

Joint Issue of

# ELSIE ITEM

and the

# DECK LOG OF THE USS LCI(L) 713



Official Newsletters of the USS LCI National Association and  
The Amphibious Forces Memorial Museum

ISSUE 121

JUNE 2023



**ALL AHEAD FULL**  
**For LCI(L) 713**

## Inside this Issue...

- LCI-713 restoration & updates
- LCIer Oral History Interviews
- Memorial pages to LCI Veterans



## The Amphibious Forces Memorial Museum *Home of the LCI-713*

### MISSION

*The Amphibious Forces Memorial Museum (AFMM) is an Oregon Non-Profit organization dedicated to the restoration and preservation of the USS LCI 713. Our Mission is to preserve the history of the Amphibious Forces in WWII, Korea, and Vietnam, to educate the public on the rich naval maritime heritage that the Amphibious Forces have played in our nation's history, and the importance of preserving historic naval ships for future generations.*

### INFO

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

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The "Deck Log of the LCI-713" is the Official publication of the AFMM. Membership is available to anyone interested in our mission of historical preservation and education. For more info please visit our website

This publication is a collaboration of the USS LCI National Organization and the AFMM.

**Notice:** The AFMM or USS LCI National Association are not responsible for the accuracy of the content. There is an immense amount of research that goes into some of these articles and we rely on the diligence of the author of each article.



# 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/](http://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.

## Full Steam Ahead!

### *A Message from the Amphibious Forces Memorial Museum*

Dear AFMM, LCI National Association members and followers,

Thank you, Jeff, for that great cover and lead in for this issue. For our crew it is always full steam ahead. As you can see by the restoration update, we still managed to complete a few projects despite the crappy winter weather we had here in Portland.

We are also shifting into a higher gear on our fundraising and hull repair efforts with some renewed emphasis on social networking, crowd funding and shipyard visits. Our bank account is looking very good, but it's still not enough for that drydocking that we need so very much.

We are just beginning our next major restoration project and have received some specific funding from a couple of special donors for it. The project is to recreate the ship's ventilation system as closely as possible to the original spec. This has become a very important item in that we need good ventilation and a bit of heat in the winter to keep our precious onboard artifacts in good condition.

Recently a dentist, Ed Carlone, from Tennessee flew out to Portland just so he could do a zoom video presentation tour of the *LCI-713* for 102-year-old Victor Scherrer of *LCI-1021*. Victor was a patient of his that he befriended. I am totally awestruck by his generosity. You can read the bio that Victor wrote in this issue.

And another poignant event happened recently onboard the *LCI-713* where we hoisted the flag off the *LCI-417*, which flew at Normandy and retrieved that day by Signalman Francis Fleming. The flag was donated to the AFMM by the Fleming family and family members were present for the raising. You can read about the *417* in this issue too.

The support we receive from our membership is outstanding and we thank you all for keeping us going.

Hope you enjoy the issue!



*AFMM President*



## ***Yes, I want to help launch the LCI 713!***

Please fill out the form and return with your check or we accept secure donations online via our website's donation page: [www.amphibiousforces.org](http://www.amphibiousforces.org)

For more information, call Rick at 541-226-5427 or email [afmm@amphibiousforces.org](mailto:afmm@amphibiousforces.org)

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**Portland, OR 97239-3871**

*Note: If you don't want to use the form, it's ok...  
However, please keep us up to date on your contact info  
for our mailings. Thanks!*

**Enclosed is my contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to help get the LCI-713 underway.**

- Lifetime Membership \$500    Lifetime Veteran \$100    Annual Member \$20  
 Lifejacket Memorial \$250 (We will contact you for an inscription)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Vet (Y) or (N) \_\_\_\_\_

LCI or Ship affiliation \_\_\_\_\_ Branch/rank \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Other ways you may show your support:***

- My company offers a matching gift program.  
 Contact me about setting up an automatic monthly direct donation.  
 Send me information on including a legacy gift in my estate plan.  
 I would like to volunteer.

My Gift Is:       In Memory of     In Honor of

Person's name \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **Observations from Officer's Country**      from Robert E. Wright Jr.

**Memorial Day 2023.** Each year we include in the issue of ELSIE ITEM closest to Memorial Day, the List of those who died while serving aboard an LCI during the War years of 1942 to 1945. As more accurate information becomes available the list changes. This year several names were eliminated. Several of those sailors listed previously survived the war and others who actually died were not aboard LCI's but other Landing Craft types.

Please take time to read all these names and reflect for a minute on those who gave everything to stop the forces of tyranny. This is the cost of Freedom we cannot repay.

**The USS Landing Craft Infantry Association was organized in May of 1991. We are about to begin our 33<sup>rd</sup> year**

**The longest membership award:**

**Chris Shelvik** SM2/c, served aboard *LCI(R) 337*  
Chris was the 13<sup>th</sup> person to join the Association in 1991

**Recognition for a Life Well Lived**

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize our oldest living Members.

**Gordon Smith** QM1/c, served aboard *LCI(L) 43*, age 102

**Harold Laabs** MoMM3/c served aboard *LCI(L) 711*, age 102 this year

**William Yakey** MoMM2/c served aboard *LCI(L) 661*, age 100

**Paul Huppmann** Lt(jg) served aboard *LCI(G) 80*, age 100 this year

Also I will mention **Victor Scherrer** Lt(jg) served aboard *LCI(L) 1021* age 102 this year and who was able virtually visit the LCI 713.(see the story on page 16)

**Membership 2023** Widows and 2022 non-renewing members will receive reminders in the mail soon. As of the end of April we have on the membership rolls:

**36** Living WWII LCI Veterans  
    **139** Widows, Associates and Other members

It is obvious that our LCI Veteran membership will continue its inevitable decline over the next few years. I am optimistic that the members who remain will stay dedicated to telling the stories of the men who manned the US Navy's Landing Craft Infantry in WWII, well into the future.



## Gator Gossip

By Jeff Veesenmeyer

Old stories will often generate new stories. In this issue there are three stories that developed from past issues of *Elsie Item*. They triggered memories from readers about more details, photos, and information for those events.

John Ratomski wrote, “I saw on the Remembering LCI Vets Facebook Page the story of *LCI(L) 79* coming to the rescue of the USS *Mississinewa* sailors at Ulithi (Winter 2023 Issue 120). My father was there and witnessed the Kaiten attack. I have several rare photos of the attack.” Some of those photos and stories about his dad’s Seabee Battalion are now shared in this issue.

The story in June 2022 about the Operation Tiger exercise at Slapton Sands reminded Joe Flynn of a newspaper article he had saved. It was about his relative who experienced that disastrous event. He sent me the clipping which has added another layer to the story.

I recalled an oral history interview I referenced for the Operation Tiger story. The Library of Congress interviewed Leroy Bowen *LCI(L) 83*. He witnessed the German E-boat attacks during Operation Tiger. But he also landed troops at Omaha Beach. His D-Day story is now included in this issue.

Bruce Gerber found a box of his dad’s Navy stuff. Inside were letters home, photos, and a poem written by Ensign Gerber *LCI(L) 1089*. Though his dad talked little about the war, the stuff he saved talks volumes. Some interesting memories of life aboard an LCI are shared in his poem.

I found another oral history. Edgar Hinson *LCI(R) 580* was interviewed by a genealogy organization. His ship was converted for rockets, and he talked about the special training he received at an army base in Florida.

None of these sailors are with us anymore. But their stories are still being told. And it is important to keep telling them. There are many sources for these personal LCI stories. Don’t throw anything away marked “Navy Stuff.”

Here is another example of how Navy memorabilia will trigger a WWII story or a memorable event. AFMM received a donation of a flag flown from the *LCI(L) 417* during D-Day at Omaha Beach. Family members of *417* shipmate Francis Fleming visited the *LCI(L) 713* to attend a flag raising ceremony. See the story and photos of their visit in this issue.

COVER PHOTO: I took the pilot house photo while touring the *LCI(L) 713* during the 2018 National LCI/AFMM reunion. The “All Ahead Full” engine order is a good metaphor for the restoration work being done by the *713*-volunteer crew.

**SEND LETTERS & PHOTOS TO:**  
[JeffreyMktg@gmail.com](mailto:JeffreyMktg@gmail.com) or my mailing address (Contact Us) inside front cover.

## LCI-713 Update

*By Jerry Gilmartin*

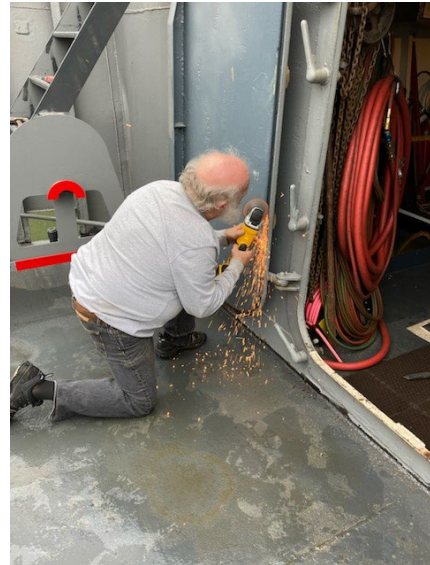
Here are the highlights of the restoration progress and significant events that occurred on board *LCI 713*. The weather wasn't the greatest in Portland this winter, which slowed things down a bit. But we did still manage to complete a few projects and add a couple of new volunteers.



*Doesn't look like much, but this is the start of restoration on the ship's ventilation system, which is a complete refabrication of the original. This will be a major project for 2023. Steve Adams leading the charge.*



*The main exterior winter project was improving the watertight doors with new gaskets, repairing hinges and dogs along with new brass dog shims (which also needed to be fabricated).*



*More watertight door work with Steve hard at it.*

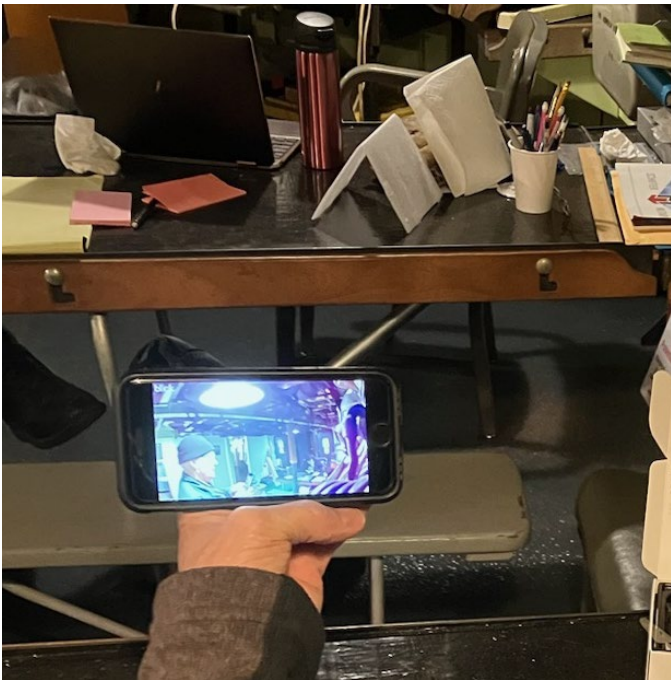


*We now have a complete 20mm Oerlikon on display in Clipping after a lot of fab work and scrounging of parts.*



*Of course, the never-ending painting. Here's Lin on one of those rare, nicer winter days in Portland.*





*On the inside, we improved our ship's security with new motion detection cameras that have remote view on our cell phones (pictured). We also added more emergency pumping, water sensors and improved door locks.*



*Our fabulous historian, Dave McKay, hosting a zoom video event of the LCI-713 with the Milbury, MA Historical Society. The town of Milbury originally sold the war bonds necessary to build the 713! Here's a video link to Dave's presentation:*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yPY10YtJwic>



*Since it was bad weather most of the time, a lot of effort went into cleaning up and improvement of our display areas. Here's John, polishing that ship's bell from LCI National.*

**PHOTO ON RIGHT: No Smoking on deck!**



*Here's Mark installing mounts for all the original complement of fire extinguishers used for display only.*



# The Flag Still Flies,

*By Dave McKay, AFMM Historian*

*LCI 417* started life at the George Lawley shipyard when its keel was laid on February 1, 1944. Eight days later the ship was launched and a week after that the ship was outfitted, underwent ship trials, and commissioned into the United States Navy on February 16, 1944. After extensive crew training at the Amphibious Training Center, Solomons, Maryland, the LCI was assigned to the newly created Flotilla Twelve. The flotilla was the third LCI flotilla to be assigned to the upcoming Normandy invasion.

Sailing from Norfolk, Virginia on March 24, 1944, it took *LCI 417* and nine other LCIs nineteen days to reach Falmouth, England. Later shifting to Plymouth, the *417*, now part of Force Baker, began a series of intensive training exercises in preparation for Operation Neptune, the amphibious landing portion of Operation Overlord.

On June 1<sup>st</sup> the ship took on approximately 200 troops of the 26<sup>th</sup> Infantry (1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division) and 33<sup>rd</sup> Field Artillery regiments at its anchorage in the Tamar River upstream from Plymouth. At 0100 hrs. on June 6<sup>th</sup>, Task Group 126.3 consisting of *LCI 417* and eleven other LCIs departed Plymouth basin in route to Normandy. Arriving off Normandy at mid-afternoon, they awaited further instructions. An hour later they and the other LCIs of the group were ordered to land their troops at Omaha Beach's notorious Easy Red sector.



*LCI(L) 417 beached on Omaha Beach D-Day plus one, 7 June 1944.*

The commanding officer, Ensign Elwyn G. Hughes and Signalman 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Francis Fleming were in the conning station as the ship approached the beach. They expected that the landing beach would have been secured by this time and the landing be uneventful. The first problem was maneuvering through the wreckage of sunk landing craft and other wreckage that littered the beachfront.

When the LCIs reached the shore and began to unload, they were met with a sustained bombardment from German mortars and artillery that sprayed the ships with shrapnel. The problem was further exacerbated by a swift current that ran parallel to the beach. Another problem involved small craft crossing the cable attached to the stern kedging anchor that must be kept taught to keep the LCI from turning sideways to the beach.

Despite these problems all but one of the LCIs successfully disembarked their soldiers and withdrew from the beach. That stranded LCI, was the *416*. It struck a large

beach mine which flooded the aft portion of the ship.

*LCI 417* remained on the beach during the night and returned to England the following morning. During the next month, *LCI 417* made a number of crossings from Newhaven to the Normandy beachhead as part of the Far Shore ferry service. This pattern continued until November 1944 when orders were received to depart for the United States.

Task Group 27.4 was a slow convoy that departed Plymouth, England on December 12<sup>th</sup> bound for Norfolk, Virginia. It consisted of *LCI 417* and sixteen other LSTs, LCIs and other service ships with escorts. Less than a week into the voyage the convoy ran into rough weather. When the weather moderated on the 19<sup>th</sup>, the convoy received intelligence that a U-Boat was nearby and to be on the lookout. At 1135 hrs. on the 20<sup>th</sup>, a torpedo from *U-870* struck the portside of *LST 359*. The destroyer escort, *USS Fogg*, turned to investigate when it too was struck by a torpedo. The LCIs were ordered to assist the stricken escort while other ships helped evacuate the crew of the LST which eventually sank at 1800 hrs. For their prompt response, the LCIs received extra turkey and fresh bread for Christmas from the convoy commander.

Arrival back in the US at the beginning of 1945 saw *LCI 417* turned into a fire support gunboat for the upcoming invasion of Japan. Before it could be sent out into the Western Pacific, the war with Japan ended. The decision was then made to convert the ship back into a troop carrying LCI and then send it and the others of the

newly formed Flotilla 37 for occupation duty in the Far East. It spent the next six months participating as part of Operation Magic Carpet before being decommissioned on June 25, 1946, and placed into caretake status.

It was then lend leased to the Republic of China's Navy on December 12, 1946. Renamed the *Lein Li* (LCI-262), the old *417* continued in service into the 1960s.



*The bow of LCI 262 is visible on the left after it was lend leased to the Republic of China.*

The national flag that flew on US ships at such history changing events as Normandy was a special kind of souvenir and usually reserved for the captains of those ships. However, in the case of *LCI 417*, the honor fell to Francis Fleming, the petty officer responsible for the ship's flags. This was because the captain at the time of the landing, Ensign Elwyn Hughes, was invalided off the ship due to a back injury two weeks after the invasion and never got a chance to acquire it.

In April, the Fleming family came to visit the *LCI-713* and participate in a special flag raising. It had been 79 years since the flag had last flown on that historic day at the

Normandy D-Day invasion. It was a great honor to have the flag fly on the 713, one that will be reserved for only very special occasions.



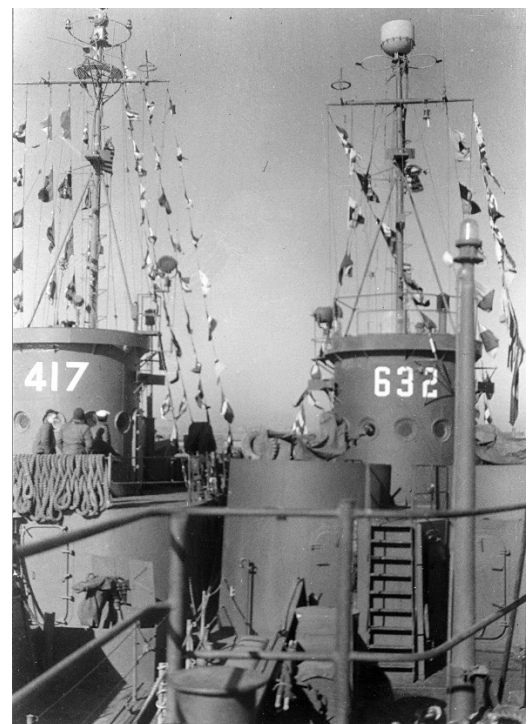
*The Fleming Family (left to right), Rick Holmes (AFMM), Lori Schall, Breanna Trasher, Brett Fleming, Connie Fleming, Wendy Johnson. On April 24, 2023*



*Francis Fleming SM3/c*



*The D-Day flag flies again! Breanna Trasher, Brett Fleming and Rick Holmes.*



*Airing bunting flags at Taku China 1946.*

## Excerpts from LCI 713 Deck Logs March April May 1945

By Jerry Gilmartin

Here is what was going on during WW2 aboard a typical Landing Craft Infantry, USS *LCI 713* during the months of March to May 1945. In some places the Deck Logs have been augmented with excerpts from Executive Officer Gordon Houser's letters home to his Mom. From these we learned the USS *LCI 713* made two Combat Landings (at Zamboanga and Brunei Bay), had two monkeys and a puppy as ship's mascots, and got stuck on Pie Beach at Hollandia, New Guinea which required being pushed off the beach by a Seabee Bulldozer! The ship also lost her stern anchor at Ngele-Ngele Island near Morotai Island and went back to look for it three times but never found it!

3-2-45	Mangarin Bay Mindoro	1033 Arrive Mangarin Bay 1135 moored to stbd side LCI710 1854 anchored in Mangarin Bay <b>(**Housers letters: Mail arrived. We obtained two new crew members - two monkeys!) (These were likely from LCI 710)</b>
3-5-45	Mangarin Bay Mindoro	Obtained repair parts for SCR (This was the ABK/IFF Unit) from AGC3 USS Rocky Mount
3-6-45	Mangarin Bay Mindoro, Army Base San Jose	<b>1623-1745 Embarked 111 Troops plus 2 Officers of 296<sup>th</sup> Port Co. (1<sup>st</sup> Lt William M Donahue, 2d Lt Charles A Mckenna) and 39 Troops plus 1 Officer from 4297th QM Gas Co (2d Lt Charles R Finnel)</b>
3-8 to 10-45	Mangarin Bay, Mindoro to Zamboanga, Mindoro	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Ship of Column 6 in a 7-column convoy for Operation Victor 4, OTC ADM Forrest B Royal</b> Left Mangarin Bay at 0649 en-route Zamboanga Convoy Speed 8 knots 0730 3-10-45 anchored 2 miles off Red Beach Zamboanga
3-10-45	Red Beach 2 Zamboanga, Mindoro	<b>1232-1241 Offloaded Troops onto Red Beach (1<sup>st</sup> COMBAT LANDING OF LCI713)</b> 1820 U/W in Sulu Sea 4 <sup>th</sup> Ship Column 2 to avoid Jap Suicide Boat attack
3-16-45	Anchored San Pedro Bay	0805 CDR Vernon Janotta (OIC LCI Flot 24) from LCI624 to ride LCI 713. 1115-1422 CDR Janotta came aboard from LCI 624
3-19-45	U/W to Tolosa Anchorage San Pedro, Leyte	0200 Moored to LCI 702 and LCI 624 0255 to 0340 Transferred Spare Left Hand GM6-71 Engine from crate on Main Deck to LCI 702
3-21-45	Tolosa, San Pedro Leyte	0750-0800 U/W for AFD8 (Small 200ft Aux Floating Drydock) entered drydock to fix Stbd Propeller Shaft and Pitch Control
3-22-45	Drydock AFD8 in San Pedro Bay, Leyte	1050 Left Drydock 1722-1805 moored stbd to SS Wolf Mtn (Type T2 Oil Tanker 523 ft long) Loaded nine 55-gallon drums of lube oil aboard. <b>(**Housers letters: Monkeys (from March 2, LCI 710 in Mangarin Bay Mindoro) have outlived their usefulness. Traded them for a tiny puppy) Puppy was likely obtained from oil tanker SS Wolf Mountain</b>



**SS Wolf Mountain T2 Oil Tanker**

4-3-45  
to 4-9-  
45

Humboldt Bay  
Hollandia NG  
Beached at  
Water Hole by  
Fleet Post  
Office,  
Pie Beach

1000-1135 took on 156 troops and 5 Officers  
1302-1325 LCI 687 alongside to assist retracting from beach, but unable  
**1425 Able to retract from beach with help of Bulldozer pushing bow** (likely  
was a D4 Caterpillar Bulldozer used by Seabees)  
**(This is when the big dent in the bow happened!)**



1651 Took position 1-1 in 4 column convoy (1<sup>st</sup> ship in 1<sup>st</sup> column) with LCT 1323,  
LCT 1331, and LCT 1327 following enroute to Doroeba, Morotai, SOA 7 knots  
1930 Group 70 Commander orders LCI 713 leave formation, locate CT 1327 which  
has fallen out with disabled steering gear  
2000-2220 Located and in Blinker Light comm with LCT 1327 until repairs were  
completed, also radio comms with Group 70  
2220-2400 U/W to rejoin convoy with LCT 1327 following

4-4-45  
to 4-9-  
45

U/W from  
Hollandia NG

4-5-45 1028-1110 Towed/assist LCI 1331 until problem repaired and resumes  
position in convoy  
4-6-45 1514 Fell out of convoy to transfer Dr LT(jg) Heydrich from LCT 1319

	to Doroeba Morotai	4-7-45 0930 moored to LCT1319 to transfer back Dr LT(jg) Heydrich 4-9-45 1745-1815 Beached at Blue Beach, Morotai and unloaded troops 4-9-45 1915-1920 retracted from beach 4-9-45 2025-2031 "Flash Red" Set General Quarters (Air Raid) "Flash White" 2035 Attempts to retract LCI687 from beach failed since tide went out, so we stayed on beach moored to LCI 687
4-29-45	Doroeba, Morotai	0745-1200 U/W to firing range for target practice 0915-1035 Set General Quarters for Target Practice for 20mms <b>(**Housers Letters: Political talk. Our Mascot Pup fell overboard one dark night!)</b>
5-7-45	Doroeba, Morotai	0046-0115 SOPA reports enemy planes approaching, called General Quarters!
5-21-45	Doroeba, Morotai,	0800-0920 U/W to south side of Ngele-Ngele Island for beaching exercises, OIC LCDR AT Baker III LCI Group 72 <b>0945 Lost stern anchor while retracting from beach</b> <b>Bearings taken when lost anchor Right Tangent of island 020D True, Left Tangent of Island 320D True, Middle Hut 0359D True</b> 0950 OIC orders rejoin beaching practice without use of anchor 1330-1512 Practiced towing a stuck LCI off the beach practice with LCI 712 <b>1535-1610 Lowered small boat to search for lost anchor but unsuccessful</b>
5-22-45	Doroeba, Morotai,	5-22-45 0920-1130 Target practice on firing range 20mm used 2280 rnds <b>5-22-45 1130 left formation to return to Ngele2 island to search for anchor</b> <b>1250 replaced missing stern anchor with spare from Troop Compt #4</b> 1321-1535 used ships small boat to search for anchor 1547-1602 beached at Ngele2 island
5-23-45	Doroeba, Morotai	1255-1720 U/W for Training drills, Tactics, Maneuvering, Flag Hoists 1330 -1515 Practicing different formations using Flag Hoists 1525-1535 Making Smoke
5-25-45	Waters just off Doroeba, Morotai	0000-0330 U/W in Night Maneuvering exercises in a 6-ship convoy 1235-1500 U/W for training with LCI636 mooring to a dead in water ship 1500-1550 Practice mooring to a ship which is moving at 6 knots
5-27-45	Doroeba	<b>1255-1406 U/W to beach at Ngele2 island to search for lost anchor</b> <b>1555 Anchored in 6 fathoms water while diver searches for anchor</b> 1900 Beached on Recreation Beach Ngele2 Island for the night
5-28-45	Rec Beach, Ngele Island Morotai	0910 Retracted from beach to get U/W for Doroeba 1625 Flotilla Communications Officers come aboard <b>1630-1705 U/W to Ngele2 Island to search for anchor</b> 1707 LCI703 alongside to transfer Comm Officer
5-29-45	Beached at Recreation Beach, Ngele Island Morotai	1230-1323 Retract from beach and U/W to Dodola Island <b>1455-1546 U/W to rec beach at Ngele2 Island to search for anchor</b> 1552-1612 Unbeached and re-beached due to fouled anchor cable with another ships anchor cable
5-31-45	Beached at Recreation Beach, Ngele Ngele Island, Morotai	0905-1026 Retract from beach and U/W for Doroeba Anchorage 1500-1730 <b>Lay To near Marry Up Pier, Morotai</b> 1730-1905 <b>Embarked Australian Troops from small boats of Div. Reserve Aust 2/32 BN (This is for the June Invasion of Brunei Bay, Borneo)</b> 1910-2100 U/W with LCI 1074, LCI 1075 and LCI 958 escorted by PC 1120 to Doroeba, Morotai 2354 U/W to Ngele Ngele

## Lt.(jg) Victor Scherrer LCI-1021

By Rick Holmes

Recently we had a very interesting visit and zoom video tour of the *LCI-713*. Ed Carlone, a dentist from Johnson City, Tennessee befriended a patient of his, a WWII veteran of *LCI-1021* Lt.(jg) Victor Scherrer. Carlone, a military collector himself, became very interested in the history behind Victor's service on LCIs and eventually stumbled onto the *LCI-713's* website. Carlone came up with the idea of visiting the *LCI-713* and doing a zoom video tour on Victor's behalf, as the 102-year-old can no longer travel.

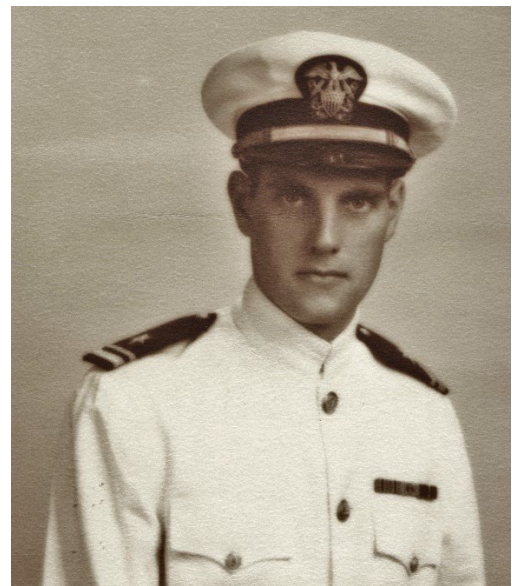
Carlone made it all happen and the tour was a big success. Victor was very engaged and offered tidbits of LCI history and operations that you could only know firsthand. What a generous thing to do, Thank you Ed!

Victor Scherrer has also written a very interesting biography, which we have posted on the AFMM website:

[Victor Scherrer Biography](#)



*Rick Holmes (tour guide) and Ed Carlone.*



*Lt.(jg) Victor Scherrer's promotion photograph*



*Ed touring with Victor in zoom session.*



*LCI 1021 Officers and Crew*



# In Memoriam

LCI 368  
Norman Wesley

LCI 465  
Howard wolfe

LCI 528  
Thomas Vecchi

LCI 551  
Richard Hudson



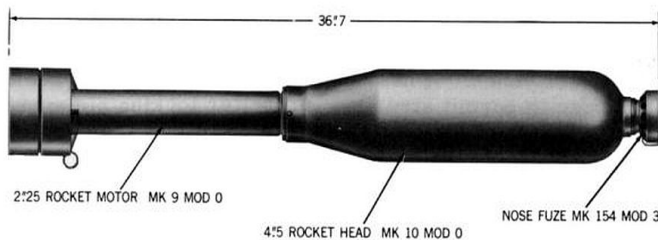
# Edgar Hinson Learns ABCs of LCI(G) Rockets

By Jeff Veesenmeyer

**A**t the end of 1943 Edgar Hinson was in Little Creek, Virginia learning how to land troops on beaches. That training was never utilized. Upon graduation he was sent to Florida to learn how to land rockets on beaches instead.

Hinson was from Whiteville, North Carolina. He got drafted in 1943, was given a choice of Army or Navy. He chose the Navy. He was sent to Bainbridge, Maryland for boot camp. From there he went to Little Creek, Virginia for small boat training. He was trained as a coxswain. After graduation his officer chose a crew to go with him to Florida for rocket training. Hinson was part of that crew.

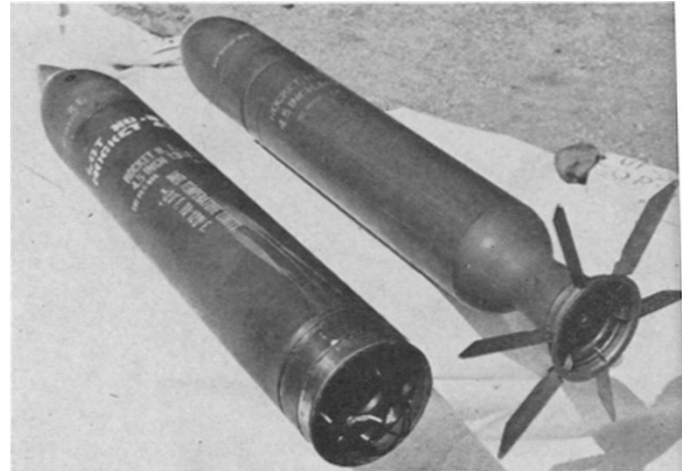
**Edgar Hinson:** *I had never seen a rocket until we got there and went out on the firing range. They wanted us to see what kind of a hole it would blow.*



*The 4.5-inch Beach Barrage Rocket (BBR) was called "Old Faithful." It was developed in 1942. It had a length of 36 inches, weighed 29 pounds, and a range of 1100 yards.*

Hinson's job with the rockets was to put them together. They were in three parts, the rocket head, rocket motor and rocket fuse. The 4.5-inch rocket head was packed with high-explosives. It weighed about 15

pounds. The rocket motor was a long tube filled with slow burning propellant powder. The rocket fuse would be attached after the rocket was loaded on launching rack. Electrical current from the ship's system would ignite the propellant powder that generated flaming gases and a forward thrust until the fuel was gone.



*The M8 4.5-inch fin stabilized rocket (finner) on right of the of M16 5-inch rocket. The larger (spinner) rockets were first used at Iwo Jima.*

**Edgar Hinson:** *The rockets were fired electrically from the conning tower. A button was pushed for each set of rocket launchers. You didn't fire them all at one time or they might hit each other. They had eight pounds of TNT in those things. There had been some explosions during launches that took out men on the bow.*

Rocket training was at Fort Pierce Army Base in Florida. Firing rockets off a ship was new for the Navy. "There were 92 of us sent there for training," said Hinson. "We had no ships yet. There were about 15 ships still being converted in Maryland."

The men were all housed in a big Quonset building. They did calisthenics each day and had some classroom training. Other than that, they were told to stay out of sight

until their ships were ready. It took three months before they got orders to return to Norfolk.



*Fort Pierce in Florida was developed for naval amphibious training. As many as 40,000 troops were stationed there during the war. They trained army and navy men for the Normandy and Pacific Island invasions.*

Once LCI gun and rocket conversions were made the rocket crews rejoined their shipmates. There were sea trials and then Flotilla Six left for San Diego on 27 May 1944. They had a rough ride along the east coast.

*Edgar Hinson: We came down the coast with breakers 17 feet high. I was in the conning tower. You'd get up on the waves and you'd see propellers turning under a ship coming down a wave. That was one of the toughest times.*

Flotilla Six arrived in San Diego on 6 June 1944. Each LCI had a crew of 72 that included 7 commissioned officers. Hinson's ship was reclassified *LCI(G) 580* on 15 June 1944. Their armament included ten rocket launchers, two 40mm AA gun mounts, four 20mm AA gun mounts, and six .50 caliber machine guns. This armament configuration

would provide a 300-foot barrage depth from the 4.5-inch fin stabilized rockets. Then heavy gunfire could be targeted on pillboxes and shore guns just prior to troops hitting the beach. When Hinson wasn't at the helm in the conning tower or assembling rockets below deck, he helped man a 40mm gun mount as a second loader. Flotilla Six took on supplies and left San Diego for Pearl Harbor. They trained there for a month in rocket launching and gunnery. They'd be part of a big invasion soon.

In September *LCI(G) 580* joined hundreds of ships for the Philippines. The slow-moving convoy stretched out for 500 miles. At times a section of the convoy would be stopped for a burial at sea. With thousands of men, there would be deaths due to sickness or accidents.

*Edgar Hinson: When they bury a person at sea, they stop every ship for a certain length of time. This makes sure that the person is down in the water deep enough that no propeller will touch them.*

General MacArthur had promised the Filipinos, "I shall return." The armada that brought him back to the Philippines was made up with over 800 warships and support vessels. On the morning 20 October 1944 *LCI(G) 580* was positioned in Leyte Gulf awaiting orders to provide a beach barrage bombardment for troop landings. Japanese aerial attacks had been limited to horizontal bombers targeting carriers, battleships, or troop transports. The escort carrier *Sangamon* (CVE-26) and light cruiser *Honolulu* (CL-48) were both damaged by bombers that day.



*LCI(G) 580 with all battle stations manned. The five portside rocket launchers are visible.*

Hinson was stationed on a 40mm gun mount. He was watching the pre-invasion bombardment being delivered by battleships and cruisers. While lookouts were scanning the sky up high for bombers a fighter snuck in low on the water.

***Edgar Hinson:*** *The Jap plane came up over the mountain and flew low over our landing ships. You don't fire over another ship, so we held fire. The Jap strafed us hitting two of our 40mm clips in the ready box.*

The 40mm shells detonated spraying shrapnel on the gun crew. The man to Hinson's left, George C. Thomas, was killed. The man on his right had his leg blown off. Hinson was hit with two pieces of shrapnel in the left foot. This was the first enemy plane they had seen. They didn't have a chance to fire back. Another ship did report shooting down the intruder.

***Edgar Hinson:*** *We were waiting to make the invasion. We took Thomas down below on a stretcher and put a flag over him. The other man was given morphine and*

*stabilized by the pharmacist. I poured the blood out of my shoe and went back to my gun, ready for some more. We were short-handed now and preparing to go in for the invasion. An Ensign and a guy from the black gang filled in on the gun. We went in, we made the invasion.*

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***He cut out the toe of his shoe and limped back to duty.***

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Flotilla Six gunboats led the way for landing craft. At under 3,000 yards from the beach, they fired their rockets and guns, then pulled away. With the beach area covered in smoke and flames their job was done. The final approach for troops and disembarking on the beach would be much safer. *LCI(G) 580* crew performed well but they had taken casualties. Their mood was somber. The reality of war was felt throughout the ship.

After their role in the invasion was done, Hinson got a tub of warm water with Epsom salt and soaked his foot. He cut out the toe of his shoe and limped back to duty. He would be awarded the Silver Star and Purple Heart. Another ship picked up Thomas and the other wounded man. George C. Thomas was buried at the American Philippine Cemetery. Years later Hinson saw a newspaper photo of Thomas' wife kneeling at his grave.

After Leyte *LCI(G) 580* was sent to New Guinea. They took part in the invasion of Mapia Island and participated in maneuvers and training for the next large invasion. They arrived at Lingayen Gulf Luzon, Philippines on 9 January of 1945. The rocket ships led the way for landing

craft again. Hinson had made boatswain mate 3<sup>rd</sup> class. His normal watch was at the helm in the conning tower now. They were strafed several times. Those on deck would duck for cover. But it was the kamikazes that were more terrifying. There is no safe place on an LCI rocket ship if hit by a plane with a bomb and fuel.

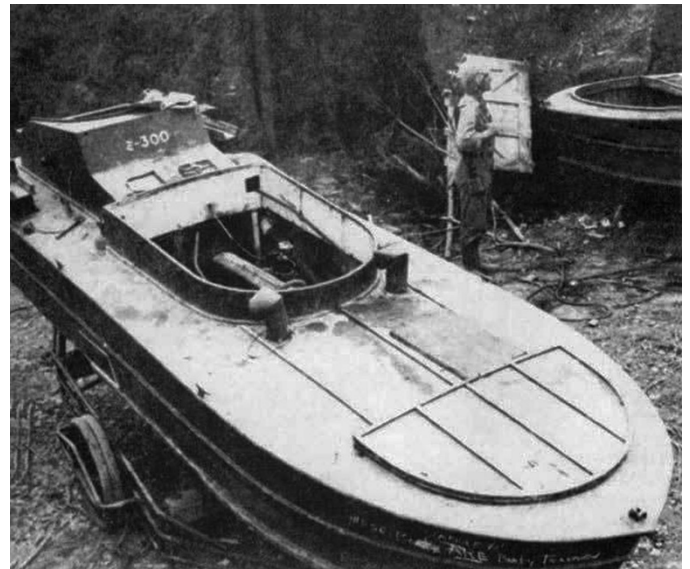
**Edgar Hinson:** *We were strafed by three zeroes off the entrance to Manila Bay on January 7<sup>th</sup>. I stood Helm watch. I helped steer the ship. I was enclosed in the conning tower most of the time.*

The rocket ships participated in landings at Nusugbau Bay, Luzon on 31 January 1945 and Mindora, Philippines two days later. Then it was back to Leyte to participate in maneuvers for the next big invasion at Okinawa. This would be the biggest and costliest battle of the Pacific War. Over 1,400 ships and 180,000 ground troops were needed for the invasion. The landing was scheduled for Easter Sunday 1 April 1945. But first the Navy needed an anchorage for resupply and repair of their ships. The Kerama Retto chain of 22 islands forms a huge deep lagoon like Ulithi. The chain is located 15 miles southwest of Okinawa.

The Japanese hoped these islands would be overlooked. They maintained only small garrisons to avoid notice. Within the backwaters and seaside caves the Japs had hidden hundreds of small wooden motorized boats. Each was designed to carry an explosive 600-pound charge in the bow. These were suicide crash boats to be used for night attacks on the anchored fleet at Okinawa.

The Japs were totally surprised on 26 March by the early morning bombardment from 12 LSM(R)s. This was followed by the Flotilla Six LCIs on 27 March. With thousands of rockets being unleashed on these islands the surviving Japs headed for the hills or surrendered. Resistance was very light for the army landing force. Hidden crash boats were discovered and blown up. Gunboats patrolled the shoreline of the islands looking for more boats to blast. They destroyed many with their 20mm machine guns.

**Edgar Hinson:** *We sailed from Leyte Island in the Philippines and arrived at Kerama Retto on 26 March 1945. We participated in the invasion of Kerama Retto on the 27<sup>th</sup> of March.*



*Shinyo boats meaning "Sea Quake," were to be driven at high speed into the side of allied ships. The bow was packed with explosives. Hundreds of these were discovered and destroyed on the Kerama Retto island chain.*

Re-supply and repair ships began anchoring in the lagoon right away. A supply depot had been the number one focus for the anchorage. But, salvage and repair became the greatest value of Kerama Retto. Fleet

warships were already fighting off constant air attacks from conventional and kamikaze planes. During the three-month Battle of Okinawa 36 ships were sunk and 368 were damaged from air attacks. The lagoon would become known as the tin can graveyard.

Hinson's LCI needed a minor repair part. They followed an LST repair ship that was looking for a smooth place to anchor. The LST ran up on a reef and couldn't get back off.

**Edgar Hinson:** *The LST captain contacted our skipper and requested a tow. We hooked our halter line to the LST and put the juice to the motors to pull them off. We shot that thing off the reef and our ship right up on the beach. We sat there for almost a month. You might say our war was over.*

With no power or refrigeration most of the crew and all of the food got transferred off the beached *LCI(G) 580*. Hinson ended up on a re-supply food ship for several weeks. "It was floating grocery store," he said. He'd walk along the chow line and order whatever he wanted. "I'll have that cantaloupe please."

However, the war was far from over in the Kerama Retto lagoon. The kamikazes would attack at dusk every night. LCIs would spread smoke and provide anti-aircraft fire support. Destroyers damaged on picket duty were tied up to repair ships. While lookouts watched the sky, Jap swimmers would sneak out and attach explosives to a ship's hull. Gunfire went on all night.

*LCI(G) 580* was finally off the beach 20 April 1945. It needed more than minor repairs now. The crew took their ship back

to Pearl Harbor at a slow crawl of about seven knots. By the time they got there the war was over. Hinson's final cruise to San Diego was on an aircraft carrier.

**Edgar Hinson:** *What I learned from my experience is anything that's worthwhile is going to cost you something. The freedom that we enjoy in this country is priceless. I'd go back today in order to help in that way.*

Hinson carried the two pieces of shrapnel in his foot the rest of his life. He died June 22, 2010, at the age of 85 and is buried in his hometown of Whiteville, North Carolina.

SOURCE: Oral History by Genealogy Trails History Group, Transcript Number 100, December 4, 2001.



*The Manilla American Cemetery in the Philippines was dedicated in 1960. It sits on a high plateau covering 152 acres. George C. Thomas GM2/c was killed on *LCI(G) 580* during the invasion of Leyte. His remains are buried here. There are 16,859 dead from WWII buried here. Most are from battles in New Guinea and the Philippines. The Tablet of Missing contains another 36,286 names.*

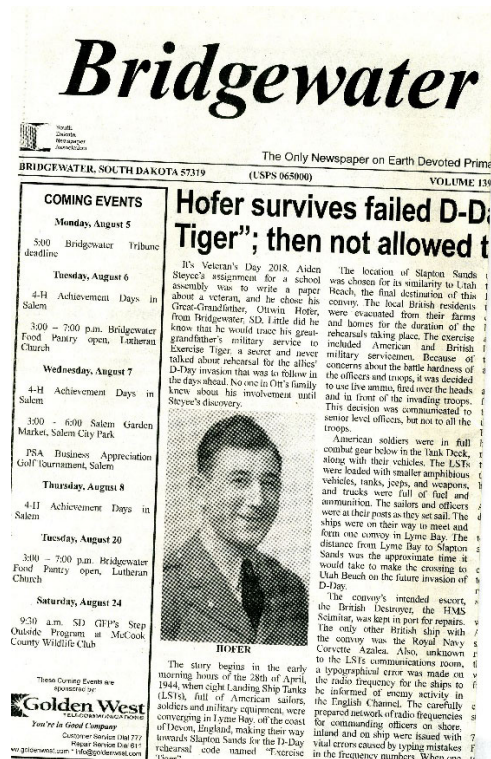
# Elsie Item story provides personal memories

By Jeff Veeseemeyer

LCI Director, Joe Flynn had a personal connection to the Operation Tiger article appearing in Elsie Item Spring 2022. “SNAFU at Slapton Sands” published in Issue 116. Flynn’s cousin-in-law Ottwin Hofer, was among the survivors on the sinking of *LST 531*. Nobody from Hofer’s family knew anything about his near-death experience until 2018. Those involved in the disaster were ordered not to discuss the operation under threat of court martial.

Flynn wrote, “Enclosed is a newspaper, the Bridgewater Tribune, with an article on Operation Tiger/Slapton Sands. The lead article is about my cousin (by marriage) who was involved in that operation. His daughter, Annelle Reynolds, is my second cousin.”

Hofer’s great grandson Aiden Steyee was given a school assignment to write a paper about a veteran. He chose his great grandfather. Steyee’s research of his great grandfather’s military service took him to the top-secret exercise at Slapton Sands, England. A full-scale D-Day rehearsal took place there on 28 April 1944. The convoy of LSTs fully loaded with troops and equipment were attacked by German torpedo boats. Two LSTs were sunk, and another was badly damaged. Hundreds of troops drowned in the icy waters. Others were killed by friendly live fire. More casualties occurred during this failed rehearsal than during the actual D-Day landing on Utah Beach. The story remained a secret for 40 years.



*In 2019, the Bridgewater Tribune ran a front-page story about how the grandson of Ottwin Hofer uncovered his WWII cover-up story.*

Years later a Sherman tank was discovered offshore of the Slapton Sands beachhead. This began a recovery project and efforts to tell the story to memorialize those men lost there. Aiden Steyee discovered this information while working on his paper. Now the story Ottwin Hofer shared with his family of nearly drowning also included a time, a place, and a disastrous operation. He had never shared those details.

His daughter Annelle Reynolds visited Slapton Sands for the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Exercise Tiger. Her trip, his story, and a school paper became front page news in their hometown of Bridgewater, South Dakota. These stories need to be told. They connect us to WWII history for all the sons, daughters, grandchildren and even second cousins of those who were involved.

## Radioman Recalls Omaha Beach Landing on LCI(L) 83

*Oral History of Leroy C. Bowen*

EDITORS NOTE: Leroy C. Bowen Jr. participated in Operation Tiger on April 27 and 28 1944. He was a radioman on the *LCI(L) 83*. His story of the disastrous D-Day rehearsal landing at Slapton Sands was included in the *Elsie Item* Spring 2022 issue. The lessons learned from that debacle were applied to the actual D-Day invasion. The most important change was the fix made to radio communications. Radioman Bowen felt many lives were saved on D-Day due to the mistakes that were corrected prior to 6 June 1944. Here is his oral history account of the landing on Omaha Beach. His interview transcript was produced by the Veterans History Project/Library of Congress.

**Leroy C. Bowen Jr. RM3/c *LCI(L) 83*:** We went out on maneuvers up to Weymouth quite often. We'd be thinking, "Well this is it. This is the invasion" Which of course it was not. Then on June 5<sup>th</sup>, that night we went out and we finally realized this was it, because we got a letter from General Eisenhower.

Early in the morning, the first thing that I remember was the battleships opening up with their big guns and we knew it actually started. Flotilla 10 was under the command of Captain Miles Lmlay. We had 24 LCIs and 12 were assigned to Utah and 12 to Omaha Beaches. Of the 12 early landings at Omaha Beach, we lost four of them, the 85, 91, 92, and 93. Two other ships, the 83, my ship, and the 88, were severely damaged.



*Leroy Bowen RM3/c 1944 and during an interview in October of 2013.*

As a Coast Guardsman, there is one thing I am very proud of...our Matchbox Fleet. It consisted of five dozen 83-foot patrol boats. Their sole purpose was to save lives. The boats were stripped of everything, and the crewmen aboard had to be trained as paramedics. They were there to save lives from the frigid waters. (Hundreds of troops had drowned or died of hypothermia at Slapton Sands due to lack of rescue boats.) By the end of day one at Normandy, they had saved at least 1,423 allied soldiers. They were saved from death in the bone chilling waters of the English Channel because of these patrol boats, which we called the Matchbox Navy. And of course, the real navy had a lot of fun with that, but boy, I was really proud of those guys.

Anyway, our landing excitement was Omaha Beach, EZ Red, and Fox Green. But unknown to us, and to anybody – the Army, the Navy or our intelligence – about 15 crack German divisions were doing their exercises, or maneuvers, right behind Omaha Beach. Navy intelligence had no knowledge of the Germans being there. This



resulted in the US Army 1<sup>st</sup> and 39<sup>th</sup> Divisions being pinned down on Omaha Beach for about four hours. After the four hours, roughly 3,000 men became casualties. This was before the Rangers and other small units, were able to climb the cliffs and get behind the German bunkers. I give credit to the US Rangers for getting us off Omaha Beach. General Bradley was thinking of calling us back.

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**Many of the LCVPs received a direct hit, were blown apart, killing most of the men aboard.**

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After the battleships stopped shelling, we all knew our turn was coming. The first people to go in were the LCVPs. These were the Higgins Boats. They were loaded from troop ships. Of the first few Higgins Boats that landed on Omaha Beach those troops never made it across the beach. They were machine gunned down from the cliffs above. Many of the LCVPs received a direct hit, were blown apart, killing most of the men aboard. The rest were drowned beneath the weight of their heavy packs. Very few made it to the beach. The Coast Guard Transport *Samuel Chase* had unloaded the 1<sup>st</sup> Army troops. When the ship started receiving casualties it became a hospital ship. They had dead piled up like cardboard boxes.

When our LCIs started going in I was in the radio shack listening for orders. The boatswain mate, a very good friend of mine, he poked his head in and said, “Hey Sparky, come out and take a look.” I could see the beach. His impression was that the beach

was loaded with driftwood. I said “Yeah, a lot of stuff.” But when we got to the beach, we realized it wasn’t driftwood, it was all bodies.

Our LCIs went in next. When the *LCI 85* approached the beach, she was hitting the wooden obstacles. The Germans had put these in with mines on top or sharp objects that would cut the bottoms out of the landing craft. As the *85* ground to a halt, a mine exploded tearing apart the forward compartments. To complicate matters, the German artillery began to find the range and at least twenty-five 88-mm shells found their mark. The Germans did a good job. The guns concentrated on the LCI ramps where troops were coming down and the ramps were blown to Hell. It made it impossible for the troops to get past the pile of dead and wounded at the foot of the ramps. The *85* backed off the beach and LCVPs came alongside and took off a few troops who were still alive. The LCI caught fire and began to list. Swinging about, she made it back to the hospital ship, *The Samuel Chase*, anchored about 10 miles offshore. Pumps were activated on the *85* in a vain effort to remove water that was filling the hold, but it did not work and the LCI sank. The remaining crew were picked up by the 83-foot rescue boats.

When the *LCI 93* moved in the tide was coming up. She struck a mine, and the Germans found her range, repeatedly hitting her with 88s. The shells exploded in the forward troop compartments. Practically killed everybody in there. Then the ship caught on fire and the crew leaped into the water. The *93* burned most of the morning. Most of the crew and their officers were

picked up by other ships or by the rescue boats.

The 89 and 92 went in under the cover of thick smoke from the burning 93. There again, the Germans had that spot targeted in. They struck *LCI 92* repeatedly with 88mm shells. The crew fought fires while unloading troops. The LCI crew finally had to abandon the ship and go ashore with the troops. The 91 was able to get in and out and come back with more troops. which was amazing. When she returned with her second load, she got grounded on a sand bar and started to take direct hits from German artillery. She had to be abandoned as she caught fire.

The *LCI 88* went in on EZ Red Beach. Soon after touching down, she was hit by German 88s and was raked with machine gun fire. Although severely damaged, she managed to unload her troops and she was ordered to port for repairs.

My ship, the *LCI 83*, had been told not to go in, to hold back. There was a report on the radio that Bradley was thinking of calling off Omaha Beach because the battle was so hot there and obstacles were damaging all the landing craft. Then an LCVP started taking off our troops. The boat took off 36 infantrymen. While we were sitting there waiting for another boat to take off more troops, a shell hit. It killed three and wounded thirteen soldiers.

Our skipper Lieutenant Hutchinson, decided to try and ram through the obstacles. But one of the mines blew a hole in the bottom of the forward troop compartment killing more men. We were grounded, so we dropped the ramps, and the rest of the troops

went to shore while under continuous machine gun fire from the cliffs. We abandoned ship and went ashore with the troops.

Photo # SC-189935 1st Infantry Division troops assemble on Omaha Beach, 6 June 1944



*USS LCI(L) 83 landing troops of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion on a narrow strip of Omaha Beach.*

Our skipper and ensign took us up to a high part of the cliff. We sat at the bottom, because if we were on the beach, we'd have gotten shot. Most of the time we just waited except when I went back and forth a couple of times to radio the flagship. I let them know the tide had gone out, that we were stranded on the beach. I helped pull some of the soldiers in that were drowning in the shallow waters of the beach. They had such heavy packs on them. The LCVPs would hit a sandbar, drop their bow ramp and unload 30 to 40 men. The tide had gone out. The men would walk a few feet on sandbar and all of a sudden, they'd be in over their heads in the water. They had these life preservers that went around you – a tube that went around your waist – and had two chambers in it that you squeeze to inflate. We had given them instructions back in England to wear it under your armpits, (something learned from Operation Tiger). Well a lot of

them didn't do that. They'd inflate around their waist and flip over with their head hanging in the water, so a lot of them drowned. Some got close enough to shore, and we were able to wade out and pull them in.

Our skipper was hoping that when the tide came back in, we'd be able to patch the ship well enough to get her off the beach and get her back to England. We were lucky, someone was looking over us. The Germans saw *LCI 83* was disabled, and they stopped shelling the ship. When the tide came in our crew began patching the ship. Then the shelling began again. Under continuous machine gun fire, we were able to get her off the beach and get her back to England. We patched her up with mattresses to fill the hole made by the mine which flooded our number one troop compartment. We closed the waterproof doors, but water was still piling up and we didn't think the pumps could keep up with the water. We piled mattresses and everything we could on the hole and when we got off the beach and started the pumps. We listed all the way back to England. After repairs, we returned five or six times, carrying troops. Then we'd go back to England with German prisoners.

The German prisoners surprised me. A lot of them were older men. A lot older than I was anyhow. We couldn't speak German, but we'd offer them a cigarette, and they'd take the cigarette. I was surprised that they were so friendly. They weren't handcuffed or chained. They just sat on the side of ship and behaved themselves. They knew they were going someplace safer.

I don't think I realized until months later how bad it really was during D-Day.

We had our own little portion of the invasion. We were all trained to do our jobs and just did our jobs and didn't think of anything else. While riding back and forth, we would hear all the horror stories. Back in England other crewmembers would tell us what happened to them...walking over bodies, on the beach and all that. But I guess, being so young, we didn't really realize how serious this thing was. We were all trained to do a job. Thank God it was good training. And I must give my skipper a lot of credit because when we went on the beach, I know some the crewmembers were panicking a little bit, but for some reason, I didn't do that. He calmed most of them down and looked over them like a mother looks over her chicks. And I felt secure most of the time, only because of him.



*83-Footers speed to the rescue on D-Day. USCG-6 had an unofficial insignia painted on their cutter and their helmets.*

## 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion Seabees Witness Kaiten Attacks at Ulithi

By Jeff Veesenmeyer



*Seabees watch the USS Mississinewa (AO-59) in the oiler's final death throes at Ulithi.*

John Ratomski saw the cover story in the Spring 2023 issue of *Elsie Item* and pulled out his dad's Navy memorabilia. His father Joe Ratomski was stationed at Ulithi with the 6<sup>th</sup> Special Battalion Seabees. They were unloading the building supplies needed to clear the jungle, build airstrips and create a forward naval base. They were there when the kaiten suicide subs attacked the lagoon anchorage on 20 November 1944.

Two months later kaiten mini subs attacked Ulithi again. This time one sub damaged the ammunition ship USS *Mazama* and another sank *LCI(L) 600*.

The Seabees were called on to unload the thousands of pounds of ammunition from the *Mazama*. Fortunately, the forward hold had been empty when the kaiten exploded near the bow. Another hold was flooded containing 500 Torpex depth charges. Luckily, they failed to go off. Casualties on the *Mazama* were five wounded and one dead.

The loss of *LCI(L) 600* was reported in the War Diary dated 12 January 1945. It was first reported that an underwater explosion from a magnetic mine had sunk the ship. But debris from a mini-sub confirmed it had been attacked by a kaiten. Out of a crew of 36 only eight escaped serious injury. Two men died from wounds, and another was missing in action.

Several days later Seabees discovered the remains of a kaiten sub that had missed the entrance to the lagoon and hit a reef. The explosion put a hole in the reef big enough to motor a small launch through.



*Seabees from the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion examine a section of a kaiten that hit a reef and exploded.*

The *Squadron Ten Service Force War Diary* described the destruction of this kaiten in detail. "Entire 40-foot underwater craft,

from midships forward was blown to smithereens. Force of the blast blew an 18-foot-wide hole in the reef and tossed the submarine nearly 100 feet. The after section remained intact. Parts of the sub were found scattered in the surf for hundreds of yards in every direction. The Jap was blown to bits”



*6<sup>th</sup> Special Seabee Battalion gang with Japanese sign from Fais at Ulithi,*

The men from the 6<sup>th</sup> “Combat Stevedore” Battalion were given a special commendation. The job of unloading the remaining ammunition from the *Mazama* was dangerous and difficult. They worked in dark flooded holds, waist deep in oil fouled water. The Seabees unloaded 2900 tons of munitions.



*Admiral Halsey shakes hands with members of the 6<sup>th</sup> Special Seabees for work they did at Bouganville and Ulithi.*



*Unloading a seaplane at Ulithi.*



### ***Joe Ratomski***

*Joe Ratomski S1/c was from the Bronx, New York. He joined the Seabees after being turned down by the Marines. He was color blind. He later worked for 30 years in the New York Police Department.*

All photos were taken by a Battalion photographer and provided by the Seabee Museum archives in Port Hueneme, CA

## Found - Ens Mitchell Gerber's WWII Letters and Photos

By Bruce Gerber (son)

My dad was born in Knoxville in 1922 and moved to Baltimore at age 13. He was a graduate of Baltimore Polytechnic high school and Johns Hopkins University. He was a mechanical engineering major and eventually ended up in ship building at Sparrows Point.

He entered active service as an Ensign on July 25th, 1944, after his "instant officer" training at Princeton. While there he crossed paths with Albert Einstein but never spoke to him as the enlistees were ordered to leave him alone. I never forgave my father for obeying that order.



*Best friends Albert Wolman and Gerber meet up at Pearl Harbor*

From there he headed to the Amphibious Training Base in Coronado, California. From there LCI(M) 1089 participated in the assault and occupation of Okinawa. In September of 1945 the ship was assigned to minesweeping operations at Nagasaki area. I am in possession of some photos of my dad and fellow crew, including photos of the devastation at Hiroshima. After the war he was on a couple other LCIs before his discharge on March 2nd, 1946.

He rejoined the Navy in the Naval Reserves as a Lt. Jg. He retired from the Navy as a Commander in 1968. He was stationed at the Ft. McHenry Naval Reserve Center.

I found letters, photos and a comical poem that he sent to his future wife Phyllis Miller during the war. His letters and photos represent what I know of his wartime experiences. He never wanted to talk about them. In the photo with two people, my dad is on the right with his best friend Albert "Bunny" Wolman. They served on different ships and by chance were simultaneously docked in Pearl Harbor where they reunited.



*The photo of the 1089 was taken February 19, 1945, in Hutchinson Creek on Florida Island in the Solomons. The ship was nicknamed The Gravel Gertie after a character in the Dick Tracy comics. Her likeness was painted inside the zero of the 1089.*



*Ensign Gerber is seated on the right partying with LCI crewmembers in March 1946.*

# The Terrible LCI

Poem by Ens Mitchel Gerber LCI(L) (G) (M)



Ensign Gerber

You've heard of the Cans and APDs  
And you've heard of the Cruisers, too;  
And you've heard of the fast PTs  
And of some of the things they do.

But, brother, if you've a minute to spare  
And feel in the need of a cry,  
Then sit right down and my tale I'll share  
Of the terrible LCI.

They're a helluva, horrible, lookin' mess,  
Neither ship nor barge, it's true,  
They're a joke to the Fleet, I must confess,  
But not to the poor damned crew.

She'll rock and she'll roll on the calmest  
day, She'll buck like a kangaroo,  
And pitch in the most peculiar way,  
Though all is serene on the blue.

The engineers sit down in their hole,  
And can't even hear or think,  
And the boys topside as they sway with the  
roll, Have often wished she would sink.

The signalman clings to his light in the  
conn,  
While the helmsman struggles to hold her  
on,  
Though its blowing a very light breeze,

The cook in the galley sobs and moans  
As over the stove slops the stew,  
And the crew sets up a terrible groan,  
And so, by God, would you.

For the Navy doesn't care if we ever get fed,  
They don't know that we're here,  
You can't blame us, brother, for seeing red,  
When the rest of guys get beer.

The Army helps out with its can ration D,  
But nobody else gives a damn,  
It's a helluva a life, I'm sure you'll agree,  
And we're pretty well fed up on spam.

And when we take troops aboard,  
to land on some enemy shore,  
They take one look and prey to the Lord,  
That they'll never see us anymore.

They were built I'm told, of some rusty old  
junk, And stuck together with glue,  
And the whole thing was planned by a  
humorous drunk,  
An inmate of "Annapolis U."

But don't pity us, friend, and dry that tear,  
Though we're thankful to you for your grief.  
But we've sailed in these things for nearly a  
year,  
So please send us our God-Damned relief.

# Photographs Capturing Early Moments of LCI History Rendova New Georgia Solomon Islands June 30, 1943

*By Robert E. Wright Jr.*



*The LCI's pictured are members of LCI Flotilla Five Group 14, (l to r) LCI(L), 330, 335, 328 and 336.*

**I**n the early morning hours of June 30, 1943, the US Marines were landed on Rendova Island in the initial phase to capture Japanese air base at Munda on New Georgia Island which was on the east side of the strait separating the two islands. In the photographs the Marines are shown unloading their ammunition and supplies.

The two Images above were taken at different times by US Army Signal Corp. photographers. I assembled them together to give a more “complete picture” of the LCI’s participation during the landing operation.

Concurrently in the European Theater, the LCI’s of Flotillas One and Two were preparing for the Invasion of Sicily.





## How many World War II fallen are buried at Arlington National Cemetery?

For more than 75 years nobody knew the answer to this question.

Now thanks to the efforts of more than three dozen volunteer researchers for the non-profit initiative Stories Behind the Stars, we have a good idea. As of Veterans Day 2022, the number of WWII fallen buried or remembered with cenotaph (empty) graves in Arlington National Cemetery is 8,299.

The volunteers started with a list of 1941-1946 burial names provided to them by Arlington National Cemetery. It was augmented by additional names provided by the remembrance organization Find A Grave. These volunteers spent more than a thousand hours going through these names one by one, excluding those who did not serve in World War II, and adding basic information to the database.

The list was assigned to 200+ volunteers to write the stories of all of these fallen. Now the four million people who visit Arlington National Cemetery every year can approach any of the WWII fallen graves and read the

stories on a smartphone. More than 8,000 of the Arlington WWII fallen stories have been completed. The goal is to complete stories for all 400,000+ WWII fallen. The *Story Behind The Stars* smartphone app is free. Searching memorials by veteran's name on [www.Fold3.com](http://www.Fold3.com) will also access their stories.

What do we know so far about these 8,299 WWII fallen buried at Arlington?

- At least five LCI sailors are buried here, and their stories are now told. (See their names on the back page of this issue.)
- At least 40 were younger than 18 years, with one only 15 years old.
- At least 10 were older than 70 - probably still in the service due to some special skill.
- There are 36 fallen who died in the December 7, 1941, Pearl Harbor attack.
- There are 60 fallen who died on June 6, 1944, the day of the D-Day landings.
- While most of the fallen were born in the US, more than 100 were born in 35 other countries.
- Pennsylvania has more WWII fallen buried at Arlington than any other state with more than 1,200.
- Preliminary results show 72% are in individual graves, 20% are in group graves, and 8% are remembered with cenotaph graves.

Participation in this project is free and free access is provided to Ancestry.com research sites. To request more information about joining this historic project, visit <https://www.storiesbehindthestars.org/volunteer>.

# Memorial Day to Honor and Remember

*"We leave you our deaths. Give them their meaning."*

THE YOUNG DEAD SOLDIERS DO NOT SPEAK

A POEM By, ARCHIBALD MACLEISH

This is our list. It is not complete. It is a compilation of the names assembled by many members of the Association over the years. These names come from official reports filed during the war years, from 1942 to 1945. As additional names are found during our research, they are added. It is divided by the theaters of the WAR, European Theater of Operations (ETO), Pacific Theater of Operations (PTO) and now including the American Theater of Operations (ATO). If known, it includes the Action and Date of the event, that resulted in the casualties. The list also includes the LCI's that were sunk if there were casualties resulting from the loss of the ship. **Note: Several names have been removed from the prior list due to incorrect information previously reporting them as casualties.**



## ETO: Atlantic, European, Mediterranean and North African Waters

### LCI(L) 1

**Sicily Shore battery 7/01/1943**

KIA Don N. Mace  
KIA Russell R. Stark  
KIA Ralph A. Austin

**Birzerte, Tunisia 8/17/1943**

Sunk by aerial bombing

### LCI(L) 5

**Bermuda Drownings 2/27/1943**

DNC John J. Gray  
DNC Clifford H. Radford  
DNC Frank Kopriva

### LCI(L) 12

**Tunis 8/5/1943**

DNC Robert E. Hoffman

### LCI(L) 18

**Elba 6/17/1944**

KIA John W. Paige  
KIA Robert J. Maher

### LCI(L) 19

**Anzio Italy 1/23/1944**

KIA George W. Solmn Jr

### LCI(L) 20

**Anzio, Italy 1/22/1944**

Sunk by aerial bombing  
KIA Donald F. Hamilton  
KIA Harold R. Kalshnek

### LCI(L) 32

**Anzio, Italy 1/26/1944**

Sunk by naval mine  
MIA Olindo P. Martello  
KIA Paul L. Nardella  
KIA William L. Nisbet  
KIA Charles W. Seavey  
MIA John F. Guethlein  
KIA Robert H. Jackson  
MIA Warren G. Johnson  
MIA David A. Purcell  
MIA Eugene L. Sales  
MIA Herbert Stake, Jr.  
KIA Charles J. Gilbride  
KIA Ralph Harding  
MIA John E. Campbell  
MIA Lawrence M. Kennedy

### LCI(L) 39

KIA Wallace W Hanna

### LCI(L) 47

**Italy West Coast**

KIA Harry Ekey

### LCI(L) 76

**Italy West Coast**

KIA Miles Beck

### LCI(L) 88

**Normandy 6/6/1944**

KIA Richard I. Frere USCG  
KIA Warren J. Moran USCG  
KIA Rocco Simone USCG

### LCI(L) 91

**Normandy 6/6/1944**

Sunk by shore battery  
KIA James E. Atterberry USCG  
KIA Leslie Fritz USCG  
KIA Ernest Johnson USCG  
KIA Stanley Wilczak USCG  
KIA Bernard L. Wolfe USCG

### LCI(L) 94

**Normandy 6/6/1944**

by shore battery  
KIA August B. Buncik USCG  
KIA Fletcher Burton, Jr. USCG  
KIA Jack DeNunzio USCG

### LCI(L) 193

**Sicily**

KIA Raymond J. Doherty

### LCI(L) 196

**North Atlantic**

DNC James W. Baker

### LCI(L) 209

**Normandy**

KIA George McAllister

### LCI(L) 211

**Italy, Anzio 1/22/1944**

KIA Gervase J. Keefe  
DOW Charles J. Vesneske  
DOW Loren B. Owens

**Bermuda Drownings 2/27/1943**

DNC Otis H. Merrill  
DNC Alton J. Wright  
DNC Oliver E. Burton

**LCI(L) 212**

**Bermuda Drownings 2/27/1943**

DNC Jesse A. Ryman  
DNC Wilbur A. Light  
DNC James C. Rogers  
DNC Willie Stafford

**LCI(L) 213**

**Bermuda Drownings 2/27/1943**

DNC Lonnie L. Albert  
DNC Vincent G. Farrell  
DNC Leroy R. Chamberlain  
DNC Allen C. Jensen

**LCI(L) 214**

**Bermuda Drownings 2/27/1943**

DNC Charles F. Kennedy  
DNC Richard A. Kapff  
DNC Jack T. Twiggs  
DNC Adam T. Picozzi

**LCI(L) 215**

**Bermuda Drownings 2/27/1943**

DNC Grant R. Redding  
DNC Thomas L. Leonard  
DNC Robert C. Gragg  
DNC James L. Riley

**LCI(L) 216**

**Bermuda Drownings 2/27/1943**

DNC James A. Hayes  
DNC Robert L. Jones

**Palermo Sicily aerial bombing**

KIA Maurice G. Boutell

**LCI(L) 218**

**Bermuda Drownings 2/27/1943**

DNC David H. Muth  
DNC Earl L. Roberts

**LCI(L) 219**

**Normandy 6/11/1944**

Sunk by aerial bombing

KIA Johnson B. Wiles  
KIA Cornelius B. Dorcey  
KIA Lester R. Bumps  
KIA Albert Combs  
KIA Cyril J. O'Connor Jr

**LCI(L) 219 (continued)**

KIA Rolen C. Sikes Jr.  
MIA John M. Longman

**Bermuda Drownings 2/27/1943**

DNC Russell L. Bloom  
DNC Lawrence R. Wallar

**LCI(L) 232**

**Normandy 6/6/1944**

Sunk by naval mine

KIA Howard J. Dague  
KIA Roger Huskisson  
KIA Walton K. Ellis  
KIA Leland A. Glover  
KIA Wilbert E. Henke  
KIA Roger F. Johnson  
KIA George A. Kelley  
KIA Robert A. Mett  
KIA Mack Penawell  
KIA Frank J. Petricca  
KIA Charles O. Rector  
KIA John H. Shreves  
KIA Frank Souza  
KIA Raphael Weinstein  
MIA Norvie Blaine Tinney

**LCI(L) 237**

**Taranto, Italy Mine 10/27/1943**

KIA Clyde H. Roberson

**LCI(L) 319**

**Salerno Italy 9/9/1943**

KIA John C. Scheuerman USCG

**LCI(L) 408**

**Normandy 6/6/1944**

KIA Raymond Aubin

**LCI(L) 415**

**Normandy, 6/6/1944**

KIA Arthur Virgil Shields

**LCI(L) 416**

**Normandy, Sunk 6/6/1944**

KIA John A. Hawkins

**LCI(L) 523**

**Normandy 06/09/1944**

MIA Dave J. Moyer

*"We have not forgotten, we will never forget, the debt of infinite gratitude that we have contracted with those who gave everything for our freedom" - Rene Coty  
President - Republic of France  
D-Day Ceremony June 6, 1954*

**LCI(L) 951**

**Southern France 8/17/1944**

**DOW Floyd J. Mabe**

**FLOTILLA 1 STAFF**

**Aboard LCI(L) 5**

**Normandy**

MIA George F. Edwards

**FLOTILLA 2 STAFF**

**Bermuda Drownings 2/27/1943**

DNC John J. Grey

DNC Clifford H. Radford

**Aboard LCI(L) 9**

**Sicily 07/10/1943**

KIA Ernest L. Fletcher

**Aboard LCI(L) 32**

**Anzio Italy Mine 1/26/1944**

KIA Thomas J. Brown

KIA George Cabana

KIA Ralph S DiMeola

KIA Jack Elkins

KIA John W. Finck

KIA Delbert Mallams

KIA Hamp L. Richardson

KIA George L Marsh

KIA Earl W. Ruebens

KIA George L. Marsh

**FLOTILLA 3 GR 7 STAFF**

**Aboard LCI(L) 77 3/20/1943**

DNC Joseph F Nestor

**FLOTILLA 11 STAFF**

**Aboard LCI(L) 530**

**Southern France 8/17/1944**

KIA William Hendrix

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**PTO: Pacific, Southwest Pacific and Japanese Home Waters**

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**LCI(L) 22**

**SWPA Philippine Islands**

KIA James A. Barber

**LCI(L) 23**

**S Pacific Solomon Islands**

MIA Theodore Morano

**LCI(G) 23 (continued)**

**SWPA Babatngon, Leyte**

**Philippine Islands 10/23/1944**

by aerial bombing

KIA George H. Gootee

KIA Loys V. Hayes

KIA Ruben C. Kale

KIA Anthony J. Pulice

KIA Arnold G. Retersdorf

KIA Harold L. Reynolds

KIA Antonio R. Fabian

KIA Robert T. Riordan

KIA Stanley C. Winkler

KIA William E. Dutro

**LCI(L) 24**

**S Pacific Rendova, Solomon**

KIA Mahlon F. Paulson

KIA Ernest Wilson

**LCI(L) 34**

**SWPA New Guinea**

KIA Sherman C. Wagers

KIA Edmund J. Baldwin

**LCI(L)(G) 65**

**S Pacific Rendova, Solomon**

by aerial bombing 7/4/1943

KIA Hurley E. Christian

**Leyte Gulf** 10/24/1944

KIA Lester Eugene. Aiston

**Philippines, Lingayen Gulf**

MIA James O. Vincent

**LCI(L) 69**

**S Pacific Bougainville**

MIA Thomas W Stanborough

**LCI(L)(G) 70**

**S Pacific Bougainville Solomon**

KIA Joseph Byars

KIA D. H. Shook

KIA Eugene Henry Whalen

**SWPA Philippines,**

**Lingayen Gulf**

by Kamikaze aircraft

KIA Robert Muir Craycraft

KIA Walter G. Kiser

KIA Densil Ray Phillips

KIA Charles Adolph Poole

KIA George Pressley

KIA James Oliver Vincent

**LCI(L) 71**

**SWPA 10/24/1944**

KIA Lawrence Weingartz

**LCI(L) 72**

**SWPA Lingayen Gulf**

**Philippine Islands** 1/9/1944

KIA John R. Mansell

**LCI(L) 73**

**SWPA New Guinea** 05/18/1944

KIA Kenneth Talley

**LCI(L) 82**

**Japanese Home Waters**

**Okinawa** 4/4/1945

Sunk by suicide boat

KIA Freeman W. Baker

KIA Bernard G. Brockwehl

KIA John T. Eastman

KIA Robert G. Heaberlin

KIA Clyde E. Irvine Jr

KIA Joseph M. Rozeman

KIA Earl H. Settles

KIA John C. Wheatly

MIA Bennie Helton

**LCI(L) 90**

**Japanese Home Waters**

**Okinawa** 6/4/1945

by Japanese Kamikaze aircraft

KIA John P. Ross Jr USCG

**LCI(R) 338**

**SWPA Philippine Islands**

**Corregidor** 02/16/1944

KIA Philip L. Michel

KIA John R. Rauch

**LCI(L) 339**

**SWPA Lae New Guinea**

Sunk 9/4/1943 by aerial bombing

KIA Fay B. Begor

**LCI(L) 341**

**SWPA Lae New Guinea**

Sunk 9/4/1943 by aerial bombing

KIA Robert W. Rolf

**LCI(L) 342**

**SWPA Lae New Guinea**

KIA James Eatmon

**LCI(L) 344**

**SWPA Leyte Gulf**

**Philippine Islands** 10/27/1944

KIA Robert Pumphrey

KIA Jack Lanbert

KIA James Palmer

KIA Edward Woodzien

**LCI(G) 347**

**Pacific Saipan** 6/15/1944

KIA Garland Eddington

**LCI(L) 352**

**Japanese Home Waters**

**Okinawa**

KIA Calos W. Jones

KIA Melvin E. Buhr Jr

**LCI(G) 359**

**SWPA Philippines**

DNC Allard W. Risen

**LCI(G) 365**

**Pacific Guam** 7/21/1944

KIA Charles L. Martin

KIA Casimir Andrew Leszczynski

KIA Edward W. Nemeth

KIA Clifford W. Mossman

KIA Thomas Wilkinson

KIA John J. Gibbs

KIA John F. Harrison

**LCI(G) 366**

**Pacific Guam** 7/24/1944

KIA William J. Barry

KIA James F. McWatty Sr

KIA Carmelo R. Sidoti

KIA Richard C. Steyer

KIA Robert W. Unger

**LCI(G) 372**

**Pacific**

DNC Noel H. Graham

**LCI(G) 396**

**Pacific Palau Islands**

1/18/1945 Sunk by naval mine

KIA James R. Wirtz

KIA John P. Mannino

KIA Bobby G. Ozbirn

KIA Delonda J. Self

KIA Robert J. Calvert

KIA Oliver E. Cole

KIA Charles V. Foxx

**LCI(G) 422**

**SWPA Philippine Islands**

**Leyte Gulf** 10/20/1944

KIA William Jenkins

KIA Jack G. Johnson

**LCI(G) 429**

**SWPA**

DNC George W Grell

**LCI(G) 430**

**SWPA Philippine Islands**

**Leyte Gulf** 08/26/45

UNK John T. McGrath

**LCI(G) 438**

**Pacific Saipan** 6/26/44

KIA Robert R. Meili

**LCI(G) 439**

**Pacific Guam** 7/24/44

KIA Jessie J. Marzie

KIA Donald Rhodes

KIA Lawrence M. White

**LCI(L)(G) 440**

**Pacific Eniwetok** 2/22/1944

*by friendly fire*

KIA Paul M. McGowan

KIA Robert F. Graham

KIA Joseph Mercoli

KIA Thomas F. Smay

KIA Robert Zielinski

KIA Earl L. Miller

KIA Fred J. Spicer

KIA W. Edward Pappen

**Japanese Home Waters**

**Iwo Jima** 2/17/1945

KIA Lee Yates UDT-14

**LCI(G) 441**

**Japanese Home Waters**

**Iwo Jima** 2/17/1945

KIA William T. Connors

KIA William E. Griffin

KIA Jack D. Starbuck

KIA Julian R. Scott

KIA Clinton E. Snider

KIA Glenn O. De Long

**LCI(L) 441 (cont.)**

KIA Moses Trexler

**LCI(L) 442**

**S Pacific Eniwetok 2/22/1944**

by friendly fire

KIA Paul D. Mayes

KIA Gordon McCuiston

KIA George W. Meckley

KIA Fleet F. Willis

KIA Floyd E. Wright

KIA Alexander W. Finney

**LCI(G) 449**

**Japanese Home Waters**

**Iwo Jima 2/17/1945**

KIA Byron C. Yarbrough

KIA Frederick Cooper

KIA William G. Corkins

KIA Lawrence Bozarth

KIA John T. Flock

KIA Bruce Goodin

KIA Clarence J. Hoffman

KIA William H. Hudson

KIA Robert R. Minnick

KIA Ralph Owens

KIA Lareto F. Paglia

KIA Carl F. Park

KIA Howard W. Schoenleben

KIA William Tominac

KIA Glenn H. Trotter

KIA Charles E. Vogel

KIA Frederick F. Walton

KIA Leroy Young

KIA Lee C. Yates

KIA Harry L. McGrath

KIA Edward P. Brockmeyer *USMC*

DNC Raymond Twyman

**LCI(G) 450**

**Japanese Home Waters**

**Iwo Jima 2/17/1945**

KIA Jack H. Musselman

**LCI(G) 457**

**Japanese Home Waters**

**Iwo Jima 2/17/1945**

KIA Willard D. Helvey

**LCI(G) 466**

**Japanese Home Waters**

**Iwo Jima 2/17/1945**

KIA Thomas E. Coppinger

KIA Huey P. Hester

KIA Charles E. Barton

KIA Glenn A. Foldessy

KIA Robert E. Pipelow

KIA Horace J. Long

**LCI(G) 468**

**Pacific Guam 6/17/1944**

Sunk by aerial torpedo

KIA Dean L. Beemer

KIA Leslie G. Foss

KIA Dewey A. Hayhurst

KIA Joseph A. Hunter

KIA Lyan S. Long

KIA Robert G. Marquis

KIA Robert Barnett

KIA Robert G. Davis

KIA J. B. Gladdis

KIA Hollis W. Hicks

KIA Steven A. Karko

KIA Woodrow B. Maggard

KIA Ralph E. Parks

KIA Ralph E. Spaugh

MIA James H. Schuerman

**LCI(G) 469**

**Pacific Guam**

DOI Ben T Morris Jr

DOI Robert A Meaux

**LCI(G) 470**

**Japan Typhoon 09/16/1945**

DOI Martin N Minsky

**LCI(G) 471**

**Japanese Home Waters**

**Iwo Jima 2/17/1945**

KIA Jessie L. Adamson

KIA James F. Bernethy

KIA Richard Cano

KIA Louis P. Hagan

KIA Billie J. Harris

KIA Troy L. Morehouse

KIA William P. Morrissey

KIA Donald Nygard

KIA Richard H. Pond

KIA Jerry A. Terracciano

KIA James W. White

**LCI(G) 473**

**Japanese Home Waters**

**Iwo Jima 2/17/1945**

KIA Joseph Edward Davis

KIA Dominick S. Gonzalez

**LCI(G) 474**

**Japanese Home Waters**

**Iwo Jima 2/17/45**

Sunk by shore battery

KIA Daryl G. Huish

KIA Fred H. Gray

KIA Donald S. Rappold

KIA Lester H. Welch

**LCI(G) 475**

**Japanese Home Waters**

**Okinawa 3/25/1945**

KIA Leo P. Selan

**LCI(G) 568**

**Japanese Home Waters**

**Okinawa 4/4/1945**

KIA Edward L. Kolodziej

KIA James M. Sweatt

**LCI(G) 580**

**SWPA Philippine Islands**

**Leyte Gulf 10/20/1944**

KIA George C. Thomas

**LCI(L) 600**

**Pacific Ulithi 1/12/1945**

Sunk by midget submarine

KIA Seth Bailey

KIA Glen DeQuaisie

KIA Edwin Janacek

**LCI(L) 606**

**South Pacific Solomon Islands**

DNC Herbert N. Masterson

**LCI(L) 612**

**Pacific**

DNC Donald R. Klock

**LCI(L) 615**

**SWPA Philippine Islands**

MIA Dewey R. Gantt

**LCI(L) 621**

**SWPA Philippine Islands**

**Mindoro 1/4/1945**

KIA Raymond Carter

**LCI(R) 707**

**Japanese Home Waters**

**Okinawa 5/3/1945**

KIA Harry M. Karnemont

**LCI(R) 726**

**Japanese Home Waters**

**Okinawa 5/3/1945**

DOW Robert A. Compton

DOW Jerome J. Pruchniewski

**LCI(L) 727**

**S Pacific Guadalcanal Solomon**

DNC M. L. Ward

**LCI(M) 807**

**Japanese Home Waters**

**Okinawa 4/1/1945**

KIA Andrew Karsen

KIA Philip R. Kenny

KIA Hugh F. Martin

DOW Thomas E. Perry

DOW Robert J Madsen

**LCI(L) 812**

**Pacific 07/20/1945**

DOI Walter Siek

**LCI(L) 821**  
**Pacific Palau Islands** 5/7/1945  
KIA Wayne A. Seath  
KIA Lee Henley Raigins  
KIA Robert E. Kriniak

**LCI(L) 875**  
**Asiatic Theater**  
UNK Harrison M. Carr

**LCI(L) 971**  
**SWPA Philippine Islands**  
DNC Harold V Powell LCDR

**LCI(L) 974**  
**SWPA Philippines Islands**  
**Lingayen Gulf** 1/10/1945  
Sunk by suicide boat  
KIA William W. Baft  
KIA Sidney F. Brennan  
KIA Emidue J. Falini  
KIA Richard E. Kern  
KIA Charles Passwater  
KIA Thomas F. Sheehan

**LCI(L) 979**  
**SWPA Philippine Islands**  
**Leyte Gulf** 11/24/1944  
Sunk by Aerial Bomb  
KIA Martin J. Fleishman  
KIA Martin F. Deem  
KIA William C. Nordan

**LCI(L) 1056**  
**SWPA Philippine Islands**  
DOW Robert Owens

**LCI(L) 1060**  
**SWPA Mindoro**  
**Philippine Islands**  
KIA Alexander J. Osowieki

**LCI(L) 1065**  
**SWPA Philippine Islands**  
**Leyte Gulf** 10/24/1944  
Sunk by Kamikaze Aircraft  
KIA Sigurd J. Bjertness  
KIA Wallace W. Hamlett  
KIA Michael M. Jalad  
MIA Gordon A. Judson  
KIA Floyd J. Parker

*When you lose a friend you have an overpowering desire to go back home and yell in everyone's ear, "This guy was killed fighting for you. Don't forget him---ever. Keep him in your mind when you wake up in the morning and when you go to bed at night. Don't think of him as the statistic which changes from 38,788 casualties to 38,789. Think of him as a guy who wanted to live every bit as much as you do. Don't let him be just one of 'Our Brave Boys' from the old home town, to whom a marble monument is erected in the city park and some civic-minded lady calls the newspaper ten years later and wants to know why that 'unsightly stone' isn't removed" ... Those thoughts are deep in us, and we don't talk about them much.*

Bill Maudlin Up Front 1944

## ATO: Atlantic, Pacific and Gulf Coast Waters

**LCI(L) 88**  
**San Diego California**  
DNC William B. Cole Lt USCG

**LCI(L) 336**  
DNC Billy E Claxton

**LCI(L) 355**  
DNC Elmer E Loshaw

**LCI(L) 419**  
**Hawaii, Pearl Harbor**

DNC Richard J. Zoner  
**LCI(L) 439**

**Hawaii, Waianae** 3/25/1944  
DNC Dewey L. Mayes

**LCI(L) 459**  
DNC Manuel A. Reyes

**LCI(L) 490**  
DNC Charles C. Groh

**LCI(L) 531**  
**Hawaii,**

DNC William A. Brown

**LCI(L) 644**  
**California**

DNC Gordon J. Monett  
DNC Warren G Moore

**LCI(L) 682**  
**ATB Solomons MD** 5/26/1944

DNC Thomas H. Reese  
**LCI(L) 691**

DNC Nicholas Derbis  
**LCI(L) 949**

DNC Stanley S Dabal

### Codes Used in the List:

**KIA:** Killed in Action

**MIA:** Missing in Action

**DOW:** Died of Wounds from Combat

**DNC:** Died Non Combat

**DOI:** Died from Injuries Non Combat

**UNK:** Unknown

# 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!

## Officers

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

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& USS LCI (L) 997  
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Vice President (interim)  
Son of Frank T. France  
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### **Richard Lovell**

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(971) 570-7231 (c)

### **Lisa Bittle Tancredi**

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Daughter of Robert D. Bittle  
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LisaTancredi944@gmail.com

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## Chaplain Emeritus

### **Abe Laurenzo**

Chaplain Emeritus  
WW II Veteran, LCI (L) 409  
& LCI (L) 47  
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## Directors Emeritus

### **Rod Scurlock**

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lci449@yahoo.com

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

C/O Robert E. Wright, Jr. President/Treasurer  
P.O. Box 407 Howell, MI 48844-0407



**Arlington National Cemetery:** There are some LCI sailors buried at Arlington. Their stories can be found on [www.Fold3.com](http://www.Fold3.com). See the article inside on how to access the stories of Perry I. Griffith Jr. *LCI 361*, John R. Mansell *LCI(G) 72*, Ray A. Wheeler *LCI(L) 496*, Richard I. Frere *LCI 88*, and William M. Strobel *LCI(L) 84*.