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 125 SUMMER 2024

D-DAY LANDING
80 YEARS AGO

LCI(L) 326

Inside this Issue…

- LCI-713 restoration & updates
- Triumph on Operation Forager
- Memorial pages to LCI Veterans
- Memoir of D-Day landing LCI-92

Deck Log of the LCI-713 JUNE 2024

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
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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.

The Elsie Item Number 125 – Summer 2024

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!!**

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- AFMM-LCI-713 Alliance
- Non-Profit Status

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- LCI Facts
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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.

AFMM Latest Happenings:

Dear AFMM, LCI National Association members and followers,

We continue to make great progress on restoration, as you'll see in our update. We had plenty of help from Nathan Williams and his Sea Scout crew for Nathan's Quartermaster project. They tackled several fabrication projects and helped reorganize our display areas. You'll see the results in this issue's photographs.

We have another new volunteer crew member to welcome: Jay Hoag. Jay has an extensive shipyard background and is well known by our neighbor, Vigor Industrial. His specialty is in ships coatings and application. His expertise fits in very well with our needs. Welcome Jay!

I'd like to acknowledge our Vice President Rich Lovell's 75th birthday this year. Despite a severe bout with diabetes which left him wheelchair bound, Rich has maintained his wit and sense of humor. Although he no longer comes onboard, he still participates in Board meetings via Zoom and keeps busy by searching for restoration items for the ship.

I'd like to mention the passing of an ardent supporter, Ken Pratt. Ken was not a LCIer but a WWII 41st Division Jungleer in the 218th Field Artillery at Zamboanga. He was transported on LCIs. Our LCI-713 was also at Zamboanga. Ken's Obituary and interesting story is posted on our website: https://www.amphibiousforces.org/Interest/interest.html

We are still looking for several restoration items that are sorely missing from the ship: Gun mounts for our 20mm Oerlikon cannons are always at the top of the list. Check out our website for other items needed if you are interested in helping with this quest.

Thank you all for your support. We are "on it" in our mission to secure a shipyard for repairs and count on you to help make it happen. Our bank account for the repairs is looking pretty darn good, but it's still not enough. Please help with your continuing loyalty to our cause.

Finally, I'd like to thank our volunteer historians for all the fabulous content they produce. I hope you enjoy the issue.

We wish you all fair winds and following seas!

Rick Holmes

AFMM President

Yes, I want to help launch the LCI 713!

You may also donate online via our website's secure donation page:
www.amphibiousforces.org

For more information, call Rick at 541-226-5427 or email afmm@amphibiousforces.org

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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) _____

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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.
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My Gift Is: ❑ In Memory of ❑ In Honor of

Person's name _____

Comments: _____

_____

Observations from Officer's Country

One of the 100's of books that was written about World War II that made a lasting impression on me was authored by Eugene B Sledge, titled, "With the Old Breed at Peleliu and Okinawa." This book was recommended to me by a Marine Combat veteran. Sledges' writing is considered by many, to be one of the best first person accounts of a combat veteran during the Pacific war. For a commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the War, he was interviewed for the Australian TV documentary, Hell in the Pacific. The following quote is taken from that interview. It has made an indelible impression, even after the passing of those 20 years.

> ***The front line is really where the war is. And anybody who is more than a hundred yards behind the front lines doesn't know what it is like.***
> ***And every time I hear people talk about sending troops into combat, I just cringe. Because, I think to myself, these people who send them have no concept of what Hell is.***

For the last month we have been working on this Issue 125 of the ELSIE ITEM. John France, our European Historian and I have done a lot of research on LCI(L) Flotilla Ten, manned by the Coast Guard, and assigned to landing beaches at Omaha on June 6, 1944. We reviewed many first person accounts written during those fateful hours of that day. We have included one of these in this issue titled, INVASION by Seth Shepard PhoM3/c USCGR, as a tribute to all the men who sailed those deadly waters, as our tribute on the 80 Anniversary to D-Day

Eugene Sledge was probably correct in his observation. You literally cannot get any closer to the front lines that in a landing craft storming a beach against heavy opposition from an entrenched and fortified enemy. After 80 years, I do not believe that I have ever heard any individual story that did not describe the experience as anything other than living through Hell on Omaha Beach during those early hours of the D-Day.

> ***It has been said that the combat veteran has to live through the experience and then, if he survives, he has to live with it the rest of his life. How you handle yourself and what you make of yourself depends a great deal on your upbringing, your discipline, and things of this sort.- E. B. Sledge***

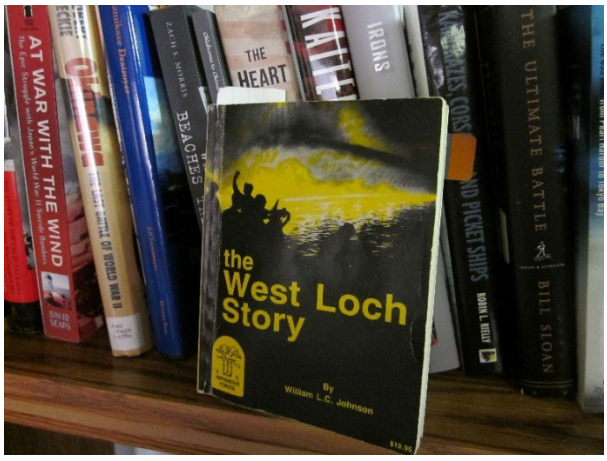
In this 125th issue of the Elsie Item we honor our Navy Veterans of the War, who made it home, to live out the remainder of their lives in peace. We also choose to honor those heroes, our heroes, who sacrificed their lives for our chance, to lead lives in peace and prosperity. Take a few minutes to read their names, then pause and remember so that their sacrifices are not forgotten.

\- **Robert E Wright Jr. President**

Gator Gossip

By Jeff Veesenmeyer

Story ideas for *Elsie Item* come from many sources. A friend showed me a small self-published book he came across. It is titled "the West Loche Story." He wondered if I was aware of the disastrous fire at Pearl Harbor in 1944. It was sometimes called Hawaii's second greatest WWII disaster. I had not and wondered why.



The West Loch Story by William L.C. Johnson was published in 1986.

The explosions and fire sank six LSTs packed with ammunition on 21 May 1944. They were preparing for the invasion of Saipan. That information was kept secret for nearly 40 years.

The book includes testimony at the Naval Board of Inquiry and personal stories from survivors. I kept looking for any LCI involvement. There on a map of West Loch was the newly converted *LCI(G) 371*. The gunboat was attached to LCI Gunboat Flotilla Three. Their mission at Saipan took on greater importance after the West Loch disaster. Flotilla Three would receive the Naval Unit Commendation for their close in fire support during the Mariana Campaign. Their story is in this issue.

Another story in this issue came from a press release from The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency. The remains of an unknown soldier killed on *LCI(L) 92* had been identified. He was in the forward troop department on D-Day. They were landing on Omaha Beach. The ship hit a mine killing everyone in that compartment. Now 80 years later (Tech4) Elmo F. Hartwick of Onaga, Kansas has been returned home.

Our Summer 2024 issue also includes the Deck Log of the USS *LCI(L) 713*. You'll find photo updates showing all the projects completed over the last six months. Visiting the ship to see the improvements is encouraged. The back cover of this issue shows the *LCI(L) 713* welcome sign. You'll find details of how to arrange for a tour.

Finally, our 103-year-old member Gordon Smith, submitted a story for this issue. Smith served on the board of AFMM and LCI National. You'll find his Air Raid story inside. Keep the stories coming Gordon.

Gordon Smith, veteran of LCI-43 is 103 now and has been a director and crew member since the inception of AFMM.

SEND LETTERS & PHOTOS TO: JeffreyMktg@gmail.com or my mailing address (Contact Us) on the inside front cover.

LCI713 Restoration Update Spring 2024

By Jerry Gilmartin

The first few months of 2024 have been a little challenging for weather, but all the rain and snow did not put a damper on the spirits of the crew on board LCI-713.

Mark Stevens and volunteers Lin Stott and Dennis Weehunt decided to tackle an interesting project aboard the ship. They desired to replace the missing hinged **Voice Tube End Cover Plates** on 6 different voice tubes. The tubes go throughout the ship and allow the bridge to talk to various other compartments without using any power. The cover plates are made from bronze and have somehow disappeared over the years. Mark removed the single remaining authentic cover plate remaining inside the Engineer's Stateroom, then used it as a pattern to make copies. Mark had 6 duplicates (including the rotary latch cam) "custom" cast in bronze, and then had fellow volunteer and machinist, Dennis Weehunt, perform the needed machining to allow a perfect fit. Then Mark, with the help of Lin Stott, went around and installed the missing covers all over the ship. Many of these have been missing their cover plates for 50 years! The voice tubes now look as good as the day they were installed!

Dennis Weehunt (top left) fabricated voice tube covers and Lin Stott (right) helped with installation.

We recently received several donations of artifacts and consumables that are needed for restoration. One of our benefactors, Rick Dulaney, donated both an authentic Stadimeter Sextant, and a bronze USN ships bell to our museum. Thanks Rick! Then another donation of 20+ gallons of high quality "PPG Amercoat" two-part epoxy marine paint as well as wiping cloths from new volunteer Jay Hoag. Other recently received donations include a Japanese Type 99 Arisaka Rifle and some authentic wooden block and tackle from volunteer Sam Kimpton.

Top row L-R: John Ragno tries out sextant, Rick Delaney with ships bell, and Jay Hoag checks paint supplies. Bottom: Phil Richart holds block and tackle pulleys; Dave McKay shows the Jap rifle.

We experienced the pleasure of hosting another Sea Scout Quartermaster project (Equivalent to a Boy Scout Eagle project), with Nathan Williams completing his Quartermaster project aboard the *LCI-713*. His ambitious project had three main parts: The construction and mounting of a historically accurate LCI mess table for the clipping room, construction and installation of a historically accurate Radio Room Battery Rack, and subsequent transfer, organization, and display of various display cases and storage boxes between different compartments within the vessel. Nathan and his crew did a fantastic job!

Nathan Williams (standing above left) gets help installing new table in clipping area from his fellow Sea Scout leader/members.

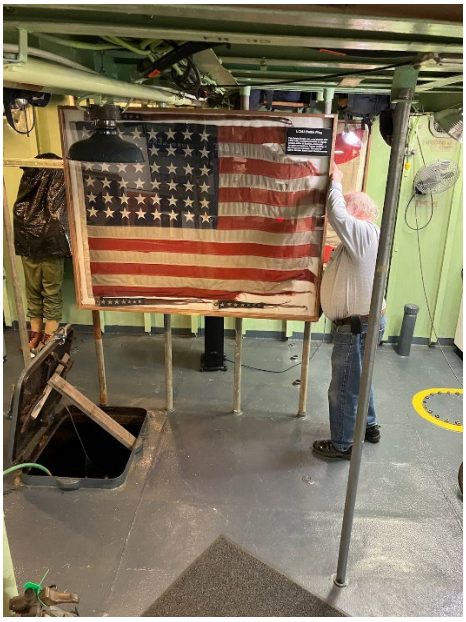
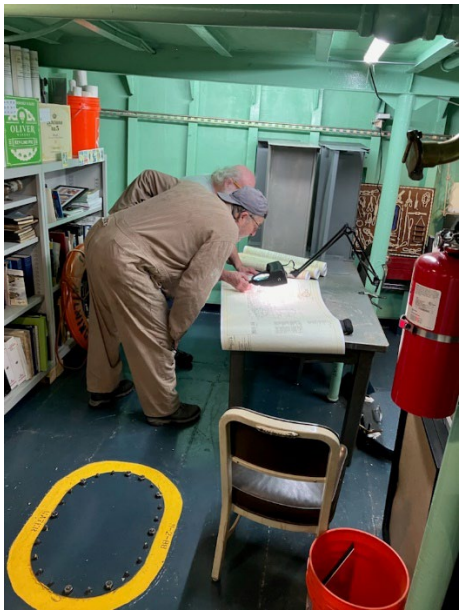
Sea Scout troop leader and Williams bring in the new radio room battery cabinet. They moved items out to make room for installation of the cabinet in the radio room.

Another project was the complete refurbishment of the Troop Officers Stateroom/Sick Bay. All equipment was removed, the entire space was painted, and select equipment was re-installed. This work spanned a three-to-four-week time period, and it was an interesting challenge with The Sea Scout project going on at the same time.

TOP ROW: Painters are John Ragno and Jay Hoag. A desk got a new coat of paint. Steve Adams and Jerry Gilmartin installed the bunks.

BOTTOM ROW: The finished officers state room gets some office items and bedding.

In process is the reorganization and consolidation of historical display materials into Troop #2, our traditional display area. Troop #4, which had several historical displays is now our library, filing and historical material storage area. Updating and reorganizing both the items on display and the fashion in which they are displayed takes a lot of thought and consideration. So far both Compartments are looking pretty great!



TOP: Steve Adams hangs the Japanese and American flags. Several tour groups came aboard the LCI-713, most notably, the local Vancouver WA Chapter of the 40 and 8 Veterans Association. They toured on April 11th.

Also, we had our Youth Ambassador, Andica Olinger, get some training from Jerry on how to be a tour guide for the ship. She was planning to give a tour to her school classmates in May of this year. On other fronts, John Ragno has been spending a lot of time researching the surviving family of the Original Crew of *LCI-713* so maybe we can get in contact with them.

LEFT PHOTO: Jerry Gilmartin gives Andica Olinger a training tour while she takes notes and photos for her class tour in May 2024.

RIGHT PHOTO: Mark Stevens welds porthole dog wrench holder clips in the galley.

Mark Stevens was able to finish making and installing several missing porthole dog wrench holder clips. These clips and their accompanying wrenches are supposed to be installed in every compartment next to the porthole, (Officially called a "Port Light") but have been missing for a long time. Thanks to Mark and the other volunteers from Camp Wythecombe, these are now all complete!

The ship keeps getting better every day!

I N V A S I O N

The Story of the LCI (L) 92 in the Invasion of Normandy on June 6, l944.

By Seth Shepard, Pho. M. 3c U. S. Coast Guard

AT A SURVIVORS BASE, PLYMOUTH, DEVON, ENGLAND, June 25, 1944

Shocked and exhausted, we crawled out of the sea over the smooth pebbles of the Normandy beach a few hours after the start of the great invasion of June 6. Around us as we sank upon the stones were dead and dying American soldiers and sailors; behind us the windswept sea broke against our burning ship; ahead of us in the hills German snipers and machine guns raked the beach. Through it all the deadly 88s and exploding mines blasted the land and sea approaches, shattering the beach and water with violent concussions and filling the gray skies with heavy smoke.

I was with this veteran U.S. Coast Guard crew through those 16 hours of tortuous waiting after our ship -- the Coast Guard manned *LCI (L) 92* struck two deadly mines in swift succession, followed by direct hits from German 88s. It was the worst hell the crew had ever experienced in four major invasions. We faced death and destruction so often that day that the first shock of abandoning our burning ship under heavy fire was overcome in the tremendous struggle to establish the beachhead. Our sector was under constant German shelling the whole time we lay there wet, cold and scared without weapons, warm clothes, or food other than a few cans of soup and some Army blankets.

I think it was a grim determination to live, an answer to our prayers and to those at home who prayed for us, and luck, that saved us in our escape from the stricken ship. But we left 41 dead American soldiers behind in the forward troop compartment. They never had a chance when we struck the first mine. Thank God that most of them did not suffer a lingering death after that disastrous explosion of flame and steel. Six of our crew were wounded and burned and it was not until two weeks later that we were able to account for all.

This story I am about to tell of our grim siege, our rescue at midnight just as the year's highest tide began lapping against our hand-dug foxholes, our second trip into the beach aboard the Navy LST that picked us up, and the four long days with little sleep and no fresh clothes as we helped the badly wounded aboard LSTs, could not be told until all the crew had been accounted for at the survivor's base.

While this narrative is the story of the Coast Guard crew of the *LCI 92*, we cannot forget the other Naval and Coast Guard crews, and other branches of the services, especially the early waves of soldiers who went through just as much, if not more, tragedy, hell, disaster, and dangerous excitement as we did that first long day. We were just one tiny part of the greatest amphibious invasion operation in all history, but we were vitally important in the establishment of that beachhead. We did hit

the beach, we did land a majority of our troops, although many of them had to leave their arms and equipment aboard, and we did land the few men we carried of the brave Navy beach battalion.

There were some craft and ships that had to go in first in the "suicide squadrons" and logically the older and more experienced Coast Guard LCIs were picked for this job. We were the second LCI of the flotilla to hit that sector of the beach, which was so heavily mined by the Germans that the first early waves after H-Hour, on the high tide, never had a real chance of backing off the beach without some sort of damage. All the world now knows that in this initial struggle the Allies were victorious and the march to Berlin began in a great new western front.

These last two weeks at a Naval survivor's base in Southwest England, where we have been gathering new clothes, signing papers for claims, getting paid, and waiting for new orders, have not dimmed our vivid memories of that invasion. And now, on the day I am writing this account, the first phase of our adventure has come to a conclusion. With seven others of the newer crew members I watched with a heavy heart the 16 veterans who had not been wounded in the assault drive off in trucks to an embarkation point for the States and home. They deserve this return for they were the majority of the crew who had been overseas for 16 months, living through four invasions in the cramped quarters of the "*92*." I had only been aboard a short while, but in that time I had come to know every man as a friend. The miracle of our landing on the French beach had drawn us all close together. Now as we watched our shipmates speed away in the trucks Freddy N. Pitzer, fireman first class, USCGR, of Clarksville, Missouri, standing next to me, said what we all felt who were left behind: "There goes the best damn bunch of fellows I've ever been with."

We walked back then to the barracks, thinking about our buddies, our ship and the invasion. I know every man can be proud of the job he did on June 6, even though we were all scared as hell and hope we don't have to hit another beach as tough as that. But they all did their duty. In fact I was the only member of the crew that actually failed at his appointed task. You see, I'm a combat photographer of the U. S. Coast Guard and in the confusion of the shelling and abandoning ship I not only lost my camera and equipment but all film and pictures.

As we talked over the events in the barracks, I thought now of the long weeks of preparation. Those days of comfortable suspense, of waiting and wondering, seem more like a haze-drenched dream than the actual prelude to battle. Yet we cannot completely forget the peaceful last weeks in England before the invasion. The fresh green of the English spring had come, leaving the cold and dampness and heavy fogs of winter behind. We were conscious all along of the essential importance of those lengthening days and to what eventually they would lead.

All the invasion veterans of North Africa, Sicily, and Italy, knew that no large-scale operation could hope to be even partially successful without the long grind of preparation. This meant actual maneuvers along the coast of England - - called "dry runs" - - and those million little items, plans, stores, orders that must dovetail into the complete pattern.

Weeks before the invasion we felt the time was approaching. Most of the ships of our LCI flotilla had been tied up at the docks in a South of England base -- a seaside resort in peacetime. The daily routine included chipping decks, painting topsides and in the bilges, getting the whole ship in first class condition. And that meant work for the crew, including watches, not the romantic or thrilling war epics of which we so often hear but seldom meet. It was a time every man wished for at least a look at the good old States, was sick and tired of the regimented military life and the long months of overseas duty aboard a cramped little amphibious ship. On an LCI the crew eats and sleeps in the same small compartment and uses it also for a recreation room.

Yet at the same time, conscious of what was to come, I think each man to himself felt that he was in a way glad to be in the operation that was to make history. Perhaps not actually glad, but at least conscious that he was doing something vitally important for his country that he could be proud of in the years to come.

It was after the ship had been lightened some by taking off such non-essential equipment as the washing machine on the stern, that the first of the new gear began arriving. Needless to say the crew constantly talked invasion and we all wished that it would hurry up and come. Waiting is tough.

Our first bit of suppressed excitement came when Army blankets were brought aboard. Just before that we had been issued new gas masks, gas suits and decontamination gear in case of enemy gas attacks. A few days later colored troops loaded crates of Army field rations, the same as before Sicily and Italy. This crowded up the well deck above the two forward troop compartments. Then from that day on supplies and equipment came trickling aboard that gave us every hint that the amphibious ships were getting set for some large-scale movement.

One bright morning we woke to find that the outer harbor had begun to fill with Allied warships, from all kinds of amphibious craft to destroyers and on up to huge battleships. When they remained there in full concentration we knew that the big event was really shaping up.

Finally, the skipper, Lieutenant Robert M. Salmon, USCGR, of Maplewood, N.J., who brought the ship across the Atlantic from Norfolk, Va., 16 months ago and through the Mediterranean invasions, was called to a secret meeting one night. He didn't arrive back aboard until 3 A.M. Before breakfast the scuttlebutt was flying fast and when we came up from chow we found posted on the ship's bulletin board strict new regulations canceling all liberty. In fact no one was even allowed off the ship unless in some official work party to be always accompanied by an officer. We were not to speak to anyone on the docks, even Naval personnel. The men of the repair base were restricted; movies in the evening were stopped, and aboard our ship the ominous two section sea watch list was posted to take effect, it said, whenever the Captain should so direct. The order came out, too, to secure all painting and to get everything in readiness to cast off suddenly. The time was drawing short.

I remember that last night before the troops came aboard. There were more than the usual letter writers huddled around the big table in the sticky air of the crew's quarters, below in the center of the ship. A

few men quickly took the advantage to send money orders home when our executive officer, LT (j.g.) Zack Felder, of Dallas, Texas, passed the word.

The next day, June 2, messages from General Eisenhower and high Naval officers were posted on the bulletin board telling us of the coming invasion. All that morning the small boats from American and British transports plowed through the harbor, taking on troops at the base. In the afternoon the first soldiers came marching down the docks to swarm aboard the outboard LCIs of our flotilla. We noticed from the start that the troops looked extremely hardened and tough and in fine condition. They were rather quiet and serious, though not solemn.

The troops we were to carry came aboard at 2:30 A.M. the next morning, June 3. When I went above to stand a regular four-hour gangway watch, the troops were mostly just sitting on deck in the sun. There was one big bushy-eyed fellow up forward, with a soft southern mountain accent, singing a mournful song. One Joe was fixing his pipe, another polishing his home-made lighter. Others were propped up on the boxes of K rations calmly reading armed service's edition books. Many were stretched out in their bunks below asleep. There were, of course, the inevitable card and crap games, although the limited space aboard the cramped ship made this difficult. Most of the soldiers playing cards were using the crisp new French Franc issue, which looked like stage money. Some of the soldiers took apart their guns and drew our Coast Guard crew as interested observers. For ourselves, we of course had our watches to stand, but mainly we kept to ourselves in the crew's quarters, playing the "*92's*" most popular game, "Acey-Ducey" and poker. Some of us went around trying to find guys from our home towns. J. W. Spring, motor machinist's mate third class of Fort Worth, Texas, found a fellow Texan from his hometown and they spent the whole evening talking over old times and, of course, Texas.

At times we lined the rail to watch the troops, go through stiff exercises, which they did with a healthy gusto. As they limbered up and became more familiar with the ship, they grew more talkative and spirited, and the old American habit of horseplay was much more in evidence.

June 4th was Sunday. Although we knew that the next day was the time set for our departure, we were all rather calm and no different from any other day. I slept until 11 A.M. that morning and then had the regular 12 to 4 P.M. gangway watch. We all tried to get as much sleep as possible because once underway we knew there would be very little time for rest. The usual Sunday church services were held and the usual number of our crew went, but no more. The Skipper spent most of the day in the chart room plotting his courses and going over his instructions. Occasionally an army officer would consult with him. Late in the afternoon an Army chaplain came aboard and with a megaphone spoke to the troops from the upper deck of a Navy LCI tied alongside us. The troops sat in all manner of positions in the well deck, staring out in space, looking at the deck, thinking or dreaming. Then they sang a few songs which dragged and were slightly off key, but they still sounded okay and sort of lifted us up a little.

Later on we had a muster in our crew's quarters and Mr. Felder explained what to do in case of being taken prisoner. Though

there was seriousness to the directions there were hilarious jibes made by the fellows which started a series of jokes about what we would tell the Germans. No one had the slightest idea they would be captured. We were all in a confident mood, and, I think, optimistic about the whole invasion.

After chow that night, which already was getting to be very monotonous as we were using those K rations, I got to thinking about this canned age war. Everywhere I looked on deck there were cans of this and that. There were even individual cans of coffee. And who will ever forget the canned soup that cooks itself. All you do is shake the can, punch two holes, and pull up the wick and light it. Woosh, the chemical in the little top compartment goes off and in a couple of minutes you have a steaming can of hot soup. We were later to be very thankful for that self cooking soup when we were wet and cold on the French beach.

That evening I sat up on the bow with Bobby Gene Smith, Seaman first class of Wichita Falls, Texas, who was on gun watch. After some playful jibes over what knots I could or couldn't tie, we fell into a more reflective mood.

"You know, Smitty," I said, "by looking at all these soldiers and sailors in their uniforms you wouldn't think they were split up in different outfits, like the Army, Navy, Seabees, Coast Guard, Navy Beach Battalion and so on. Why, you can hardly tell an enlisted man from an officer in their steel helmets and battle clothes. I'd say it really is a combined operation."

"That's right," Smitty said. "But no matter what uniforms they have you can tell they're Americans, even from just the way they walk or look around."

Came Monday with gray skies and colder weather - - invasion weather, we said. Still at the docks, the troops continued with their exercises. There was a more restless feeling among everyone, but also more laughter and jokes. At one time Allied planes were flown over the harbors, rather low, in order that we could see the type of identification to be used in the invasion. After this the troops took showers on the docks, running up the gangway in their skivvies.

At 3:45 in the afternoon Chief Boatswain's Mate Charles Campen, USCG, of Hertford, North Carolina, told us in the crew's quarters that at 5 p.m. sea watches of four hours on and four hours off would go into effect. We didn't have to be told what this meant. A stranger among us would never know from our hilarity, yelling and horseplay that we were about to participate in one of the greatest undertakings in history. In fact I don't think anyone thought of it historically at the time. I know I didn't. But there was a general excitement underneath our playfulness, and also optimism touched with some feeling of tenseness. I didn't go around asking everybody how they felt and no one asked me. But I know for myself I had a feeling of something like stage fright, or more accurately, the feeling a high school boy often gets just before the vital game with a rival school. As for the Army and Navy men we were carrying, they gave no real outward sign of what they were thinking. On the whole I would say everyone was exceptionally calm and ready. Various army officers gave their groups a talk and last minute instructions in the troop compartments. Certainly there was nothing overly dramatic. Things just continued to go

along as they had, smoothly. For us, our last orders were to be sure to always wear our gas suits, our heavy impregnated shoes and socks and keep our gas masks with us.

We left the docks during evening chow. I remember Eugene J. Snarski, Seaman first class, of Detroit, Michigan, whom we called "Jeep", sliding down the ladder to his unfinished meal and good humoredly complaining:

"I don't know why we always have to shove off just in the middle of chow, especially when we have some white bread for a change." Modest "Jeep", who received the Purple Heart previously for wounds he sustained in the Salerno, Italy, invasion was later the most badly wounded of our crew.

After eating I went above with my camera and found we were just entering the outer harbor, which was no harbor but a large bay. Everywhere the ships were beginning to take their positions. LCIs, LSTs, transports, destroyers, escort vessels, even cruisers and battleships. All the LSTs had a large barrage balloon flying above them and the LCIs looked top-heavy with the mass of troops on deck. We all watched the memorable sights of the vast flotillas of ships stretching in every direction.

As we stood out into the channel our group formed into what seemed like three endless columns of LCIs. Then later as we left the bay astern our three columns were joined by a flanking fourth column of the famous little 83 foot Coast Guard cutters and a long line of huge transports beyond. On the horizon were destroyers and other escort vessels. The wind was brisk and it was definitely chilly topsides. The heavy clouds gave a dull gray hue to the water, except for the white breakers. Our ship rolled a bit and some of the soldiers stood near the rail as they began to feel that sickly stomach sensation.

At first, we hugged the coastline but as twilight set in, we began to ease away from the high cliffs of Southern England. At 8:30 P.M., on a course of 110 degrees - ESE - we watched 74 planes fly over high in the clouds. They were P-38s. This was the largest concentration of planes at one time we had seen, although all evening bunches of Spitfires had flown over. Those planes made us feel more secure and were always a grand sight. Off our port quarter now we could make out in the evening haze more ships of task forces and amphibious flotillas coming out of other harbors.

At 9:30 P.M. I went below to warm up and get some more film equipment. The crew off watch was trying to sleep in the crowded quarters, but they were having a hard time because of the early hour, the excitement and laughter. I decided that I might as well shave since no one was in the head at the time. I only cut myself once. I thought that was good going for a pitching ship in the choppy channel. Down in a troop compartment hatch saw a group of soldiers rolling the dice, enjoying themselves. But most of the soldiers were just waiting quietly, with their own silent thoughts.

At 10 P.M. I went back up to the conning tower to find it still cloudy and cold and windy. The officers and men in the conn, which on an LCI is open to the sky shoulder high, and the highest part of the ship, seemed to be in a good mood, eating candy and cracking jokes. The Captain said it was his opinion that the morale of the troops was the highest of any invasion they had been

through and everyone agreed. Chief Campen pointed out to me the growing number of LCTs coming out from land. There were so many it was impossible to count them all as they dotted the horizon. At 10 P.M. the Skipper went below for a while and turned the ship over to Warrant Boswain James C. Cubbedge, watch officer, of Miami, Florida. The order was also passed to keep a special lookout for the dangerous German E-boats, which have a habit of sneaking in on channel shipping and doing damage with their torpedoes.

Soon I decided that the best place for me was in my "sack" if I was going to be up in the early hours of the morning. So I went below and crawled into the bunk. I couldn't go right off to sleep but the last thing I remember was the one shaded light hanging down over the mess table, swinging back and forth and sending its faint rays over the tiers of three bunks, most of them filled with sleeping forms, relaxed and trusting and not knowing what hell they would be facing in less than 10 hours.

On through the blackness of the cloudy night the ship sped across the channel in a great armada of ships. I slept soundly, dreaming and hearing nothing until 3:40 A.M. - June 6. Suddenly awakened by the clanging of the alarm bell - general quarters - I sprang out of my bunk and tried to dress with record speed. Like everyone, I had slept in my clothes except for the outer gas suit and my heavy shoes. I was the last man to scramble up the dark ladder, after grabbing my camera and film.
I climbed up to the conn. As the night wind whipped the spray across the deck, I could just make out the dark form of the ship and hurrying figures. Once I got up, though, I could see bright flashes in the distant horizon ahead and some flares closer by. The Skipper had sounded general quarters as a precautionary measure when the flares went off. A few minutes later secure from general quarters was given and the crew on watch from midnight to 4 A.M. went below.

Now in the distance ahead, along the French coast, we could see sharp flashes of brilliant explosions and heavy anti-aircraft fire and hear the deep rumble of the blasting. As my eyes became more accustomed to the darkness, I could make out the dark shapes of landing craft and ships surrounding us. We had finally reached our objective and now the LCIs were slowly following each other in a long circular movement. The beach on which we were to land was 16 miles away. All the while I was conscious of that eerie whistling of the wind through the rigging. It was cold and I pulled up the hood of my gas suit over my steel helmet and tightened my life jacket. I was going to be very thankful for that jacket later.

Now the dawn of that momentous day began breaking. The blackness changed into a shadowy gray and then into a more distinct dull gray until the rays of the sun - - still below the horizon - - began streaking the heavy clouds with traces of pale pink. This burst forth into brilliant red for a few minutes and then as suddenly disappeared into the bluish gray morning skies.

We knew a tremendous air attack was to begin at 5:45 A.M. on the German-held coast and we could see the flights of huge bombers far overhead as they roared through the clouds, on their way. When Paul E. Lambert, Signalman second class, of Marquette, Michigan, at his station in the conn, said the planes were "a good sight to see," he echoed all of our thoughts. We were

later to be very grateful to the Allied air forces who kept the German planes away. Most of the crew had vivid memories of the German air raids in Italy and especially one night at Bizerte. Another good sight were the destroyers which risked a great deal in covering us so near the German batteries.

At 5:50 A.M. the LCIs of our flotilla formed into two columns and swung in toward land, now hazy as an early morning mist blew in off the channel. There were ships in all directions as far as the eye could see. We could not help gasping with amazement at the complete coordination of this vast array of shipping despite the confusing picture it presented. At 6:45 we sped past columns of LSTs unloading trucks, tanks, jeeps, equipment through their huge bow doors onto the long flat Rhino barges. We could see the waves slapping over the barges and men and equipment.

And on we went through the gray seas while the oncoming fog closed in astern of us. By 7 A.M. we knew that the first waves of small landing boats had already hit the beaches and we wondered how they were making out. All we could see ahead was a smoky haze over the approaching land, which we now could see was not as flat as we first thought. All the crew were at their beaching stations and the ramps were in readiness for lowering. The spray over the bow kept the men forward wiping their streaming faces. At 7:30 we passed the attack transports, recognizing some of our Coast Guard ships. We were all tense now, saying little and watching with eagle eyes. General quarters was sounded at 7:45 and soon we were approaching the cruisers and destroyers shelling the coast, half hidden by smoke screens, which mixed in with the haze and grayness.

At 8 A.M. we were less than three miles from land and amidst the firing warships throwing up a continuous bombardment. The wind continued brisk and I could see the forward gun crew bracing themselves against the waves which shot over the bow. Ahead of us everywhere were small landing craft and now the beach itself was plainly visible, even with the smoke. Suddenly I realized that we were in for a tough time as I made out shattered Higgins boats on the beach and men running to take cover. I could see a few houses in the lee of the hill, wrecked and on fire. My heartbeat multiplied when I looked over the starboard bow, near the beach, and saw the Coast Guard manned *LCI 91* enveloped in flames and smoke. She was the first LCI to hit that sector of the beach and we were scheduled as the second.

Below us, in the pilot house, Edward E. Pryzbos, quartermaster first class, at the steering controls, gave one look at the "*91*", and yelled to our two waiting pharmacist's mates: "Looks as if we're going to have a rough landing." Raymond A. Maleska, pharmacist’s mate second class of Yonkers, New York, known to all as "Doc", and Rudolph J. Hursey, pharmacist's mate second class, USNR, of Chesterfield, South Carolina, known as "Pop", hurried aft to be ready with their first aid kits.

On we went. The beach was a few hundred yards off now and we could see the wooden and steel traps set by the Germans on which some of the Higgins boats had ripped out their bottoms. Smoke was everywhere and we smelled the powder of battle. We felt nearby explosions from shells and could see funnels of water shoot up in the air. The Skipper was standing forward in the conn,

griping the handrail as he directed the ship by speaking through the tube to the pilot house. Lambert, the signalman, stood on the starboard side of the conn, with ear phones on. I was on the port side by the signal light with my camera, bracing myself to take a picture. Then it came!

A terrifying blast lifted the whole ship upward with a sudden lurch from the bow. A sheet of flame and steel shot out from the forward hold. The ship quivered as if it were pulling apart and the concussion threw the three of us in the conn backward and down hard. The heat was like from blast furnace. We were stunned for an instant and our ears were ringing with the deafening vibrations. Seconds later another shattering explosion shook the ship like a toy boat and a rain of shrapnel splattered the shivering LCI.

In that first blast from the mine, which set fire to the main fuel tanks and blew out a hole in the starboard side big enough to drive a Higgins boat through, 4l soldiers in the forward troop compartment were trapped in a fiery furnace, most of them being killed instantly. The first explosion blew two of the soldiers out the hatch and the sheet of flame shot aft through the pilot-house ports, singeing the eyebrows and hair of Morton A. Rabinowitz, radioman third class, of Brooklyn, who was standing inside on the annunciators to the engine room.

But the worst concentration of explosive fire centered forward where many of our crew were working to lower the ramps and on the anti-aircraft gun. Snarski, who was inboard on the port winch on the well deck, was trapped where he stood, getting the full force of the blast in his face, setting his head on fire. He was badly burned in the face, head, hands, legs, arms. Martin Masariu, fireman first class of Indianapolis, outboard on the winch, was thrown backward almost to the number one hatch, or about 15 feet. His hair was blazing. Raymond Macht, seaman first class of Milwaukee, on the starboard winch outboard, was also blasted backward, the flame burning his face. Macht saw that Masariu's hair was on fire so he quickly slapped his hands over Masariu's head, putting out the fire but burning his own hands. Vincent DiFalco, motor machinist's mate third class, of Providence, R.I., on the winch with Macht, luckily escaped with just burned hands, although he was near the center of the explosion.

Arthur L. Lornson, Jr., Seaman first class, of Menasha, Wisconsin, standing on the port side just aft of the ramp and forward of the check line, was just about to swing the lead line when we struck the mine. He was hurled overboard in the cold water, coming up astern of the ship. He yelled but because of the noise and confusion no one heard him. The current carried him through some oil over near a piling which he grabbed and hung on 'til he gathered some strength to swim ashore. Just a few seconds after he left the piling an 88 shell hit it directly. Lornson eventually made the beach in a bitter struggle against swirling water.

Raymond Norman Patterson, seaman first class, Algiers, Louisiana, was burned on the back of the neck while he was at the port check line, aft of the ramp. On the other check line across the ship both Smith and Richard Paladino, ship's cook third class, from New Jersey, were untouched and ran aft to help soldiers who were hit near the stern when an 88 sprayed shrapnel there.

On the bow near the forward gun, was Gentry W. Warden, coxswain, of Ranger,

Texas in charge of the bow ramps. He was thrown over the gun turret onto the port ramp. Then as an 88 shell hit the ramp a dangerous piece of shrapnel pierced his forearm lodging next to the bone. The port ramp was twisted somewhat away from the ship, making it impossible to lower.

On the forward gun Herbert Nolda, coxswain, of Lincoln, Nebraska, went through the first blast, but on his way aft was knocked down when an 88 struck the ship close by the No. 2 troop hatch between the bulwarks. I remember Nolda was the first person I saw as I pulled myself up on the conn and looked down an instant. His face was bleeding badly from shrapnel wounds in his jaw.

The scene was extreme confusion. The piles of K rations and gear for the soldiers were littered over the well deck. Flames and dense smoke were pouring from the hatch, the ramps were damaged making both impossible to lower. Everywhere were faces blackened from the smoke and fire.

Mr. Felder, also on the bow, was shaken up and slightly burned in the face. It was a miracle that Charles R. Higgins, Seaman first class, of Pottsboro, Texas, with the phones on the forward gun, escaped unharmed, as well as John F. Mateyack, Seaman first class, Oaklawn, Illinois.

On the port ramp was Lawrence Davison, ship's cook third class, of Erie, Pennsylvania, ready to take in the anchor, but apparently the first blast threw him overboard and he was missing for 10 days after the invasion. He later turned up at a hospital in England, wounded.

Meanwhile, in the engine room, heavy black smoke was forced back through blower system from the explosion and fire forward. Chief Machinist's Mate Frederick Sutton, and Spring were on the throttle.

Pitzer was at his declutching station and Gaylord W. Jones, electrician's mate first class, Glendale, California, had both generators running. Thrown off balance in the first shock, the "black gang" stayed at their posts despite the heavy smoke choking them. They had no real idea of what was happening because the phones went dead after an 88 struck the conn. They could feel the ship shaking from the explosions and grabbed their steel helmets. They knew that at any time the one hatch leading up to the deck could be hit and trap them below, but finally they were driven from the engine room to breathe.

It was just after they came up from the after hatch that we missed Lester P. Phillips, motor machinist's mate first class, Charlotte, North Carolina. Stationed at the after winch, "Smi1ie" as we called him was knocked overboard and carried out by the currents. He couldn't holler because of the combination of oil and salt water that clogged his mouth. His life jacket saved him for he was in the water about an hour. Exhausted and partially paralyzed from the underwater concussion from shells and mines exploding, Phillips was finally seen by a LCT, which actually scooped him out of the sea with the bow ramp. We thought Phillips was missing until he showed up at the survivor's camp 10 days later.

Meanwhile, I had gathered up some of the precious film in the conn. The Skipper and Lambert had of course already left to help below and I knew, with those shells bursting around us, that I was just inviting trouble by

staying up there exposed to direct hits and flying shrapnel. It was shortly after I climbed down the ladder to the signal deck that an 88 shell pierced the conn in a blinding flash and explosion, sending a huge piece of shrapnel hurtling through a ready box forward, but fortunately did not set off the ammunition.

After glancing through the forward ports of the pilot house I came back to the hatch and saw LT (j.g.) George A. Finn, our engineering officer, bravely attempting to cut away the ladder made fast along the upper deck life lines. He was out in the open exposed to the machine gun fire on the beach. He had to give up the attempt when shells began exploding closer. I saw the "*91*" belching black smoke off our starboard beam. I knew the other crew must be having as bad a time if not worse than we.

By now we were drifting in a little farther for the aft anchor cable had slackened. I went below to the main deck amidst the confusion and agony of burned and suffering soldiers. Some of the crew had managed to get one fire hose rigged up and were playing a stream of water through the forward escape hatch. I saw Army officers pleading with their men to get off as quickly as possible. Some soldiers were jumping overboard and others slid or let themselves down a chain up forward of the damaged ramp. The cries of some of the helpless soldiers in the deep water were pitiful. All the while the terrific explosions, fire and heavy smoke filled the air and the littered decks heaved under the impact of still other shells as they ripped through steel plates.

I went aft and saw "Doc" Maleska and "Pop" Hursey aiding the wounded amidst the chaos. Without their cool stand as they swabbed the burned faces, necks and hands of soldiers and our own crew, there would have been many more bad cases of burns.

By now the order to abandon ship had been passed, but because of the thunderous noise and condition of the ship not all the crew heard the order immediately. The Skipper had previously asked me to help fight the fire and I had gone forward, climbing over the crates of rations to relieve some of the others coughing from the heavy smoke. I lay low over the boxes playing the dwindling stream of water over the well deck and down the escape hatch of the troop compartment where the dead soldiers lay. I soon realized that it was hopeless to put out the fire with this little trickle of water. It seemed like every few seconds an 88 came whooshing over my head and as I ducked down the violent explosion would vibrate against my head, echoing in my helmet. I think it was then I felt more scared and lonelier than at any time that day.

As the bulwarks on each side of me shut off the view I did not know the crew was abandoning ship until Mr. Finn yelled to me. I crawled back over the crates, stopping a couple of times to duck when I heard the whoosh sound of the 88s. Some of the crew and soldiers had gone in a rubber life raft but most of them had to swim for it. I decided to make one last attempt to salvage some of my film so I ran down the companion way, slid down the ladder and grabbed some stuff lying in my bunk. I heard the generators still running and the crew's quarters had not been touched by fire or shells as yet. Everything was as we left it. I even grabbed a hunk of bread on the mess table. I had forgotten to eat breakfast.

When I rushed up on deck, keeping close

to the side of the cabin, I saw the other raft already filled with the last men. Some others were letting themselves down the rope ladder over the side. I followed the last men over the starboard side as the ship was broaching to. The good old life jacket kept me up and I used my arms and legs like mad to get me ashore. The tide had already reached the high water mark and was flowing out now. My steel helmet kept my head low in the water and the heavy high shoes pulled me down, but I made it alright.

The boys on the raft had a tougher time because of the tide and mines around them. We saw bodies floating face down near us. One 88 hit directly ahead of the raft, spraying the men with water.

DiFalco, who had burned his hands, was struggling in the water, worn out. He saw a dark floating object and tried to grab onto it. But our first-class gunner's mate, Michael Zaley, of Pennsylvania, was nearby and saw that the object was a mine. He yelled at DiFalco to steer clear. DiFalco did.

Once up on the beach we sank exhaustedly on the pebbles, reaching the lowest point of human existence. But the shock of the 88s around us and the sniper's fire soon brought us to our senses. We began to crawl forward up to a small retaining wall of pilings that held back the earth and grass above the beach. This was the only protection from German shells and the machine gun firing from the hills ahead of us. There we began to dig in. Further down the Navy beach battalion men were trying to set up a signal light on the beach for the incoming ships. Each time they started sending a few letters we would hear a "zing" and out of commission would go the light again. Those German snipers were accurate at times. The Army medics and Navy corpsmen ran back and forth aiding the wounded men. Some of the soldiers stretched out along the beach were a horrible sight with parts of their body shot away. I was impressed time and again at the lack of moaning or cries from the wounded. They lay there still, waiting with haunted eyes, but not asking for help because they knew that every able soldier with a gun was needed forward in the lines.

Now as the tide went out it left our burning ship high and dry on the beach. Some of us sneaked back aboard, dodging sniper's fire, and we tossed over some canned pea soup and Army blankets. Then we moved down the beach, away from the ship which was still a target and drawing fire. I was still shivering rather violently as I lay down on the beach with my wet clothes and the cold wind from the channel blowing across me. I never realized a human being could vibrate as much as I did then. But there were others too shaking in the cold.

The only incident that made us smile a little during that grim siege was when portly Jones came marching down the beach with his fishing rod over his shoulder. He had managed to salvage this, which to him was more valuable than food then. Leonard W. Baker, officer's steward third class, Charleston, South Carolina, was one of those who went back to the ship. He had his sea bag in the stern steering engine room, which was farthest from the fire. Baker went below to get some clothes, but suddenly a machine gun opened up, splattering a rat-a-tat on the hull. Baker flew up the ladder, let himself over the side as fast as possible and dug in on the beach. He decided that clothes were not so important.

Meanwhile, George William Oswald,

seaman first class, of McKees Rock, Pennsylvania, had dug in along the pilings behind a stalled tank. But soon the Germans began opening up on the tank and Oswald left in a hurry. "It was too hot for me," he said as he joined our main party farther up the beach.

The story of the beach has been already told and it is no use to go into it again. Needless to say, we had a grandstand seat the rest of the day to the proceedings, which at times was dismal when we had to watch our own ships, tanks, landing craft and equipment blown sky high when a German 88 scored a hit. But we cheered the tremendous blasting by our heavy Naval ships, whose shells flew over our head with terrifying speed and noise. We watched the first German prisoners, hands on head, come down the beach under guard of Army MPs. They certainly knew the danger of their own guns for they hit the beach stretched flat at the first whoosh sound of the 88s.

In the early evening the Germans began a new barrage and we realized that if we were going to survive that night we would have to dig fox holes along those pilings, which we did, scraping the skin off our hands as we dug through the rocks and rough dirt below. We learned two days later, after being picked up, to our horror, that the Germans had set booby traps just below our foxholes. If we hadn't been rescued that night we probably would have dug in deeper and perhaps blown ourselves up. At any rate, near midnight three LCMs managed to get in to the beach about a quarter mile down from us. They were sent in to evacuate wounded and survivors. We were feeling pretty low by then for the tide was once more coming in. In fact it was beating against the mounds of stone and dirt in front of our foxholes and before long would have run us up above the pilings. The oncoming tide on the pebbles sounded just like machine gun fire, adding to our nervousness. So, when the LCMs hit the beach, we walked down the road above the pilings. The full moon rising back of us gave a hideous light to the dead bodies lying along the beach road. Then we saw bodies stacked up like a lumber pile down farther. But we made the boats without drawing any fire. Most of the snipers, however, had been driven out of the hill overlooking the beach, but there was still danger of 88s. We helped the wounded into the boats and then followed them on. Most of our crew stayed together, but Chief Campen, Lambert, Pryzbos and Hurzey were separated and helped to load the very badly wounded on another LCM. We were taken to an LST, waiting a few miles out to unload her cargo and Army troops. But just as we were climbing aboard we had our first German air raid of the night. A German raider swooped by the LST in a long arc, just missing the barrage balloon, to fly along the beach and strafe. We had gotten off that beach just in time.

Completely worn out and hungry we groped along the dark deck and went below. Besides the Army troops and their equipment aboard and the regular Navy crew, there were over 100 badly wounded jammed in the crew's bunks and soldier's bunks. So we survivors had to flop down anywhere we could find on the deck. I lay down on the steel deck in a troop compartment where there were some badly wounded soldiers. I was so hungry I couldn't sleep much, but I finally fell off, only to wake almost every hour. During an air raid, when the shrapnel started falling like hail on the decks, we all jumped up mainly because

of our nerves. The next morning more wounded were brought aboard, further jamming the ship. We sat out in the channel all day because the Germans were still shelling the beachhead and it was too risky for a big LST. But our heavy ships blasted the coastline and by Thursday we went into the beach and discharged the soldiers and their heavy equipment. Meanwhile, we survivors turned to and helped the medics with the wounded until Saturday night when we arrived back in England.

I'll never forget those peaceful English hills and how good they looked to us after the French coast under fire. All the time that we aided the wounded by serving them their meals, feeding them and washing the canteens and dishes, we did not have any change in clothing until we reached the survivors base, nor any showers until the last night aboard the LST. Most of us hadn't brushed our teeth since the night before the invasion. So you can imagine what a motley crew we were that Saturday night after the invasion when we marched off at a Southern British port and were taken to a tent city for the night. The following day, Sunday, we were jammed into a Navy truck and driven over 100 miles across the South to the survivor's base, where we found thousands of other survivors packed in the camp. We were given a mattress and blankets, and for the first time in a week slept comfortably a full and quiet night. Not a man of our crew got up for breakfast that next morning and most of us slept right through to dinner time.

And so ends our invasion week, an experience we will never forget. Will we meet next on some Pacific beach? We hope not, but we will be ready if we must. We know that until we have Berlin and Tokyo the war is not won. *And we mean to win!*

Air raid at night; what is it like?

By Gordon Smith LCI-43

It starts out with the blare of BATTLE STATIONS ! ! ! ! This was triggered by the watch on the conning tower. The horn has shattered your dreams of home.

Immediate are your reflexes as you scramble up the ladder to exit the small, cramped crew's quarters. You have slept in your clothes because these raids are frequent. At your battle station you sort out what is going on and attempt to focus on what your duty must be and proceed to do it as you have been trained.

Seemingly out of nowhere a flare comes floating gently overhead. Your ship is now nakedly exposed in a bubble of light surrounded by complete darkness. Then comes the roar of the enemy plane zooming in on its target. Bombs are dropped and strafing guns rattle. You are then drenched with muddy water from the shallow anchorage as the bomb barely misses your little ship and the geyser marks the spot where the 500-pound bomb dropped.

Another air raid has come and gone. You know another raid is coming very soon. You take off your "Mae West" life jacket and use it as a pillow and attempt an exhausted sleep on the steel deck so that you do not have to make that hasty rush out of crew's quarters again that night! This happens many nights in a row. Pretty soon, your mind becomes weary from the strain.

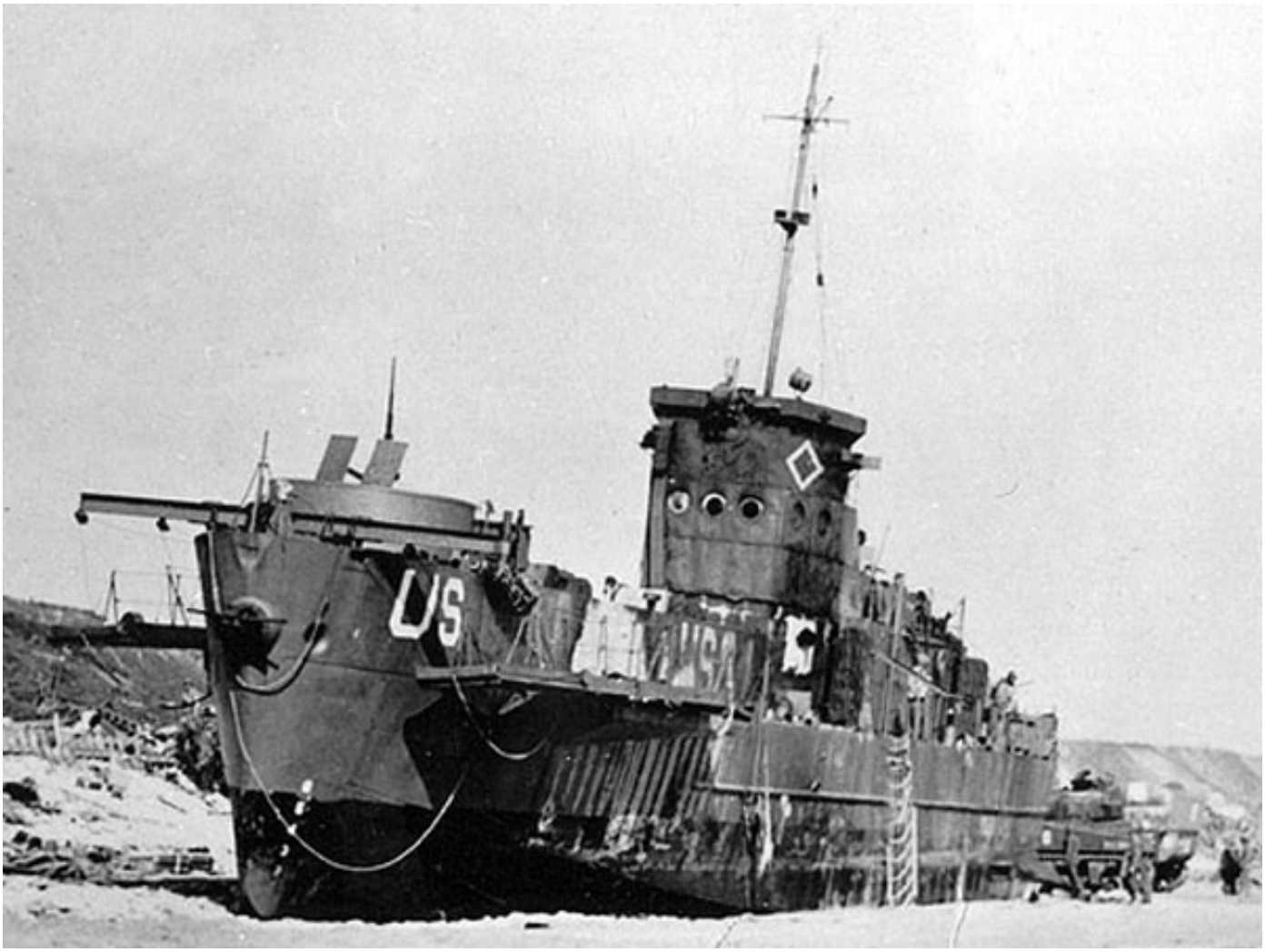
A friendly little scout plane flies overhead. All your brain hears is the roar of the engine and you simply break down and cry.

When you get home with your loved ones, you feel ashamed because you feel you have become weak. You do not tell them. They do not know. It takes many years....yet.....it will cling with you forever.

D-Day Soldier KIA on LCI(L) 92 Identified

By Jeff Veesenmeyer

WASHINGTON – The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced that U.S. Army Tech. 4th Grade (TECH4) Elmo F. Hartwick, 38 of Onaga, Kansas, killed during World War II, was accounted for Aug. 21, 2023.



Beached and abandoned LCI(L) 92 on Omaha Beach. Censors erased the ships number.

At approximately 0800 on 6 June 1944, *LCI(L) 92* was making a straight in approach to Omaha Beach. Their assigned landing area was "Dog White Beach." Lt. Robert M. Salmon in command of the Coast Guard vessel was using smoke to cover his approach. He maneuvered his LCI slightly downwind of the beached and burning *LCI(L) 91*. He was spotted through the smoke by enemy gunners anyhow. The landing craft began taking hits from enemy shells. Just before beaching he hit an underwater mine. Fuel ignited from the ship's stores and engulfed

the forward troop compartment. Damage control could not reach the trapped men.

Tech4 Elmo E. Hartwick from Onaga, Kansas was among the men killed in the forward compartment of LCI(L) 92 on D-day.

LCI(L) 92 carried 200 members of the 149th Engineer Combat Battalion. Twenty-four men in the forward compartment were killed from the explosion and intense fire. Elmo F. Hartwick was among those killed. Crewmembers fought fire and unloaded the remaining troops. The beached LCI was abandoned later that day. None of the 25 Coast Guard crew were lost.

It would be several weeks before it was possible to recover remains of troops in the forward compartment. Later in June the 500th Medical Collecting Company examined the ship. They gathered burnt remains and buried them in the United States Military Cemetery at St. Laurent-sur-Mer #1.

In 1946 the American Graves Registration Command began to analyze the remains from *LCI 92.* There were four unknowns who were interred in Normandy American Cemetery, an American Battle Monuments commission site in Normandy, France. In June of 2021 the *LCI 92* remains were exhumed and transferred to a laboratory for anthropological analysis. Scientists from the Armed Forces Medical Examiners System used mitochondrial DNA analysis to confirm Tech4 Hartwick's remains.

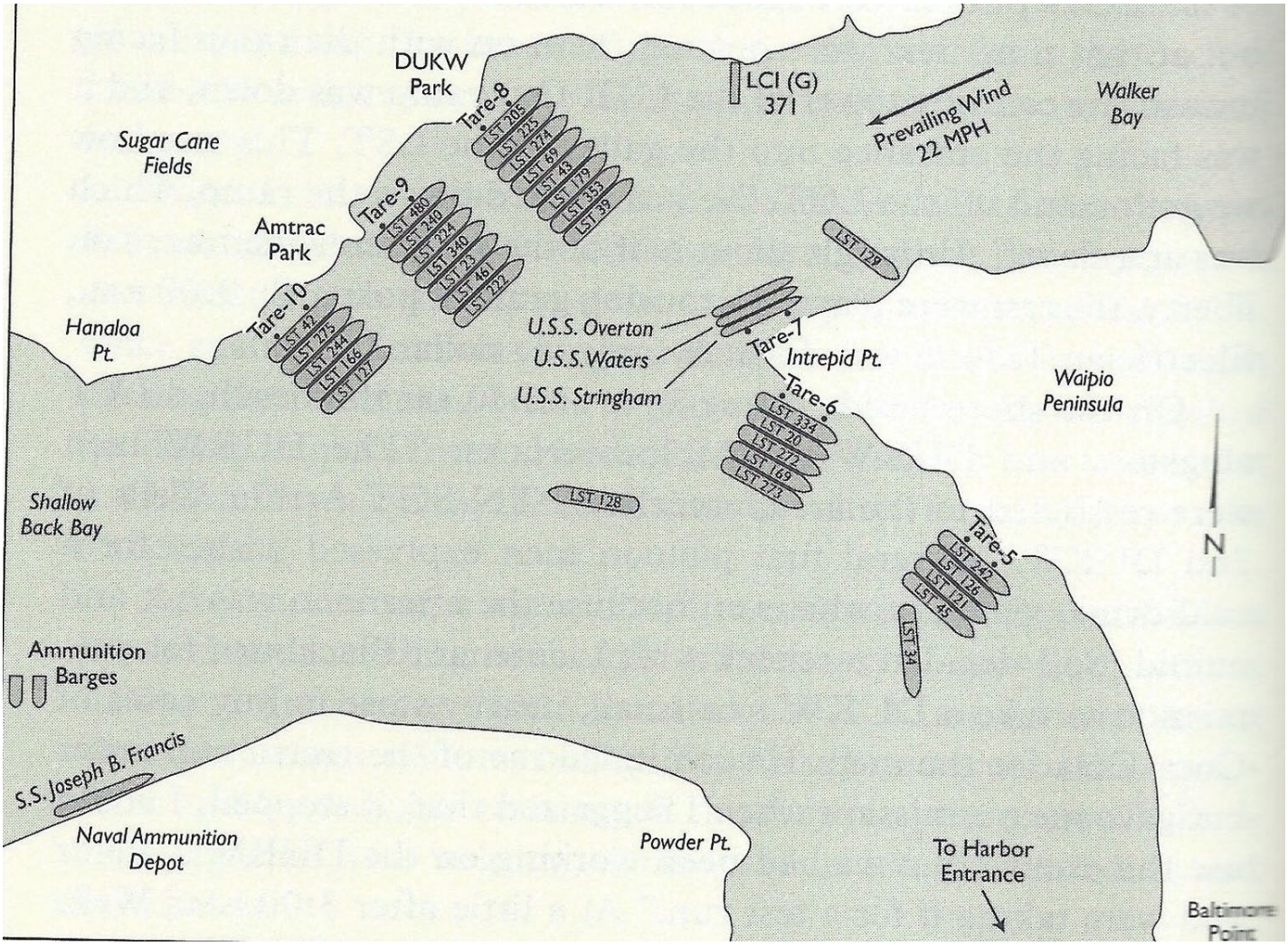
Hartwick's name is listed on the Walls of the Missing at Normandy American Cemetery. Now a rosette has been placed next to his name, indicating that he has been accounted for. TECH4 Hartwick's remains were returned to family and buried in his hometown of Onaga, Kansas.

Hartwick's remains were finally returned home and laid to rest in his hometown of Kansas.

There are 1557 names listed on the Wall of the Missing at Normandy. Hartwick is among those who have been finally accounted for.

Tragedy and Triumph During Operation Forager

By Jeff Veesenmeyer



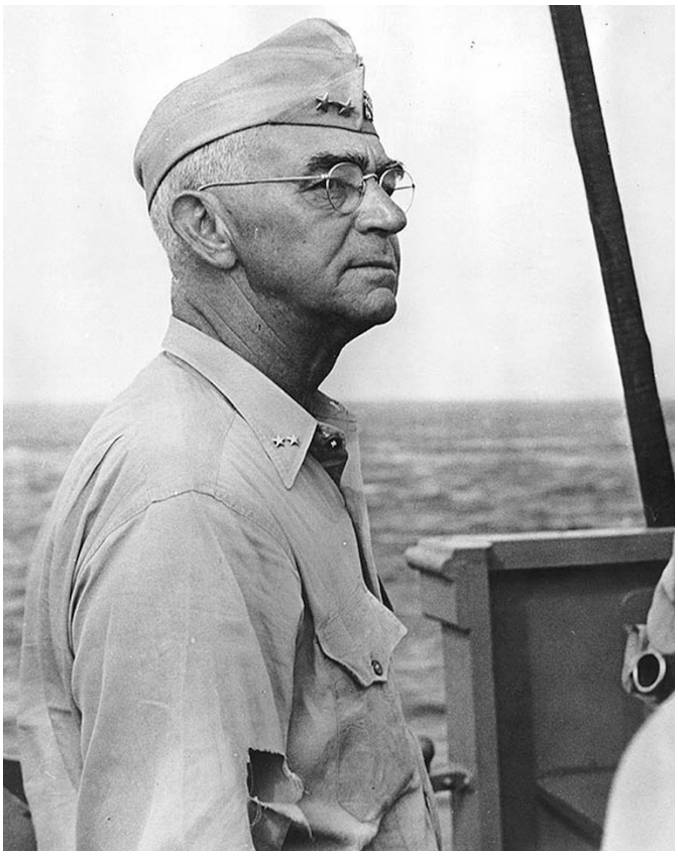
The West Loch anchorage area at Pearl Harbor on May 21,1944

After the Marshall Islands campaign, Admiral Nimitz set his sights on the Marianas. The northern island of Saipan had been occupied by Japan for over 50 years. It was considered a home island. There was a large civilian population. This would be the first assault on Japanese territory. It was unknown if the 30,000 settlers would join the 32,000 man Japanese 31st Army in defense of their homes.

Operation Forager was scheduled to begin with the invasion of Saipan on June 15, 1944. The overall task commander was Admiral Spruance. Recently promoted Vice Admiral Kelly Turner would head the Joint Expeditionary Force. It included 535 ships and 127,000 men. His northern force would invade Saipan followed by a southern force invasion on Guam. This operation would be the second largest amphibious invasion at this point in the war. The largest was happening nine days earlier at Normandy.

Even with the massive shipbuilding efforts since Pearl Harbor, the Navy was spread thin on two sides of the world. Admiral Turner found himself short of the

necessary ammunition ships to supply his operation. His solution was to utilize LSTs to haul ammunition.



Vice Adm. Richmond Kelly Turner, commonly known as Kelly Turner. As commander of the Amphibious Forces Pacific Fleet, he created the Underwater Demolition Team (UDT) in 1942.

The Rehearsal

Forager rehearsals took place May 14-20 on Maui, Hawaii. Turner had 47 LSTs assigned to his Saipan northern force. Sixteen of the LSTs were designated as ammunition ships. Three other LSTs were assigned to transport LCT (landing craft tank) mortar gunboats. It was hoped that these LCTs could maneuver within Saipan's reefs to provide flank support for the invasion beaches. The LCTs had been converted with six 4.2-inch mortars and carried 2,500 rounds of projectiles. The added tonnage on the LCTs was huge.

While enroute to the rehearsal area the convoy encountered heavy seas. Two of the LCT mortar gunboats broke loose of the LST securing gear and went overboard at night. They were top heavy and poorly secured. Both were lost along with Marine and Coast Guard crews. After the rehearsal and return to Pearl Harbor, it was decided to scrap the mortar gunboat plan.

On May 21 thirty-four LSTs were back at Pearl Harbor and nested at West Loch in Tares of five to eight. The West Loch Naval Ammunition Depot was just south of their anchorage. The 16 LSTs designated as ammunition ships were fully loaded with 750 rounds of 5-inch 38-caliber anti-aircraft shells and powder for them. Ten more LSTs were loaded with 270 rockets, 6,000 rounds of 40mm, and 15,000 rounds of 20mm machine gun ammunition. In addition, the LSTs had 55-gallon high octane gasoline drums lining their decks for the gas guzzling LCTs, tanks, and trucks. These ships were floating time bombs. The 4.2-inch mortar rounds were no longer needed. An unloading detail was formed. The clock began ticking.

The Disaster

On the morning of May 21st trucks were ferried out to *LST-353* from the Naval Ammunition Depot. Each truck was hand loaded then lowered on the elevator to the LSTs tank deck to be ferried back to the depot on LSMs. The hot arduous work was performed by army personnel from the 29th Chemical Company Schofield Barracks. The executive officer of *LST-353* checked on progress during the day. He spotted two civilian workers smoking and ordered them

to stop. His concern were the 80 drums of gas just forward of the elevator and truck.

At 1508 Lt.(jg) Raymond W. Thomas was meeting with the ships captain in the conning tower of *LST-353*. They were moored in Tare 8. Thomas reported, "The explosion was an instantaneous one that knocked the captain and me down. Debris was falling around." They hid under the pilot house until burning debris stopped falling. Then they attempted to get hoses and water on the inferno. There was no water pressure. Thomas started down a ladder to check on the pumps when a second explosion blew him back up an out of the hatch. The ship was engulfed in fire at this point. Survivors headed for the fantail, cut life rafts, and abandoned ship. The inboard *LST-179* and outboard *LST-39* were also on fire. A third massive explosion sent burning debris to all the LSTs at West Loche. Hundreds of men were in the water swimming to shore. Some were caught by the spread of burning fuel. Ships frantically got loose of their nests and attempted to get away. In the chaos, men in the water were sucked into screws and run over. Those swimmers making it to shore were not safe yet. They stumbled through a sugar cane field while dodging falling debris. One man was crushed by a jeep. Another lost both legs when hit by steel decking. Smaller blasts continued through the afternoon. Many were injured by shrapnel and ammunition going off.

Chief BM Clyde V. Cook was on *LST 272* moored in Tare 6. "After the first explosion hundreds of men were in the water. Only heads were showing. It looked like a large flock of ducks swimming in a pond. Then the gas caught on fire. The wind-swept flames blew across the men. After it passed not a head could be seen."

The smoke and fire in Tare 8 and Tare 9 engulfed every ship. Six LSTs would sink.

Seaman James J. Gooley was on the bridge of *LST 480* in Tare 9. The first explosion blew him off the bridge. The signal light came down on top of him. He saw sacks of potatoes blown into the air. When the tank deck exploded his clothes caught fire but fortunately, his clothes were blown off by the blast. He swam a short distance to shore.

Bill Gourley S1/c raced to his damage control station at the stern of *LST 273*. "The deafening blasts caused the ship to shake, rattle, and roll. I was ordered to cut our lines with an axe."

The chain reaction explosions could be heard throughout Pearl Harbor. Machinist Mate Warren Boche climbed to the top of a two-story building to see the action unfold at West Loche. He counted seven big explosions. Coast Guardsman Lindel C. Jones was stationed at Peir 4 in Honolulu Harbor. He was the skipper of a 55-foot patrol boat. After hearing the explosions, he was ordered to take command of one of the fireboats and head for West Loche. When he

entered the channel all kinds of warships were heading out. Smoke billowed thousands of feet above and debris was in the water. A tugboat came out to meet the fireboats. A vice admiral gave orders directing each fireboat to an area of need. Jones was sent to the center of the disaster.

Fireboats poured water on the LST inferno throughout the night of May 21-22.

A half dozen LSTs were adrift. Jones helped pull one to the beach. He pushed the ship to shore until it went aground. As he returned to the firestorm his screws became tangled in clothing. His boat was dead in the water. A crewmember jumped in to untangle the mess. The vice admiral's boat pulled alongside with new orders. He told Jones to pull his fireboat up the ramp of a burning LST. As he pulled away, he yelled, "Hurry up, you want to live forever?" When free of debris, Jones followed orders and drove his boat up the LST's ramp. Bullets were going off and bouncing all over the tank deck. Miraculously nobody got hit. The crew spread foam and water on the deck getting most of the fires out. Then they went on board to rescue survivors. But there weren't any. A group of men were found in the chain locker. All had suffocated. Jones' crew continued throughout the night fighting fires and picking up survivors.

George Swallow, a Marine was on *LST-69* when the *353* exploded. His LST was in the same nest several ships inboard. He was ordered to get to shore. After crossing to the next ship through falling debris he dove in the water and was picked up by an LCVP. He later saw a news article about the West Loche disaster. It was referred to as "A minor incident." Those who were there knew differently.

Pharmacist's Mate Henry Beuckman knew differently too. He was on *LCI(G) 449* in another area of the harbor when the explosions rocked his ship. Once an attack was ruled out and the accident was confirmed he knew help was needed for casualties. He rushed to scene and spent the night caring for men with horrible wounds and burns. For him the disaster was a nightmarish blur.

The final toll was 163 dead and 396 injured. Six LSTs, three LCTs and seventeen LCVTs were sunk. Eleven buildings were damaged or destroyed. Many small craft and fireboats were damaged. But with Operation Forager just days away from launch, the news was downplayed and covered up. The officer who had been directing fire and rescue at West Loche was none other than Vice Admiral Kelly Turner. His entire operation nearly went up in smoke. He couldn't let the world and Japanese know that a major invasion was imminent. He replaced the six sunk LSTs and lost supplies from his backup of ships and material. The task force went to sea just one day late, picked up the day at sea and still landed at Saipan on D-Day at H-Hour.

The Naval Board of Inquiry interviewed 75 survivors. Rumors of

sabotage, mini-subs, careless welders, and smoking were all considered. Nothing was ever confirmed. From the findings, Admiral Nimitz considered it was either a mishandled mortar shell or gasoline vapors or both. The inquiry report was classified. It wasn't declassified until 1960. By then it was mostly forgotten.

In the end, the demand for warships exceeded the ability to produce ammunition ships. During war, adjustments must be made. The LCI gunboats of Flotilla 3 were called on to replace LCT mortar gunboats at Saipan.

Lt. E.W. Gooding, skipper of LCI(G) 371.

Anchored just east and upwind of the nested LSTs on 21 May was newly converted *LCI(G) 371.* Lt. E.W. Gooding was in command. Gooding and his crew had a front row seat of the entire disaster. Wind was in their favor. They were spared sparks, smoke, and debris from the blasts. Their deck report from the month of May never mentions anything about the explosions or aftermath. The log entry for 20-24 May simply lists the ship as "berthed at West Loch, Pearl Harbor." Their assignment was duty ship on odd days. On 25 May they up anchored and were underway with Flotilla Three for Saipan.

The Saipan Invasion

Vice Admiral Turner turned to LCI gunboats to replace the LCT mortar gunboats that were lost or left behind. LCI task groups got the assignment. They included *LCIs 371, 372, 373, 439, 431, 449, 450, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 470, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 347, 755, and 726*. The LCIs first provided cover fire for the underwater demolition teams, UDTs, who scouted the Saipan beaches and blew up obstacles. With cover fire from the LCIs 20mm and 40mm guns the swimmers succeeded with their mission but lost four KIA and five wounded.

On invasion day, the LCIs led the way with rockets for the 2nd and 4th Marine Divisions and 27th Infantry. By days end there were 20,000 troops ashore. It had been anticipated that the capture of Saipan would take three days. It took three weeks. The rough terrain provided excellent fortifications on cliffs, in caves and behind hillsides. The LCIs were able to get inside the coral reefs and provide close in gun support on enemy flanks and rear positions. One night, the Japanese attempted an amphibious counterattack by moving troops on barges behind U.S. lines. They were caught enroute by patrolling LCI gunboats. Fourteen loaded barges were destroyed. Japanese land-based planes targeted the little ships armed with destructive firepower.

They were fought off with effective anti-aircraft gunnery on the LCIs.

The Japanese knew that if they lost Saipan, they would lose the war. Whoever controlled the Marianas could control the South Pacific. Saipan airfields would put the B-29 Superfortress within range of bombing Tokyo. No Japanese city would be safe. The Japanese Fleet Admiral saw an opportunity. By destroying the American support fleet, the American land forces would be cut off and destroyed too.

Vice Admiral Ozawa was ordered to steam northward from his base in Borneo. He was to launch a surprise attack against the American fleet with waves of carrier and land-based warplanes. After defeating the American fleet, he would reinforce the Japanese garrison on Saipan and defeat the struggling land force. His task force included 9 carriers, 5 battleships, 13 cruisers, 28 destroyers and a couple dozen submarines. He had 473 carrier planes and 540 more on land-based airfields. He matched the Americans in number of aircraft. But Japan's planes were worn out and inferior to America's by this time in the war. More importantly, many of Japan's carrier pilots were inexperienced. Most had limited training and no combat experience.

The surprise factor was lost when Americans intercepted and de-coded Japan's orders. Then American submarines spotted the Japanese fleet near the Philippines. U.S. submarines shadowed the Japanese fleet as it steamed toward the Marianas. They were able to sink three of Ozawa's oilers and four destroyers. Now, Admiral Spruance, the Overall Task Commander of the carrier task force knew what he faced and when to expect the first contact. He still had time to prepare for a major naval battle. Spruance decided to launch air attacks at the airbases on Guam and other nearby islands. This reduced the number of land-based planes by half that were available to Ozawa. The airfields were badly damaged which limited their support of carrier planes in need of fuel. Spruance began steaming his task force west towards the enemy but would turn back east to the Marianas each night. His number one mission was defense of the invasion force. Left behind were four older, slow battleships and LCI Flotilla 3. They would provide ground support for the troops and defend the invasion force from air attack.

"Tallyho"

On the morning of June 18th, neither of the two enemy fleets knew exactly where the other was located. The fast carrier fleet, Task Force 58, had 15 carriers. They were defended by concentric circles of battleships, cruisers, and destroyers. They were spread out over 12 miles of the Philippine Sea. Japanese search planes spotted them, and Ozawa launched his first raid of 45 bomb carrying Zeroes and 8 torpedo bombers.

As the planes were launching from *Taiho*, USS *Albacore* fired six torpedoes at Ozawa's command ship. Warrant officer Komatsu had just taken off when he spotted a torpedo wake. He aimed his plane into the torpedo blowing it up and killing himself. Despite his sacrifice, another torpedo hit *Taiho's* starboard side forward fuel tank. Flooding was controlled, but fuel leaked dangerously. The ship's speed was reduced only slightly.

Ozawa's first raid was picked up on radar when still 150 miles away. Task Force 58 turned into the wind and launched Hellcat fighters. The first Japanese raid had 42 planes shot down. Only a few made through to the battleships. The South Dakota was hit, but none of Jap planes made it through to the fast carriers. The next wave had 128 planes and 70 more were shot down. This time a few made it through the devastating defense of anti-aircraft fire and Hellcat pilots. The Bunker Hill was hit but fought on. Two more raids were launched with similar results. The American pilots had a field day against their inferior opponents. Some pilots became Aces (5 kills) in one day. They named their battle "The Great Marianas Turkey Shoot."

By days end, Ozawa's carriers had put 373 planes into the air. Only 130 returned. Fifty planes from Guam were shot down as well. The Japanese had lost nearly 300 planes to only 30 Americans. They caused minimal damage to U.S. ships and sank none. U.S. submarines continued their attacks on Ozawa's carriers. The carrier Shokaku was hit by three torpedoes and sunk. Then gas fumes from leaking fuel on Ozawa's flagship *Taiho* blew up and it sank. Ozawa worried how he would recover his returning planes after they refueled at Guam. He waited for them. None returned.

Now Task Force 58 went in pursuit of the battered Japanese fleet. The next day planes were launched in the afternoon knowing they would be returning low on fuel and after dark. They reached the Japs at dusk. Hellcats shot down 65 more Japanese planes. Then dive bombers and torpedo bombers sank a third carrier and seriously damaged other ships. This gamble sealed the victory for Spruance but was costly. Lights were turned on all ships to guide the planes back. Still, 80 planes were lost due to running out of fuel or crashing in the dark. Fortunately, no Jap submarines were in the vicinity. The Battle of the Philippine Sea ended Japan's naval air force. Ozawa had only 35 planes able to fly when he retreated in disgrace.

Jack Clifton CM2/c, The Sullivans (DD-537): *At 2200 our planes started coming back. We had to turn into the wind, and every ship turned on their lights so the planes could land. We lost a lot of planes because they ran out of gas, and a lot missed the carriers and hit the water. Planes were on fire all over. Around 20 destroyers stayed in the vicinity to pick up pilots.*

Saipan's defenders fought to the bitter end in hopes of reinforcements. A bonsai charge by 4,000 remaining soldiers ended their resistance. They preferred death to surrender. The island was declared secure on July 9th. The LCI gunboats had been patrolling nightly in the anchorage area in Garapan Harbor. The crews hadn't had a full night sleep in weeks. Finally, they were relieved from nighttime patrols. They were ordered to Marpi Point. There were holdouts, snipers and civilian at this northern sector of Saipan. LCI gunboats would patrol the coast by day for any sign of the enemy. Then one of the ugliest events of the Pacific War was witnessed by Marines and LCI sailors.

Marpi Point was on the northern tip of Saipan. It stood on a sheer cliff 800 feet above rocky shoreline with waves crashing in from the Philippine Sea. The scenic

location was worthy of a painting or photograph. But as the *LCI(G) 449* approached, the crew saw movement on the cliffs. Robert Duvall grabbed a pair of binoculars to get a better look. What he saw took his breath away. People were jumping off the cliff to their deaths on the rocks below. Whole families, men, women, and their children would hold hands and dive over the side. Now the crew could here sailors from other gunboats yelling, "Don't Jump."

Japan had warned their citizens that if captured by Americans, they would be tortured, raped, and killed. As the gunboats drew in closer, loudspeakers were used to convince jumpers that they wouldn't be hurt by Americans.

Bob Hallet LCI(L) 449: *I would look away for moment, but then look back, to see if it was real.*

Thousands of people were floating in the water. One of the crewmembers knelt and prayed for the poor souls, with tears rolling down his face. That night there were no patrols. They anchored off Marpi Point. But no one got much sleep. The visions of bodies falling and floating off Marpi Point wouldn't go away.

The Tinian Snipers

Marianas's campaign was far from over. But the outcome without Ozawa's air support and reinforcement was certain. Next was Tinian to the south. It was lightly defended compared to Saipan but needed to be neutralized quickly. The campaign was a month behind schedule. On July 24, after bombardment by warships and rocket barrage by LCIs, 15,000 Marines landed. A decoy landing made resistance on the landing beach light. The Marines marched across the island in a week. But scattered pockets and snipers were a constant threat.

LCI(G) 449 was called on to help take out some coastal cave positions. Snipers were firing from hidden positions and caves along the coast. They were causing casualties along coastal areas that were thought to be secure. Lt. Herring, the skipper of *LCI(G) 449* was ordered to pickup some Marine snipers to go after Jap snipers. They carried specialized guns mounted with 8-power scopes. Herring maneuvered his ship in close to the southern tip of the island. They patrolled back and forth hoping to draw fire. A call came in identifying a cave where sporadic fire was seen. Now with an exact location the Marine sharpshooters could set up and waited for an opportunity. They were close enough that the cave entrance was visible through the camouflage. After a half hour Herring told the Marine officer his bow gunner could hit the cave opening with the 40mm gun. The Marine doubted the tiny cave opening could be hit by a ship mounted gun, but finally relented.

Round after round of 40mm shells exploded deep inside the cave. The Marine smiled and agreed their target was dead. *LCI(G) 449* spent the rest of day putting 40mm shells inside every cave opening on the coast of Tinian. The Marine sharpshooters just sat and watched the show.

The Triumph

On July 16th *LCIs 442, 474, 475*, and *437* began patrolling Agat Bay, Guam landing beaches. UDT frogmen had already cleared the landing area of obstacles. The LCIs fired

their 40mm and 20mm guns continuously at beach throughout the night. This was to prevent the enemy from replacing mines and obstacles before the invasion. The suppression fire on the landing beach continued each night until invasion day July 20th.

LCI(G) 439 and eight sister ships led the way for the first wave of Marines. They pounded the beach with 40mm fire and rockets. Then they split up to cover either flank of the beachhead with continuous fire. Four LCIs went north and five went south. On the north flank *LCI(G)s 365, 366, 439, and 440* were being fired on from a Jap 3-inch gun. It was well hidden on Pelagi Rock. All the LCIs fired back until the barrels on their 40mm gun barrels became so hot they had to be cooled down with fire hoses. After many near misses from the 3-inch gun *LCI(G) 365* was hit repeatedly and on fire. Damage was severe and there were many casualties. The ship was taking on water had to be pulled out of battle. A 76mm shell hit *LCI(G) 437* in the steering room and above the water line. It passed through and out the other side without blowing up.

It was critical to knock out the guns on Pelagi Rock. There were mortars on enfilade side of the rock structure. On the side facing the sea and Agat Beach, the Japanese had mounted artillery guns on rails inside a cave. They would roll them out, shoot and roll back. Air strikes and bombardment had done nothing to stop their devasting and accurate fire.

A group of seven LCIs were ordered to form a strafing line along Palagi Rock. They would pass by close to the location to draw fire, so spotter planes could locate the guns. Call fire would be directed for destroyer, cruiser, and battleships at the hidden gun positions. *LCI(G) 439* was assigned to lead the sweep of the peninsula. Crewmembers considered the assignment a suicide mission.

Lt(jg) Henry Mullins, LCI 439: *The Japs had one or two guns in a cave on rails in a cliff overlooking the invasion site. The "Big Boys" tried to stop the guns but had no luck.*

LCI 439 was the first to be hit by enemy shells. Two loaders on the 40mm gun were killed. Twenty others were wounded. The *LCI 366* followed close behind. Mortar shells were dropping all around the line. Several found their mark on *LCI 366*, killing five sailors and wounding thirteen more. The next ship in line turned to starboard with others following until they were out of range. Navy planes circling overhead located the Jap mortar positions and destroyed them. The cave guns remained intact. Marines would be needed to destroy them with flame throwers.

The fight for Guam would drag on into August and guerrilla warfare continued for months, even years. The significance of capturing the Marianas was three-fold. The great Japanese naval base at Truk was cut off from support. The Japanese naval air power was reduced to powerless. Most of Japan was now within range of the B-29 Super Fortress bombers. Also, Tojo, the warlord who launched Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor and the south Pacific, resigned in disgrace. Japan knew they could no longer win the war. They could only hope for a favorable peace treaty. LCI Flotilla Three played an instrumental role in an

operation that started with disaster and ended in triumph.

The Commendation

The Secretary of the Navy takes pleasure in commending LCI(G) FLOTILLA THREE AMPHIBIOUS FORCES PACIFIC for services as follows…

"For outstanding heroism in action in support of amphibious landings on enemy Japanese-held Kwajalein and Eniwetok Atolls in the Marshall Islands, and on Saipan, Guam, and Tinian in the Marianas, from January 31 to July 28, 1944. Operating dangerously in poorly charted waters off the reef-studded shores of those heavily fortified hostile bases, LCI(G) Flotilla THREE preceded the assault waves to deliver concentrated rocket and gunfire at perilously close range against beach entrenchments, pill boxes and blockhouses, repeatedly navigating unswept channels to carry out their missions, the ships of Flotilla THREE suffered serious damage under heavy Japanese gunfire and the intense cross-fire of our own ships and, despite numerous casualties, rendered substantial aid to our invasion forces. Gallantly responding to the many calls for close-in fire, the units of the Flotilla provided smoke and protective screens for the large combatant and auxiliary vessels against hostile aircraft, submarines, and small craft; they disrupted potentially dangerous counterattacks by Japanese landing barges, and they defied enemy fire to conduct daring patrols in support of reconnaissance and demolition parties. The unique and varied service rendered by LCI(G) Flotilla THREE was directly instrumental in braking down enemy resistance on these fiercely defended islands and reflects the aggressive fighting spirit of the officers and men who braved fanatic Japanese opposition to fulfill their missions."

James Forrestall – Secretary of the Navy

All personnel serving on these ships during this time-period were authorized to wear the Navy Unit Commendation ribbons. LCI(G)s 77, 78, 79, 80, 82, 345, 346, 347, 348, 365, 366, 371, 372, 373, 437-442, 449-461, 463, 470, 725, 726.

SOURCES:

"The West Loch Story" by William L.C.Johnson
"The Second Pearl Harbor" by Gene E. Salecker, University of Oklahoma Press
"Jack Clifton's WWII Memoir" by Jack Clifton
"Oklahoma to Okinawa:18K Miles on the LCI(G) 439" by Bill Mercer
"The Heart of Hell" by Mitch Weiss
"The West Loch Disaster" LST Scuttlebutt May 2017

All that is left as a reminder of that fateful day at West Loch is the rusted hulk of LST 480, standing silently off Waipio Peninsula. In 1994, the National Park Service, in conjunction with the U.S. Navy, placed a wayside exhibit directly across from LST 480 to commemorate the event.

Was My Dad Cool?

By John Harvey

Don't get me wrong. I loved my dad. And he certainly did some very cool things with me, my siblings, and my friends. He took us hunting, fishing, and engaged us in proto-conservation work by planting hundreds of pine and spruce seedlings to help with reforesting the north woods of Wisconsin.

On family trips he stopped at historical sites and Civil War battlefield to give us both information and a feel for history of the country and the men and women who made it happen. Around the dinner table he engaged us in conversations on science, current events, and politics. For all these experiences which enriched my life I am grateful.

But I remember that as I grew into my teen years, I began thinking that my dad wasn't very cool. He proudly wore a military style butch haircut and wanted the same haircut for us much to the chagrin of my mother. He was overweight and had a pronounced potbelly. He smoked 2-3 packs of cigarettes a day. He probably drank a few too many highballs after work. He used funny language such as saying "shove off" when he meant to leave and calling pancakes "collision mats." And he always drove Nash Ramblers.

By comparison I thought that several of my friends had much cooler dads. One of these dads drove a corvette, played golf at a country club, was trim, well-groomed, and wore fashionable cardigan sweaters. Another friend's dad drove a classy looking Studebaker, had designed an artistic house situated into the woods, listened to jazz, and read Esquire magazine.

My dad never spoke much about his military service aboard the *LCI(L)1074*. I knew that he was the captain of a little ship in the Pacific and that he liked to go to reunions to get together with his old shipmates. But reading through the February 1945 log entries opened my eyes to a different view of the man and his accomplishments.

During the month of February 1945 his LCI moored alongside other ships 20 or more times. The *1074* was 160 feet long and weighed somewhere around 300 tons. That was no easy task and each mooring seemed to go smoothly.

The log entries reflect that the *1074* beached around 10 times during the month. This was done to pick up and later disembark survivors and passengers and to drop off supplies for Filipino guerilla forces fighting the Japanese. As I read these entries, I thought about what Joseph Gage said about the *1074* landing troops on the beach. (*Elsie Item September 2021*)

"You run up on the beach, you really try, and our skipper was really good, he'd get as far up on the beach as he could get. Many times, we'd let them off and they didn't even get wet. That was really something."

I also read in the log entries that on six occasions the *1074* sailed in column through the night. As the captain of the ship, he had lots to attend to stay in position and stay on course. During two other nights the *1074* took on supplies.

There were a variety of other tasks that the *1074* took care of including transferring officers and men from one ship to another, securing voting records, picking up and delivering the mail, taking crews on liberty, picking up supplies, and the frequent task of taking on water.

As the captain he had to supervise the other three officers and the twenty-six crewmen. He had to enforce discipline and maintain morale. Not an easy task under pressure and in close quarters. On this topic Gage said the following in his interview.

"Your feelings about people, and getting along with people, and the shipboard experience was tremendous. You can't replace that. Especially this kind of ship where there's a small group of guys and you're almost like, it's hard to say, but almost like brothers because you've been through so much. And you're living in close quarters. So, because of that I became a much, much, much better person."

It sounds like my dad was a good skipper and a good manager of people.

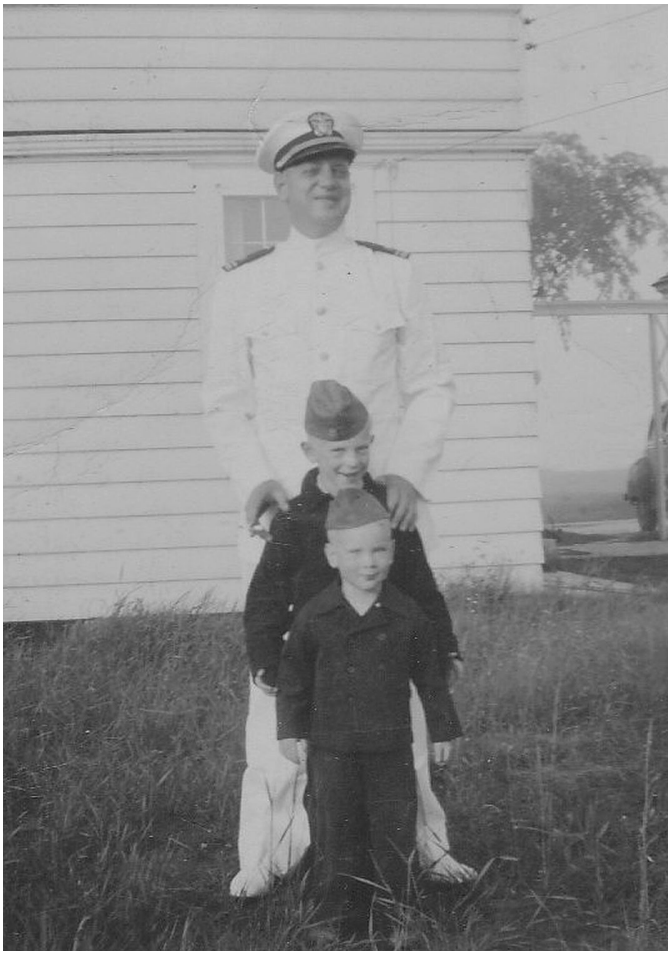
I wish I had known some of this back when I was a teenager. Looking back at what my dad accomplished in February of 1945 I would now say that he was very cool.

Oh, and on February 6, 1945, after beaching at Tarragona and disembarking 230 combat survivors, the *1074* retracted from the beach, came alongside the *LCI(L) 709,* and picked up beer for the crew.

Well done, dad.

EDITORS NOTE: This tribute to Lt.(jg) Robert G. Harvey was written by his son during research of the *LCI 1074*. Writer-author John Harvey obtained the complete deck log for his dad's ship. He is turning the mundane daily reports into a memoir of the ship and crew. I included part of his dad's story in the June 2021 issue of Elsie Item.

Harvey gave me permission to publish this. I saved it for the June issue to honor all the cool dads who served on LCIs during WWII. Happy Father's Day.



Lt.(jg) Robert G. Harvey with two of his children before leaving for war in 1944. It would be a year and a half before he returned home.

Memorial Day to Honor and Remember

"We leave you our deaths. Give them their meaning."
THE YOUNG DEAD SOLDIERS DO NOT SPEAK **By ARCHIBALD MACLEISH**

This is our list. It is not complete. It is a compilation of the names assembled by the research over the years of many members of the Association . 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 The list is divided by the theaters of the WAR, European Theater of Operations (ETO), Pacific Theater of Operations (PTO) and now includes 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 that ship. **Robert E Wright Jr.**

Normandy American Cemetery Marker

Stanley Wilczak RM3c USCG LCI(L) 91

ETO: Atlantic, European, Mediterranean and North African Waters

LCI(L) 1

Sicily 7/01/1943
Shore battery
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 2/27/1943
Drownings
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 Italy 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

Italy 9/6/1943
KIA Wallace W Hanna

LCI(L) 47

Italy West Coast 4/1/1944
KIA Harry Ekey

LCI(L) 76

Italy West Coast 3/18/1944
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 Mine & 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
Sunk by Mine
KIA August B. Buncik USCG
KIA Fletcher Burton, Jr. USCG
KIA Jack DeNunzio USCG

LCI(L) 193

Sicily 07/10/1943
KIA Raymond J. Doherty

LCI(L) 196

North Atlantic 01/04/1944
DNC James W. Baker

LCI(L) 211

Anzio Italy 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 8/01/1944
by 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
Ship 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 10/27/1943
Naval Mine
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 6/6/1944
KIA John A. Hawkins

LCI(L) 523

Normandy 6/6/1944
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
Sicily Aboard LCI(L) 9 7/10/1943
KIA Ernest L. Fletcher
Anzio Italy Aboard LCI(L) 32
Naval 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

Southern France
Aboard LCI(L) 530 8/17/1944
KIA William Hendrix

PTO: Pacific, Southwest Pacific and Japanese Home Waters

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 Philippine Islands
Babatngon, Leyte 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 5/18/1944

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

LCI(L) 69

S Pacific Bougainville Solomon

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

by Kamikaze aircraft 1/05/1945
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
DOW Lawrence Weingartz

LCI(L) 72

SWPA Philippine Islands

Lingayen 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 2/16/1944
KIA Philip L. Michel
KIA John R. Rauch

LCI(L) 339

SWPA Lae New Guinea 9/4/43
Sunk by aerial bombing
KIA Fay B. Begor

LCI(L) 341

SWPA Lae New Guinea 9/4/43
Sunk 9/4/1943 by aerial bombing
KIA Robert W. Rolf

LCI(L) 342

SWPA Lae New Guinea 9/4/43
KIA James Eatmon

LCI(L) 344

SWPA Philippine Islands

Leyte 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 05/20/1945
KIA Calos W. Jones
KIA Melvin E. Buhr Jr

LCI(G) 359

SWPA Philippines 07/18/1945
DNC Allard W. Risen

LCI(G) 365

Pacific Guam 7/21/1944
KIA Charles L. Martin
KIA Casmir Andrew Lesczynski
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 03/13/1944
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 10/20/1944
KIA William Jenkins
KIA Jack G. Johnson

LCI(G) 429

SWPA Australia 12/31/1943
DNC George W Grell

LCI(G) 430

SWPA Philippine Islands

Leyte 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 Zielinksi
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
KIA Moses Trexler

LCI(L) 442
S Pacific Eniwetok 2/22/1944
by friendly fire
KIA Paul D. Mayes
KIA Gorden 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. Floock
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. Beener
KIA Leslie R. Foss
KIA Dewey A. Hayhurst
KIA Joseph A. Hunter
KIA Lynn S. Long
KIA Robert G. Marquis
KIA Robert Barnett
KIA Robert G. Davis
KIA J. B. Gaddess Jr
KIA Hollis W. Hicks
KIA Steven A. Karako
KIA Woodrow B. Maggard
KIA Ralph E. Parks
KIA Gerald E. Spaugh
MIA James H. Schuerman

LCI(G) 469
Pacific Guam 11/30/1944
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 2/17/1945
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 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) 615
SWPA Philippine Islands
Parang 4/15/1945
MIA Dewey R. Gantt

LCI(L) 616
Pacific 08/21/1944
DNC Donald R. Klock

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 date unknown
UNK Harrison M. Carr

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

LCI(L) 974
SWPA Philippines Islands
Lingayen 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 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 Philippine Islands
Mindoro 02/17/1945
KIA Alexander J. Osowieki

LCI(L) 1065
SWPA Philippine Islands
Leyte 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

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

Lest I continue
My complacent way,
Help me to remember
Somehow out there
A man died for me today.
As long as there be war,
I then must
Ask and answer
Am I worth dying for?

A remembrance prayer from Elanor Roosevelt
on the wall at the Pearl Harbor Memorial

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.***

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GREETINGS VISITORS! You'll find this sign at the entrance ramp to the LCI(L) 713. The museum ship is moored at Vigor Shipyard on Swan Island, in Portland, Oregon. It is open to the public on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. or by appointment. Saturdays are workdays and will be your best time to visit. There is an unmanned locked gate at the ramp, so please contact the crew ahead of time. afmm@amphibioiusforces.org