

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 105

JUNE 2019



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

## Your Story



We are always looking for stories and memories of your LCI service. Although we are primarily interested in your experiences aboard an LCI ship, we are also interested in the circumstances leading up to your entry into the Navy and the impact that your WWII experiences have had on your postwar life.

General guidance on sharing your story can be downloaded from the Association website: [usslci.org/share-your-story/](http://usslci.org/share-your-story/). Any letter to the editor can be sent to **Jeff Veesenmeyer (JeffreyMktg@gmail.com)** or the postal address below.

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**“Elsie Item”:** Official publication of the USS LCI National Association, a non-profit veteran’s organization. Membership in the USS LCI National Association is open to any U.S. Navy or U.S. Coast Guard Veteran who served aboard a Landing Craft Infantry, to anyone related to an LCI veteran, to any past or current member of the U.S. Armed Forces, and to anyone interested in the history of LCIs.

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



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.*

## AFMM ONLINE



[www.amphibiousforces.org](http://www.amphibiousforces.org)

For information on AFMM Events and LCI-713 restoration:



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

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

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



# Observations from Officers Country

by Robert E Wright Jr, President

**MEMORIAL DAY 2019** - If you look at the Cover of ELSIE ITEM 105 it features a single white cross. It's one among the 9,386 American graves at the Normandy American Cemetery at Colleville-sur-Mer, France. This issue features Memorial Day and the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the landings at Normandy. It is appropriate that we do take time to reflect on the cost in young men's lives that the United States and their Allies paid on those days long ago that freed the world of National Socialism.

I, with the additional assistance of our European Historian, John France, have spent numerous hours updating the LCI Memorial Section that is presented in this issue. This project is not one that brings any elation. With each new name that you added to our roll you realize that another family experienced tremendous grief when they received that notice their son was not going to be returning to them when the war ended. It is only right that we take a few minutes of our time to read those names of those who gave up their futures, so we could live in the freedom that we enjoy now.

The name on the Normandy cross is Leonard J. Smith, Chief Boswain Mate, United States Navy. Chief Smith died June 16, 1944 on board the USS *LCI(L) 414*. This is all the information we can determine from the records that are currently available. Indirectly, I know Leonard, because I have spoken to his son while trying to uncover lost information about his death on that far away shore. I like to picture Leonard as one of the characters in a John Wayne movie that was made during the early part of the War. You know the part, the tough old Navy Chief, who seemed really old and knew everything there is to know about the Navy from his years of experience. And maybe that part was true, because Chief Smith had served in the United States Navy during World War I.

On June 16th 1944, Chief Smith died aboard one of our Landing Craft Infantry, the 414. We don't know to which naval unit that he was assigned. We don't know why he was there on that day. We can find no

specific event that was the cause of his injuries and death. He was among us on his final day, and we will call him our brother and will rightly honor him as one of our Heroes.

**REUNION 2019** - Earlier this month the Association held its annual reunion and general business meeting. One of the Navy traditions says that you should never volunteer for additional duty. That was the case this year as no one stepped forward to run for office of President or Vice President. I like to believe that was the result of the "exceptional" work being done by myself as President and Rich Lovell as Vice-President. So, the results of the elections of officers should not come as a surprise. We both offered to continue in our current offices, and we were approved by the voting of the members present, representing you.

Thank you for your continued confidence, and we will continue our work and do our best to represent the Association during the year to come.

There are a many people to thank for all the work and effort that went into getting the reunion launched and all the events that happened.

A special Thank You to the Amphibious Forces Memorial Museum and their entire crew, for hosting this year's events. A special thanks for all the long hours and hard work in preparing the *LCI-713* and for accommodating our visit on Saturday afternoon.

Thank you to Rick Holmes and Sue Cospers for being so gratuitous of hosts. Events like this only take place after an enormous amount of work and hours are expended, so that it appears that all the events happen, just like magic.

Thank you to Rich Lovell for presiding at the Memorial Program. It is an emotionally difficult task to acknowledge the passing of our friends of so many years.

Thank you to the Association Executive Board Members for your attendance this year. I know that it took a real effort on your part to attend. Your inputs guide this Association and keep it relevant as it steers course toward the future.

## Whatever Will Float Our Boat

Rick Holmes, AFMM President

The AFMM is having another excellent year; visits and tours to the ship are up and the ship is really looking good. Our troop 2 and 4 spaces are now alive with historical information and displays. In May we hosted a fabulous LCI veterans reunion with 13 WWII veterans attending.

Anyone that has visited *LCI (L) 713* knows the ship is invisible from Swan Island's Lagoon Drive. Behind a locked gate, the ship is tied up at a Port of Portland moorage in the lagoon. But once the adventurous visitor finds us, we always receive high praises.

The AFMM is also all but "invisible" to the world beyond its supporters and veterans of the Gator Navy. Our professional fund raiser helped us earn two grants. One let us hook up to shore power and to buy and install a three-phase transformer. Now, we have full time security as well as the available power for heating and ventilation to protect our collection of historical artifacts and backup pumps to protect the ship. The grant also let us commission a hull survey. The significant finding is that the 250-ton LCI is structurally sound and could be hoisted onto a barge, hauled out of the water via a travel lift or floated into a dry dock. This is really great news, but the AFMM simply does not have the funds for any of these alternatives.

However, one of our volunteers has begun a project to help increase AFMM's visibility and to encourage maritime organizations to help support restoration of LCI-713. J. Wandres is a retired U.S. Navy public affairs specialist. Along with J's project we have begun work on a major social media campaign geared toward raising our public awareness and donations. These new programs will begin rolling out over the next few months. And we plan on continuing to pursue public and private foundation grants via our professional fundraiser.

Our mission is to keep the LCI-713 alive for the next 100 years, to remember and tell our veterans' stories and to hopefully educate the public on a little bit of history, which seems to be sorely needed. We are already forgetting the lessons learned from not so long ago.

We need your continuing support to succeed. Our minimal annual operating requirement is \$10,000, which includes only insurance, utilities and basic operating expenses. On top of that we have restoration expense, but we are selective and frugal so any extra income is saved for our ultimate goal: an operational ship. Your generous support and donations are crucial toward making this happen. Please help us succeed and "***Launch the LCI-713***"!

### Here's how you can help:

- Make a membership donation to the AFMM or upgrade your member level
- Purchase a membership for your family or friends.
- Sign up to volunteer in 2019.
- Include us in your will, living trust, life insurance proceeds or retirement plan.

Thank you,



# Yes, I want to help Launch the LCI-713!

Please complete the following and return with your check. *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.*

Or make a secure online donation via our website: [www.lci713.com](http://www.lci713.com)

**Amphibious Forces Memorial Museum**  
**Rick Holmes, President**  
**PO Box 17220 - Portland, OR 97217**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

My Gift Is:      In Memory of      In Honor of

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



## Gator Gossip

By Jeff Veesenmeyer

### 20 Years Ago – Elsie Item #29

*Our 9th reunion at Louisville is now history, it was indeed a very enjoyable and successful reunion. Our attendance was greater than expected with 760 people attending, there were 428 members and as usual over 30 walk-in's.*

The paragraph above was how LCI President Robert Weisser began the June 1999 issue of *Elsie Item*. There have been many changes since then. A sad change is knowing there will never be another reunion with that many attendees.

A glad change is in knowing the legacy of those past members will never be forgotten. In the June 1999 issue, it was also announced that our LCI website had been launched. It was a dot.com back then. Today our website is at [www.usslci.org](http://www.usslci.org). It is designed and managed by board member Stan Galik and his son. They've done a phenomenal job.

Websites and museums are where the legacy and history of LCI ships and sailors will live on for the next generation. For starters, you'll find a complete issue of every *Elsie Item* ever published. There are 103 issues posted now, from 1991 through 2018. You can search for names, places and ships that were in *Elsie Item* articles over the past 28 years!

But the website has so much more. When you click on the drop down, "Other Research Sources," you'll gain access to

dozens of Research Tools. There are links to photo archives, oral histories and how-to obtain military records. Here are some examples.

### Veterans History Project

The Veterans History Project of the American Folklife Center collects, preserves, and makes accessible the personal accounts of American war veterans so that future generations may hear directly from veterans and better understand the realities of war. Sailors that served on Landing Craft Infantry are highlighted. Here is one oral history example from **James A. Rogers LCI(L) 527**. – June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1944. *Sighted French coast at dawn and began circling in the transport area about 10 miles off Utah Beach awaiting orders.*

These organizations are listed to help you find military documents and information

### Obtaining Records For A LCI

To obtain official documents for each LCI, send a written request to...

National Archives at College Park

8601 Adelphi Road

College Park, MD 20740-6001

Toll Free Customer Service: (866) 272-6272

Hours: Monday – Saturday, 9AM – 5PM

(Closed Sundays and Federal Holidays)

LCI WWII records are also accessible online with a paid annual membership at <http://www.fold3.com>

**FRONT COVER:** June 6, 2019 marked the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day. The front cover photo is of a grave marker for one LCI veteran who was killed at Normandy on 6 June 1944. This issue is dedicated to the D-Day veterans.

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

# LCI veterans recall D-Day

By Jeff Veesenmeyer



*The 75 D-Day commemorative logo.*

**“Okay, let’s go.”** Those three simple words from General Dwight D. Eisenhower set into motion the largest amphibious invasion in history. An armada of 5,300 ships would be delivering 150,000 troops, their equipment and supplies to the coast of Normandy. Among those ships were over 4,000 landing craft of all types. They included LCVPs, LSMs, LSTs, and LCIs.

Famed war correspondent, Ernie Pyle reported, “The best way I can describe this vast armada and frantic urgency of traffic, is to suggest that you visualize New York Harbor on the busiest day of the year and then enlarge that scene until it takes in all the ocean the human eye can reach, clear around the horizon. And over the horizon there are dozens of times that many.”

The memories of D-Day remain vivid for LCI sailors who hit the beaches with allied infantry troops 75 years ago. Their stories have been told through oral histories, books, magazines and our own *Elsie Item*. Some excerpts from those stories are reprinted here to remind us of what LCI crews experienced that morning of 6 June 1944.

**Chuck Phillips - Engineering officer LCI(L) 489:** Our cook, Mike Yakimo, used everything we had in the refrigerator to prepare the finest meal he could for the troops we carried. Mike was a great cook and wanted to do something special for the soldiers. I don’t recall that they were too hungry, understandably. Sometime that night, I, in my Mae West, went down to the troops with some soup Yakimo had prepared for them thinking the soup might be something their seasick stomachs could handle. These guys were seasoned soldiers, they looked at me all bundled up in my Mae West as if something might be wrong with me, but they didn’t say anything derogatory. What I remember is that they had a quiet determination. They were calm; there was no hysteria. They were stripped down lying on the bunks resting-contemplating, no Mae West’s, but holding their rifles knowing what they had to do the next morning and preparing themselves mentally to do it. As I left them, I couldn’t help thinking about the wives, children, and parents back home who might never see their husbands, fathers or sons again. I didn’t even realize the full extent of the danger they—we all—would be facing.

**Gene Januzzi - LCI 530:** As we waited, I sensed my smallness and loneliness among the immense forces that at last had been unleashed. I saw the glow of bombs bursting silently on the enemy shore, watched a giant outburst of anti-aircraft fire that hosed and spewed and flowered in a merry hell of light and color. I heard and saw in the light of the anti-aircraft fire the C-47s flying low-towing gliders towards the beach. They returned without gliders.

At H-hour minus two hours, the commander came up to the conn and told me



to get underway slowly down the swept channel to Point Zebra, which was a ship standing just off Utah Beach. As my ship moved, the aerial bombardment and the anti-aircraft fire ended. I heard and smelled the gunfire of the Navy ships. Dawn diluted the night. As we neared Point Zebra, my eyes were on the beach. German 88s sent up geysers of water and sand at the shoreline. I stopped engines and waited for a signal from the control vessel. It was the last wait. From the vessel came a one-word semaphore message: PROCEED.

I looked at the Commander and he nodded. I got my ship underway and headed toward the beach. "All engines ahead full." I said into the voice tube, "Steady as you go." The wait was over.

**Chuck Phillips - Engineering officer LCI(L) 489:** Because of heavy cloud cover, Air Force bombers who had come in before H-hour had been unsuccessful in destroying the German defenses. Their bombs landed inland and missed the beaches. Huge concrete bunkers and smaller pillboxes held artillery. An enemy gun was strafing the beach from a bunker just above the area our troops were landing. The captain ordered the ramps back up. We began to back off. I don't know if any of the soldiers who disembarked survived at that first attempt to land, except the ones we were able to pull from the ramps. Other LCIs around us were not as lucky. Some of them were destroyed beyond repair and never got off the beach. Seems I recall a Coast Guard *LCI 91* or *92* burning on the beach all day. I still don't know how we survived. We had experienced our first site of Bloody Omaha. Around 7:30 a.m., we were steaming as before, shaken and proceeded to AP76 to report.



*USS LCI(L)-93 aground on Omaha Beach. She still flies her flag, though knocked out of the invasion ripped and wounded on the beach.*

**James M. Loy – Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard Commandant:** Throughout the invasion, four of the LCIs numbers 85, 91, 92, and 93 were lost while distinguishing themselves in the heat of battle. *LCI 85* was one of the first to ram its way through sunken obstacles and successfully clear troop compartment. After unloading troops to smaller landing craft, *LCI-85* struck a mine and was simultaneously struck by 25 artillery shells. Listing badly, *LCI-85* returned to USS *Samuel Chase* and unloaded its wounded before it sank.



*British commandos hit the beach on Juno.*

***Edward Sciecienski – Coxswain LCI 487:***

As the 487 dropped her ramps I ran forward from my station on #2 gun and descended the ramp with the “Man Rope” that would assist the heavily laden soldiers going up to the beach. I was concentrating on stretching the line to the beach and falling on the small anchor to draw the line tight so that soldiers would have something to hold on to as they struggled through the surf. As I pushed through the cold waves, I discarded my Thompson .45 caliber sub machinegun that was impeding my forward motion. Amidst the thunder of artillery and mortar rounds I threw myself onto the anchor on the beach. I was not thinking that June 6 was my eighteenth birthday. My only thoughts were whether I would survive the day.

***James Roland Argo – Pharmacists Mate***

***1/c LCI 489:*** To the best of my recollection, our LCI and about 5 other LCIs among LSTs, and LCMs hit Omaha Beach just at daybreak on Jun. 6, 1944. Immediately all hell broke out. The German bunkers that were supposed to have been shot out in an air raid weren't. For two solid days our LCI was shelled. You should have seen my helmet. I wish I had saved it for my kids to see. During the invasion itself, the sick bay expanded to include the mess hall and the deck. The men on our LCI were lucky. We did not have one single casualty. The mess hall and deck were filled with men from the Big Red One and other landing craft alongside us.

Al Allen, a seaman, brought wounded men to me all day on the 6th and 7th of June. He never stopped even though he took a shot across the knee. He was a good young man. He probably saved more lives than we can

count in those two days, literally hundreds and hundreds. I don't know how he maintained the stamina to keep bringing the injured from the beach onto the LCI. I patched these men up the best I could and got the really injured ones transferred to hospital ships. When Allen couldn't get the injured to me, I went to them on the beach. When I would jump into the water with all my gear and medical kit, I would nearly go under. The waves with the weight of my gear were not a good combination for jumping into the ocean. It was so loud for two days with shelling and bombing. I'd say, “Watch out behind you Allen” and he would duck, or he'd say, “Hit the deck Doc” and I would hit the deck. We watched out for each other. It seems a miracle now that we did not lose one man on our LCI on D-day. Sometimes the air was so full of fire that it seems impossible that any of us survived.

There were 4,414 confirmed allied troops killed in action on D-Day. Many of those are buried in the American Normandy Cemetery. Sixteen LCIs were destroyed.



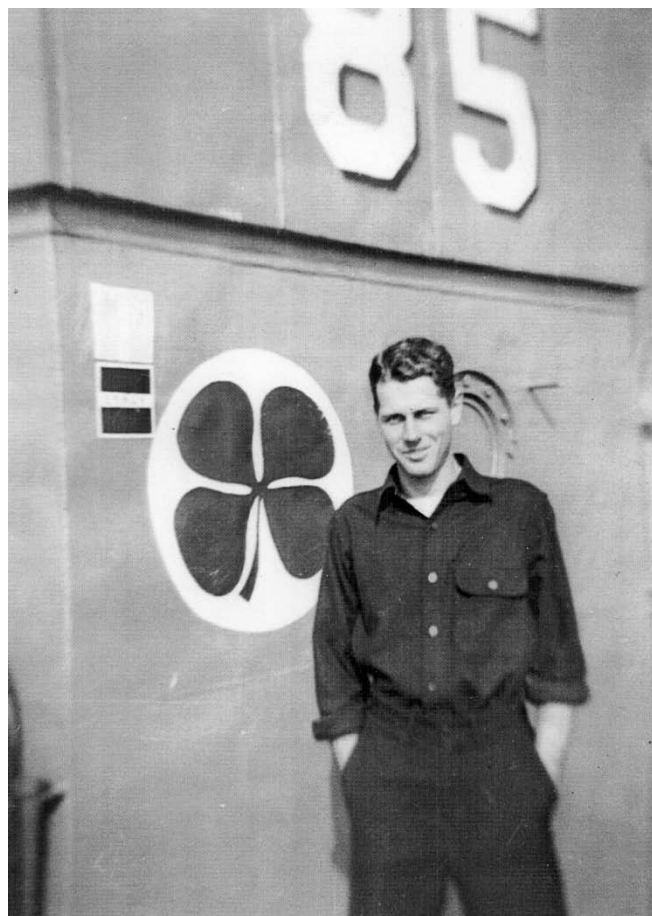
*This is the American Normandy cemetery one-year after D-Day. There are now 9,338 American servicemembers buried here.*

## LCI(L) 85: THE FOUR- LEAF CLOVER

On June 6, 1944, U.S.S. LCI(L) 85 sailed through rough waters towards the Normandy Coast of France. *LCI 85* was part of a vast armada of more than 5,000 ships and landing craft underway to deliver an army to liberate France from Adolph Hitler's occupation forces. From France, the allies would push into the heart of Germany and end the most devastating war in human history. The seasoned officers and crew of *LCI 85* were combat veterans of the invasions of North Africa, Sicily and Salerno, Italy. They were part of the fabled LCI Flotilla 4, consisting of 24 LCIs manned entirely by U.S. Coast Guard crews. Upon their transfer to England, the "Coasties" of Flotilla 4 joined twelve U.S. Navy LCIs to form Flotilla 10 for the Normandy invasion. On board *LCI 85*, was a crew of four officers and 30 enlisted men, including two additional Pharmacist Mates (medics) who were temporarily assigned to *LCI 85*. Allied planners of "Operation Neptune," the code name for the seaborne invasion of Normandy expected high casualties.

On the conning tower of *LCI 85* was painted the crew's good luck charm, a Four- Leaf Clover. It had served them well, keeping them safe through previous invasions. One particular incident of *LCI 85* luck occurred during the night of September 7, 1943 in the bay of Palermo, Sicily. There, a German aircraft dropped a torpedo which passed amid-ship directly underneath *LCI 85*, narrowly missing her due to her shallow draft. The torpedo continued on and struck a Landing Ship Tank (LST), which exploded and burned.

On D-Day, the 189 soldiers onboard *LCI 85* were seasick and miserable. They had been in cramped quarters for several days because the invasion, originally scheduled for June 5, had been postponed due to stormy weather. The soldiers on board consisted of troops from the following units: Company C, 37th Engineer Combat Battalion, 5th Engineer Special Brigade – 26 personnel; Company C, 6th Naval Beach Battalion – 40 personnel; 210th Military Police Company – 13 personnel; 294th Signal Company – 10 personnel; Headquarters and Service Company, 37th Engineer Combat Battalion, 5th Engineer Special Brigade - 4 personnel; Company B, 6th Naval Beach Battalion – 7 personnel; and Company A, 1st Medical Battalion – 89 personnel.



Lt.(j.g.) Coit Hendley Commanding Officer

The Skipper of *LCI 85*, Lieutenant (j.g.) Coit Hendley Jr., was familiar with the troops on board. *LCI 85* had landed them during practice runs at Slapton Sands, Devon, England. They included Combat Engineers consisting of both Navy and Army personnel, whose job it was to clear beach obstacles, mark beach exits and organize the unloading of men and supplies from landing craft. The Executive Officer of *LCI 85*, Lieutenant (j.g.) Arthur Farrar noted that two of the doctors on board were veterans of the Tunisian Campaign. One had been awarded the Silver Star Medal and the other had been awarded the Purple Heart Medal. Their job on D Day was to set up a first aid station one mile inland from the beach.

The Silver Star Medal recipient was Captain Emerald M. Ralston of Company A, 1st Medical Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division. He was born in Oberlin, Kansas on April 25, 1906. He graduated from John's Hopkins School of Medicine. Before the war, he lived and worked in Warren, Pennsylvania. He was 38 years old, much older than most of the men assembled to assault the Normandy beaches.

Hendley, 23 years old, was a Southerner with a distinct southern accent. He was born July 17, 1920 in Columbia, South Carolina. His father was a bank president. Hendley began his studies at the University of South Carolina in 1936 at age 17. He graduated in 1939. Hendley moved to Washington, D.C. where he began work as a copy boy in 1940 with the Washington Evening Star newspaper. He joined the U.S. Coast Guard February 18, 1942 in order to make a contribution to the war effort. Hendley, like many others who joined the Coast Guard, expected to spend his time during the war patrolling the U.S. Coastline. He was wrong.

Hendley was assigned to *LCI 94* of Flotilla 4 in Galveston, Texas as the Executive Officer. He participated in three invasions with Flotilla 4 and sailed with them to England. There, he was promoted and took command of *LCI 85* on January 13, 1944. He replaced Lieutenant Thomas R. Aldrich as skipper. Hendley's reputation preceded him. During the invasion of Sicily, the troops were hesitant to descend the ramps under enemy fire. Hendley observed this from the bridge. He rushed down, pushed by the soldiers and marched down a ramp as if it was a drill. Either embarrassed or inspired, the soldiers followed him.

Hendley enjoyed life in England while awaiting the invasion of Normandy. Comfort in England included a girlfriend, Wren Sylvia Grashoff. She was a member of the Women's Royal Naval Service.



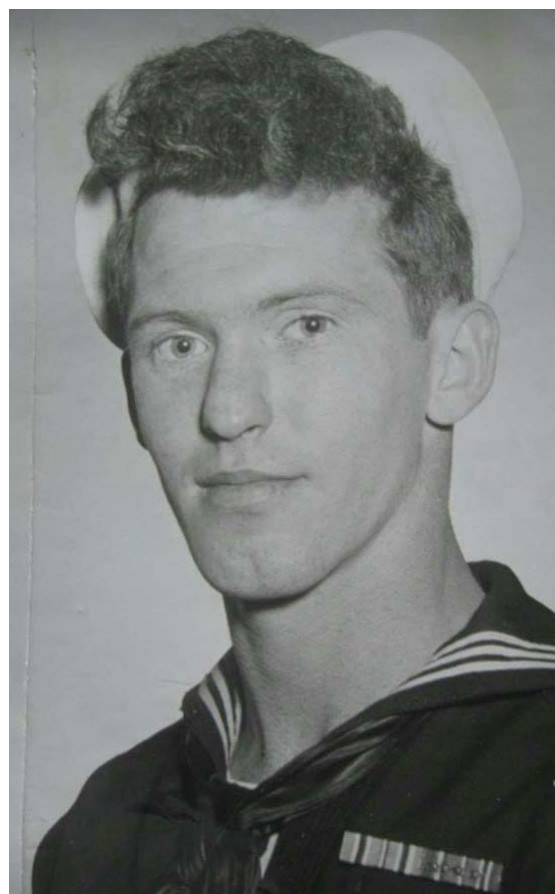
*Lt. (j.g.) Arthur Farrar Executive Officer*



Farrar was 30 years old. He was born July 12, 1913 in Graham, Texas and was raised in Elgin, Oklahoma. After graduating from college, he was a school teacher and by 1940, he was the Superintendent of Schools in Elgin. Farrar left his job July 1, 1942 and seven days later enlisted in the U.S. Coast Guard Reserves in Nashville, Tennessee as an Apprentice Seaman. After completing a competitive exam, Farrar was transferred October 10, 1942 to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut for Reserve Officer's Training. He joined *LCI 85* in Galveston, Texas, February 1942 and four months later, he was sailing off to war.

By the time *LCI 85* sailed to England, Farrar had two souvenir German machine guns stored in his locker from previous invasions. He frequently practiced marksmanship with his Government issued, Navy 45 caliber, 1911 semi-automatic pistol. He nearly shot smooth the bore, shooting at unsuspecting sharks and seagulls. This combat veteran was ready for Normandy.

The only other "Okie" on board *LCI 85* was Coxswain Elmer Carmichael. He was 23 years old, born May 19, 1921 in Tonkawa, Oklahoma. Carmichael moved with his family to Crescent, Oklahoma in 1927, where his father was City Marshall for many years. Carmichael graduated from Crescent High School 1940. He was president of the senior class, president of the student council and graduated as salutatorian. After high school, Carmichael worked at the Crescent Lumber Yard until he joined the U.S. Coast Guard on June 21, 1942. He met Farrar when Farrar joined *LCI 85* in Galveston, Texas. They bonded during a long conversation on deck. From then on, they worked the same watch together on board the "85".



*Seaman 1<sup>st</sup> Class Gene Oxley*

Another crewman on *LCI 85* was Seaman 1st Class Gene Oxley. With freckles and blue eyes, he stood 5' 8" and weighed 130 pounds. He was 20 years old, born October 21, 1923 in the small town of Stilesville, Indiana. He was the youngest of six children. When he was four years old, his father committed suicide in front of the entire family. Gene was very close to his mother who was devastated by her husband's suicide. She was a frequent patient in mental institutions.

Oxley's older sisters – Mildred, Mabel and Dorothy, all helped raise Oxley until they married and moved out of the house. Oxley persevered. He began swimming shortly after he could walk. He went swimming in all the local swimming holes whether swimming was permitted or not. Later, the family moved to Indianapolis where he joined a Y.M.C.A. He was a life guard at a local park. He was a Boy

Scout and earned good grades in school. Oxley's family moved back to Stilesville where he graduated from high school in April 1942. He joined the U.S. Coast Guard in Indianapolis on July 17, 1942.

**In England, at the end of May 1944,** Hendley received a fifteen- pound canvas bag that was sealed and marked "TOP SECRET." With the bag was a dispatch advising him not to open the bag until ordered to do so. He only had to wait a few days to receive the order to break the seal and open it. Inside the bag were orders, the plan of attack, maps, charts, and photographs of their targeted beaches. The troops who boarded *LCI 85* in Weymouth on June 2nd were ordered to remain on board along with the crew of the "85" until it was time to sail. Secrecy was strictly enforced. Nobody could leave *LCI 85* without having specific business to conduct, and without being escorted by an officer. Hendley had more than a week to study the plans.

All Flotilla 10 LCI Commanders met in the hold of the Flotilla Flagship where a detailed map was painted on the wall and deck. The map depicted their target, the beach sectors and landmarks of Omaha Beach as if viewed from ten miles off shore. With briefing and training complete, all that remained was the tense waiting.

General Dwight Eisenhower, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces for "Operation Overlord," the air and sea invasion of Normandy, gave the orders for D Day to commence on June 6th. Thus, began what Eisenhower referred to as the "Great Crusade" to liberate Northern Europe from the Nazis. A special double daylight savings time was established for D Day. Therefore, it

did not get dark until 11:30PM. *LCI 85* and Flotilla 10 set sail from Weymouth at 3PM on June 5th and sailed the majority of the way across the English Channel in daylight with overcast skies.

From midnight on, Farrar observed air activity over France. Cones of flak of various colors lit up the sky. Many expected to be bombed by German aircraft or attacked by torpedo boats during the voyage, but it did not happen. Flotilla 10 split with half of her LCIs headed for Utah Beach and half headed for Omaha Beach. By 3AM, the transport ships and landing craft had arrived at the assembly area, 20 miles from Omaha Beach. By 4AM, *LCI 85* was circling in her assigned position, awaiting orders to head for shore. At 7:30AM, she headed full speed towards the battle.

*LCI 85* was scheduled to land troops on Easy Red sector of Omaha Beach, at 8:30AM during half-tide when many of the beach obstacles were exposed. Omaha Beach was two miles long and Easy Red sector was located in the eastern half. There were few signs of trouble ahead. The beach was shrouded in smoke and Hendley observed some black puffs from explosions along the shoreline. On schedule, a control vessel signaled the "85" to proceed to the beach. With Hendley on the Conn and Ensign Harold C. Mersheimer standing next to him, *LCI 85* plowed through the waves at twelve knots.

Chief Quartermaster Charles O. McWhirter was at the helm in the wheel-house below Hendley. Ensign Paul M. Petit, the Engineering Officer, stood at the winch on the stern. His job was to let the stern anchor out as they neared the beach so they could winch themselves back off the beach after landing the troops.

Farrar was stationed between the two ramps at the bow. He was in charge of landing the troops. He and Carmichael, who manned one of the ramps, stood a few feet from each other. Carmichael had a lot of confidence in Farrar and was impressed with Farrar's coolness under fire during previous invasions. As the "85" pushed through the rough seas, Farrar and those manning the ramps were soaked by waves splashing over the bow.

**As LCI 85 neared the shoreline**, signs of a deadly, chaotic battle came into view. Numerous small landing craft careened about and many had been hit by enemy fire. Hendley directed McWhirter to steer the "85" through a small opening in the beach obstacles. Adorned with her Four- Leaf Clover, LCI 85 made her final push. Hendley could see a line of prone soldiers along the beach firing at German positions. Four American Sherman tanks were directly ahead. Three were ablaze and the fourth fired at the enemy intermittently but appeared to be disabled.

Due to the strong cross current, LCI 85 landed farther east than planned on Easy Red, near Fox Green beach sector. The "85" crushed through obstacles and ground to a halt short of the beach. It was stuck on top of an unknown obstacle. Farrar ordered the ramps lowered. Oxley scurried down the ramp with a light tow line around his waist that was connected to a 30-pound anchor and a heavier rope – the "man rope." His job was to anchor the man rope on the beach so that the soldiers, laden with heavy equipment in the rough surf, could pull themselves to shore. Oxley volunteered for this dangerous task as he had done so before during the invasion of Salerno, Italy. When Oxley jumped off the ramp, he immediately sank over his head in water.

Clearly, troops could not be landed there. The soaking wet Oxley was hauled back aboard and Hendley ordered the "85" to be retracted from the beach so that they could attempt another landing elsewhere.

While retracting, LCI 85 was struck by three artillery rounds from German shore batteries. One round penetrated troop compartment # 3. McWhirter could hear through the voice tube in the wheel house the screams of the soldiers below deck. During retraction, something hit the stern winch and disabled it. Petit would not be able to drop the anchor to assist retraction during the next beaching.

LCI 85 rammed through obstacles a second time and beached approximately 200 yards to the west on Easy Red beach sector. When the "85" grounded about 70 yards from the beach, it struck a teller mine on an obstacle, which exploded under the bow. The explosion fractured the forward compartment and water poured in. When the ramp crew attempted to lower the ramps, only the port ramp hit the water. The starboard ramp became stuck on top of a beach obstacle.

**Once again, Oxley dashed down the ramp** and into the water with the man rope. This time it was only waist deep at the end of the ramp. He swam with the line through withering machinegun fire. Each time, he attempted to duck under water to avoid the bullets, his life belt popped him back up. The strong cross current pushed Oxley east as he swam. When he reached land, he found that he was far off course from the bow of LCI 85. He ran exposed on the beach back to a point directly inland from the bow. He began pulling out the slack of the man rope only to discover that the anchor had been shot away.

Hendley observed soldiers who had been prone on the beach, stop their firing to assist Oxley pull the rope taut while another soldier fired a bazooka at the Germans. Because there was no 30 - pound anchor attached to the man rope, Oxley turned his 130 - pound body into an anchor. He wrapped the man rope around his waist and dug his heels into the beach. Although, the Germans continued to shoot at him, he stood there alone holding the rope taut and awaited the troops to descend the ramp of *LCI 85*. He was amazed that the hail of German bullets did not strike him.

Even though Oxley encountered deeper water closer to shore, Hendley decided to disembark the troops. Soldiers began descending from the ramp. Heavy German machinegun fire swept the water and the hull near the ramp filled with troops struggling to get ashore.

After Oxley saw a group of four men descend the ramp, he observed the ramp twist off from what he believed to be a hit from German artillery. Soldiers toppled off the ramp. Farrar who stood mere feet from the ramp, observed the ramp get twisted off by the strong cross current. It dropped five feet, held only by the cables from the forward winch. In total, Oxley observed 36 soldiers disembark from *LCI 85* via the ramp or by lowering themselves over the side. They struggled through the surf holding on to the rope. Oxley, steadfastly holding the other end of the rope, watched in horror as German machine gunners raked straight down the line of soldiers. Oxley saw only six soldiers make it to the beach.

During this time, the Germans pummeled *LCI 85* with many artillery rounds from various cannons including their dreaded 88

Millimeter. Originally designed as an anti-aircraft flak gun, the Germans used it effectively in a number of roles. It was their best artillery piece, and the “88” overlooking *LCI 85* wreaked havoc on her.

The Germans concentrated their artillery fire on the forward section of the “85” where the massed troops awaited to go down the ramps. Oxley, who believed that Hendley was the best skipper afloat, stated that the Germans “shot away everything around him on the exposed bridge but he stayed right up there without even taking cover once.”

Hendley who had just waved at two of his friends standing below him at the base of the conning tower, watched both of the officers killed instantly by one artillery round that also wounded several others on the crowded deck. Killed in that blast were officers of the 6th Naval Beach Battalion, Beachmaster Jack Hagerty and Beachmaster G.E. Wade. Onboard *LCI 85*, three other members of the 6th Naval Beach Battalion were killed – Assistant Beachmaster, Lieutenant (j.g.) Leonard Lewis, Boatswain’s Mate George Abbott and Pharmacist’s Mate John O’Donnell.

As soon as the artillery rounds began slamming into the “85,” Captain Ralston of the 1st Medical Battalion jumped into action. Two troop holds below deck were set afire. Ralston rushed down into one of them. There, he calmed the men and organized them to fight the fire. Although suffering from a painful burn to his face, and struggling against extreme heat and heavy smoke, he performed life- saving medical treatment on the wounded. He continued his heroics by pulling a critically wounded out of the other burning troop hold. In the meantime, shells burst



through the wheel house and blew the clothes off of McWhirter. Miraculously, he only suffered a narrow scratch down his back.

**Farrar also had a very close call.** While working the ramp, he was grazed in the left thigh, which took off a chunk of his left buttocks, creating a large flesh wound. He looked down and saw a hole the size of his head in the hull of the “85” from the artillery round that nearly killed him. In pain, he removed his gun belt with his trusty .45 caliber semi-automatic pistol and went back to work.

Other than the scratch on McWhirter’s back, there were no small wounds on *LCI 85*. There were chunks of flesh, heads and limbs covering the deck. Ralston and other medical personnel administered plasma to the wounded and patched them up the best they could.

Of the four wounded crewmen of *LCI 85*, the most serious was Radioman 3rd Class Gordon R. Arneberg. An artillery round ripped through the radio room and tore off one of his legs. He was dragged out of the room and onto the deck and where he received medical treatment. His severed leg was one of the obstacles for Hendley and others to negotiate around until someone kicked it overboard. Soldiers remaining on board could not move forward through the bodies and the blood- slick deck. With her ramps out of order, landing troops from *LCI 85* came to an end.

Hendley gave the order to retract as fast as possible. Oxley saw *LCI 85* retracting from the beach and he held on to the man rope as he ran towards her. However, the German steel raining down on him forced him to drop

the rope and run back to seek cover. Oxley was left behind on the beach.

As *LCI 85* retracted, the wounded Farrar climbed down onto the ramp in an attempt to rescue the wounded soldiers clinging to it. He pulled one man onto the ramp and held on to him. Another soldier clung to the ramp without assistance. Farrar tried to pull a third soldier up but the terrified man had a death grip on a lower stanchion of the ramp. Farrar could not break the soldier’s grip. Farrar realized that he could not save the man and let him go. Farrar and the other men on the ramp had a rough ride during the fast retraction away from the German guns. They got dunked several times into the waves as they clung to the dangling ramp.

When *LCI 85* stopped, Farrar crawled back onto the deck and Boatswain’s Mate Rudolf D. Hesselgren helped him drag the two remaining soldiers aboard. They discovered that one of them had succumbed to his wounds. Boats came alongside *LCI 85* to rescue wounded and transfer the remaining able-bodied soldiers to shore. Ralston transferred wounded to one boat that came alongside to the rescue. The crew of that boat implored Ralston to come aboard. He refused. Instead, he ordered the remainder of his unscathed team members to board a Landing Craft Medium (LCM). They were transported to shore under heavy fire. Ralston was wounded while underway. He refused medical treatment and tended to the wounded on shore. Several times, under heavy fire, he rushed from the beach into the surf to rescue wounded soldiers and drag them to relative safety.

After navigating *LCI 85* away from the German guns, Hendley descended from the

conning tower with Pharmacist Mate Simon Mauro to count the casualties and assess the damage. *LCI 85* had been hit by 25 German artillery shells. They counted fifteen dead and 30 wounded on deck. Hendley decided to get the wounded to a medical ship.

Three fires burned below in the forward compartments as *LCI 85* limped seaward towards help. The crew of the “85” put out the fires and feverishly worked pumps to remove the water from the battered holds below. Pumping out the water was an important delaying action to keep *LCI 85* afloat but in the end, it would be a losing battle.



*Elmer Carmichael manning the lines and Pat McGuire grasping the rail*

Ten miles off shore, *LCI 85* came alongside the *USS Samuel Chase*, a transport ship, manned by “Coasties.” U.S. Coast Guard combat photographers on board, documented the event with still photos and a movie of the crippled “85.” Hendley transferred the wounded, including Farrar, to the “*Samuel Chase*.” Carmichael overheard a conversation between Hendley and an officer on the “*Samuel Chase*.” Hendley demanded that the officer take the dead off *LCI 85*. The officer refused and told Hendley to take the dead back to shore. Hendley replied that the “85”

could not make it back to shore. He argued that if the officer did not remove the dead from *LCI 85*, nobody would ever know what happened to them. The officer finally gave in and the dead were transferred. Carmichael was very moved by Hendley’s effort to secure and respect the men killed on board his ship.

Some Navy and Army doctors who were transported to the beach by *LCI 85*, remained onboard to treat the wounded until they could be transferred to the *USS Samuel Chase*. With that task completed by 1:30PM, they boarded a small boat in silence and were transported back to the hell of Omaha Beach where they knew they were needed.

Meanwhile on shore, Seaman 1st Class Oxley dug a shallow foxhole with his bare hands and feet on a very narrow strip of beach clogged with soldiers. They could not advance any farther without being cut down by enemy fire. Oxley was unarmed, barefoot and had lost his helmet. The tide began to come in and Oxley dug several more foxholes as he tried to stay ahead of the surging water. The soldiers around him did the same. Eventually, the water forced them over a three-foot high sandbar where they were completely exposed to German snipers. They dug in the best they could but the Germans found their mark over and over. Oxley conversed with a medic with his head down in a foxhole next to him. At one point, Oxley asked the medic what type of aircraft was flying overhead. When he received no reply, Oxley lifted the medic’s helmet and saw that he was shot dead.

Tanks were unloaded from landing craft. Soldiers hugging their shallow foxholes saw the tanks as better protection from the German gunners. They got up, ran and

huddled behind the tanks. Oxley was fortunate he did not join them. One by one the tanks were destroyed by German artillery and the troops hiding behind them were slaughtered.

Oxley saw two soldiers with “tommy guns” get up and rush up the slope to attack the Germans. Both were shot and tumbled back down the hill. Medics who picked up wounded on the beach and placed them on litters were killed while carrying them to landing craft. The horror was relentless.

**Oxley got tired of waiting to get killed** on the beach. He saw a Landing Craft Tank (LCT) 100 yards behind him near the water’s edge. Oxley jumped out of his hole and ran towards it. That got the attention of a German machine gunner who fired bursts at him. He “ran, stumbled and crawled” until he reached the LCT. Once again, no German bullet pierced his body. However, the gunners did manage to shoot off the seat of his britches. The exhausted Oxley climbed aboard the LCT believing that it was his ticket back to England. However, a 20MM gunner on the LCT could not resist shooting at a nearby German pillbox. Unfortunately, the Germans in the pillbox returned fire and within minutes, the LCT was sinking. Once again, Oxley jumped off a sinking vessel into cold waters.

After again spending what seemed like an eternity on the beach, Oxley espied his next ride to freedom. “Coastie” *LCI 93* was coming in to unload troops 150 yards from him on Easy Red sector. He ran along the beach chased by small arms fire. He boarded *LCI 93*, only to find out that it too was only a temporary reprieve. After landing the troops and collecting some wounded, the “93” sailed

back out to the troop transport USS Samuel Chase to pick up another load of soldiers. To Oxley’s dismay, *LCI 93* sailed back to the beach. On the way back to shore, Oxley told one of the crewmen on *LCI 93*, “I think I am a Jinx!”

As *LCI 93* landed her second load of troops, sixteen crewmen fled from the nearby *LCI 487*, having been disabled by a mine on the beach. They ran to *LCI 93* to seek refuge. That attracted the attention of German gunners who shot the “93” to pieces. With the tide going out, exposing a sandbar behind it, *LCI 93* could not be retracted off the beach. She was trapped. With *LCI 93* getting pounded, Gene Oxley decided to take his chances on the beach again. For the third time in a matter of hours, Oxley jumped off a sinking vessel into cold waters.

Ten miles off shore, *LCI 85* pulled away from the USS Samuel Chase. The Salvage Tug (AT 89) came alongside and attempted to pump water out of the “85.” They could not pump fast enough. *LCI 85* began to sink at the bow. The crew of the “85” scrambled onto the tug. *LCI 85* rolled over with the bottom of her stern sticking out of the water. At 2:30PM, sailors from the tug, deployed an explosive charge on the stern. After sailing 165,000 nautical miles during her life, and earning four battle stars, *LCI 85*, with her “Four- Leaf Clover” sank in 14 fathoms of water. Her luck had run out.

The crew of *LCI 85* huddled together on the deck of the tug. Their Skipper, Hendley sat alone, away from the crew. He broke down crying, believing that he was responsible for the deaths and wounding of the many men on the “85” that day. His guilt was unfounded but his pain was real. Those feelings of guilt would haunt him for years.

On the tug, the crew of *LCI 85* was issued a Red Cross package containing a towel, sweater, pants, socks, shoes, toothbrush and razor. The clothes they were issued were intended for Merchant Mariners and were certainly not U.S. Coast Guard regulation. Fireman 1st Class S. Eugene Swiech of Chicago, Illinois was issued a yellow wool sweater and black trousers with pinstripes. His shipmate, Carmichael was similarly attired.

Back at Omaha Beach, the intrepid Oxley huddled in a foxhole, surrounded by dead soldiers for three hours. He was finally rescued by a boat sent from the destroyer USS *Doyle*. He spent the next day on the “Doyle” and was then transferred to another “Coastie” LCI. Oxley assisted in pumping water out of the holed LCI for the next two days until it could join a convoy back to England.

Oxley’s shipmates from *LCI 85* were transported by the tug to a Landing Ship Tank (LST) in the assembly area that served as a hospital and temporary refuge for crews from vessels that were sunk. Three days later, the crew of *LCI 85* was in Plymouth, England at a survivors’ camp. There, they were reunited with Gene Oxley in a raucous, joyous celebration. Oxley, whom his shipmates had given up for dead, was given the nickname the “Lucky Ox.”

Hendley wandered around Plymouth that night in search of a pub. He could not find one that was open, so he purchased a bottle of scotch from a man who peddled black market liquor. Hendley then took a train to visit his English girlfriend who lived with her mother. It was a shocking reunion for the women. They believed Hendley had been killed in action. His girlfriend, Sylvia worked at a

British Navy communications center where she received a false report that all hands were lost when *LCI 85* sunk. It got worse. Days later, Hendley’s father was in a movie theater in South Carolina where he saw a newsreel of the film taken by a U. S. Coast Guard photographer on the USS *Samuel Chase*. The film showed *LCI 85* transferring wounded to the “Samuel Chase” and then listing and floundering in the water. The narrator of the newsreel announced that the crew had gone down with the ship. For a week, Hendley’s father believed that his son was dead and tried in vain to get information from the Coast Guard. Fortunately, Hendley had worked for the Washington Evening Star before the war. He sent them his eye witness account of D Day. When they received the story, Herb Corn, the managing editor, contacted Hendley’s father by phone and assured him that his son was alive and uninjured.



*Elmer Carmichael at Survivors Camp 1944*



Back at the survivors' camp, Carmichael grew restless. He needed a respite from the painful memories of the carnage on D-Day. He recruited a co-conspirator to leave the camp and visit a couple of fair English maidens who he knew in a nearby village. They slipped out of the survivor camp and soon they were socializing with the girls. Their fun was short lived. Few things go unnoticed in a small village, especially oddly dressed strangers. Carmichael was startled when the house was surrounded by police and armed men of the Home Guard who demanded that Carmichael and his cohort in crime exit the house. They had been reported as German saboteurs and they were being arrested. Carmichael informed the armed men that he and his companion were none other than proud members of the U.S. Coast Guard and survivors from the sunken *LCI 85*. He plead with his captors to return them to the survivors' camp where his officers and shipmates would vouch for them. Reluctantly, his captors did so and Carmichael was reunited with the rest of the crew of *LCI 85*.

Oxley was interviewed at the survivors' camp by a U.S. Coast Guard Combat Correspondent, Everett Garner. The interview was released for publication on June 25 and was titled "Indianapolis Coast Guardsman Has Three Ships Shot Out from Under Him In One Morning: And Loses Only Seat Of Pants." The Coast Guard saw the public relations value of Oxley and on June 26, Oxley received orders to report to the Coast Guard Public Relations Office in London.

On June 24, Hendley submitted his after-action report for *LCI 85* on D Day. He then traveled to Weymouth and located his friend Lieutenant (j.g) Henry K. "Bunny" Rigg, the Skipper of *LCI 88*. One of Rigg's officers was

wounded on D Day, so Hendley replaced him for several weeks. *LCI 88* shuttled more troops to Omaha Beach and performed other duties. Afterwards, Hendley joined the headquarters staff of LCI Flotilla 10 at Greenway House for several months.

Farrar was shipped via hospital ship to the U.S. Navy Hospital, Portsmouth, Virginia, where he was admitted on July 29, 1944. There, he received a whole skin graft on his left gluteal region for his wound sustained on D-Day. He was granted convalescent leave and he returned to Elgin, Oklahoma. On September 9, 1944, he married Ferne Castle in nearby Lawton, Oklahoma. Farrar was awarded the Purple Heart Medal and he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for his heroism at the ramps of *LCI 85* on D Day. On June 29, 1945, he was assigned to Coast Guard Operations Base, Galveston, Texas as Communications Officer and Port Security Officer. On September 1, 1945, he was transferred to Houston, Texas as the Port Security Officer. On October 3, 1945, Farrar was promoted to Lieutenant in the U.S. Coast Guard Reserves.

Farrar requested to remain on active duty, but his request was denied October 24, 1945 due to a reduction of force of the military returning to peace time strength. Farrar was mustered out of active duty status in New Orleans on January 14, 1946. The following day, he began his inactive duty reserve status and returned to his job as Superintendent of Schools in Elgin, Oklahoma.

Farrar earned his Doctorate of Education from the University of Oklahoma in 1957. He retired from his position of Superintendent of Elgin Schools in 1967. He finished his career in education as the Head of the Business

Department at Cameron University in Lawton, Oklahoma.

Farrar was an excellent athlete who was never hindered by his wound received on D Day. He and his wife Ferne raised three sons and a daughter, to whom he spoke very little about the war. Fifteen years after D Day, his fellow “Okie” shipmate from *LCI 85*, Carmichael, looked him up at his office at the school district. After a long conversation, they kept in touch and attended reunions for the crew of the “85.” In 1988 Farrar suffered a stroke that weakened him. He wrote his last letter October 26, 1989 and mailed it to Carmichael. He advised Carmichael that he would not attend the reunion that year but reminded Carmichael that they were to play a round of golf soon. Carmichael received the letter on October 30<sup>th</sup>. He was stunned the following day when he read in the newspaper that Farrar had died October 29. Lieutenant Arthur Farrar was buried in Old Elgin Cemetery, Elgin, Oklahoma.

**Following survivors’ camp in Plymouth,** England, Carmichael was shipped back to the United States where he was stationed in Port Arthur, Texas. There, he was put in charge of a 38’ picket-boat with duties to put commercial pilots aboard ships entering the inter-coastal canal at Sabine Pass. He married his sweet heart, Bette Lee Steen on March 27, 1945 and they set up house in Port Arthur. His older brother Dortis, a Navy Seabee, married Bette’s younger sister, Edna Jean.

Carmichael mustered out of the Coast Guard as a Boatswain’s Mate 2nd Class September 29, 1945. He returned to Crescent, Oklahoma and found employment as a bookkeeper at the Farmers & Merchants Bank. He worked his way up the ladder to Bank President. He was

employed there for 28 years. Carmichael and his wife Bette adopted their two daughters with whom he spoke little of the war.

In 1973, Carmichael took a job with the First National Bank in Okeene, Oklahoma, where he again worked his way up to the position of Bank President. He retired in 1985. He was a civic leader, serving as a board member and president of several organizations. He served on the Crescent City Council and was Mayor for four years. He also found time to be a member of the Crescent Volunteer Fire Department for 20 years and served as their Chief for 2 years.

Always the patriot, Carmichael was a lifelong member of the American Legion and always promoted the U.S. Coast Guard and *LCI 85*. Carmichael conducted a campaign to have Flotilla 10 honored. After years of persistence and with help from Congressman Phil Graham, Carmichael succeeded. Fifty-seven years after D Day, Flotilla 10, Group 29 was awarded the Coast Guard Unit Commendation for their gallantry on June 6, 1944. They received the award from Admiral Riker, U.S. Coast Guard at a Flotilla 10 reunion in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Carmichael was a fixture at other LCI reunions including those of the USS Landing Craft Infantry National Association. He wrote articles about *LCI 85* for Oklahoma newspapers. He wrote the article: “The Life and Death of *LCI (L) 85*,” for the book: “USS LCI, Landing Craft Infantry, Volume I” published by the USS LCI National Association in 1993. He also submitted articles for the “Elsie Item” newsletter.

Carmichael later donated to The National D-Day Museum in New Orleans (Now, The National World War II Museum), the helmet

he wore in the iconic photograph of him kneeling on the deck of *LCI 85* on D Day surrounded by bodies of soldiers killed by German gunners. After the grand opening of that museum June 6, 2000, Carmichael received a letter from a man who wanted to remain anonymous. The man was a soldier who was wounded on *LCI 85* on D Day. He wanted to thank Carmichael and his shipmates for saving his life.

In his later years, Carmichael suffered from esophageal cancer and weakened arteries. His condition deteriorated after his beloved wife Bette died on February 21, 2011. Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class Elmer Carmichael died September 26, 2011 and was buried in Crescent, Oklahoma.

Captain Emerald Ralston of the 1st Medical Battalion, who acted heroically, saving the wounded on *LCI 85*, was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross on August 8, 1944 for his actions on D Day. On February 2, 1945, Ralston was awarded an Oak Leaf Cluster to his Silver Star Medal for gallantry in action on July 28, 1944 in Normandy, France. He survived the war and lived until age 83. He died May 22, 1989 and was buried in the National Cemetery of Arizona in Phoenix, Arizona.

**Oxley became a reluctant hero** and celebrity after D Day. He was promoted to Coxswain and was awarded the Silver Star Medal. While assigned to the Coast Guard Public Affairs in London, the "Lucky Ox" story was featured in newspaper articles and a live interview, short wave CBS Radio broadcast from London to New York. He was interviewed by broadcast journalist Bill Shadel. He was sent to Glasgow, Scotland for

a short time before being shipped back to the United States.

The Coast Guard sent Oxley on tour throughout the Midwest at ammunition and armament factories where he told his story, raised morale and money for the war effort. He was photographed with other celebrities, Congressmen and Senators and was featured in many newspaper articles. Oxley was also featured in a chapter of the book "Sea, Surf & Hell" published in 1945. Jack Warner of Warner Brothers Studios suggested to Oxley that he write a book about himself and Warner Brothers Studios would produce a movie based on the book. The humble Oxley declined. He just wanted to return to a normal life.

Oxley mustered out of the U.S. Coast Guard as a Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class in September, 1945. At first, he worked for his brother-in-law in the landscaping business. On August 17, 1956 he married Dorothy Mae Carr in Indiana. They adopted a son and daughter. Oxley did share his wartime experiences with them. They started a new life in Milford, Ohio, near Cincinnati. There, Oxley started his own landscaping business which flourished. He purchased 99 acres of land which he used as a nursery for that business. He spent the rest of his life in Milford. He was haunted by his experience on D-Day. He became an alcoholic and later became addicted to prescription drugs. He was a chain smoker and developed emphysema. Eventually his lungs and his heart failed. The "Lucky Ox," hero and celebrity died May 16, 1992 and was buried in Milford, Ohio.

The U.S. Coast Guard did not share Hendley's belief that he was responsible for

the deaths and wounded on *LCI 85* on D Day. On the contrary, they recognized his heroics in his attempt to save *LCI 85* and the personnel onboard. Hendley was awarded the Silver Star Medal and the French Croix de Guerre. Later, he was shipped back to the United States and was promoted to Lieutenant. He was assigned to Charleston, South Carolina, Baltimore, Maryland and finally, Washington, D.C. He mustered out of the Coast Guard December 14, 1945.

Hendley went back to work for the Washington Evening Star Newspaper as a reporter. He eventually lost his southern accent. He worked his way up to Assistant City Editor. While working there, he met his future wife, Barbara Louis Davidson, who was also employed at the "Star". Hendley and Barbara married July 18, 1948 and raised two sons and two daughters. He spoke little to them about the war. In 1965, Hendley joined the Gannett Group and was the Executive Editor of the Elizabeth Daily Journal. A young copy boy at the Washington Evening Star, Carl Bernstein followed Hendley to the Elizabeth Daily Journal. Hendley mentored Bernstein and gave him his first job as a reporter. In 1966, Bernstein left the Elizabeth Daily Journal for the Washington Post as a reporter.

Hendley later became a newspaper trouble shooter, working from paper to paper. He was the Executive Editor of the Camden-Courier Post from 1968 through 1972. On October 10, 1972, Hendley's wife Barbara died of a brain aneurysm. Carl Bernstein, then the Washington Post reporter of Watergate fame, took a break from the investigation to attend her funeral.

Later, Hendley became the Executive Editor of The Herald News-Passaic, New Jersey, from 1972 until his retirement in 1980. He came out of retirement in 1982 to help start up a new newspaper, The Washington Times as the first Managing Editor for that paper.

Hendley had contact only once with a shipmate from *LCI 85* since he shipped back to the United States from England. However, in 1984, Fireman 1st Class Eugene Swiech of *LCI 85*, contacted Hendley after seeing him on television. He requested a reunion with Hendley on June 6, 1984. Hendley's contact with Swiech brought back many buried memories. Before meeting Swiech on June 6, Hendley wrote an article for the Washington Times that was published on June 6. It was reprinted by the U.S. Coast Guard. It was a detailed story of his war history including the sinking of *LCI 85* on D Day.

Hendley continued working at the Washington Times until his death, at which time he served as an Associate Editor. Lieutenant (j.g.) Coit Hendley Jr. died at home in Washington, D.C. on May 16, 1985 of heart failure. He was buried next to his wife Barbara in Annapolis, Maryland. Many journalists attended the funeral service. Hendley's sons and Carl Bernstein were pallbearers.

Sadly, there are no *LCI 85* crewmen alive today. May they and their "Four- Leaf Clover" find fair winds and following seas.

John France, Historian

USS Landing Craft Infantry National Association

May, 1, 2019



USS LCI(L) 85 during her final hour

## Research Notes & Sources

Coit Hendley Jr., Arthur Farrar, Elmer Carmichael and Gene Oxley wrote their personal wartime stories or dictated their stories to others. Of the four, Elmer Carmichael is the only one who I interviewed. This article is their story. They lived it. I merely weaved together their stories and other information obtained during my research into a chronological order of events.

Coit Hendley Jr. wrote three stories used for this article. His personal account of D Day was published in "The Coast Guard at War: Volume XI, Landings in France," published by U.S. Coast Guard Public Information Division, 1946.

Michael Oxley, the son of Gene Oxley, sent me his father's personal scrapbook. Inside was a copy of an undated war time document issued by a Public Relations Officer, U.S. Coast Guard, Washington, D.C. Labeled as "Immediate release/for release," was a personal

story of D Day, written by "Coit Hendley, Lieutenant (j.g.) USCGR, formerly on the staff of the Washington Evening Star."

The third story written by Hendley, used for this article was a story about his wartime experiences: "D Day: A Special Report" published by the Washington Times newspaper June 6, 1984. It was re-printed by the U.S. Coast Guard.

Hendley's son, Coit Hendley III provided me with biological information and Hendley's work history in journalism, including his mentorship of Carl Bernstein. He provided information regards to cause and date of death of Hendley's wife Barbara.

Hendley's son, Peter Hendley provided me with wartime photographs of his father, place of burial of Hendley and his wife Barbara, as well as specifics of Hendley's funeral. He also provided me with a copy of his father's orders to take command of *LCI 85* in January, 1944.



The source of Peter's information was a book he was completing at the time of my research: "*LCI 85: The Military Career of Lt(jg) Coit Hendley Jr. During the Invasions of North Africa, Italy and Omaha Beach on D-Day: His Papers and Photos*", published by Yewell Street Press, ISBN:978-0-9964993-6-1.

Hendley's daughter, Dale Hendley provided me with dates when Hendley joined the Coast Guard and was released from the Coast Guard as a Lieutenant.

Arthur Farrar wrote one story used for this article. His story of his wartime experiences: "LCIs Are Veterans Now" was published December, 1944 (Vol VI, No. 9) issue of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy Alumni Association Bulletin, pp. 181-191.

Farrar's son, Arthur R. "Ray" Farrar, provided me with wartime photos, biographical information, and military records of his father. He also provided a letter from his father to Elmer Carmichael days before he died and Carmichael's letter to Farrar's widow days after Farrar died.

Farrar's son, Edwin Farrar, provided me with stories of Farrar's marksmanship training with his .45 caliber 1911 pistol, discarding that pistol after being wounded, his German machinegun souvenirs, and the lack of any hinderance from his wound in post war life.

I found, the date of birth, date of death and date of marriage of Farrar and his wife on the web site [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com).

Also, on that site was a photograph from a newspaper article of Farrar and notation that he was Superintendent of Elgin Schools.

I found Farrar, next of kin and war time address on the list of WWII Navy, Marine and Coast Guard casualties on the web site [www.fold3.com](http://www.fold3.com).

Elmer Carmichael narrated one story used for this article. "The Life And Death Of LCI (L) 85" was printed in the book "USS LCI, Landing Craft Infantry", Volume I, produced by the USS Landing Craft Infantry National Association and published through Turner Publishing Company, Paducah, Kentucky, 1993.

I found Carmichael's obituary on [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com). Carmichael's daughter, Deborah Rice advised me that she and her husband submitted the obituary after editing a biography her father wrote October 22, 2004. She provided me that biography as well as an article referencing Carmichael's success in securing a Coast Guard Unit Commendation for Flotilla 10, Group 29. Deborah provided me with a photograph of her father taken at the survivors' camp in Plymouth, England, in June 1944. She also provided me with the date of birth and death of her mother.

I interviewed Carmichael at a reunion for the USS Landing Craft Infantry National Association. He provided me with his story of his arrest after slipping away from the survivor's camp after D Day. He described the clothing he was issued on the Tug which was different than the clothes he was photographed wearing later at the survivors' camp.

Gene Oxley first told his D Day story at a survivor's camp in England to Everett Garner, a Coast Guard combat correspondent. The story: "Indianapolis Coast Guardsman Has Three Ships Shot Out From Him In One Morning: And Only Loses The Seat Of His Pants," was released June 25, 1944. I found this document in the archives of the USS LCI National Association. A research team from our Association recovered this document during one of its trips to the National Archives. I also received a wartime copy of this document in the personal scrapbook of Gene Oxley, sent to me by his son Michael Oxley. This undated

document was from U.S. Coast Guard Public Relations Division, labeled for “Immediate Release.” Also, in the scrapbook were other wartime copies for immediate release by the Coast Guard Public Relations Division in Washington, D.C.: “Gene Oxley Biography,” and “Indianapolis Coast Guardsman Braves Nazi Fire: Loses Pants, Three Ships,” in which Oxley praised Hendley for his action at Sicily when he marched down a ramp so that soldiers would follow him, and Hendley not ducking behind cover while under fire on the bridge of *LCI 85* on D Day.

Other copies of wartime documents in Gene Oxley’s scrapbook were: a transcript of live interview of Oxley by William Shandel, Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), short wave broadcast from London to the United States; the original orders dated June 26, 1944 for Oxley to report for duty in London with the U.S. Coast Guard Public Relations Office.

There were many wartime photos in Oxley’s scrapbook of him on speaking tours for the Coast Guard in the United States. There were several copies of newspaper articles in Oxley’s scrapbook reference his actions on D Day including an undated article in the “Indianapolis Star,” a St. Louis newspaper September 20, 1944; a “Daily Herald,” July 3, 1944; and an undated “Evening Standard.” There were three other unknown and undated newspapers with Oxley’s D Day experiences.

Oxley’s daughter, Vikki Lamons, provided me with information regards to Oxley’s childhood, his father’s suicide, his mother’s mental instability, the CBS live broadcast/interview, his anguish over what he experienced on D Day, his life before and after the war and his cause of death. Her brother Michael confirmed the information she provided. Vikki was able to confirm information in newspaper articles about her father, such as the story of Jack Warner

offering to make a movie about Oxley, and she was able to debunk a couple of exaggerations made by others in newspaper articles to inflate her father’s pre-war accomplishments.

Andrew E. Woods, Research Historian for the Colonel Robert R. McCormick Research Center, First Division Museum at Cantigny Park, Wheaton, Illinois, contributed greatly to this article. He informed me that a soldier onboard *LCI 85*, Captain Emerald Ralston, was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions on D Day. Andrew sent me copies of Ralston’s citations and other military records which enabled me to tell his story. Andrew sent copies of “Top Secret Neptune” landing diagrams that included a list of units and numbers of personnel carried to shore by *LCI 85*. One of the units listed was the 6<sup>th</sup> Naval Beach Battalion. They have an excellent web site, [www.6thbeachbattalion.org](http://www.6thbeachbattalion.org). On their site I found letters dated October 21, 2002 and November 9, 2002, reference members of that unit who were killed on *LCI 85* on D Day. One letter, written by Ken Davey identified those killed, including the two officers and friends of Hendley who Hendley waved to moments before they were killed.

I found a copy of Hendley’s After Action Report for *LCI 85* on D Day on [www.lci.org](http://www.lci.org), the website for the USS LCI National Association. It is listed under archives for the “Elsie Item” newsletter, Issue # 58.

A few days after the Landings at Normandy France the United States Navy along with Marine and Army Divisions launched Operation Forager on the other side of the world. Their goal was to take the Marianas Islands from the Japanese. It was on a much smaller scale than Operation Neptune “only” deploying 535 ships, 125,000 sailors and Marines plus the Army’s 27<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. After the painful lessons learned during the landings at Tarawa, the Marine Corp adopted the fire support provided by the LCI rocket and gunships as an integral part of their amphibious landings in the Pacific. This is one of their stories:

# Voices from the Pacific

By Dominick Maurone *LCI(G) 440*

In May 1944, we gathered in the Marshall Islands in preparation for the invasion of the Marianas Islands. We were in a convoy that consisted of Tractor Group-Four. Our flag ship was the USS *Black*, DD 666. We had sixteen LSTs, carrying the First Provisional Marine Brigade, which was a unit of the famous Carlson's Raiders. Our Group Eight consisted of nine *LCIs*, 365, 366, 439, 440, 442, 474, 475, 437, and 450.

On 10 May, we were under way. We participated on the initial assault on Saipan Island on 15 June, and stayed in the area until 5 July. After participating in the landings we went along with TG-4 as an aircraft screen. We were attacked by five Jap torpedo planes, some of which launched their torpedoes at the USS *Black*. One of the planes was shot down and crashed about five hundred yards off our starboard beam. For the next few weeks we patrolled between Saipan and Guam.

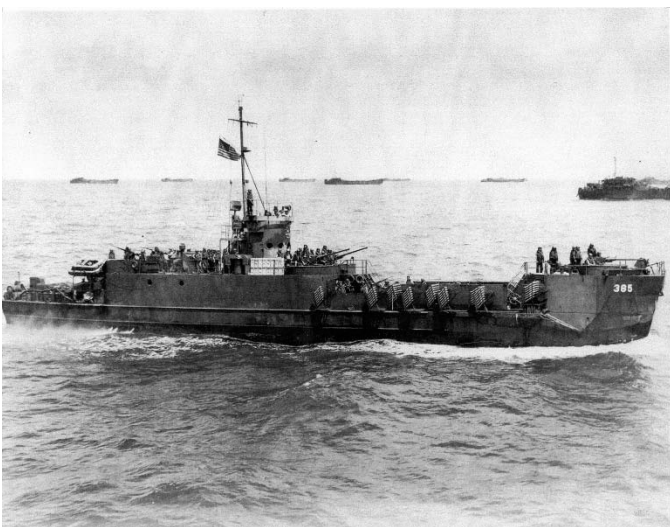
We left Saipan on 5 July 1944, and headed for Eniwetok, where we picked up supplies--ammo, water, mail--and reloaded our rocket crates. We then joined a convoy and were on our way for the invasion of Guam. On 21 July 1944, we got into position with the rest of Group Eight to attack Agat Beach. We headed towards the island at five knots. At 0820 we fired our test rockets to see how

close to the beach they would hit. Then we moved in closer and fired salvo after salvo until our rocket launchers were empty, which put us within a hundred yards of the beach. We then turned broadside to the beach and commenced firing with our 40-mm and 20-mm guns, and our .50-caliber water-cooled machine guns. That continued until our troops established a beachhead, at which time we pulled away from the island. We were then ordered, along with other *LCIs* in Group Eight, to patrol the boat lanes between Bangi Point and Neye Island. Division 15 Commander, aboard *LCI 365*, then ordered us to line up parallel to each other, 120 feet apart. While we were in this formation the 365 got caught in a crossfire between the Jap guns south of Bangi Point and from the north at Palagi Rock and Neye Island. The 365 received nine hits on both port and starboard sides, killing seven and wounding fifteen. The 365 was out of action and the 439 became our flagship, and for the next couple of days we continued to patrol the boat lanes.

Two days after the 365 was hit, a small unit of Marines in their amphibious vehicles entered the water off of Agat Beach and headed north through the boat lanes in front of the *LCIs*. They turned into a small beach in the area between Neye Island and Palagi

Rock, the same area where the Japs hit the 365. A burst of machine gun and mortar fire destroyed their vehicles and all the Marines were killed. We were then given orders by the commander to go in and draw their fire. This was so our planes could see where the firing was coming from and destroy the site. This was definitely a suicide mission. The division commander, now aboard the 439, ordered the single file method for strafing the area between Neye Island and Palagi Rock. There were seven LCIs on this mission, and we were perfect targets for the Japs. As we proceeded in at slow speed, we saw the 439 get hit with mortar fire. She suffered two killed and thirteen injured. As the 366 reached its point of fire, it was also hit, with five killed and thirteen wounded, including the Commanding Officer. We, on the 440, were next in line. Our commander, Lt. Keyes, saw where the Jap mortar shells were falling and turned to star-board and out of their range. Our planes were then able to see where the mortar fire was coming from and destroyed the site.

Reprinted from ELSIE ITEM 71



*LCI 365 before being caught in a crossfire from Jap guns during the invasion of Guam. The ship took 9 hits and suffered 22 casualties.*

## Excerpt from “USS LCI(L) 419...Its Story”

*Memoir of Robert Roderick, QM U.S.N.R.*

There were few people who guessed how nearly England had lost the war. If Germany had continued her blitz from the air for a month or two more, she would have brought England to her knees. But the bulldog tenacity – yes, it was magnificent and brilliant, no matter what the attitude of the American people is toward the English – the stubborn will to resist and protect this beautiful and valiant island from slavery turned the tide of the European war, and perhaps saved the fate of the world.

When we arrived in England it was reported, but not confirmed, that half the British fleet had been evacuated to Halifax.

It was a queer sight – the barrage balloons, the rivers and streams clogged and clogged with every type of landing craft. The shores were bristling with guns and anti-invasion apparatus. The towns and cities were teeming with soldiers, sailors, and airmen. Forests were cut down and camps were set up overnight. England had been transformed into a terrific little powder keg, the hope of Europe, and of the world. From this small island the invasion of Europe was to be launched. We all knew that was coming, but the eternal question on our lips was “when?” There were guesses and bets, whispers and the usual scuttlebutt.

The regular work of the ship went on, but we were all straining our eyes and ears for outward signs of the big invasion date. D-Day had originally been scheduled for June 4th, 1944. The date had been beautifully concealed. I can remember the

LCI's pulling out one by one on what we thought was the real invasion. We waved good luck to each other, made our "V" for victory signs, and wondered morosely if we would ever see each other again. That trip ended up in Plymouth Harbor – it had just been a "dry run." The weather was exceedingly unfavorable for air protection and support.

## **MONDAY 5 JUNE 1944**

Monday afternoon at about 1500 our task force of LCI's departed from Plymouth for France. It was cloudy and hazy – little better than the time originally set for D-Day. In our company were about forty LCI's. Others joined our group as we sailed northeast toward Portland. We met no subs, planes, or warships. The route we took had been tested many times. In fact, the British and American Navies had spent a good year in the Channel, trying different approaches to the French Coast, feeling out the enemy's radar protection. Many of these "experimental" voyages included large convoys of LST's and resulted in tragedy. These approaches to France were discarded. Others proved more successful: often ships would come within a few miles of the French Coast without being detected. If the Germans were aware of these voyages, then the real invasion seemed merely another routine voyage to them.

On into the late hours of the night we crept, the balloon barrages attached to each craft looking ghostly, and as unreal as this greatest event in all history – the invasion of Fortress Europe. Our escorting destroyer swept back and forth before us, like a mother hen leading her brood under the protection of her radar tracer, bringing us nearer to France. An occasional blinking

light would break the calm of the night, indicating a change of course. Once, two of our transports carrying paratroopers flew overhead. We thought of these paratroopers, dropped across the Cherbourg Peninsula, sandwiched in between the enemy, with both face and back to the Germans. Some of us slept on deck. If we expected action we were disappointed.

## **TUESDAY 6 JUNE 1944**

When we arrived in the Baie de la Seine, about ten miles northeast of Isigny, the beach was already taken, and a thriving little center, piled high with equipment had been established. Once we heard an 88 explode. The story made the rounds that fortunately the Navy had slightly miscalculated, hitting the wrong beach. The original point of the invasion was supposedly well-protected by obstacles including mines, spikes, rails, etc. Another story was that the German positions were undermanned due to the fact that half the normal complement was miles behind the coast drilling at anti-invasion maneuvers, at the exact time of the invasion. The greatest stroke of luck was that the Northwester, which came a few weeks later, did not occur during the first week of the invasion.

## **THURSDAY 8 JUNE 1944**

As the night progresses, only distant blazes can be seen on the horizon in the direction of Cherbourg and Caen. Often tracers soar to the sky.

About an hour before noon our ship was shaken by a loud bump. I looked over the side to see what small boat had rammed us. There was no small boat in sight. I looked dead ahead into the area in which we had



been anchored the preceding day and saw a tremendous geyser of water shoot into the air.

It doesn't take long to learn what water explosives feel like. They make every beam in the ship shudder. When the geyser of water disappeared, I saw a small coaster with a gaping hole in its bow. In three minutes, the ship was completely sunk. We turned our eyes away from it. We do not like to think about it. We might have hit that mine. The Baie is full of them. We may strike one next.

### **FRIDAY 9 JUNE 1944**

Enemy planes were overhead again tonight. We were warned that E-boats were in the vicinity.

About 0200 we could see a destroyer's searchlight on the horizon. It struck an object in outline which we assumed to be an E-boat. Shortly afterwards, the destroyer switched off the light and fired. We were unable to judge results.

We were ordered to open fire on E-boats if they came any nearer. This seemed quite a ridiculous order; however, since the transport area was full of convoy ships and landing craft. To open fire would be to send our own ships to the bottom.

We made smoke with our smoke machine, which performed magnificently. The smoke poured down into crews' quarters and a few light sleepers awoke cursing, "Who the hell is smoking those El Ropo Cigars?" The smoke, which was to be a protective measure against planes, blew away from our ship, affording us no cover whatever. It blew toward a cruiser, and completely

blanketed it. The smoke was so thick that we couldn't see our hands extended arm's-length ahead of us.

While the smoke protected us from planes, it provided an excellent blanket for any E-boats which might sneak into the area. We soon received the order to "negat smoke."



*The USS LCI(L) 419 on UTAH Beach days after the landing area had been secured.*

For the most part, Utah Beach was sandy. Trees had been stripped to the ground by initial Naval batteries. It was green, smoking, flaming, quivering earth, almost volcanic; not in the geological sense, but from the fire, the stars, rockets, tracers that poured forth. From the hot human lava of soldiers' blood pouring over the terrain it was quivering and changing form, and every mile won by the new nature was paved in blood. The news reporters 3,000 miles away sang on about "negligible losses."

Courtesy of the George C. Marshall Foundation, Lexington, Virginia.

Submitted by Lisa Bittle Tancredi

# Witness to invasions, surrenders and occupation

By Jeff Veesenmeyer

**W**hen Chicagoan, Bill Simmons joined the Navy in July of 1944, he had no idea what he would see. At age 17 he wanted to serve and do his part of for the war effort.

After basic training at Farragut Naval Training Center in Idaho, Simmons was sent to Pearl Harbor. There he went aboard his new home the *LCI(L) 756*. The crew was sprinkled with veterans fresh from operations at New Guinea, Casablanca, and Iceland. The skipper, Ensign Melvin Wunsch of Stevens Point Wisconsin had participated in the three invasions in Europe and Africa. These veterans had sailed the recently launched *756* from Portland, Oregon shipyards to San Diego and then Hawaii. This is where invasion training would begin for Simmons.

During this time the Pacific War was raging at Saipan, Tinian, Guam and the Philippines. As part of Flotilla 16 the crew of *LCI 756* trained in tactical and operational maneuvers at Maui and Kahoolawe. In December of 1944 the *756* was transferred to Flotilla 21 and assigned a radical change of purpose. Three 4.2-inch chemical mortars were mounted on her decks. She was now *LCI(M) 756*. The ship's complement increased from four officers and 25 enlisted to five officers 45 enlisted. Still a small and very close crew compared to most warships. Simmons became good friends with Sam Caruso. They stayed in



*Bill Simmons on liberty in Shanghai.*

touch after the war.

Crewmembers were quickly trained in mortar craft operations. Then they joined an amphibious convoy headed for a top-secret forward area. Their destination is described in the ship's history as "Bloody Little Iwo" a sulphurous, volcanic, pint sized island, half way between Saipan and Tokyo."

On 19 February 1945 Simmons witnessed combat for the first time. At H-Hour 0900 *LCI 756* was on the right flank of the Fourth Marine Division. His ship poured chemical mortar shells into the east boat basin and stone quarry on Iwo Jima. The Japanese had defended this position with many gun emplacements and pill boxes. Amphibious boats could provide close in support while the Marine landing craft hit the beach. The mortar barrage kept Jap defender's heads down long enough for the Marines to get a foothold. Once the Marines were on shore, the mission for *756* changed.

For the next 8 days and nights they circled ships of the U.S. fleet off Iwo Jima. They

made smoke by burning hundreds of gallons of fog oil. This helped protect the larger ships from air attack. They were also sent in close to shore at night. They would harass enemy positions on the northwest end of Iwo with mortar shells. The Japs fired back from concealed artillery emplacements. But their accuracy against this small moving target was not good. The 756 sustained no hits and no casualties. The crew was tired from lack of sleep and mortar crews were muscle weary. They had expended over 2700 rounds of mortar ammunition on the eight square mile island. The ship had earned her first battle star.



*A 4.2-inch mortar shell is fired from LCI 756 during their bombardment of Iwo Jima.*

On 26 February LCI 756 joined a convoy headed to the Philippines. The crew would get much needed rest. The ship was to be resupplied while her crew began preparation for the next battle. Eighteen days were spent in Leyte Gulf for fueling, watering, provisioning, training, mail calls, and even some recreation ashore. It rained daily, but nobody complained. The scuttlebut was that the next invasion would be the biggest to-date of the Pacific War.

On Easter Sunday 1945 Bill Simmons and his shipmates were greeted with a bright, clear morning and a sea that was glossy smooth. The idyllic scene was broken by the deafening roar of guns from U.S. battleships, cruisers and destroyers opening up on the beaches of Okinawa.

The 756 lined up with mortar and rocket LCIs. The gator gunboats pounded the landing beach at close range in front of the infantry landing craft. Resistance was light. The Japanese had learned to avoid the initial pounding from warships and gunboats. Most troops were able to simply walk ashore.

Kamikazes were the main threat on day one of the invasion. These planes were mostly harassing in nature. Yet they instilled terror in every sailor of Task Force 58. With over 1400 ships in the invasion armada, Japanese pilots had no problem finding a target. Some managed to get through the walls of anti-aircraft steel and crash into a ship. LCI 756 was sent back out to the transport area where she took up her specialty – making smoke.

As the invasion days became weeks and then months the 756 took on many other duties. Her crew participated in a feint secondary invasion to disrupt Jap strategy on 17 April. She rained mortar shells on the seaport city of Naha in support of a Marine offensive. The ships 40mm and 20mm crews took credit for several assists in downing kamikazes. Between air attacks they delivered mail to capital warships.

As the 82-day battle for Okinawa reached a climax, some Japanese troops and Okinawan civilians surrendered. With no place left for retreat, they swam out to ships

patrolling near the southern shore of Okinawa. LCI 756 crewmembers pulled a number starving and beaten Japanese from the water along the Okinawa shoreline.



*Loading prisoners on a whaleboat at Naha City, Okinawa.*

Finally, Simmons and the crew of LCI 756 got the joyous news to head back to Pearl Harbor for rest, rehab and repair. They would need to prepare for the next big invasion...Japan. About three-fourths of the crew hadn't set foot on land for 6 months. While in Hawaii, shore liberty got even better. The war ended.

With peace, the demobilization period began. Mortars and ammunition were removed from the ship to make room for bunks and troop passengers. The LCI(M) would become the LCI(L) 756. She was sent back to Okinawa. There she was kept busy with trips to neighboring islands carrying

Okinawan repatriates and Japanese officers. In 1946 she served occupation duty in Shanghai and Tokyo. The 756 earned three battle stars. She was decommissioned in July 1946 at San Diego.



*LCIs 757, 756 moored alongside LSMs 430 and 456.*



*Bill Simmons on the right with shipmates from LCI 756.*

After the war, Simmons got married, had two daughters. He worked for ComEd for a while. Then he got back into uniform as a Chicago police officer. He served the city with honor for 33 years. Simmons was active in the VFW and was a Commander for the American Legion Post 973. He passed away in 2018 and is survived by his daughters, seven grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

# My Grandfather's Sacrifice

By Danika Gagnon

When I was younger, my grandfather never talked about the war. He, like many other grandfathers, had fought in World War II. His name is William J. Gunter and he served in the Royal Canadian Navy. He took part in landing missions in France aboard Landing Craft Infantry 249 on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1944, at Juno Beach.

As I got older, he would tell us a story here or there about his time in the military if prompted, but he never boasted or bragged about his exploits, and he certainly never complained about how difficult it was, or about the hardships he and fellow soldiers endured.

My grandfather grew up in the Sandy Hill neighborhood in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

He was 14 years old when the war started in 1939; he joined the Sea Cadets that year. He still remembers watching Reserve Army Units on parade on Cartier Square (the present site of Ottawa's City Hall). He recalls seeing individuals stepping forward to volunteer for active duty, not realizing that they wouldn't see their homes for five years, and that many would not return at all.

The following year, 1940, he joined a Reserve Army Unit and trained with them that summer. That fall, he was asked to provide a birth certificate. That is when they parted company, on account of him being underage. With his discharge certificate in his pocket, he went down the street and joined another Reserve Army Unit and trained with them the following summer at the age of 16.

The next year, 1942, at age 17, he was able to legally enlist in the Canadian Navy. After two months in Montreal, Quebec, he went to Halifax, Nova Scotia, for two more months of training.

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## A call went out for 10 volunteers for “especially hazardous duty”

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However, after one month in Halifax, a call went out for 10 volunteers for “especially hazardous duty” with the Royal Navy Special Forces. This turned out to be the Royal Navy “Combined Operations Command” headed by Lord Louis Mountbatten.

This group was intended to harass the enemy on the European continent by means of raids along the occupied coast. He recalls spending time on the assault courses, crawling over wires, swinging on ropes, and other such things—not exactly the sort of sophisticated training present-day Special Forces members receive.

The group's eventual job was to man a 41-foot-long landing craft, powered by two 65HP Ford v8 engines that could carry up to 36 infantry men.

He later went to Gunnery School and was assigned to *LCI(L) 249* as an anti-aircraft gunner, manning twin mounted 20mm Oerlikon cannons on the bow. This craft was 165ft long, was powered by eight 250HP engines, and could carry up to 200 troops for short periods.





**William J. Gunter Royal Canadian  
Navy, Able Seaman  
HMCS LCI(L) 249 had twin 20mm  
Orelkons on the bow**

When the big day finally arrived (D-Day), they embarked their troops, engineers, and demolition experts, and were told to land on Bernier-Sur-Mer (Juno Beach). They had practiced approaching slowly and dropping a kedge anchor, enabling them to use a powered winch to disembark. But due to the terrain, they had to beach at full speed and were not expected to get off. He recounts that they sustained a lot of damage from mines and other obstacles. I can't imagine the fear these young men, barely teenagers, must have felt in that exact moment.

He remembers approaching Juno Beach, and noting that it was littered with the wreckage of the Canadian assault craft which had gone in just ahead of them. His description of this scene is simple, yet heart-

wrenching: "We wondered at that time what had happened to all our friends?" How demoralizing it must have been to carry on knowing your friends, fellow soldiers, had perished so suddenly.

They did manage to get off, but things didn't get easier—almost immediately, they lost all power and steering. Their tiller flat, magazine, after troop space, and engine room were all underwater. They waded through the water and staggered off the beach. Eventually, another landing craft infantry was able to tow them back to Portsmouth, where they ended up in dry dock number 1 next to Nelson's Victory.

After the war, he returned to general service, took further general gunnery training, and was assigned as Senior Gunnery Rating on HMCS *Grandmere*, a minesweeper on escort duty.

He was fortunate enough to survive WWII uninjured and settled back in Canada to raise a family and enjoy a successful career in the public service. Many of his friends weren't so lucky. His friends, our veterans, sacrificed their lives to protect our country and allies.



*HM LCI(L) 278, 249, 299, 132 loading troops.*



**William Gunter speaking at the 2015 University of Ottawa Remembrance Day Celebrations** (photo: University of Ottawa)

Every year, on November 11 my grandfather visits the war memorial in Ottawa to pay tribute to his friends, fallen soldiers, and fellow veterans.

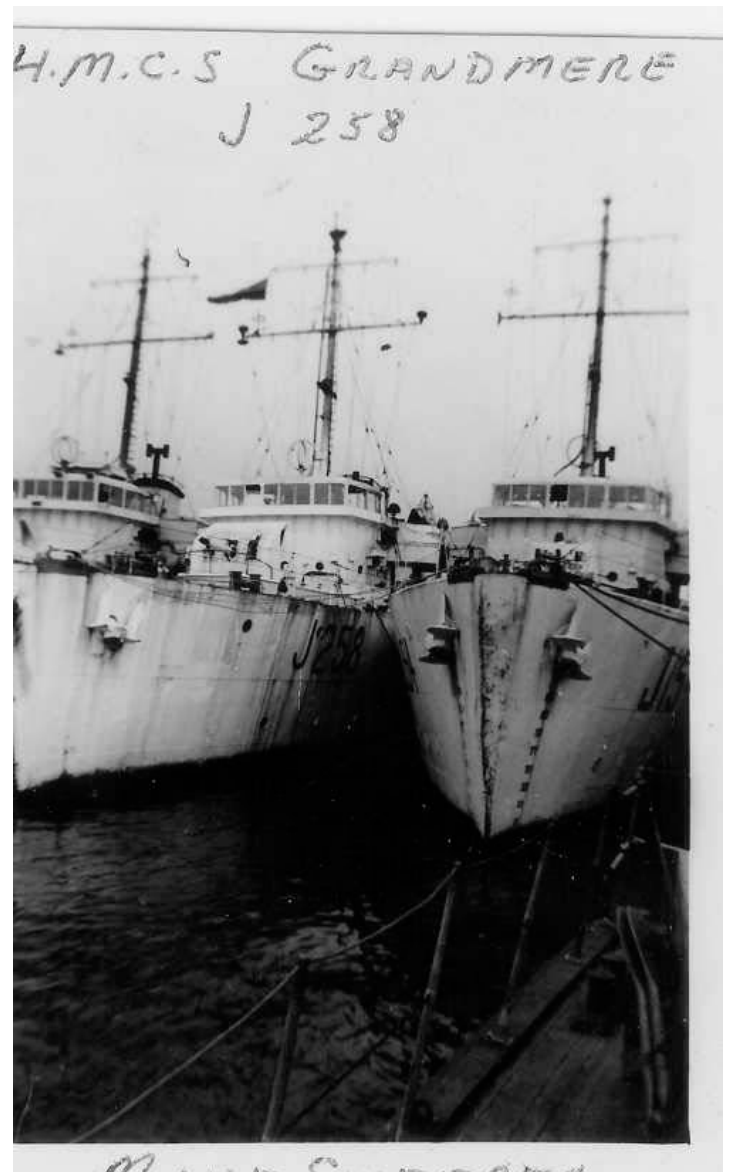
He's also made several trips back to the Normandy beaches and has attended many ceremonies there. Of his time there, he's said, "When I visit the cemeteries and see the ages on the tombstones, it saddens me to think of the years of life these men have missed."

It can be difficult for non-veterans to understand the bravery and strength it took to fight, or to truly understand the horrors

these veterans must have witnessed. Yet, my grandfather does not complain; he is proud to have served his country, and he appreciates his freedom every single day.

On the anniversary of this historic day, and every other day of the year, I thank my grandfather and all veterans for their bravery and for their sacrifices.

Thank you, Grandpa.



*Minesweepers of Bangor Class with HMS Grandmere J258 (number visible in the middle) berthed alongside two sister ships.*

## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

### Holy Bible NASB

Psalm 1: 1-6    2 Peter 1:21    2 Tim 3:16  
Heb 11:6

I love to read the Psalms because they are so applicable to life, and, as all of the Bible, they are a message from God to all of us. The Psalm printed in its entirety below is a comparison and a contrast between the person who follows the true God and the one who does not do so. Remember the writer is not just penning his opinion, but as the scriptures say in Peter 1:21, "Holy man of God wrote as inspired by God, Holy Spirit". 2 Tim 3:16 "All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;" So as you read the words of this Psalm below, imagine God speaking, and listen closely to his voice.

### PSALM 1:1-6

<sup>1</sup>Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers,

<sup>2</sup>but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night.

<sup>3</sup>That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers.

<sup>4</sup>Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away.

<sup>5</sup>Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

<sup>6</sup>For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.

Without forcing my idea of what the Psalmist is saying, I believe we can conclude that the life lived in obedience to God is a successful one. The life lived for self without God is empty and an utter failure. I see the Psalm as an encouragement to give God first place in my life, with eternity in view.

If one is to follow God, the Bible in Heb 11:6 reads "without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him".

*Ebenezer* (I Samuel 7:12)

RM-1/C Abe Laurenzo LCI 47, 409



**Did you know?** Abe Laurenzo will be one of two WWII veterans honored at the 75th Anniversary of D Day Celebration of Heroes held at the Oregon Historical Society in Portland Oregon on June 6. This is presented in partnership with The Mighty Endeavor.

# In Memoriam

LCI 361  
George Highfill

LCI 368  
Walter C. Deinhardt

LCI 397  
Forest T. Gilmore

LCI 469  
William Gulick

LCI 605  
Charles Dillon

LCI 632  
Harold LeRoy LaDuke

LCI 636  
Willard W. Schenck

LCI 647  
Parke Sandler

LCI 726  
John B. Stilley

LCI 736  
Robert C. Wood

LCI 768  
Weldon LaVergne Jones

LCI 791  
Edward Lynch

LCI 802  
Earl Stein Jr.

LCI 867  
Charles Vickers

LCI 960  
Fred C. Andrews

LCI 1032  
Dr. Harold Hurst



# The ex-Salvage Chief Comes Home to the Columbia

By J. Wandres

The US. Navy's ex *LSM-380* has come home to the Columbia River at Astoria, Oregon, with the hope of being restored to its original haze gray. The 928-ton Landing Ship, Medium has taken the long route and a long time to return to its home port.

Launched in January 1945, *LSM-380* served in the Pacific for only six months before World War II ended. Then, she repatriated thousands of surrendered Japanese troops to their homeland. Then *LSM-380* was sent to the reserve fleet at Suisun Bay, California.

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## In February of 1948 Portland-based salvage expert Fred Devine bought the 928-ton LSM.

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With her bow doors welded shut and part of her stern lopped off, the ex-LSM was re-launched as M/V *Salvage Chief*. Her twin 1,440 horsepower Fairbanks-Morse engines turning at 720 rpm, and six salvage winches, allowed her to pull anything free. In 1949, she freed SS *Pine Bluff Victory*, aground in the Columbia River. In 1952, she rescued the 10,000-ton former Liberty ship SS *Yorkmar*. In 1989, she helped transit the supertanker *Exxon Valdez* from Prince William Sound, Alaska to San Diego.

Fred Devine died in 1971, and M/V *Salvage Chief*, was buried at sea. The ship, too, was retired but then bought by the Salvage Chief Foundation in 2016. The

foundation is incorporated – not as a nonprofit – but as a Public Benefit Corporation, sponsored by the City of Astoria. A public benefit corporation pays taxes but may also earn a profit. This is different from a nonprofit such as the 501c3 Amphibious Forces Memorial Museum.

A bill has been suggested by Oregon State Senator Brian Boquist, a Republican from Dallas. SB 678 would request \$1.9 million in public funds to restore the *Salvage Chief* back to the original *LSM-380*. Sponsors of the proposed bill claim an “emergency,” to pass the bill before the current legislature adjourns on July 1, 2019! The Legislature does permit such an “emergency” consideration, but only for the “immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety.” More often, an “emergency” clause is inserted to stifle opposition to a proposal. Passage of SB 678 before the end of the current session could free up the \$1.9 million in taxpayer dollars for the Salvage Chief Foundation.



*The USS LSM 380 served in the Pacific during the last six months of WWII. Navsource photo.*



# We Remember Charles “Buster” Lawrence. Why?



*USS Charles Lawrence (DE-53)*

Born in 1916, he graduated in 1935 from Benson Polytechnic High School, in Portland, Oregon. His major was aviation mechanics. He joined the Army and served two years as an aviation mechanic at Hickam field, Hawaii. He was discharged in October 1939. But military life appealed to him, and he joined the navy in February 1940. After completing Aviation Machinist Mate training, he was assigned to a PBY squadron at NAS Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. He was 25, older than most of the crew, and, of course, was called “Pops.”

On 7 December 1941 Japanese bombers attacked and destroyed NAS Kaneohe. Lawrence manned an anti-aircraft battery and was wounded but directed his crew until he died. Charles Lawrence was honored with a Navy Commendation Medal, later upgraded to the Navy Cross. His legacy lived on when the Navy named the USS *Charles Lawrence* (DE-53) in his honor. *Lawrence* served with the Atlantic fleet until September 1944 when she entered the Brooklyn Navy yard and converted into a high-speed transport (APD-37). Again, transferred to the Pacific fleet, the ship called at Pearl Harbor in February 1945.

Lawrence’s service in 1941 was honored at NAS Kaneohe Bay. The USS *Lawrence* was decommissioned in June 1956 . . . then scrapped in September 1964.

## Vampire Volunteers

By J. Wandres

*(Intrepid Explorer of the South Pacific)*

My wife and I were fortunate to be part of a small-group tour of New Zealand and Australia. Whilst in Sydney I visited the Australian National Maritime Museum, and the destroyer HMAS *Vampire*, a member of the Historic Naval Ships Association, as is *LCI-713*. It was a gray, drizzly day. Museum curator Jeff Hodgkins introduced me to three volunteers of the “Steel Team” who constantly check for rust. Other volunteer teams inspect the engine room, or armaments.

The 60-year old *Daring-class* HMAS *Vampire* served the Australian navy for more than a quarter century. Twin steam turbines produced 54,000 horsepower to drive the ship at better than 30 knots. Armament included six 4.5-inch cannons in three twin turrets, six 40mm BoFors and five 21-inch torpedoes. A refit added a Sea Cat missiles.

To American navy types, *Vampire* would seem like an upscale cruise yacht: The wardroom is turned out with hardwood trim, silver service and a wine bar. The C.O. suite has a private office. The Chiefs’ lounge has its own galley.

HMAS *Vampire* visited the U.S. during the 1976 bicentennial, making port visits at Long Beach and Seattle. After serving as a training vessel *Vampire* was decommissioned, then transferred to the Australian Naval Museum, along with patrol boat HMAS *Advance*, submarine HMAS *Onslow* and Her Majesty’s Barque, HMB *Endeavor*.

## The 2019 LCI National Reunion!

On May 3-5 2019, the AFMM proudly hosted the LCI WWII Veterans Reunion. 13 veterans attended along with family and friends for a total of over 85. Everyone had a great time. Activities included: a reception, business meeting, memorial service, LCI-713 tours, DUKW rides, Famous Dave's BBQ, Portland Spirit Champagne Cruise on the Willamette River and banquet dinner featuring the Parkrose High School Debonaires.



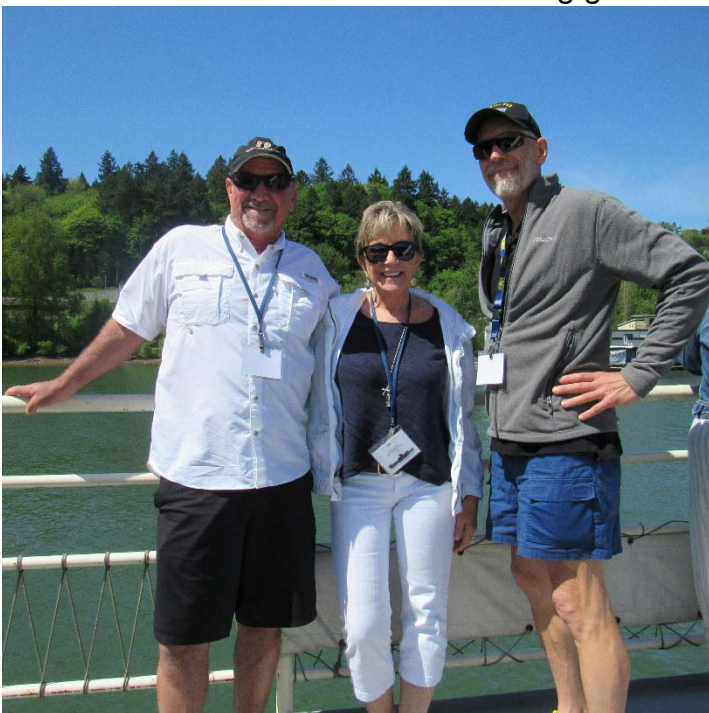
*4 Generations honor Ralph Rayner LCI-944*



*LCI-713 was decked out and looking great!*



*Parkrose High School Debonaires choral group with the LCI Veterans, Great music!*



*Tom, Jo Armstrong and Rick Holmes on the Portland Spirit*



*Royal Wetzel on the "50"*





*Rich Lovell, Del Hollinger and Chris Shelvik with the Portland Spirit Captain*



*Thanks to Steve Greenberg for the rides on his fabulous DUKW!*



*Leroy Olson and grandson by the 20mm*



*Vern Malmquist of LCI-948 and 3 generations of family to honor him*



*AFMM Chairman Emeritus Gordon Smith and Sharon singing Anchors Aweigh*



*The LCI Veterans on the well deck of the 713.  
Front row: Malmquist 948, Rayner 944  
Shelvik 337, Pomeroy 981, Olsen 966,  
back row: Hollinger 470, Wetzel 70*





*Robert Wright interviews Del Hollinger*



*The Wrights, Robert and Richard with Karen and Diane having fun at Famous Daves*



*John Stanley of LCI-958 with Carol*



*713 Mascots Clair and Rio with Bob Miller*



*The Memorial Service, Rich Lovell at the podium and bagpiper Goeff Frasier*



*Harold (LCI 412) and Bob McCreary with Sue Cosper*

# AFMM Meets the Fleet at Bremerton

By Jerry Gilmartin, Chief Machinists Mate, USN, Ret; AFMM Board member

I represented Amphibious Forces Memorial Museum at the 2018 conference of HNSA, the Historic Naval Ships Association, at the Kitsap Conference Center in Bremerton. Here's a summary of how we -- and you -- can help the mission:

**Social Media:** Who today does not use Facebook, Instagram, and email? *Deck Log – Elsie Item* is available online. Share it with friends and buddies who served our nation. Post it online or on bulletin boards in a clubhouse or veterans' meeting place.

**Collections and Archives:** Where do we get items for the AFMM museum on board the LCI? Well, Rich and Marilyn Lovell are serious estate “sailors” on weekends and acquire items for the museum – or to trade for other items. Visitors to the *LCI-713* in Portland donate items. Those who cannot get to Portland will tell us what they have and ask if we are interested. If so, AFMM will arrange to acquire the items and acknowledge its value to your estate. Here are some ideas.

Often, when veterans visit the LCI they open-up with stories about their naval service. At the HNSA conference a speaker from the Naval History and Heritage Command emphasized the importance of recording the veterans' stories about their service. After all: who will remember the *who*, if not you?

**Haze gray and underway:** Topic A at AFMM board meetings is how to raise about \$800,000 to put the ship into dry dock to get the hull repaired and engines re-installed?

AFMM has the steel plate and diesel engines. What AFMM does *not* have is \$800,000. The HNSA speaker suggested that veterans discuss with family, and their estate or legal advisers, how to make a significant (and may we add) *tax deductible* gift to Amphibious Forces Memorial Museum. If you or a family member are still employed, ask if your employer rewards community service with cash incentives. Last year my employer contributed \$10 for every hour of my community service and awarded AFMM \$4,000.



***This Taffrail Log kit is one example of the many items on our wish list. This was used to determine the ship's speed. Visit our website to see the many other items we need. <https://www.amphibiousforces.org/>***

***“Can't spare \$800,000?  
Not \$8,000?  
Or \$800?”***

***“Even your \$80 donation will be tax deductible.”***



## Not All LCI Casualties Occurred during the Landings

When you are doing research, something on a page may jump out and seize your attention. This was the case when I was reviewing the WWII Missing in Action files of U.S. Navy Personnel. On this list was a sailor from *LCI 232*, missing near Iceland during July 1944.

The name was unique, Norvie Blaine Tinney RM1. As far as I could determine there was only one individual of that name that served in the U.S. Armed forces in WWII. This made searches for additional information much easier, which produced this newspaper column (right)

Norvie B. Tinney was assigned to the *LCI(L) 232* at the Amphibious Training Base at Bizete, Tunisia. He was aboard during the invasions of Sicily and later in Italy, before the *LCI(L) 232* was transferred to England as part of Flotilla 2 which was to participate in landings on Normandy's Utah Beach. The details of the *LCI(L) 232* of Flotilla 2 is covered in detail by the excellent article by LCI Association's European Historian John France in his May 2011 Elise Item 75 story titled "*They Gave Their All: The Loss of LCIs 232 and 219*".

Norvie Tinney was not included on the list of men killed during the sinking of *LCI(L) 232*, on June 6, 1944, from the mine explosion. He was only listed as wounded because he had been transferred to an evacuation hospital.

His wounds were serious. On July 26, 1944 he was put aboard an aircraft for the evacuation flight back to the U.S. via Scotland, Iceland and Newfoundland. The last radio contact with the plane was 3 hours after their departure from Iceland. All aboard the plane are still considered Missing in Action.

The casualty rate of enlisted men on the *LCI(L) 232* was 96%, Killed, Wounded or Missing in Action.

### HOSPITAL PLANE, 26 ABOARD, LOST

#### Army Craft Is Missing on Flight From Scot- land

Washington, July 30 (AP)—Loss of an Army transport plane with 26 persons aboard including 18 patients, while en route from Scotland to Mitchel Field, New York, was announced Saturday by the War Department.

The plane, a C-54 transport, presumably went down Wednesday morning between Iceland and Newfoundland, the department said. It was last heard from about 1 a. m., Wednesday, and "would have exhausted its gasoline that morning," the announcement declared. An intensive search is still under way.

#### 18 Patients Aboard

Aboard the plane were 15 Army and 3 Navy stretcher cases. The eight other persons aboard included a civilian crew of five and an Army flight nurse.

More than 150 planes of the Air Transport Command and the Royal Canadian Air Force have joined in the search, together with surface craft of the Navy, Coast Guard and other services.

"This is the first casualty of its kind," the department's announcement said, "since the beginning of the Army's world-wide evacuation program soon after the United States entered the war. Since that time, 250,000 sick and wounded have been evacuated by air."

#### Flown Under Contract

The four-engine plane was flown by a Transcontinental and Western air crew under contract to the War Department.

Among those aboard the plane were the following patients:

Seaman (second class) Carl Edward Atwell, Navy, Wellsburg, W. Va.

Private Willie D. Greenawalt, Kline, W. Va.

Radioman Norvie Blaine Tinney, Route 2, Elkins, W. Va.

Second Lieutenant Gerald Trenton, Cumberland, Md.

Also aboard was Technician Frank W. Sorrells, Fairfield, Va.

The crew included the following, from Alexandria, Va.:

Capt. Robert W. Funkhouser, pilot; First Officer Howard R. Latimer, the copilot; Rayburn Darst, flight engineer; Harold E. Holman and Harry B. Cumberland, radio operator.



# On This & Every Memorial Day the Heroes We Will Remember

*They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them.—Byron*

This is a list, but not the complete list. It is simply the compilation of names assembled by many members of the Association from official reports filed during the war years 1942 to 1945. It is separated by the theater of the conflict between the European Theater of Operations (ETO) and the Pacific Theater of Operations (PTO). If known, it includes the Action and Date of the event, that resulted in the casualties. The list includes the LCI sunk if there were casualties as the result of the loss of the ship. **There are 28 New Names in BOLD.** To make additions or corrections contact President, Robert Wright.



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

### LCI(L) 1

Sunk 8/7/1943

#### **Birzerte, Tunisia by Bombing**

#### **Sicily 7/01/1943**

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

### LCI(L) 5

#### **Bermuda 2/27/1943 Drownings**

John J. Gray  
Clifford H. Radford  
Frank Kopriva

### LCI(L) 9

#### **Sicily**

KIA Ernest L. Fletcher

### LCI(L) 10

KIA Charles Bates

### LCI(L) 16

KIA Stoy Kay Alexander

### LCI(L) 18

KIA John W. Paige  
KIA Robert J. Maher

### LCI(L) 19

KIA George W. Solmn Jr

### LCI(L) 20

#### **Sunk 1/22/1944 by Bombing**

#### **Anzio, Italy**

KIA Donald F. Hamilton  
KIA Harold R. Kalshnek

### LCI(L) 32

Sunk 1/26/1944 by Mine

#### **Anzio, Italy**

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) 33

KIA Walber Kaczyski  
KIA Merle Levell

### LCI(L) 47

#### **Italy West Coast**

KIA Harry Ekey

### LCI(L) 76

#### **Italy West Coast**

KIA Miles Beck

### LCI(L) 88

#### **Normandy**

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

### LCI(L) 88 (continued)

KIA Rocco Simone USCG  
KIA William B. Cole Lt USCG

### LCI(L) 91

Sunk 6/6/1944 by Shore Battery

#### **Normandy**

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**

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

### LCI(L) 193

#### **Sicily**

KIA Raymond J. Doherty

### LCI(L) 209

#### **Normandy**

KIA George McAllister

### LCI(L) 211

#### **Normandy**

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

#### **Bermuda 2/27/1943 Drownings**

Otis H. Merrill  
Alton J. Wright

**LCI(L) 211 (continued)**

Oliver E. Burton

**LCI(L) 212**

**Normandy**

KIA Peter Edmond James  
KIA Edward James Martin

**Bermuda 2/27/1943**

Jesse A. Ryman  
Wilbur A Light  
Willie Stafford

**LCI(L) 213**

**Bermuda 2/27/1943 Drownings**

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

**LCI(L) 214**

**Bermuda 2/27/1943 Drownings**

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

**LCI(L) 215**

**Bermuda 2/27/1943 Drownings**

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

**LCI(L) 216**

**Palermo Sicily**

KIA Maurice G. Boutell

**Bermuda 2/27/1943 Drownings**

James A. Hayes  
Robert L. Jones

**LCI(L) 218**

**Bermuda 2/27/1943 Drownings**

David H. Muth  
Earl L. Roberts

**LCI(L) 219**

**Sunk 6/11/1944 by Bombing**

**Normandy**

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

**MIA John M. Longman**

**Bermuda 2/27/1943 Drownings**

Russell L.  
Bloom  
Lawrence R. Wallar

**LCI(L) 232**

**Sunk 6/6/1944 by Mine**

**Normandy**

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**

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

KIA Clyde H. Roberson

**LCI(L) 319**

**Gulf of Salerno 9/9/1943**

KIA John C. Scheuerman USCG

**LCI(L) 408**

**Normandy**

KIA Raymond Aubin

**LCI(L) 416**

**Normandy**

KIA Arthur Virgil Shields  
KIA John Hawkins

**LCI(L) 523**

**Normandy**

Dave J Moyer

**LCI(L) 951**

**Southern France**

KIA Floyd Mage

**FLOTILLA 1 STAFF**

**Aboard LCI(L) 5**

**Normandy 6/6/1944**

George F. Edwards

**FLOTILLA 2 STAFF**

**Bermuda 2/27/1943 Drownings**

John J. Grey  
Clifford H. Radford

**Aboard LCI(L) 32**

**Sunk Anzio 1/26/1944**

**KIA Thomas J. Brown**

**KIA George Cabana**

**KIA Jack Elkins**

**KIA John W. Finck**

**KIA Delbert Mallams**

**KIA Hamp L. Richardson**

**KIA Earl W. Ruebens**

**KIA George L. Marsh**

**KIA Ralph DiMeola**

**FLOTILLA 11 STAFF**

**Southern France 8/17/1944**

**KIA William Hendrix**

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

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**LCI(L) 22**

**SWPA Philippine Islands**

KIA James A. Barber

**LCI(G) 23**

**SWPA Babatngon, Leyte**

**Philippine Islands**

**10/23/1944 by Bombing**

KIA Theodore Morano  
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

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

KIA Robert T. Riordan  
KIA Stanley C. Winkler  
KIA William E. Dutro

**LCI(L) 24**

**SWPA Rendova, Solomons**

KIA Mahlon F. Paulson

**KIA Ernest Wilson**

**LCI(L) 34**

**SWPA New Guinea**

KIA Sherman C. Wagers  
KIA Edmund J. Baldwin

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

**SWPA Rendova, Solomons**

**7/4/1943 by Bombing**

**LCI(G) 65 (continued)**

KIA Hurley E. Christian

**Leyte Gulf 10/24/1944**

KIA Lester Eugene. Aiston

**Lingayen Gulf, Philippines,**

MIA James O. Vincent

**LCI(L) 69**

**SWPA Bougainville, Solomons**

MIA Thomas W Stanborough

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

**SWPA Bougainville, Solomons**

KIA D. H. Shook  
KIA Joseph Byars  
KIA Eugene Henry Whalen

LCI(G) 70 (continued)

**Lingayen Gulf, Philippines,  
by Japanese Kamikaze**

KIA Robert Muir Craycraft  
KIA Walter G. Kiser  
KIA Densil Ray Phillips  
KIA Charles Adolph Poole  
KIA George Pressley  
KIA James Oliver Vincent

LCI(L) 71

**SWPA 10/24/1944**

KIA Lawrence Weingartz

LCI(L) 72

**SWPA Lingayen Gulf**

**Philippine Islands 1/9/1944**

KIA John R. Mansell

LCI(L) 73

**SWPA New Guinea**

KIA Kenneth Talley

LCI(L) 74

**SWPA**

KIA Bernard Yank

LCI(L) 82

**Sunk 4/4/1945**

**Japanese Home Waters**

**Okinawa 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

LCI(L) 90

**Japanese Home Waters**

**Okinawa 6/4/1945**

**by Japanese Kamikaze**

KIA – John P. Ross Jr USCG

LCI(R) 338

**SWPA Corregidor**

**Philippine Islands 02/16/1944**

KIA Philip L. Michel  
KIA John R. Rauch

LCI(L) 339

**Sunk 9/4/1943 by Bombing**

**SWPA at Lae New Guinea**

KIA Fay B. Begor

LCI(L) 341

**Sunk 9/4/1943 by Bombing**

**SWPA at Lae New Guinea**

KIA Robert W. Rolf

LCI(L) 342

**SWPA at Lae New Guinea**

KIA James Eatmon

LCI(L) 344

**SWPA Leyte Gulf**

**Philippine Islands 10/27/1944**

KIA Robert Pumphrey  
KIA Jack Lanbert  
KIA James Palmer  
KIA Edward Woodzien

LCI(G) 347

**SWPA Saipan 6/15/1944**

KIA Garland Eddington

LCI(L) 352

**Japanese Home Waters**

**Okinawa**

KIA Calos W. Jones  
KIA Melvin E. Buhr Jr

LCI(G) 365

**SWPA Guam 7/21/1944**

KIA Charles L. Martin  
KIA Casimir Andrew Leszczynski  
KIA Edward W. Nemeth  
KIA Clifford W. Mossman  
KIA Thomas Wilkinson  
KIA John J. Gibbs  
KIA John F. Harrison

LCI(G) 366

**SWPA 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) 396

**Sunk 1/18/1945 by mine**

**SWPA Palau Islands**

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 Leyte Gulf**

**Philippine Islands 10/20/1944**

KIA William Jenkins  
KIA Jack G. Johnson

LCI(G) 438

**SWPA Saipan 6/26/44**

KIA Robert R. Meili

LCI(G) 439

**Hawaii 3/25/1944**

DNC Dewey L. Mayes

**SWPA Guam 7/24/44**

KIA Jessie J. Marzie  
KIA Donald Rhodes  
KIA Lawrence M. White

LCI(L)(G) 440

**SWPA Eniwetok 2/22/1944**

**by friendly fire**

KIA Paul M. McGowan  
KIA Robert F. Graham  
KIA Joseph Mercoli  
KIA Thomas F. Smay  
KIA Robert Zielinski  
KIA Earl L. Miller  
KIA Fred J. Spicer  
KIA W. Edward Pappen

**Japanese Home Waters**

**Iwo Jima 2/17/1945**

KIA Lee Yates

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

**SWPA Eniwetok 2/22/1944**

**by friendly fire,**

KIA Paul D. Mayes  
KIA Gordon McCuiston  
KIA George W. Meckley  
KIA Fleet F. Willis  
KIA Floyd E. Wright  
KIA Alexander W. Finney

LCI(G) 449

**Japanese Home Waters**

**Iwo Jima 2/17/1945**

**By shore battery**

KIA Byron C. Yarbrough  
KIA Frederick Cooper  
KIA William G. Corkins  
KIA Lawrence Bozarth  
KIA John T. Flock  
KIA Bruce Goodin  
KIA Clarence J. Hoffman  
KIA William H. Hudson  
KIA Robert R. Minnick  
KIA Ralph Owens  
KIA Lareto F. Paglia  
KIA Carl F. Park  
KIA Howard W. Schoenleben  
KIA William Tominac  
KIA Glenn H. Trotter  
KIA Charles E. Vogel  
KIA Frederick F. Walton  
KIA Leroy Young  
KIA Lee C. Yates  
KIA Harry L. McGrath  
KIA Edward P. Brockmeyer USMC

**LCI(G) 449 (continued)**  
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**  
**Sunk 6/17/1944**  
**Guam by aerial torpedo**

KIA Dean L. Beemer  
KIA Leslie G. Foss  
KIA Dewey A. Hayhurst  
KIA Joseph A. Hunter  
KIA Lyan S. Long  
KIA Robert G. Marquis  
KIA Robert Barnett  
KIA Robert G. Davis  
KIA J. B. Gladdis  
KIA Hollis W. Hicks  
KIA Steven A. Karko  
KIA Woodrow B. Maggard  
KIA Ralph E. Parks  
KIA Ralph E. Spaugh  
MIA James H. Schuerman

**LCI(G) 469**

**SWPA Guam**  
DOI Robert A Meaux

**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**  
**Sunk 2/17/45**

**Japanese Home Waters**  
**Iwo Jima 2/17/1945**  
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(L) 559**  
**Pacific**  
KIA Donald M. Gross

**LCI(G) 568**  
**Japanese Home Waters**  
**Okinawa 4/4/1945**  
KIA Edward L. Kolodziej  
KIA James M. Sweatt

**LCI(G) 580**  
**SWPA Leyte Gulf**  
**Philippine Islands 10/20/1944**  
KIA George C. Thomas

**LCI(L) 600**  
**Sunk 1/12/1945**

**SWPA Ulithi**  
**by Japanese Midget Submarine**  
KIA Seth Bailey  
KIA Glen DeQuaisie  
KIA Edwin Janacek

**LCI(L) 621**  
**SWPA Mindoro**  
**Philippine Islands 1/4/1945**  
KIA Raymond Carter

**LCI(L) 682**  
**ATB Solomons MD 5/26/1944**  
Drowning Thomas H. Reese

**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(M) 807**  
**Japanese Home Waters**  
**Okinawa 4/1/1945**  
KIA Andrew Karsen  
KIA Philip R. Kenny  
KIA Thomas E. Perry  
KIA Hugh F. Martin  
**LCI(L) 812**

**Pacific**  
DOI Walter Siek  
**LCI(L) 821**

**SWPA Palau Islands**  
**5/7/1945**  
KIA Wayne A. Seath  
KIA Lee Henley Raigins  
KIA Robert E. Kriniak

**LCI(L) 974**  
**Sunk 1/10/1945**

**SWPA Lingayen Gulf**  
**Philippines Islands**  
**by Japanese 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**  
KIA Martin J. Fleishman LTJg  
KIA Martin F. Deem  
KIA William C. Nordan

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

**LCI(L) 1060**

**SWPA Mindoro**  
**Philippine Islands**  
KIA Alexander J. Osowiecki

**LCI(L) 1065**  
**Sunk 10/24/1944**

**SWPA Leyte Gulf**  
**Philippine Islands**  
**by Japanese Kamikaze**  
KIA Sigurd J. Bjertness  
KIA Wallace W. Hamlett  
KIA Michael M. Jalad  
KIA Floyd J. Parker  
KIA Lester S. Tumblyson  
MIA Gordon A. Judson

Codes Used:  
DOI Died from injuries non Combat  
DOW Died from Wounds after Combat  
DNC Died Not in Combat

# Your Officers and Executive Board

Please feel free to contact any of the officers or directors listed below for whatever comments, questions or assistance you may need. We're here to serve you!

## Officers

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

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

## Three LCI veterans visited Normandy on 6 June 1994 for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day



*Pictured at Normandy are L-R: Howard Clarkson LCI 537 Omaha Beach, Chas Robinson LCI 118 Juno Beach, and Edward Eng LCI 85 Omaha Beach.*