucci and 121 Rangers were trucked to rendezvous with Filipino guerillas. From there they slipped through Japanese lines and began the 20-mile hike to the POW camp. Japanese troops were retreating on the roads each night to avoid air attacks. The Rangers took to jungle trails guided by the guerillas. They arrived at Cabanatuan on the 29th. Mucci was informed that a retreating Japanese division arrived there. An assault now would be suicidal. They would wait until the Japanese moved out that night and attack the next day. It provided more time for recon and planning.

A large Japanese force of infantry and tanks was based across the Cabu River near the camp. The Cabu Bridge needed to be wired with timed demolition charges by Scouts. Guerillas would set up a defensive line to keep enemy troops from crossing the river in small craft. All prison guard-towers and gun emplacements were located and assigned to teams for taking them out. By afternoon of 30th everyone was in place. Normal camp routine was observed. Then that Gong, Gong, Gong of a ships bell made everyone in the operation freeze. What was that? They would learn later that a POW sailor had fabricated a bell and rang it for the changing of watches.

As Rangers crawled the open ground to the camp, a Black Widow buzzed the camp feigning mechanical trouble. Jap guards watched skyward as Rangers crept closer. Then all guns trained on the guard towers

opened up with deadly fire. Other Rangers rushed the gate, blew the lock off and charged inside shooting Japs as they ran for cover. A bazooka team took out trucks, enemy barracks and gun emplacements. Surprise was so complete that return fire was minimal. Two mortar rounds exploded near the gate wounding several Rangers. That mortar was immediately silenced. Within 12 minutes the fight was over. Only one Ranger had been killed. One POW had a heart attack. Medical officer Captain Fisher had been wounded badly by shrapnel.

Rangers began calling for POWs to come out. Most were hiding under barracks, in latrines or ditches. They believed the shooting was from Jap guards executing prisoners. Some were so scared they had to be carried from hiding. Others were so weak they had to be carried to waiting ox carts. In all 522 POWs were rounded up for the march back to freedom.

The Cabu bridge was blown by Alamo Scouts. Filipino guerillas were now fighting a rear-guard action along the river. Evacuation of the compound began immediately. P-61 air cover provided protection all along the flanks of the mile and a half long column. At each village or hamlet additional ox carts were waiting with food and water. They eventually had more than 100 ox carts and many Filipinos to help keep the men moving. The column wound through the jungle all night. Travel for the wounded Captain Fisher became too painful. He was left at a village with a contingent of Rangers. He would die before he could be evacuated by air.

Crossing a main highway traveled by Japanese troops was Mucci's biggest

concern. Roadblocks were set up two miles from their crossing in either direction. Being intercepted at this location would have been disastrous. It took the column an hour to cross. They finally met up with an American patrol at 0900 the morning of the 31st. Mucci relaxed a bit. He had pulled off the most successful rescue raid of the war.

News of the raid spread fast. It was termed "brilliantly successful" by allied correspondents. The feat was celebrated by McArthur's troops, the American public and sailors on *LCI 982*. They took pride in being selected to carry these crack troops to battle. They had been part of a multi-unit joint operation that would become heralded in books and films. The raid boosted pride and morale among soldiers. An important result was the first-hand accounts from survivors of the atrocities that had taken place on Bataan and Corregidor. War criminals could now be brought to justice.



The Cabanatuan POWs celebrate their freedom. They had survived battle, the Bataan Death March, and nearly three years of slave labor, disease, and malnutrition. They were finally going home.

Son Discovers Dad was on LCI at Utah Beach, Normandy.

By Jeff Veesenmeyer

“It was something which you just can’t imagine if you have not seen it. It was boats, boats, boats, and more boats. Boats were everywhere,” recalled one observer of 6 June 1945 off the Normandy Beaches.

Among the 6,000 ships and landing craft poised for the largest invasion in history, was the *LCI(L) 530*. This 156-foot flat bottomed ship was just a speck among the battleships, cruisers, transports, and destroyers. The crew of 56 were just one roster of sailors among a mass of 156,000 troops that day. Their impact on the invasion would be known only to them and the few loved ones they shared their stories with. That is...until Stephen Jampol wanted to know more about what his dad did during the war.

“The 70th Anniversary of D-Day got me thinking about dad’s service records”

Jampol’s dad enlisted in the service right after high school in 1942. The family knew Paul Jampol had served in the Navy and was in Italy. That was it. He didn’t talk and he died suddenly at age 45. “For a long time, I just wanted to know what ship my dad was on during the war,” said Stephen Jampol. “All the publicity about the 70th Anniversary of D-Day got me thinking about dad’s service records.”

In 2014 Jampol contacted the Military Records Center in St. Louis. Four months later he received a 50-page report about Paul



Paul Jampol QM1/c LCI(L) 530

Jampol’s service. “I received rosters with dates and lot’s more. The biggest surprise was on the single page Navpers-601 report. My dad was part of Operation Overlord, D-Day at Utah Beach from June 6th to June 16th 1944. He was also at Operation Dragoon, St. Tropez August 15 to September 9, for the invasion of Southern France.”

His dad’s ship was identified too. Paul Jampol had served on the Landing Craft Infantry-Large 530 from January 1944 to September of 1945. It was an emotional moment for Stephen. He felt pride for pursuing his dad’s records. He felt sorrow for his dad who needed to lock the war years away.

NAVPER-501

9

Name JAMPOL, Paul (m)
(Name in Full, Surname to the Left)

808 78 72 Rate QM1c
(Service No.)

Date Reported Aboard: 7 January 1944

USS LCI(L) 530
(Present Ship or Station)

R/S New York, N. Y.
(Ship or Station Received From)

2/14/44: Serving outside the continental limits of the United States this date.
George E. Kelley
George E. Kelley, Lt. (jg), USNR
Commanding Officer

3/6/44: Served on board this vessel during landing operations on Normandy, France. Was in the assault area from 6 June 1944 to 16 June 1944. Was a credit to this ship and to the operation.
George E. Kelley
George E. Kelley, Lt. (jg), USNR
Commanding Officer

8/15/44: Served with credit on board this vessel during landing operations on Southern France. Was in the assault area from 15 Aug. 1944 to 9 Sept. 1944. Was a credit to this ship and to the operation.
George E. Kelley
George E. Kelley, Lt. (jg), USNR
Commanding Officer

to Transferred

This Navpers Report provided Steve Jampol more than he had hoped for...his dad had been on LCI(L) 530 during D-Day.

"I clearly remember in 1962 when I was 8," recalled Jampol, "our parents took us to a drive-in movie in Elmsford, New York to see, *The Longest Day*. We all went back to that drive-in a few years later, to see the film, *The Train*." This was another war film. It was set in southern France during August of 1944. The LCI 530 was part of Operation Dragoon in August 1944. Paul Jampol might have been trying to deal with memories of his war years by watching those movies. He may have wanted his sons to know the history of his war even if he couldn't share those experiences. His dad died in 1970. Many questions remained unanswered.

All Stephen had hoped to find was which ship his dad had served on. Now he wanted to know more. He contacted a surviving shipmate from the 530. He spoke with the shipmate and his son. The son told Jampol that it was only recently that his own dad finally started to talk about his D-Day service. "My dad," Jampol remembers, "did not live long enough to be comfortable to talk about his experience on D-Day." A quest to learn what his dad couldn't share began.

Thanks to the information he received from the Military Records Center, Jampol and his brother dedicated a brick in their father's name. A National D-Day Memorial was being constructed in Bedford, Virginia. Now there is a brick at the memorial engraved with "PAUL JAMPOL, LCI(L) 530, UTAH BEACH, JUNE 6, 1944."



While digging through his dad's Military records, Jampol read about shipmate William Robert Hendrix. He was buried at the Rhone American Cemetery in Draguignan, France. There had been one man killed aboard the 530 by friendly fire. It happened on day 2 of the invasion of Southern France in August 1944. Hendrix's hometown was just 11 miles from where Jampol lived in North Carolina. He and his

wife were planning a vacation to Europe in 2015. He decided to track down the Hendrix family. Then bring something from home to be placed on the William Robert Hendrix gravesite in France.

Jampol located Hendrix's 87 year-old brother. He explained what he wanted to do. The brother told him where the home had been. It was now a building in downtown Charlotte. Jampol went there scooped up a bag of earth from where the Hendrix home had once stood.



Signalman William Hendrix was killed on LCI(L) 530 during the landings of southern France. His family chose to have him buried at Rhone American cemetery.

While touring France that summer Jampol and his wife made a side trip to the Rhone American Cemetery. An employee provided directions to the Hendrix gravesite. Jampol spread the soil from home around the headstone. Then he placed three small flags

on the grave...an American, U.S. Navy and state of North Carolina. He took pictures of the grave and sent copies to Hendrix's brother. "I did all this because I think my dad would be really pleased that I did this for someone who was killed on his ship and was from our home state," said Jampol.



Rick Holmes, Dave McKay, Steve Jampol and Jerry Gilmartin meet at the AFMM's LCI 713 Museum ship for a tour.

Jampol's research of *LCI 530* led him to the websites for Amphibious Forces Memorial Museum, at www.amphibiousforces.org and the USS LCI National Association, www.usslci.org. He contacted Rick Holmes and scheduled a tour of *LCI 713*. He and his wife traveled to Portland in September of 2017. Rick and his crew gave the Jampol's a stern to bow tour.

"It was such a good experience for me to get a little insight as to what life was like for my dad during the 20-months he was on *LCI 530*. I am 66 and I do not take a lot for granted but I think I am very spoiled in comparison to the greatest generation and all that they had to do 70 years ago," said Jampol. "Seeing what life was like on that ship for just going to the bathroom tells a lot."



Lifejacket Memorials like this one for Paul Jampol are found along the life preserver racks on LCI 713. A great way to honor an LCI vet while helping to keep the museum ship afloat.

The Jampol's gave a donation to the LCI 713 Life Preserver Memorial. A plaque is inscribed to the memory of Paul Jampol.

In 2018 the Jampol's took another trip to France. They spent more time at Normandy and took a day tour of the historic sites. They visited and photographed, the Zero Kilometer Liberation marker, gun emplacements, invasion statues and Utah Beach Museum.

Jampol stood by an artillery gun emplacement looking out to where his dad's LCI 530 command ship had been on D-Day. LCI(L) 530 Flotilla 11 Flagship would have been looking down the barrel of this gun as they stood off the beach. "It was emotional to imagine the violence that had taken place here. And on this warm, sunny day there was only beauty and calm," recalled Jampol.

Jampol's mom passed away in 2005. His brother wasn't interested in too many things from her place. Rather than toss almost everything he took most. There were a few boxes of photos with 1,000s of pictures.

"One box over time I did go thru but most of the things we just kept in storage in our house." Not until planning a move to Texas from North Carolina did he start going through a lot of things. Most of it had not been looked at for the 15 years they had been stored in their house. A photo of his dad with members of the crew was first discovered in 2020. "I scanned it to send my brother a copy. If I had seen that photo it would have provided a big clue about what ship my dad was on."

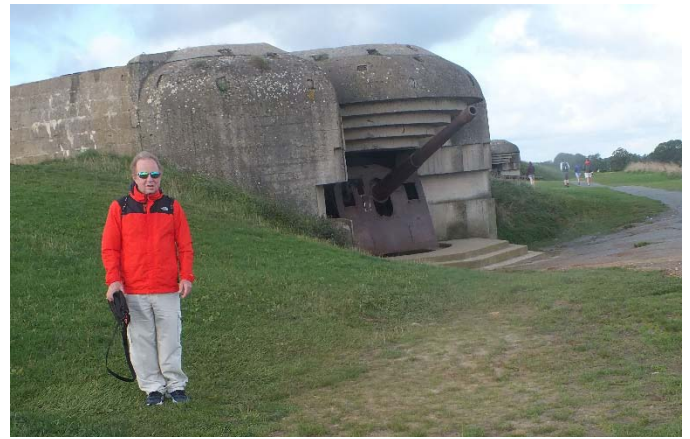


Paul Jampol is kneeling left front with the helmet on. This photo would have provided a good clue about his ship. It was found among boxes of family photos only recently.

The ship's roster provided some names that Jampol thought he could search online. "I tried to find a shipmate from the 530 just to talk to. I was able to talk to Anthony Molligo and his son Tony. When my wife and I went to Normandy in the 2015, I bought a few of the small glass bottles from the Utah Beach Museum." Jampol scooped up sand from Utah Beach, filled his souvenir bottles and sent one to Tony Molligo Jr.



The sand from the Normandy Beaches is said to still contain bits of metal shrapnel. This is one the jars of sand Jampol brought back from Utah Beach.



Steve Jampol at one of the German artillery batteries on Utah Beach. They are constructed with concrete walls 6.5 feet thick.



This statue on Utah Beach honors the first units to set foot on Normandy. They were the Naval Combat Demolition Units Amphib Scouts and Raiders. They came ashore ahead of the first waves to clear paths through the beach landing obstacles.



Steve Jampol and wife Pat at the 00 Kilometer Liberation marker on Utah Beach. This beach is the western most of the landing sites. It was the first location liberated on D-Day.



Steve Jampol and brother Craig at the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, VA where they donated a brick for their father Paul.



Anthony Molligo MM LCI(L) 530 front row far right in the crew photo above.
Paul Jampol is not in photo.

The elder Molligo had only begun to tell his son some of the stories several years ago. “My dad didn’t speak much about his service,” says Tony Molligo Jr. Anthony Molligo remembered when his ship arrived in England they had supplies on board for the civilians. The flour and sugar had become solid lumps from getting wet during the Atlantic crossing. The civilians were nevertheless overjoyed with the food.

Molligo told his son that during D-day, the 530 was one of the “command” LCIs during landings on Utah Beach. The 530 stayed in Normandy for several days. It was hit by

another ship and was sent back to England for repair.

Anthony Molligo was a Machinist Mate who helped out as cook from time to time. His fried dough was a big hit with the crew. He remembered the poverty and poor children he saw everywhere in Italy. While docked in Palermo, Sicily the crew was ordered to attend an opera. The crews dislike for their Lt.(jg) skipper became historic.

Anthony Molligo recalled that shipmate Hendrix had been killed by friendly fire during the invasion of southern France. He was their only casualty.

“Dad didn’t keep many mementos from his service. He told me he just wanted to go

home and go back to work.” Molligo only kept his cracker jack uniform, seabag and knife. The rest was donated to charity.

Before Molligo died his son was able to get him his medals and a trip on an Honor Flight to DC. He was presented with a French medal, for his participation in D-Day during a ceremony for D-Day vets.



Anthony Molligo on left with a LCI(L) 530 shipmate. Location unknown.



The LCIs 530, 38, and 594 in a nest at Palermo Sicily, pier #2, February of 1945.

NATIVES ONLY

COMMISSIONING REPORT

REPORT OF CHANGES

of U. S. S. LCI(L) 530

(for the month ending) 7 day of January, 19 44, date of sailing from Pier 42 North River, N.Y. to PhiladBase, Solomons, Md.

1

2

3

4

5

NAMES

SERVICE NUMBER

Rating or Date of Last Report

Time of Retirement

Place of Retirement

1

2

3

4

5

1

2

3

4

5

The officers and steward on LCI(L) 530

The Muster Report from 7 January 1944 lists Paul Jampol and Anthony Molligo. They were being transferred from the North River, NY to Solomons, MD for training.

21

LCI(L) 530 Flotilla 11 Flagship Utah Beach

By Carl V. Batzkall

The first light of June 6, 1944 off Normandy found the *LCI 551* in column astern of the *LCI 529* which was following in the wake of the group flag ship *LCI 552*. Bringing up the rear was the *LCI 527*. The landings were scheduled to begin at 0630. At that time after steaming all night at different speeds, the column changed course and headed towards the beach.

This group was attached to Flotilla 11 led by the command ship *LCI(L) 530*. During the invasion of Normandy *LCI(L) 530* was redesignated *LCH 530* and served as the flagship to Capt. James E. Arnold, USNR.



USS LCI 551 underway.

At 0810 the *LCI 551* and her group arrived at their rendezvous point in the vicinity of Utah Beach. At 0830 they anchored offshore to await their turn to land. The opportunity to do so did not come until late in the afternoon.

At 1512 the group formed up and at 2/3 speed they headed for the beach. At 1609 beaching stations were set and the group lay to along the line of departure. At 1756 they upped anchor and formed a line abreast. Once again at 2/3 speed they approached the beachhead and were immediately taken under fire. Shells landed amongst them in salvos of four. This sporadic shelling would continue throughout their entire stay on the beach.

At 1815 the *LCI 551* grounded on the beach. The crew extended and lowered her ramps and began discharging troops of the U.S. Army's 4th Infantry Division. The water was relatively calm. Heavily laden as they were these heroic soldiers struggled towards shore. But because the ships had grounded on an offshore sandbar, they quickly waded into water over their heads. Sailors on a grounded LCT that had been left behind in the morning landings went to the rescue. They fished them out with boat hooks.

This first beaching was hampered by a strong long-shore current that carried 551 northwards, parallel to the beach. She was dangerously close to the 527 that was to her starboard. As a result, she upped her stern anchor and maneuvered for another run at the beach at 1825. The anchor was let go a second time, she grounded, lowered her ramps and more troops began to disembark at 1833.

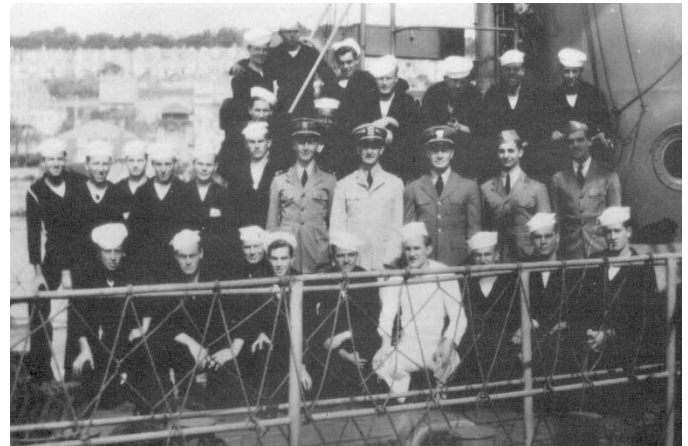
At 1840 the combined effect of the rising tide and disembarking of the troops caused the ship to float free. After raising her ramps slightly, she then drove ahead to beach again. At 1845 the ramps were lowered again and disembarking resumed. Floating free again at 1850 and having unreeled most of her stern anchor cable, she was forced to lift her ramps and retract from the beach. At 1905 the 551 beached for a third time and her ramps were again lowered. She renewed unloading but most immediately was forced to raise them and drive ahead to reground. Disembarkation renewed, but she had to retract again. After three more futile attempts to land her troops via the ramps a LCVP came alongside to remove the last of her troops. At 1950 the 551 came about and returned to the transport area at flank speed.

After landing their troops, the ships in the 551 group were ordered to anchor and await further orders. Amidst the general chaos and shell fire the Group Flagship *LCI 552* had suffered minor damage and was ordered to return to England.

Later that night a single German plane attacked at low altitude and dropped a bomb between the 551 and a destroyer anchored to her starboard. A short time later General Quarters sounded, and the plane made a second run. Crews in the LCVPs that were tied up and strung out astern of the 551 fired away with 50-caliber machine guns, hitting nothing, but making a lot of noise and lighting up the sky with fountains of tracers.

The 551 remained at anchor for three days and then was ordered to convoy a group of LCTs to the eastern end of the British beaches Sword and Gold and then return. Following this task, she was assigned to

convoy LCTs back and forth across the English Channel as they removed refugees and brought in supplies.



USS LCI(L) 551 crew photo taken at Fowley, England, date unknown. Ship's officers left to right: Engineering Officer Langehheim, Executive Officer Buswell, Commanding Officer Lt.(jg) Fred Caraiedo, Medical Officer Johnson, and O'Brien.

Thereafter the 551 was ordered to Poole, England. She remained there until 18 July when she was sent to the Mediterranean for landings in southern France.

Flotilla 2 at Utah Beach

Flotilla 2 had sailed from Plymouth and Salcombe, England on June 5, 1944 bound for Utah Beach with members of the 4th Infantry Division.

With the destroyer USS *O'Brien* (DD-725) as escort, *LCI-27* led 21 LCIs of Flotilla 2 in two columns. They were headed toward Red Beach sector of Utah Beach on June 6th.

These LCIs were numbers: 3, 4, 5, 8, 11, 29, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 231, 232, 325, 326, 349, 350, and 419.

These two columns of Flotilla 2 LCIs were followed by another task force including 23 LCIs of the Green Beach assault group of Utah Beach.

The Utah Beach assault groups did not experience the level of slaughter and devastation as their counterparts did on Omaha Beach. However, five vessels including *LCI 232* were victims of German mines on D-Day that were in the waters of the Cardonnet Bank. Three other vessels were struck in that channel on subsequent days. German planes dropped mines nightly.

At 1042 the 22 LCIs of Flotilla 2 successfully disembarked their army troops onto smaller LCMs and LCVs about 1,000 yards off Utah Beaches Red Sector.

While off-loading her troops of the 4th Infantry Division, the *LCI 214* received word that the area was heavily mined and that she should depart the area as soon as possible. But her captain was coaxed into taking a closer look at the beach. After transferring troops to the smaller craft, he reluctantly headed the *214* toward the beach, while leading a column of LCIs.



LCI 214 on Utah Beach

Directly behind the *214* was the *LCI 232*. After moving forward a few hundred yards the *214* turned and headed back out to sea with her column of LCIs following. Shortly after she made her turn a loud explosion occurred. The *LCI 232* detonated a mine that

blew her out of the water. She immediately rolled over with the bottom of her hull facing skyward and sank within five minutes.

The crewman below deck did not have a chance. Fourteen of her crewmembers were killed. The *LCI 216* which was following behind *232* came to the rescue and took off what remained of the *232* crew.

LCI 219 Assigned New Role

After disembarking her troops on D-Day, *LCI 219* remained in the transport area. She received orders to tie up alongside *LST 282*. At 1756 she was boarded by the LST Flotilla 10 Commander with seven staff officers and sixteen enlisted men. The *LCI 219* was assigned the task of overseeing the placement of pontoon causeways on Utah Beach.

Five days later, on June 11, 1944 *LCI 219* was still supporting the operations of the command staff of LST Flotilla 10. The *219* was returning from Omaha Beach and was entering the Utah Beach area of operations. At 0345 there was a sudden air raid alert. There was no time for men on watch to sound the alarm.

A German aircraft dropped a bomb that struck the water on the port side of the *LCI 219*. It riddled approximately 25 feet of the hull with shrapnel causing many eight or nine- inch holes. In the darkness below deck many crewmembers were thrown from their bunks.

Lieutenant William Becker, the ships engineering officer grabbed his gear and scrambled topside to his battle station. He observed everyone coming out of the crew

quarters had been injured. He then hurried to the engine room where he found a fire blazing, all generators out, and every sailor of the “black gang” injured. With power knocked out the engine room pumps were useless. Lieutenant Becker reported to the ship’s captain, LCDR (then Lieutenant) Albert Joseph Corsi, who instructed him to survey the ship for additional damage. Becker counted a total of four fires. At first the ship took in water slowly but it steadily listed to port. Confusion began to take hold on the main deck. It was dark, many men were wounded, and they needed treatment.

Despite the hull damage and listing to port, individual acts of heroism began to take place as Captain Corsi attempted to save his ship and crew. A handful of the crew went below to search for survivors.

Lieutenant Becker could only muster eight uninjured sailors to fight the fires. The decks were getting hot as they fought the losing battle.

At 0400 the sub chaser *SC 1291* came alongside the 219 to pick up her wounded. A fire rescue party boarded the LCI as the SC 1291 attempted to maneuver the stricken 219 toward the beach. Together, the sailors from the two vessels brought the fires under control, but the water kept pouring in on the port side. No longer able to control the flooding of his ship, captain Corsi ordered all those left aboard to abandon the LCI(L) 219.

At 0515 the *LCI-219* rolled on her port side and sank. Seven of her crewmen and three from the LST Flotilla 10 Command Staff lost their lives.



LCI(L) 219 and LCI(L) 554 (far right) in the transport area off Utah Beach. LCI(L) 219 received bomb damage later that night. LCDR Albert J. Corsi was awarded the Navy Cross for his efforts to save his ship and crew despite severe wounds. He was the last man off the ship.

More Memories and Photos of LCI(L) 514

Submitted by Dixon Hemphill



Dixon Hemphill while attending the V-12 Navy Training Program at Holy Cross College in Worcester, MA during February 1944.

A story by Dixon Hemphill appeared in the December 2020 issue of *Elsie Item*. His story was titled "Memories aboard LCI 514(G) in China. Hemphill's story was post war, but the original 514 crew had seen war time duty in France, Italy, and Africa. This letter is from Dick Viken the 514's signalman during that tour. Photos are from Hemphill's 514 memorabilia in China.

Thursday, 17 April 1997

Dear Dixon,

I was happy to get your letter. I too joined the LCI Association about 4 years ago with the idea of finding some of the crew from 514. My last year in the Navy was spent on the LCI(L) 221 and I have had some good contacts (by letter and phone) with four of

that crew. Until your letter however, not a word from 514.

I was part of the original nucleus crew of the 514. We trained at Little Creek and Solomons and then picked her up and put her in commission at the shipyard in New Jersey. We did the outfitting and shakedown in New York at pier 87 (or near there). I know we were there for Christmas in '43. It's really an amazing story in a way. When we joined that convoy to cross the Atlantic in January of '44, there wasn't one enlisted man or officer on board who had ever been to sea before.

I was 19 by then and the Navy had given me four months at the University of Chicago to become a signalman. Most of the rated men were about the same age. Ed Koch the bosn' had been a beer truck driver in N.Y.C. The oldest crew member was "Pop" Gillespie, the electrician's mate, who was probably 35 and from Boston. The Captain was Wilbur G. Inman from Chicago. The Exec. was Victor H. Bagnall from Bergenfield, N.J. The other two officers were John K. Burdick from Cleveland Heights, OH, and Albert O. Technow from Dayton, KY.

"We landed in the 19th wave on Normandy on Utah."

We were of course still an LCI(L) then. It took 21 days to Falmouth England and it was rough. We trained along the south coast of England near the Lands End area until June. We landed in the 19th wave on D-Day on Utah near San Marcouit. Two more landings at Courselles Sur Mer, and two at Barfluir. The last two I think were with Brits.

We left England on July 15 and had a restful cruise to Bizerte. Spent about 10 days in the Southern France invasion in August. We were very lucky through the whole thing with no casualties. Actually, Lt. Inman was not much of a ship handler and most of our damage occurred in collisions. The other ships used to tell us we had sunk more allied shipping than the German E-Boats.

Until December 14 of '44 we carried a steady stream of troops, mail, and cargo back and forth between Africa, Sicily, Italy, and France. Even including one load of prostitutes who went with the North African troops the other LCIs were taking to Southern France.

On December 14th in Palermo Sicily the 514 headed for home to be changed to an LCI(G) and about six of us noncoms were transferred to other ships. I was pretty bitter, but of course it turned out to be great duty with the war over in Europe. We got back to the States just in time for VJ-Day.

I probably haven't told you anything you didn't already know but hope it helps. I think I read once about the 514 on a Chinese adventure and I'd like to hear about it.

Sincerely,

Dick Viken

Northfield, MN

The following pictures are of the 514 crew during 1945 and 1946. They were submitted by Dixon Hemphill. The ship had been converted to a gunboat. It left San Diego for Okinawa on 20 August 1945. The war was over. No more worries of having to provide gunboat support during the invasion of Japan. Now they would provide occupation

support in the Philippines, Formosa, and China. They arrived in Shanghai in January of 1946.



Officers of the USS LCI(G) 514 in Shanghai, China 21 April 1946. Front Row L-R: Art Walton, Dixon Hemphill. Back Row L-R: Jim Nash, Bill Snyder, and Stan Donahue the Commanding Officer.



Boyd (Guns), Plummer (Sparks), Gorsline (Goose), Hopkins (Doc)



The LCI(G) 514 "Deck Force." Included Salvatore, Felton, Hilbers, Darter, Vandehie, Evans, Euratte. Cowdell.



"Radio Gang" Croat, Currier, Fletcher



"Black Gang" included Grobner, Fagan, Carpenter, Scott, Griffin, Lombardo, Sitz, and Roshen.



"Signal Gang" Lassa and Fendress.



Wangpoo River: Mailman Linsey (Tex), delivers only one letter and for a guy sent home 3 months ago.



Lt. (jg) Stan Donahue, CO of LCI(G) 514



The LCI(G) 514 was decommissioned on 12 June 1946. She was turned over to the Chinese Nationalist Navy along with LCI(G)s 233, 417, 418, 514, 517, 630, 631, and 632. In July 1945 their crews hitched a ride on the Monrovia, from China to Norfolk, VA non-stop thru the Panama Canal.

Touring WW2 Historic Sites on Saipan

Photos by Charlie Ritz

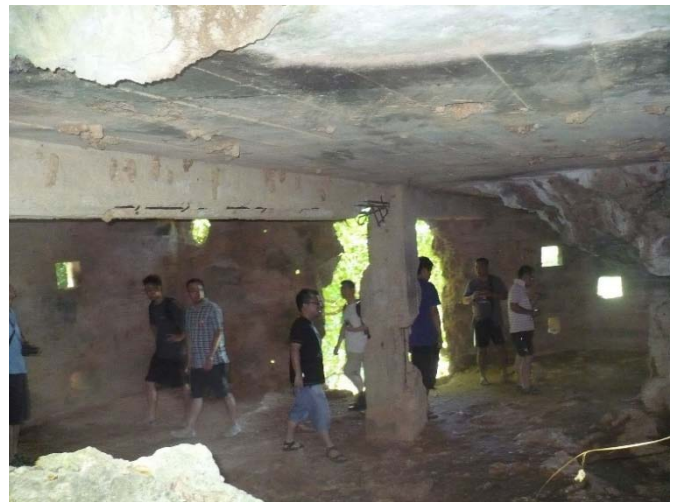
Saipan is located on the northern tip of the Mariana Island chain. The U.S. invasion on 15 June 1944 caught Commanders Saito and Nagumo by surprise. They thought the islands to the south were next in line for attack. The 29,000 Japanese defenders would fight to the death. Admiral Nagumo won fame at Pearl Harbor then lost it in defeat at Midway. His land-based assignment to Saipan became a death sentence for this storied naval officer.

Today, the island is a tourist destination. The island waters are popular for scuba divers and snorkeling enthusiasts. Many historic battle sites attract visitors also.

LCI associate member, Charlie Ritz took a dive trip there in 2019. His dad, Lt. Cmdr. Edward J. Ritz was skipper of the *LCI(R) 1024*. Charlie toured the Saipan battle sites and shared these photos.



A Japanese type 95 (3-man crew) light tank.



The last command post where Commander Saito and Admiral Nagumo committed suicide.



A damaged anti-aircraft gun is among the many armaments and bunkers that remain of the defeat. Bonzai charges and mass suicides are an ugly part of Saipan's war history.



Suicide Cliff on the northern coast of Saipan provides a beautiful view with a horrifying past. Thousands of civilians jumped to avoid capture and the fear of rape and torture by Marines.

Officers and Executive Board

Please feel free to contact any of the officers or directors listed below for whatever comments, or questions you may have, 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.

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

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